

Dear Board of Zoning Adjustment,

My name is Maya Kavaler. I write this testimony to express my deep opposition to the proposed special exception and area and use variance from non-conforming use requirements of the Hillview Market property, located at 2324 North Capitol Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20002, under BZA case 21151.

I live and work from home directly next to the property across the alley at 8 Bryant Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20001, approximately 20 feet away. I own my property and I purchased my home in April 2023 as a first time home buyer. Given my extremely close proximity, I have deep concerns for how the proposal would impact my quality of life:

- 1. Noise** – The impact of noise emanating from a restaurant so close to my home is one of my largest concerns. I rely on a relatively peaceful environment to live, work and sleep. I have already been impacted by the construction noises coming from the property, so I know that I would be impacted by the unavoidable noise coming from a restaurant. From morning until night, I would hear patrons coming and going from the property, daily trash pick-ups (which the property's owner has planned for), delivery drop offs, Uber/Doordash pick-ups (including the increase in extremely loud motorbikes and scooters), music, increased traffic, and more. This represents an entirely new, constant, and stagnant source of noise that does not currently exist. While I recognize we live at the intersection of North Capitol and close to hospitals, the current noise I experience is brief, moves past my home quickly, and generally reserved to rush hour. Additionally, the constant dumping of glass bottles into the bins, which is expected with their proposed bar, will introduce an additional and new source of noise. My home was not built to withstand the noise that is inherent to a restaurant. Should this proposal be approved, I would be forced to replace my windows with noise-resistant windows as a first step to making my home a space conducive for living, sleeping, and working. I've been quoted over \$40,000 for this work, which is a huge cost for me to absorb in order to offset the impacts of this potential business. Currently, I can hear from inside my home just one person speaking on their phone in the public space next to the property. The applicant seeks to utilize this space for outdoor seating for 33 people. The noise from that alone will make living in my home intolerable.
- 2. Trash and Rodent and Pest Control** - The neighborhood continues to suffer from increasing challenges with rodent and roach infestations. I regularly see rats in our alley and in my backyard, both during the day and night times, and find large roaches in my home in the warmer months despite keeping a clean home and contracting regular pest control services. A full service restaurant will significantly increase the potential for more food products, garbage, and debris, thus increasing rodents and pests. Given my proximity to the property, I am at direct risk of harm with trash, rodents, and vermin coming onto my property. Even with regular pest control visits and daily trash pick-ups, dumpsters filled with food will still sit overnight, feet from my home and attracting pests. Once they come to the restaurant, they won't have to go far to come to my home.

3. **Access to the Alley** – I park my car in my private parking space in the alley behind my property. The daily trash pick-ups, delivery drop offs, ride share parking, and order pick-ups (which is planned to be from their back door along the alley) presents numerous opportunities for illegal parking in the alley, thus blocking my access to and from my parking spot. This presents a new and significant inconvenience that I don’t experience now. Additionally, many families walk through the alley with their children and dogs (including myself) and children play in the alley. Increased traffic in the alley would be dangerous.
4. **Traffic** – While Bryant Street is a relatively quiet street, it provides access to North Capitol Street. As a result, I have witnessed extremely reckless driving, particularly during rush hour, which includes speeding, driving up our one way street in the wrong direction, and more. Opening a restaurant on our street will only increase traffic and embolden even more reckless driving. Our neighborhood has many children and pedestrians with pets, myself included, and I fear for our safety. I would be remiss to not also mention that this would lead to an increase in motor bikes and scooters in the neighborhood, who I often see riding on the sidewalk, which make driving and walking in the neighborhood dangerous. Given that there have already been fatalities at this intersection, increasing traffic and vehicles of various types only increases insecurity.
5. **Parking** – While I have a parking spot behind my home, I have regular guests – as do my neighbors – who rely on street parking. Opening this business as a restaurant would only make street parking more difficult. In various community meetings, the property’s owner has told the community that patrons will park on North Capitol Street. Not only is parking illegal on North Capitol during certain hours of the day, it is also an extremely busy and dangerous thoroughfare. It is highly unrealistic that a driver would choose to park on North Capitol Street over Bryant Street. The property’s owner has offered no parking plan.
6. **Pedestrian and Personal Safety** - As mentioned above, the increased traffic that the proposed restaurant will create will be extremely hazardous to the pedestrian community. I walk my dog at least four times a day, so this poses a significant concern to my daily life. Additionally, as a woman who lives alone, I have serious concerns that the restaurant would pose to my personal safety. I regularly exit my front door to walk my dog or walk through the alley to access my car, which would be in plain sight for all of the restaurant’s patrons – particularly at the sidewalk café. Additionally, you can see directly into my bedroom windows from the sidewalk café. The thought of having people sit directly outside my home and watch me enter and exit (thus knowing where I live or if someone is home), makes me incredibly uneasy.
7. **Property Value** – Given that I live directly next to the property, I will be among the most impacted of those effected by this proposed change of use. I was drawn to Bryant Street precisely because of the qualities that its residential zoning provides. When it comes time for me to sell my home, I would imagine that those originally drawn to our block would be deterred by the impacts I have laid out above. This in turn, I would expect to decrease my property value.

I should note that I was supportive of the original plan to open a store/deli/coffee shop in this property. However, the change from a store to a restaurant is not a one-to-one change and a restaurant creates deleterious external effects to our block and specifically to my home. These deleterious impacts make a restaurant wholly inappropriate for a residentially zoned street. While the proposal has some support throughout Bloomingdale, the strongest opposition comes from the closest neighbors – the ones who will be actually impacted by the restaurant. I urge you to support these neighbors and vote to oppose the area and use zoning relief request to this property.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best,
Maya Kavaler (Homeowner)
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