

Re: Letter in Support to Zoning Commission Case No. 24-15, 901 Monroe Street LLC

Dear Zoning Commission Members:

My name is Mara Lee, and my family and I live at 1011 Jackson St NE. I have been living in Brookland since February 2019, but first moved to D.C. in 1995, and was a renter in a group house in Logan Circle that year, rented in group houses in Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights in the mid to late aughts, and in an apartment in Brightwood from 2017-2019.

I support building 233 apartments at 901 Monroe Street. A six-story building is wholly appropriate for a site directly across the street from Metro. It is similar in scale to other newish apartment buildings across the train tracks on Monroe Street, and is only one story taller than the taller building at Dahlgreen Courts at the other end of 10th Street NE, which was built in the late 1920s, at the same time as many of our housing stock.

I am particularly pleased that 15% of the development will be inclusionary zoning units. Housing in reach to working class renters is desperately needed in the city. I personally know a family with three adults, across three generations, and one child sharing a two-bedroom apartment within a mile of this property because the woman with the young adult child cannot afford to move out of her mother's apartment. I do wish that the IZ program would focus more on 50% AMI than 60% AMI, so that Section 8 vouchers could cover the rents, but that's outside your purview. The fact that only 30% of apartments in the city charge rent of less than \$1,500 a month shows how badly we need to build more apartments.

At Hanover, around the corner from this site, the effective rent of a 1-bedroom available at the end of July is \$3,394 –more than the \$3,000 a month it would cost to buy a small two-bedroom condo with 10% down in an older building in the neighborhood. (Still cheaper than the cost of buying a larger, two-bedroom condo in a new flip, however). Not that Horning wants to hear this, but we need to build more units so that there are more 1-bedrooms that are affordable to single person households (the median single person household income is about \$75,000 in the city).

I do not think there is a need for retail at that location, given the vacant retail already nearby, but am pleased that there is the option to add more residential in that spot if a tenant is not found quickly.

It is a shame that the former Colonel Brooks bar has been a vacant lot for more than a dozen years when it is directly across the street from a metro stop just nine minutes from Union Station, a major jobs hub. We have done a decent job of adding housing units at the same rate that we have added households since 2012, but this spot is really a prime spot for commuters, and it's absurd that it has stayed vacant while apartments have been built on much less advantageous lots for commuting, like in Ivy City, a mile further up Rhode Island Avenue, and Benning Road NE.

Personally, I am looking forward to some fast-growing trees being planted in the tree lawn in front of this building, as I walk to the metro, and in the summer, that stretch of sidewalk is very hot!

If you choose to approve this project, I hope that it is done soon enough, and there are no appeals, that the market conditions do not change to the point that it is no longer economical to build, either because of tariffs on imported lumber, or because of the worsening job picture in our city.

Sincerely yours,

Mara Lee