

We purchased our Brookland home 3.5 years ago knowing that the property immediately abutting our backyard alley would be developed. We assumed the design would be humane for the immediate neighbors. However, key assumptions about a more human design – such as reasonable scale, setbacks that preserve air and light, green barriers between our the new apartment complex and our townhomes, community amenities for the 200-footers, and the preservation of safety in our backyard alley – which were largely present a decade ago in the 901 Monroe St ZC No. 10-28 design – are all missing from today's proposal, ZC No. 24-15.

I will share with the Zoning Commission (ZC):

- 1) **Health, Safety and expected costs** to my family, including our 3-year old, of ZC No. 24-15, namely: safety hazards for pedestrians, including schoolchildren, cyclists—but especially—for children living immediately adjacent to the planned development.
- 2) **Overview of the 200-footers survey**, created to clearly identify—to the developers—the top concerns of neighbors most impacted by ZC No. 24-15; and
- 3) **Overview of the 200-footers' experience with the development team** since our first meeting in September 2024.

1) Health and Safety

The proposed use of the Lawrence Street alley as the ingress/egress for a building of 233 units creates serious safety and health hazards. Young children, including mine, regularly play in this quiet dead-end alley, which serves as a community gathering space and play area for families on our block. Converting it to a high-traffic corridor puts the existing families on the block—who have no protection between their backyards and the alley—at risk. The constant flow of vehicles entering and exiting will also emit air and noise pollution. Traffic may be especially congested due to an expected high number of daily deliveries at the 901 Monroe St apartments, and traffic that will service the retail in the building. In No. 24-15's Exhibit #81, DDOT estimated only five trucks per day, *“including trash, recycling pick-up, mail and parcel deliveries, and move-ins and move-outs by residents.”* For 233 units with some 400+ residents, plus retail? Sometimes my house on its own has 5 trucks per day stopping by with package deliveries. Aren't we talking about *hundreds* of daily truck packages to 901 Monroe St?

For my family, our backyard *is* our essential outdoor space—our respite, where we often eat dinner, where we linger as a family or with friends enjoying the sunset. We play in the garden where my daughter harvests beans, tomatoes, or peas she planted—though now the massive scale of the building blocking sunlight threatens to take our garden beds out of commission. The new 6-story-wall and proposed alley-highway for deliveries and resident and retail traffic threatens to decommission our outdoor respite. How do you put a price on losing the sunset, gardening with your child, or siphoned sunlight from the room where she sleeps?

Beyond this loss of quality of life, as a mother my primary concern is safety. It's difficult not to imagine the horror of a vehicle quickly rounding into the alley, without regard for the child who has wandered beyond the edge of the backyard, or who is peddling back home. But our backyards have no protection—they immediately abut the alley. It's a parent's nightmare—transforming our backyard alley into a major traffic-way. How do you put a price on the life or the safety of a child?

We fully understand that use of an existing alley is the default standard for DDOT, but also understand that DDOT *does make exceptions* to this practice when appropriate. ZC No. 24-15 should be such a case. If a heritage tree must be protected, children should also be protected. In a May 13, 2025, virtual meeting with DDOT that the 200-footers set up, DDOT could not offer examples of using dead-end alleys for new developments that similarly abut neighbors backyards that have no protection. The 200-footers' safety risks are not factored into DDOT's decision-making algorithm. In the previous design, ZC No. 10-28, our dead-end alley was respected—left untouched and safe. In fact, it was thoughtfully lined with tree-plantings for a buffer. The 200-footers request that ZC No. 24-15 return to the ZC No. 10-28 plans for an ingress/egress, using the existing curb cut on 9th street (that entrance served the businesses and homes previously on the property, which were demolished by the developers). To mitigate adverse effects on the immediate neighbors, we recommend an alley green buffer be added as an amenity.

If the alley must be used, the conditions of ANC-5B for its support of ZC No. 24-15 **required** that "*During the schematic design and design development phases, the developer should seek community input regarding the safety, security, and aesthetic aspects of the alley. This should include, but is not limited to, pole locations, lighting, security barriers at both six townhomes and proposed development (fencing, walls, garage doors, pedestrian doors), cameras, pavement styles, sidewalk design for pedestrian access to the garage, and relocation of street drop-off from Monroe to 9th St NE.*"

In a June 9, 2025 meeting between the developers and the 200-footers, the 200-footers asked what thought the development team had given to the new conditions laid out by the ANC regarding alley safety and security. In their response, they had nothing new to offer. They offered no indication that they had given additional thought to *alley safety, security and aesthetics*, despite the conditions set by the ANC. Based on the evidence to date, we are concerned that the developers purported agreement to the ANC's conditions may be an empty promise. If they are permitted to use the alley, the developers must take our safety more seriously and should compensate homeowners on the block for any infrastructure or updates to our backyards that will be necessary to protect our health and safety.

