

13 May 2014

DC Office of Zoning (DCOZ)  
441 4th St NW #200  
Washington, DC 20001

DC Zoning Officials,

I recently attended the May 8, 2014 DC Zoning hearing regarding development plans for McMillan Reservoir. The Zoning Commission should reject the VMP plans for the following community impact and environmental health reasons:

- **Develop a green, healthy plan.** A representative in support of medical facility building said this development would eliminate health conditions but this exaggeration is clearly not the solution. Prevention is key. Using the McMillan Reservoir as a park with walkable amenities and development that won't bring more traffic into the Bloomingdale neighborhood is the smarter approach. Working with urban sustainable gardens could also provide better produce and diet changes to this urban food desert with a high incident of diabetes and other diseases that can be treated and prevented with better nutrition
- **Protect greenspace air quality benefits.** Demographics are shifting with less DC residents driving and more millennials not getting driver's licenses. It is not responsible to add all those new parking spots and excessive traffic to the area. DDOT noted problems with the current plans as did some Zoning Commissioners but a few bike racks are not enough to prevent diesel buses and hundreds of cars from polluting our Bloomingdale neighborhood. Noise and safety are just two concerns. Air pollution around busy streets has been linked to heart attacks, asthma attacks, loss of IQ points in children and many other detrimental health effects.<sup>i</sup> We will all pay for these health burdens down the road.<sup>ii</sup>

FIGURE 1  
Traffic spreads pollution up to 1500 feet from the roadway



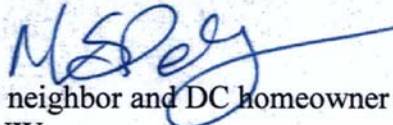
Tailpipe pollution can travel 1500 feet or farther from the roadway. Three pollutant types and their impact range are depicted.

- **Think long-term economics and benefits:** The community, city and economy would grow 10-100 times with a visionary plan that preserves and develops McMillan as a destination public space. The caverns and towers can be preserved in stages just like other city examples like the San Antonio Riverwalk and New York City's High-Line. The benefits from these unique spaces has been shown to increase tax revenues and property values surrounding such revered and considerate development plans that used private-public partnerships to this boldly.

Some solutions worth considering include:

- The use of **Transfer Development Rights (TDR)** to allow McMillan to stay green while developing higher, denser buildings closer to public transit spots like the Shaw/Howard corridor.
- Truly use **Community Benefits Agreements (CBA)** not just the fake community benenefits the VMP plan labeled as such in their submission
- **Work with visionary businesses and developers** like DC's Neighborhood Restaurant Group know and respect in DC. They care about proper community development and even support the Arcadian Sustainable Farming group in Virginia. This would be the ideal approach to developing McMillan, including the possibility of an urban farm to help public health, compared to a harm-and-treat-disease approach in the VMP plan (bringing traffic and losing green buffering = more harm to health).

PLEASE think visionary. **Develop a strong public space and surround it with smart private development.** Reject this VMP plan. It does nothing but destroy a truly valuable asset in our community and city. Let's develop smart, not stupid.

Respectfully,  
  
 Mel Peffers  
 Bloomingdale neighbor and DC homeowner  
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 Washington, DC 20001

<sup>i</sup> <http://pubs.healtheffects.org/view.php?id=334>

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/6117\\_AllChokedUp\\_NYCTrafficandHealthReport.pdf](http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/6117_AllChokedUp_NYCTrafficandHealthReport.pdf)