

**Testimony Befor the DC Zoning Commission
Thursday, March 23, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Robert Robinson, Chair, DC Consumer Utility Board**

CASE NO. 13-14
(Vision McMillan Partners LLC and the District of Columbia – First-Stage and Consolidated PUDs and Related Map Amendment @ 2501 First Street, N.W. (Square 3128, Lot 800))

My name is Robert Robinson, I Chair the DC Consumer Utility Board and am a Ward 1 resident, but I am here to testify in my personal capacity and as one who has previously opposed this execrable project.

My testimony addresses Issues 3 and 4:

Issue No. 3

Is the high-density development proposed for the site the only feasible way to retain a substantial part of the property as open space and make the site usable for recreational purposes?

Absolutely not, DC government and the developers have repeatedly ignored the communities pleas in this regard.

Elected officials who receive money from these developers have repeatedly refused to meet with the community to discuss their concerns.

2. Adverse Impacts

The 1958 PUD Regulations provide:

2403.3 The impact of the project on the surrounding area and the operation of city services and facilities shall not be found to be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project.

2403.8 In deciding a PUD application, the Commission shall judge, balance, and reconcile the relative value of the project amenities and public benefits offered, the degree of development incentives requested, and any potential adverse effects according to the specific circumstances of the case.

The Court concluded that the Commission “failed to adequately address a variety of asserted adverse impacts of the PUD, including environmental problems, destabilization of land values

and displacement of neighboring residents, and increased demand for essential public services.” (149 A.3d at 1036.)

The District government believes there will be no adverse impacts and will take no steps to address them.

DC has proven, citywide, that its attempts to compete with large suburban malls are failures, they simply disrupted the ability of its neighborhood business districts to serve their communities: see the blight occasioned by Rhode Island Avenue Mall (5th & RI Ave, NE) and The Shops at Rhode Island Avenue (7th & RI Ave, NE)

Issue No. 4

A. *Will the PUD result in environmental problems, destabilization of land values, or displacement of neighboring residents or have the potential to cause any other adverse impacts identified by the FOMP in the record of this case?* Z.C. NOTICE OF LIMITED SCOPE PUBLIC HEARING Z.C. CASE NO. 13-14 PAGE 4

Certainly. The problems of congestion in DC are familiar and their role in creating environmental problems are well understood. Come to North Capitol Street at 8:00 a.m. and learn what failure of transportation policy is all about.

Yet, DC’s budget for mass transit hasn’t appreciated in decades.

DC policies that benefit the redevelopment of single family homes into multifamily rental units are displacing families and driving up the cost of housing citywide.

B. *If so, how should the Commission judge, balance, and reconcile the relative value of the project amenities and public benefits offered, the degree of development incentives requested, and these potential adverse effects*

DC’s Planning Office serves the development community. The small area plans it developed for my neighborhood were never funded or implemented by DC government.

DC has proven, citywide, that its attempts to compete with large suburban malls are colossal failures, they simply disrupt the ability of neighborhood business districts to serve their communities: see the blight occasioned by Rhode Island Avenue Mall (5th & RI Ave, NE) and The Shops at Rhode Island Avenue (7th & RI Ave, NE)

Policy MC-2.6.3

DC's Planning policy shuns developing of transportation plans around commercial development in neighborhoods.

We live adjacent to DC USA, the DC Office of Planning, DDOT, DPW and other agencies have done nothing to address the impact occasioned by the development at 14th Street and Park Road, NW — in fact, the common areas have become filthier with each passing year.

DC's policies are designed to increase traffic and parking congestion in order to prey on residential neighborhoods and small businesses via regressive fees, taxes, surcharges, fines and user charges and uncontrolled utility costs.

Policy MC-2.6.4

Community involvement: The DC Office of Planning has failed to prove itself responsive to community needs and requests. Our small area plans for Mt Pleasant have never been funded or implemented.

Policy MC-2.6.5:

Scale and Mix of New Uses: Recognize that development on portions of the McMillan Sand Filtration site may be necessary to stabilize the site and provide the desired open space and amenities. Where development takes place, it should consist of moderate- to medium-density housing, retail, and other compatible uses. Any development on the site should maintain viewsheds and vistas and be situated in a way that minimizes impacts on historic resources and adjacent development. 2016.9

The District's ability to discipline the scale and density of development is unproven. Look at M Street, SW. It's a joke.