

Comments in Opposition to Application #21288

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I'm commenting on the application as a resident of Edgewood and as President of the Edgewood Alley Green nonprofit. In addition to the remarks shared by my colleague, I want to highlight the wide-ranging support this park has received, and the value you would be jeopardizing by allowing the proposed development.

Creating this park has been a 5-year, uphill battle, and we have many more years to go. However, we've been supported by partners for three reasons:

- 1. Heat island mitigation:** Edgewood is a heat island. A 2017 DC Policy Center [study](#) showed that on a typical day in August the high temperature was officially recorded as 93, but the actual on the ground variance ranged from 73 in Rock Creek Park to 102 near Edgewood. The difference is green space. With heat comes danger, with the study noting Edgewood as one of highest risk neighborhoods for heat stroke or heat-related illnesses based solely on tree canopy. That's why Pepco and Casey Trees have supported the park.
- 2. Crime reduction:** Research repeatedly shows a correlation between green spaces and reduced crime. For many years this alley was a known spot for dumping illegal cars and selling illicit drugs. Since becoming a green space, it's now a safe and welcoming space for neighbors. A [2023 study by NBC4 Washington](#) used GIS analysis to map violent crimes across the city with an overlay of tree canopy. There was an undeniable connection – tree canopy leads to lower violent crime. Allowing more dense development to be built would threaten the trajectory of crime reduction in Edgewood, and the Metropolitan Police Department has supported multiple community events in the park for this reason.
- 3. Flood mitigation:** Edgewood faces severe flooding issues. In 2020 six inches of rain fell in just 70 minutes, leading to water belching from toilets and drains, and affecting around 30 homes bordering the alleyway. In 2023 neighbors watched this tragedy repeat as two dozen homes were flooded and 10 dogs drowned in a daycare. Our park helps manage stormwater and aligns with city infrastructure upgrades like the Boundary Tunnel. More development and paving will hinder this goal.

Before my time expires, I want to address housing. I am fully aware that one argument in favor of this zoning change is to add additional housing, in a time when affordable housing is a major challenge in our country and in our city. While I fully support that argument, that's not what is happening here. This development will create one or two homes, with no guarantees on affordability. It will replace hard-won green space with density and disruption.