

August 24, 2002

Re: Office of Zoning Case # ZC 02 -17 (Stonebridge Assoc.)

Carol Mitten, Chairman  
Zoning Commission  
District of Columbia Office of Zoning  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite 210-S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chairman Mitten:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the massive new apartment and retail development that Stonebridge Associates is proposing to build on the site at Western Avenue and Military Road (Office of Zoning Case # ZC 02 -17 (Stonebridge Assoc.)), and to enlist your support of our neighborhood's efforts to ensure that the scale and character of any development of this location is consistent with the current zoning for this site. The current zoning restrictions for this site reflect the commitment in the Comprehensive Plan for Ward 3 to control redevelopment of this Ward and to protect its low-density residential nature, and already take into account the proximity of this site to the Friendship Heights Metro stop.

The Stonebridge proposal to increase the zoning density for this site provides no public benefit to the community and most certainly will result in a significant degradation of the public health, safety, welfare, and natural resources of the surrounding neighborhood. The increased traffic congestion will result in a further degradation of the air quality in Friendship Heights and place unbearable pressure on a road infrastructure that is inadequate to accommodate even the current flow of traffic in and around this neighborhood. The current rush hour gridlock on the Military Road and Western Avenue already encourages frustrated drivers to turn our residential streets into thoroughfares; the volume of diverted traffic, and speed with which they race down residential streets, currently poses an extreme danger to all residents and most particularly to neighborhood children. The development proposed by Stonebridge can only intensify these problems and dangers.

This neighborhood already has some of the most intense retail development in the city. Unlike other areas of the city that are woefully underserved by retail establishments, this neighborhood already offers every form of shopping and

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entertainment imaginable. While there is no need for more retail establishments in Friendship Heights, the Stonebridge Associates should be encouraged to pursue retail development in neighborhood's that would welcome such efforts.

In addition, parking problems are likely to become unbearable, as hundreds of new tenants and people visiting the new retail establishments seek long term and short term parking on residential streets to avoid paying parking garage fees.

Finally, beautiful stands of trees and the only remaining open space in the neighborhood also would be destroyed to accommodate this development. The plans to destroy these majestic old trees is in direct conflict with Mayor William's and the City Council's stated desire to protect and enhance these rapidly dwindling natural resources.

It is my understanding that the zoning for this site was previously upgraded to accommodate increased development that was deemed consistent with its proximity to the Friendship Heights Metro station. That zoning increase, however, also was consistent with the low-density residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. District of Columbia authorities and elected officials should resist entreaties by this developer for additional upgrades of the zoning. The zoning change proposed by Stonebridge Associates provides no public benefit, but most certainly would increase the profits of a developer who would exploit our city and neighborhood for its own narrow purposes and gain.

As a thirty-year resident of the District of Columbia and a twenty-six year resident of the Friendship Heights neighborhood, I care deeply about this city and its future. I urge you to reject the Stonebridge proposal and, thereby, join with this neighborhood in defense of preserving the stable residential neighborhoods that represent the true heart and soul of this city.

I hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,



Linda D. Johnson  
4114 Legation St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20015