Under the current proposal, the immediate neighbors will suffer unnecessarily high costs to their health, safety, and quality of life that could be avoided if the developers redesigned the project. The 200-footers have requested seeing an alternative design that still allows

901 Monroe Street to meet its goals for new housing goals and financial feasibility. While the 200-footers are sympathetic to the reasonable profit margins and financing feasibility to move the project forward, profit should not come by requiring the immediate neighbors to “pay” for financial benefits that only accumulate to the developer or investors – especially when the developers have failed to offer meaningful amenities for those most adversely affected.

2) 200-Footers Survey.

In November 2024, the immediate neighbors to 901 Monroe Street developed a preliminary survey about the proposed 901 Monroe Street development. The survey allowed us to identify top priorities regarding adverse effects in the ZC No. 24-15 plan, construction concerns, community amenities, and changes that neighbors would request of the current proposal. Twenty 200-footers participated in the preliminary survey. The results demonstrated clear opposition to a few key discretionary elements of the No. 24-15 design, and clear support for certain amenities that could be part of a community benefits package.

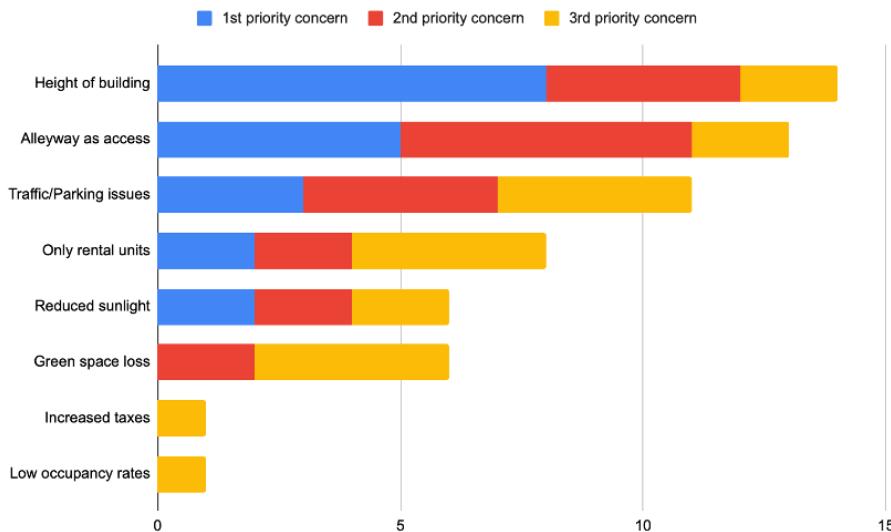
We first presented results from the survey during a Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) meeting on Nov 12, 2024. The presentation that day highlighted top concerns about the proposed Construction Management Agreement (CMA) and ZC No. 24-15's design including: *“damage to our homes, parking, noise, building height, use of the alley from Lawrence Street as the single ingress/egress point, and lack of any attempt to provide the community with greenspace or provide anything to improve the quality of life.”* We followed up by providing complete survey results in the public record, posted in the ZC No. 24-15 case file (Exhibits #12A, 16A, 17).

Understanding that the Applicant hears all kinds of comments and suggestions from various neighbors within and beyond Brookland, we created the survey as clarification about the top priorities of neighbors *most* affected, as support from 200-footers on any project should be crucial. We hoped the survey could offer guidance on how to engage with us. During a June 9, 2025 meeting, one of the members of the development team indicated he “remember[ed] seeing the survey from many months ago – don’t remember what it said – remember more what’s said in the meetings.” While some of our framing has changed (for example, some survey choice options have since been combined as they are effectively the same), most essential concerns and priorities for change or amenities remain the same. These include:

- I. *Top adverse effects and priorities for change:* massive scale of 901 Monroe and resulting loss of sunlight; alley traffic and safety and moving the ingress/egress to out of the dead-end alley; and no opportunity for new residents to build equity in the neighborhood since all units are rentals.

II. *Priority amenities*: publicly available greenspace, restaurants and retail, public maker space in the building, coverage of large shade trees, dog park, community garden, playground, gym/recreation space available to neighbors.

Figure 1. 901 Monroe adverse effects (200-footers' top concerns, per preliminary survey)



3) 200-Footers experience with developers.

I have never been in a PUD process before. Our first peak at the process came when my husband and I spoke with our ANC Commissioner Ra Amin—who was our friend long before we moved into his SMD. It's not a matter of "if" but "when," he let us know. He encouraged us, *you should ask them [the developers] for things*. I assumed this meant it would be a fair discourse and negotiation process, with developers trying to offset some of the adverse effects disproportionately felt by next-door neighbors.

