

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

I am writing to formally oppose the Board of Zoning and Adjustment (BZA) application number 21250, which seeks a special exception to establish a 14-bed inpatient health care facility in an existing detached, one-story plus basement building in an R-2 residential zone. While I recognize the need for expanded healthcare options, this proposed facility raises significant concerns regarding zoning compatibility, operational feasibility, and potential negative impacts on residents—both within the facility and the surrounding neighborhood. For the reasons stated below, I cannot support the relief being requested and I urge the BZA to deny this application.

The R-2 zone is designated for low-density residential use, primarily for single-family and two-family dwellings. The introduction of a 14-bed institutional facility is inconsistent with the zoning intent and would negatively impact the neighborhood's residential character. The density of use far exceeds what is appropriate for an R-2 zone, setting a dangerous precedent for further institutional encroachment into residential neighborhoods, and the increase in foot and vehicular traffic will disrupt the quiet, residential nature of the area and create parking and congestion issues.

Given the size and nature of the facility, there are serious concerns about whether it will be adequately staffed to provide proper care for residents, particularly if they have complex medical or behavioral health needs. Specifically, insufficient staffing can lead to neglect, delays in care, and safety risks for residents. The applicant has not provided clear details on the staffing model, staff-to-patient ratio, or level of medical oversight, raising concerns about how residents will be cared for. Facilities of this nature typically require 24/7 supervision by trained medical and behavioral health professionals, yet the applicant has not confirmed whether on-site medical staff will always be available.

The proposed site does not appear to be adequately designed to support the specific medical, therapeutic, and social needs of the residents. Without a clear plan for medical oversight, behavioral support, and specialized services, the well-being of the residents could be at risk. If the residents require skilled nursing care or intensive behavioral health support, a small, retrofitted facility in a residential neighborhood is not an appropriate setting. In addition, there is no clear plan for how emergency medical or psychiatric needs will be handled. Also, the lack of outdoor space and recreational amenities could negatively impact the residents' quality of life.

A 14-bed facility with on-site staff, visiting healthcare providers, deliveries, and emergency vehicles will generate significant traffic and parking demands in an area not designed for institutional use. Increased traffic congestion, particularly from ambulances, staff, and visitors, could create hazards for residents and pedestrians. The application lacks a clear parking plan, raising concerns that overflow parking will spill into residential streets, impacting neighbors. The potential for increased emergency calls (ambulances, law enforcement, etc.) raises public safety and noise concerns.

While I strongly support expanding access to health care services, such facilities must be appropriately located in zones designed to support them—not shoehorned into residential neighborhoods where they strain infrastructure, disrupt community life, and potentially compromise resident care.

For these reasons, I urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny this application. Instead, I encourage the applicant to explore alternative locations within zones specifically designated for health care and institutional use, ensuring both community well-being and responsible urban planning.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Tiffani Nichole Johnson

Submitted on 5/28/2025 by:

Opposition to BZA Application No. 21250 of Fikremariam Mengesha
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