



# Coalition for Smarter Growth

*Choices for our communities, Choices for our region*

February 20, 2007

Carol Mitten  
Chair, D.C. Zoning Commission  
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REC'D  
DC COMMISSION  
2007 FEB 20 11:11:32

**RE: SUPPORT for proposed PUD by Akridge at 5220 Wisconsin Avenue (Case Number 06-31)**

Dear Chairman Mitten and Commission members:

These preliminary comments are provided on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. The Coalition for Smarter Growth is a regional non-profit organization working to ensure transportation and development decisions are made with genuine community involvement and accommodate growth while revitalizing communities, providing more housing and travel choices, and conserving our natural and historic areas.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth supports this PUD application as a good example of transit-oriented development, which improves the local quality of life while also providing more housing in accessible locations. This project will greatly enhance this block and restore the sidewalk to a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. The Coalition has worked with community members and the developer to make this a project that meets local and citywide goals.

The project offers many benefits to the community and city, and is especially important given its proximity to the southern portal of the Friendship Heights Metro station (just 300 feet). This project is respectful of its context, providing an appropriately scaled building for its location on Wisconsin Avenue and close proximity to the Metro station, while stepping down its scale as it nears low density residential buildings. We concur with other groups and residents that this is a good example of transit-oriented development, offering the right mix of uses and restoring the streetscape and pedestrian environment at a Metro station entrance. We have provided extensive comments to the developer and appreciate the developer's inclusion of many of our recommendations.

The project offers seven percent affordable housing units. While we would like to see more units of affordable housing, we support at least this number be built at this site. In addition to the affordable units provided on site, we recognize that the developer will be providing funding for off-site preservation for very low income indigent women at the Lisner Home.

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ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-31  
ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 06-31  
EXHIBIT NO. 48

We applaud the developer for providing a number of transportation demand management measures. These include the provision of bicycle parking for residents and bicycle parking and showers and changing facilities for workers. The two carsharing spaces that will be provided on the site will be available to both building residents and surrounding neighbors. We appreciate this community-wide benefit.

We find the 1.2 parking ratio too high for this transit-adjacent location, and would prefer to have the number of parking spaces reduced. Fewer parking spaces reduces the number of vehicle trips from the site and saves construction costs, allowing for more affordable housing. We believe that the high parking ratio reflects the developer's desire to respond to some existing neighbors' demands for more off-street parking in order to reduce competition for residential street parking. Yet this should no longer be a concern since new residents will not be eligible for the \$15-per-year street parking permits. Furthermore, according to the 2000 census, 13.5 percent of households in this census tract do not own a car. Given the significant number of non-car owning households in the neighborhood and the close proximity of the project to Metro and retail services, we believe the parking ratio should be brought down below 1:1. Parking reductions should be combined with incentives to ride transit, carshare, walk and bicycle.

At the very least, we request that the parking spaces be sold separately from the housing units. This way a purchaser can forego buying parking that he or she does not want. With construction costs ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per space, unbundling the cost of parking from housing will make the units affordable to more households. By advertising the project's transit convenience, carsharing, transit benefits, and neighborhood amenities, the developer will be able to attract those purchasers who are predisposed to own fewer cars, to use carsharing for occasional driving needs, and to otherwise rely on walking, bicycling, and transit for transportation.

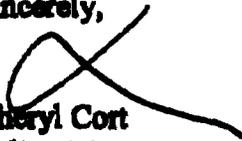
We commend the developer for working with the Department of Transportation to fund improved transportation demand management measures for the whole community. Ward 3 Vision proposed this important community amenity earlier in the process. It will assist the city and the neighborhood in addressing continued parking and transportation management challenges. The development itself will have negligible impact on existing traffic levels given its pedestrian orientation and proximity to high quality transit services and shopping.

We also appreciate the developer's commitment to achieve LEED certification. This means the building will offer additional benefits to the environment beyond its compliance with modern stormwater management standards and the provision of housing opportunities where residents will drive and pollute far less than their more suburban counterparts. The developer's offer to provide neighborhood serving retail is important, and one we hope can be formalized as part of the zoning order.

Finally, we recognize the developer's efforts to share plans and revisions with neighbors and other interested parties through a variety of venues. The developer conducted an open public process to solicit proposals from the neighborhood for neighborhood-enhancing amenities. While we have participated in many PUD processes, we have never experienced such an open effort to develop an amenities package.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort  
Policy Director



**Coalition for Smarter Growth**  
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**TO:** Carol Mitten  
Chairman, D.C. Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Cheryl Cort  
Policy Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth

**DATE:** February 20, 2007

**RE:** Support for Case Number 06-31

**Fax number:** 202-727-6072

**Total number of pages:** 4

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