In September 2024, we received a notice in the mail from the development team, announcing the 901 Monroe St process. Shortly thereafter, our Commissioner Ra Amin invited immediate neighbors to participate in a call with the developers. The developers shared their design, heard our initial feedback, and answered questions. I didn't make much of it at the time, but Commissioner Amin answered several questions *instead* of the developers answering directly – our neighborhood Commissioner speaking *for* the developers. Our Commissioner had clearly been meeting with the 901 Monroe team. Unfortunately, as 200-footers, we were never invited to meet independently with our SMD Commissioner to share our concerns as his constituents.

As 200-footers, we hoped to have transparency and respectful dialogue with the development team; however, numerous actions have demonstrated questionable willingness of the 901 Monroe team to take the 200-footers concerns, suggestions, and well-being seriously.

As a few examples, we would like to highlight issues of mistrust through the following: (a) several “letters of support” in ZC No. 24-15 – while submission of these letters may be beyond the development team’s control, we believe it’s crucial to highlight irregularities; (b) inflation inaccuracies in the developer’s list of *“Updated List of Community Meetings and Presentations”* noted in Exhibit #56 (A) lists; and (c) ongoing interactions (or lack thereof) between the developers, our ANC SMD Commissioner and the 200-footers. Through these points we will describe the development team’s engagement with 200-footers over the past 10 months.

(a) Categorization and irregularities in ZC No. 24-15 letters of support

One of the 200-footers took the time to review and categorize aspects of the letters of support for ZC No. 24-15; the complete analysis can be found in Exhibit 104. As a summary, as of June 19th, he noted, purportedly, 31 letters of support. However there were several irregularities:

- 1 appears to be misfiled; it is about something unrelated (Exhibit 41);
- 1 was unclear about whether it was support or opposition; in addition, the writer may not be within the United States—this was unclear (Exh. 23);
- 1 is from a member of the Menkiti sales team;
- Several support letters failed to provide addresses or do not live in the area:
 - 3 others claim to be from Ward 5 but do not provide addresses,
 - 2 are from residents of Ward 6,
 - 5 did not provide addresses or claim to be from any particular area of DC or DC at all;
- 6 of the letters merely seem to say that they just don’t like an empty lot;
- 2 cited their support for ZC No. 24-15 due to the homeownership opportunities (Exh. 13 and 2); *[however, there will be none]*
- 5 were conditional based on inclusion of retail.

(b) Inflation of the list of “Updated List of Community Meetings and Presentations” (Exhibit #56).

While this list accurately describes some community meetings, it also includes events when 901 Monroe was *not* discussed, or that were not accessible to all the public. A review of these meetings, chronologically:

- **Sept 4, 2024: Immediate Neighbor Meeting** – this occurred.
- **Sept 25, 2024 6:30pm: SMD 5B04 Neighborhood Meeting** – this was a Single Member District (SMD) meeting led by ANC Commissioner Ra Amin, held at the Brooks Mansion. The agenda only listed 3 agenda items: the first two on a Reed Street PUD and the third on 901 Monroe St. This meeting occurred. However, 901 Monroe Street was *not* discussed. The topic was briefly brought up at the end of the meeting, *after* the meeting’s 8:30pm end time. Neighbors requested

that, since the topic could not be discussed during the scheduled meeting time, it should NOT have been included by the developer for the public record.

