



**Chevy Chase**

**Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3/4G**

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 6252 Northwest Station Washington, DC 20015

CHEVY CHASE OFFICE  
5601 Connecticut Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
(202) 363-5803  
FAX (202) 686-4366  
E-mail uppernwdc@juno.com

January 29, 2003

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**  
Zoning Commission for the  
District of Columbia  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Suite 2108  
Washington, DC 20001

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Re: 5401 Western Avenue, NW  
Zoning Commission Case No. 02-17C  
Response to Submittals

Dear Members of the Commission:

As a party to the subject hearing, ANC 3/4G is pleased to submit its response to the January 6<sup>th</sup> submission by Holland & Knight LLP on behalf of Stonebridge Associates. The ANC was unable to meet the January 27<sup>th</sup> due date and, therefore, requests your consideration to waive this submittal into the record.

In a prior submission and in its testimony before the Zoning Commission, ANC 3/4G expressed its concerns regarding a number of issues:

- Precedent setting siting of the proposed high-rise development.
- Increased traffic on Military Road, Western Avenue, and the side streets that traverse our neighborhood.
- Safety of pedestrians across Military Road and Western Avenue.
- The use of Military Road and/or Western Avenue as the route to dispose construction debris and to deliver building materials.

ANC 3/4G has reviewed the Stonebridge submission thoroughly and does not find satisfactory answers to our concerns.

1. **Siting.** The site bounded by Western Avenue and Military Road was zoned R-5-B in 1974 to serve as a transition zone between the high-rise commercial buildings along Wisconsin Avenue and the single family houses to the southeast. If the up-zoning requested by Stonebridge were granted by the Commission, the development will be the tallest building facing Western Avenue. All of the other high-rise buildings in the area face Wisconsin Avenue in conformance with existing zoning. If this up-zoning were granted, it would target Western Avenue for further high-density development. Why would other developers not seize the opportunity to seek up-zoning on other properties facing Western Avenue, or Military Road for that matter? Increasing the zoning in this R-5-B property would be a dangerous step on a slippery slope that could result in a substantial increase in unwanted up-zoning requests in our neighborhood. Just because it is near Metro does not mean that the Stonebridge property or others nearby should be up-

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zoned. We see no rationale to increase the zoning contrary to the Zoning Commission's findings in 1974.

We do not agree with the Stonebridge contention that 1974 zoning should change because it was based on assumptions that are no longer valid. The Metrorail may have relieved some traffic that would otherwise occur. However, the growth in shopping traffic and other traffic-increasing activities on Wisconsin Avenue were also unanticipated. This additional traffic has made the section of Wisconsin Avenue near the site among the congested areas in the District. Anyone who commutes, knows that during morning and evening rush hours, all of the major Friendship Heights and Chevy Chase intersections are backed up, causing delays of at least 5 to 10 minutes.

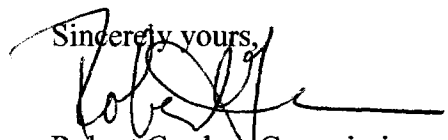
Thus, we believe that up-zoning this property will be precedent setting, is uncalled for and unjustified according to previous planning decisions.

2. **Added traffic.** As discussed above, the traffic at major intersections in the area near the property is already at or near capacity. We have reviewed O.R. George and Associate's report and remain unconvinced that the development will reduce auto traffic in the area. We do not believe the projected drop-off and pickup figures for the daycare center. We believe that a matter-of-right development that conforms to current R-5-B zoning will result in reduced traffic in the neighborhood compared with the higher density building in question. This would be a worthwhile benefit to the neighborhood.

3. **Safety.** ANC 3/4G raised the issue of pedestrian safety crossing Military Road and Western Avenue near the proposed development. We are concerned that vehicle traffic exiting the building and daycare center will threaten pedestrians along Western Avenue and on Military Road at Western. The rebuttal submission did not address our concerns. We believe that these concerns deserve serious scrutiny by the Zoning Commission.

4. **Truck Traffic.** The developer has assured ANC 3/4G on several occasions that construction vehicles would not use Military Road or Western Avenue. How will the developer enforce this promise and ensure that contractors and subcontractors adhere to the restriction? We request that the Commission have this agreement memorialized in writing.

ANC 3/4G thanks the Commission for weighing the seriousness of our concerns in your deliberations.

Sincerely yours,  
  
Robert Gordon, Commissioner  
Spokesperson for ANC 3/4G

cc: Holland & Knight LLC  
Friendship Heights Organization for Responsible Development