

Attn: DC Zoning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment
Subject: Letter in Support of ZC Case No. 24-15, 901 Monroe Street, LLC

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Eric Behna, I am a 10-year DC resident and former ANC Commissioner. I currently live in ANC5F which abuts the area of 901 Monroe Street proposed development. Specifically, I live 0.2 miles (2 minute walk) from the site and walk past it daily. **I write in strong support of the proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) and map amendment to upzone the parcel to MU-5B.**

I love living in this area and I sincerely wish more DC residents could enjoy living here and all the wonderful things that Brookland/Edgewood have to offer. The current 15% of units reserved as affordable is very important to ensuring DC residents of all income levels can afford to live in this neighborhood. I also urge that the percentage of affordable units be increased as high as feasible, possibly doubling the amount to 30%.

The neighborhood at large should not be forced to live amongst a giant, vacant lot because of the selfish whims and desires of a small, shortsighted group of “200 footers” and the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) who oppose any and all development and wish to keep “others” out of the neighborhood. We should welcome more people to live in our neighborhood who will strengthen the community and support local businesses. We’ve seen many local businesses such as Brookland’s Finest, Brookland Pint, The Runaway, and more close down due to lack of foot traffic. Welcoming more residents to Brookland/Edgewood will help local businesses thrive.

Additionally, as someone who has lived in far denser corridors of DC (e.g. Columbia Heights), the “quality of life” concerns of those in opposition to this project are exaggerated and overblown. This area can readily accommodate more density, as evidenced by earlier developments such as Monroe Street Market and Hanover 8th Street in ANC5F. For years, imagined concerns of parking, light, and “neighborhood character” have trumped concrete needs like housing affordability and the need for transit-oriented development. We have seen repeatedly in other parts of the city that placing a 233-unit apartment building in an area with plentiful public transit options does NOT translate into 233 cars on the road. Upzoning an area does NOT turn it into a dark concrete jungle that is unpleasant to live in. And the neighborhood character of Brookland/Edgewood already includes a wide variety of architectural styles – an apartment building will add to this existing diverse mix of housing.

To conclude, **I strongly support the 901 Monroe Street development.** I welcome this development and its future residents who will activate the area, bringing their unique life experiences to the fabric of the community and their dollars to support local businesses. Thank you.

Best,
Eric Behna
ANC 5F Resident