

Case #13-14 (Vision McMillan Partners LLC and the District of Columbia—First Stage and Consolidated PUD and Related Map Amendment at 2501 First Street, NW (Square 3128, Lot 800)).

Testimony by Phoebe Sweet
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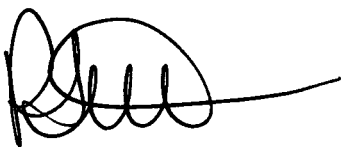
Thank you, commissioners, for your time and your efforts to maximize public comment and participation in this process. I wish to speak in support of the Vision McMillan Partners' plan to redevelop and restore the McMillan Sand Filtration site.

For a century, the McMillan site was all about providing community benefit – especially public health benefit. But for the last three decades, the site has failed to fulfill that promise. Today, thanks to cooperation between VMP, the District and so many neighbors, McMillan again has the opportunity to be more than an interesting historic site fenced off from the community it once served. McMillan can once again be a beautiful resource to the District, offering both public health, recreation, safety, and economic benefits.

I'd like to make one comment on process. The District bought the McMillan Sand Filtration Site in 1987 at substantial cost for the express purpose of mixed use redevelopment. The federal government offered the site for a dollar, but the District foresaw the need for retail, housing, and public space, and made the conscious decision to dedicate this site to mixed-use redevelopment. Twenty years passed before VMP was selected through a competitive RFP process to redevelop the site with input from the community. After a lengthy master planning process with extensive community involvement, the current plan emerged. No one can claim that the intended use for this site is anything but mixed use development with historic preservation. And no one can credibly claim that the process has been anything but open, transparent, and inclusive.

But I don't have to tell you about the process. The experts have already done that. You know the details of the plan as well as I do. What I'd like to share with you tonight is the hope this project brings to so many in this community. The proposed amenities will mean so much to a community that is starved for local recreation opportunities, walkable shopping, a modern grocery store, and usable open space. This project will bring desperately needed jobs and badly needed tax revenue to a section of the city that is crying out for redevelopment and positive change. It will add housing units to a city with prices on par with San Francisco and New York, while encouraging public art and preserving the historic features that make this site special. And, on a personal note, I can't wait to see that chain link fence come down after so many years.

I urge you to approve VMP's plan to revitalize this site and restore its substantial community benefits. And I thank you for your diligent consideration of our comments.



5/13/14