- **Oct 7, 2024: Guided walking tour** – this occurred.
- **Oct 16, 2024: ANC-5B meeting** – this meeting occurred, with the 901 Monroe St presentation beginning more than 30 minutes after the meeting's end time. While this may be typical of ANC meetings, I had assumed the meeting ended at 8:30pm, and planned my 2-year old's bedtime for immediately following the meeting. The Q&A on 901 Monroe St did not begin until 9:15pm, 45 minutes after the meeting end time. At the time I voiced that, to enable the community's participation in discussion of 901 Monroe St, it would be important to ensure that future 901 Monroe discussions occur during the designated meeting time.
- **Nov 12, 2024: BNCA meeting** – this meeting occurred, dedicated entirely to 901 Monroe St, with presentations by both the development team and 200-footers (including the preliminary 200-footer survey results).
- **Dec 15, 2024: Menkiti Brookland Trolley Tour** – this was a *ticketed, paid event*, thus not accessible for all neighbors, nor was it advertised as a 901 Monroe Street event.
- **Feb 19, 2025: ANC 5B** – this meeting occurred, with 901 Monroe on the agenda as a “community report.” The developers presented changes that had been made—purportedly based on community feedback, namely better street activation (though the meeting also followed the Commission’s set-down including ZC feedback). The only change overlapping with the 200-footers’ priority concerns was limiting apartment residents’ street-parking access, so as not to overwhelm the already limited on-street parking in the area. The developer also added some live-work units; however, those units were met with skepticism, with concerns that they would not address neighbors’ requests for restaurants, retail, public maker or community organization space activating the street.
- **Apr 8, 2025: ANC 5B04 SMD** – this meeting occurred in-person and was entirely dedicated to 901 Monroe. The meeting focused heavily on discussion of the proposed Lawrence St alley ingress/egress. During that meeting, ANC Commissioner Amin committed to setting up a meeting between DDOT and the 200-footers. Commissioner Amin never followed through on that commitment, and the 200-footers had to request their own meeting with DDOT.
- **April 15, 2025: BNCA** – this meeting occurred in-person and was entirely dedicated to 901 Monroe.
- **May 5, 2025: Community Proffer Conversation** – this featured 10-minute presentations by local non-profits that were proposed to receive financial contributions from the developers. These organizations were selected by ANC Commissioner Ra Amin, without input from the 200-footers about the priority Community Benefits Package items that immediate neighbors had prioritized. When 200-footers raised questions about ZC No. 24-15 generally, they were told that this meeting was not a discussion time for the proposed ZC No. 24-15 PUD.

- **May 13, 2025 ANC 5B DLZU Committee** – this meeting occurred and was entirely dedicated to 901 Monroe.
- **May 21, 2025 ANC 5B** – this meeting occurred, during which the ANC agreed to **conditionally support** ZC No. 24-15. The conditions for the ANC 5B's support *have NOT yet been met*.
- The developers also listed that they had a table at four Monroe Street Farmers Markets across the bridge between Nov 23, 2024 and Apr 19, 2025.

(c) ***Ongoing interactions (or lack thereof) between the developers, our ANC SMD Commissioner and the 200-footers.*** Beyond the engagements described above, on May 6, 2025, I emailed the development team, reaching out on behalf of the 200-footers. Three weeks later, on May 27th, the developer replied to our request for a meeting. On June 9th, the 200-footers hosted three members of the development team on a neighbor's front porch, primarily discussing safety concerns in the alley, the Construction Management Agreement (CMA), and amenities for an improved community benefits package. Beyond the initial September 2024 meeting, this was the only conversation exclusively between the developers and 200-footers, and it was convened at the 200-footers' request.

During the June 9th meeting, 200-footers became concerned that the 901 Monroe team had not given further thought to alley safety, one of the conditions of the ANC-5B's conditional support. In addition, when we discussed an additional condition of the ANC 5B, the CMA, the 901 Monroe team demonstrated clear resistance to using the previous (2012) CMA as a starting point, *even though they had previously communicated their agreement to this condition to members of the ANC 5B Development, Zoning and Land Use Committee (DZLU)*. We are concerned that the Applicant committed to this condition before the ANC DZLU to get its support but with no intent to follow through. The conditions of ANC 5B read: *“The Construction Management Agreement (CMA) should be developed collaboratively between the developer and the affected neighbors. All parties should reach consensus on the agreement, using the previously agreed-upon version (ca 2012) as a starting point and updating it to reflect any significant changes to the construction.”*

During the June 9th meeting, we asked if they could provide a redlined mark-up version of the 2012 CMA, in accordance with the ANC's condition to use that version as a “*starting point and updating it.*” The developers pushed back, indicating that they “think [their] CMA is reasonable and it works.” Many core discrepancies exist between the 2012 version referenced in the ANC's conditions and the developers' current CMA.

In addition to limited engagement by the developers, ANC Commissioner Amin never met exclusively with the 200-footers to better understand our concerns, and

he failed to help us set up a promised meeting with DDOT to discuss 901 Monroe. Instead of acting as an intermediary in public meetings, our ANC Commissioner regularly spoke on behalf of the developers, dismissing neighbors' concerns while he argued in defense of the developers' interests.

The development of a good project often depends a good process. We believe more engagement with the 200-footers by the development team would not only have built trust into this process, it would have created a better project.

I am inspired by Ward 5 Councilman Zachary Parker and his insistence that the new RFK stadium be shaped by input from DC and to the benefit of DC residents and neighbors. When referring to the current deal, he says *"The Council cannot serve as a rubber stamp for whatever deal comes our way. The current deal was negotiated without the input from the Council or neighbors, and it is vital that we shape the future of these 180 acres at RFK together."*

We agree with Councilman Parker. 901 Monroe's 1.4 acres should not be rubber stamped without negotiating and incorporating neighbors' input. We hope to be included so we can work together.