September 9, 2019

The Hon. Scott Peters  
2338 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Peters:

On behalf of the American Planning Association (APA), I write to voice our support for the Build More Housing Near Transit Act. This legislation will strengthen the connection of transit infrastructure investment and local land use policies in ways that will boost housing affordability and availability. APA believes that better linking land use and transportation improves not only housing opportunities but also overall community livability and affordability. By encouraging early coordination, this legislation will help drive too-scarce federal transit funding into projects that will provide maximum local and regional benefits.

As you know, the United States is in the middle of a housing affordability and availability crisis. According to national research, from 2000 – 2015, the country failed to produce the 7.3-million homes needed to keep pace with growth. Nearly half of the country’s renter households are cost-burdened, spending more than thirty percent of their income on housing. APA believes that improved and expanded planning is a critical part of the solution of our housing challenges. To that end, APA has launched the Planning Home campaign to promote critical reforms and investments.

We believe that the Build More Housing Near Transit Act is a part of the solution. Transit is vital to the economic and social mobility needs of the country. At a time when expanding opportunity for all is a national imperative, transit access is especially critical. So, it is imperative that our transit investment support a vibrant mix of housing, retail and commercial options and that these housing choices include affordable options. The link between transit and walkability is clear, yet only 20 percent of U.S. households are in walkable neighborhoods. This legislation will help provide a useful incentive for ensuring planning for housing and supportive land use decisions are part of the process of major federally-funded transit projects.

The Build More Housing Near Transit Act would spur the development of much-needed housing near transit locations, fulfilling critical transit, housing, economic development, and environmental goals. It would achieve this by making some small but important enhancements to the evaluation criteria for the FTA’s Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants program, or Section 5309 grants.

We believe this legislation has the potential to greatly enhance both affordable and market-rate real estate development around transit locations. This means communities would be able to realize needed
housing that uses less land, takes cars off the road, and provides housing opportunities closer to jobs, schools, and amenities.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing the *Build More Housing Near Transit Act*. It’s the type of innovative policy that will help the country meet its transportation infrastructure, housing affordability, and environmental policy goals.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kurt E. Christiansen, FAICP, President
American Planning Association