

TO: The D.C. Zoning Commission

FROM: Caren Bohan
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TESTIMONY ON STONEBRIDGE PLAN FOR WASHINGTON CLINIC SITE

I am a 7-year resident of the District and I would like to speak in strong support of the Stonebridge plan to develop the Washington Clinic site.

I live in Chevy Chase, D.C., about a 20-minute walk away from the site and my two children have both attended Chevy Chase Plaza Children's Center. Although being a parent at the Center is what initially sparked my involvement in the hearings on this project, it is not the only reason for my support. I think this is a very reasonable proposal that will serve the need for additional housing in the district near public transit.

As far as the childcare component goes, that is one of many reasons I think the this proposal deserves approval. The fact that the childcare center will be a nonprofit run by the Children's Center represents a very important opportunity to expand the options for quality childcare in the District.

A few months after my son was born five years ago, I visited many childcare centers in the district but found none with the kind of warm and caring atmosphere of the Children's Center. We were lucky enough to be on the waiting list only 10 months before getting a space and my son thrived there and my daughter, who is now three, has also had a terrific experience there. When my son started kindergarten in September, I was impressed at how well he adapted to a new full-day school five days a week. He is excelling at things like phonics and early reading. I give a lot of credit to the children's center for helping prepare him for this important step.

I feel very lucky to have had access to such excellent childcare. I know many, many working mothers who are not so lucky and who have been on waiting lists for a long time to try to get their children into a good childcare program.

If the Stonebridge plan goes through, it is unlikely that I personally will benefit from the expanded childcare center as both my children will already be in public school by then. But I would like to see other children benefit from the wonderful atmosphere of the Children's Center.

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Exhibit EXHIBIT NO. 196

Since I live a 20-minute walk away from the proposed development, I will not have to deal with the noise and other issues that accompany new construction and I am sympathetic to the neighbor's concerns. However, I think that the developers have made quite a number of compromises to try to address the issues they have raised.

I also think that it is crucial to look at the long-term and issues such as the environment. I take my daughter to the children's center on the bus or often walk to Friendship Heights with her in the stroller. I'm a big believer in public transportation and I think one of the best ways to encourage its use is to allow and even encourage some higher-density developments near the Metro. This gets cars off the road and ultimately will contribute to a sensible development pattern, as population density is clustered near restaurants, shops and other amenities. This contributes to a more cosmopolitan atmosphere as opposed to the kind of sprawl of Montgomery County and Northern Virginia.

Thank you very much for listening to what I have to say.