

**MEMO:** Comments in Support, BZA Application No. 20472: The River School

**DATE:** October 19, 2021

Dear Chairperson and Secretary of the BZA,

I am writing in support of the River School coming to our neighborhood. My name is Ekin Birol and I live at 4436 45th St NW, Washington, DC 20016 with my family, where we have been for about 11 years. I am not affiliated with the River School; my child is a student at Janey Elementary. However, I have learned about the River School from neighbors and absolutely think they would be fantastic addition to our neighborhood. There are several reasons I have come to this conclusion:

1. I have experienced hearing loss since I was a child; I am thrilled to know that the d/Deaf community near me will now have a wonderful schooling option. Bringing the River School to our neighborhood is supporting differently abled children and people with disabilities. This is not just “another school” – it is a school that fills an incredibly important, incredibly unique niche. There is no school like it in the country.
2. I think this is a gorgeous school (the photos look simply beautiful) and that it will make this area a more desirable location for people to live in more generally. I strongly believe this will result in a more vibrant neighborhood, and a more diverse and supportive neighborhood—and that this will ultimately result in more valuable homes and businesses around us.
3. I simply do not buy that River School will be harmful for traffic. I knew almost nothing about Georgetown Day School (so much bigger, I understand, than the planned River School) until I saw their playground and began enjoying it with my daughter and our neighborhood friends. I don’t see how River School, which I understand will be a *lot* smaller, will be anything different than another great school in our neighborhood that all of us can enjoy. Traffic has not been observably impacted for me with GDS, and I don’t see how River School will be any different.
4. We cannot as a community stop progress; this is not a UNESCO cultural heritage site that we need to protect! Development is a part of the passage of time, and it honors me that a school with such a great mission is where development (of a space that will now doubt soon see more development) is heading. Our community is growing; we have changing and growing needs. This seems such a wonderful way to go!
5. The people who oppose the River School do NOT represent us; we have heard about the nasty NIMBY-ism that they are spouting and find it ridiculous. I have not yet found a convincing argument to oppose this wonderful project; the campaign against it seems to be based on lies about traffic that have already been addressed by the school and are now completely unfounded. Or they are based on concerns about the buildings themselves – which I do not understand, as they will be no taller than the homes in the area, and covered with greenery. I am not sure why they have a bone to pick with this school, but their objections do not resonate with most of their neighbors.

I 100% support the River School, and welcome them to the neighborhood. I hope you will make the good choice to do the same!

Sincerely,



Ekin Birol

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Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.20472  
EXHIBIT NO.86