



# Coalition for Smarter Growth

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Testimony before the Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman  
DC Zoning Commission

Regarding a public hearing on:

ZC Case 16-11: PUD for Bruce Monroe site

By Cheryl Cort  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
December 5, 2016

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization working locally in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region dedicated to making the case for smart growth. Our mission is to promote walkable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities, and the land use and transportation policies and investments needed to make those communities flourish.

We wish to express our enthusiastic support for the Bruce Monroe redevelopment proposal for 271 housing units to achieve major public benefits in mixed income housing and innovative replacement of 94 nearby public housing homes in a highly walkable, transit-accessible neighborhood. Another 108 of the apartments will be affordable at the 60 percent AMI level, with the remaining 71 units offered at market rate. This important project is being done in conjunction with the creation of a quality community park highly visible from Georgia Avenue.

The Bruce Monroe site proposal should be celebrated as a leading example of how to replace aging public housing units with quality new homes for current residents in close proximity to the existing site. Residents at Park Morton public housing complex will be able to move from their existing apartments into their new homes at the Bruce Monroe site without having to move multiple times or be displaced from their neighborhood. Further, the mixed income development provides a major community benefit through a new park and a small amount of retail or community service space on a busy transit corridor.

While the Bruce Monroe site has hosted recreational uses since the obsolete school building was demolished several years ago, the public space was not well planned. The proposed development for Bruce Monroe offers important public benefits in providing more affordable housing along a major bus corridor and walking distance to Metro stations, along with a quality new park for the whole community.

We recognize the careful planning of the site focuses the greater intensity of residential uses close to Georgia Avenue, which helps energize this major transit and commercial corridor. The townhouses placed to the rear of the site appropriately engage the lower scale residential block stepping away from Georgia Avenue. The taller apartment building offers greater definition to Georgia Avenue and the new park. The new small street at the rear of the site offers connectivity that breaks up a large block.

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Support by Coalition for Smarter Growth for ZC No. 16-11  
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Regarding transportation, we want to express our support for DDOT's recommendation that each resident be offered a bikeshare membership for at least 3 years, and provide SmartTrip cards to each unit. The project could also contribute to enhanced transportation choices by expanding the existing bikeshare station or creating a new one nearby.

While the vehicle parking supply of 99 is about one space to three units, it exceeds the required 79 spaces. We suggest that further cost savings could be found by reducing parking supply, and ensuring that all parking is leased at full cost separately from living space. Subsidized vehicle parking leads to unnecessary vehicle trips, traffic, pollution and collisions.

We commend the 99-year lease approach to this District-owned property. This is a good approach to ensuring the sustainability of the affordable housing on this site.

### **Conclusion**

The Bruce Monroe redevelopment plans offer an exciting opportunity to replace aging public housing with quality, mixed income housing, and public park nearby the original site. The Bruce Monroe property is appropriate for increased housing uses, given that Georgia Avenue is a major transit corridor and is highly accessible by foot and bicycle. The Bruce Monroe site is a critical part of making the New Communities Initiative a success and fulfill an outstanding promise to the residents of Park Morton. We urge the Commission to advance this PUD without delay.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.