

April 26, 2014

Oana Cheta
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Washington, D.C. 20002

To Whom It May Concern:

My husband and I are writing to express our strong support for the McMillan Development Project. We own a home on Girard St. NE across from the proposed development site and plan to raise our family here and remain long-term, upstanding members of this community. We believe the project is vital to the area's long-term wellbeing and prosperity.

We know that a development of this size is never easy because of the many passionate interests involved and the need for each of us to give up things we deeply care about for the sake of the greater good. Yet, from everything we have read and witnessed, the entire process has been thoughtful and well designed (*especially* compared to most development projects that we have seen), with repeated efforts to accommodate many different views.

We also understand and appreciate the desire for a larger park space as well as concerns about increased traffic, the loss of the skyline view, or the destruction of certain historic features of the site. We too would love to preserve these things in an *ideal* world. Having worked in the public and private sector, in local politics, in public health, in education, and in community organizing, we have advocated for social justice issues and conscientious, green development and fought for some of the very same issues now at stake here.

However, partly *because* of our experience with these complex issues of community development, we also understand the difficult individual compromise that is required for the collective good, and have seen the benefits that can come when diverse parties are able to come to an agreement, even if imperfect. The net benefits *do* outweigh the sacrifices.

These benefits would include a major economic boon to the whole area both during the construction phase and long into the future due to the employment and tax revenue it will generate for the city. The rise in property values and creation of much needed amenities such as a grocery store, retail offices, cafes and restaurants, and mixed income housing will make the entire area a more desirable and safer place to live, give older residents a place to enjoy, and also attract young families who will invest in the community's future.

We may not have a "central park" or the most perfect view of the city, and, yes, we will certainly have to contend with increased traffic congestion on an already busy street. But our children will at least have some green park space to play in, rather than an ugly wasteland to stare at. My husband, who suffers from a chronic medical condition, relies on quality care from Washington Hospital Center, and the hospital needs space for new offices to remain the region's leading medical provider and continue serving the entire DC community. Also, as a soon-to-be mother, I will greatly appreciate the daily convenience of going across the street for milk and eggs, or taking my family for an ice cream cone or a run in the park on a Sunday afternoon rather than going half way across town.

Finally, and perhaps best of all, a center of recreation, commerce, and leisure of this kind will bring together diverse people from all across the city—much as Malcolm X/Meridian Hill Park has done—right in the midst of an already historically and culturally rich area situated between three centers of higher learning and the region’s most important medical center. Nothing could be better for the cultural and social health of our city.

We appreciate the concerns and passionate feelings of everyone involved in this debate. Instead of continuing a never-ending stalemate and having nothing to show for it but a fenced off, abandoned field that benefits no one, we hope to see a vibrant center of new life and creativity that will make Northeast DC flourish in ways we can only imagine today for many generations to come. We must not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Instead, we must each be willing to give ground and work together to create a conscientious, sustainable development and a lasting legacy to this great city and its people.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Oana Cheta & Jesse Torrence