

July 23, 2026

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairman
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: **Support** for Office of Planning's Supplemental Report III recommendations

In Zoning Case No. 25-13 -- Proposed Zoning Text and Map Amendments to create and map - new Wisconsin Avenue Mixed Use zones for Friendship Heights and Tenleytown Metro station areas

Dear Chair Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission:

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. We are a nonprofit organization advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the Washington, DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for the recommendations in the Office of Planning's Supplemental Report III. The data and analysis provided by OP provide a sound rationale for the recommendations for the three questions examined at the request the Zoning Commission.

We have advocated for strengthening the form-based approach to zoning, rather than relying on a discretionary Design Review process. A Design Review process discourages new development due to the added risk of delay and uncertainty associated with a contested case. If the Zoning Commission plans to move forward with the use of Design Review for the new Friendship Heights and Tenleytown Metro zones, we support OP's recommendations, which offer a more appropriate way to encourage quality redevelopment.

Specifically, we support:

1. Large lots of 15,000 SF and above in the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown Metro zones will be subject to Design Review by the Zoning Commission. Below 15,000 SF lot size, projects should be reviewed as matter of right projects. These smaller projects would still be reviewed for compliance with the zones' urban design requirements, but not as a contested case. This approach is consistent with guidance of the Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework. OP's rationale in the Supplemental Report III offers a detailed analysis of lot sizes and potential impacts. We concur with OP's conclusion that 15,000

SF for lots in the two new Metro zones is an appropriate threshold for Design Review, if the Zoning Commission chooses to apply a Design Review requirement.

2. Affordable housing projects are exempt, if they meet high affordability levels -- 33% affordable for very low and extremely low income households, and are affordable for the life of the building. We support this exemption because affordable housing projects are far more sensitive, and less tolerant of the uncertainties created in the development review process. If we are serious about bringing more affordable housing to high opportunity neighborhoods like these ones - where little exists - we must do more to remove barriers. This exemption is a helpful step to lower barriers in the development review process.
3. Historic properties can be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), and do not need a separate Design Review at the Zoning Commission. Appropriate design review can be provided by HPRB, since the project would already be subject to review at HPRB, and subject to the requirements of the zone that the project occurs in. A second review by the Zoning Commission would be largely duplicative.

These recommendations will help advance increased housing, and affordable housing options in this high-opportunity Metro corridor. This rezoning helps implement the Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework and offers the potential for thousands of new homes, and the benefit that comes with that -- attracting new shops, restaurants, and services around two Metro stations in Friendship Heights and Tenleytown, and the Wisconsin Avenue transit corridor. This significant upzoning advances the District's goals to create more housing, and more affordable housing, especially in high opportunity and transit-accessible areas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Cort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Cort

DC and Prince George's Policy Director