

Case #13-14 (Vision McMillan Partners LLC and the District of Columbia—First Stage and Consolidated PUD and Related Map Amendment at 2501 First Street, NW (Square 3128, Lot 800)).

Testimony of Christopher Chambers, Ward 1 resident



Chairman Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission

I am a DC native and long time resident of Ward 1. Our house is a five minute walk from the McMillan Sand Filtration Site as well as both Washington Hospital Center and Children's Hospital. So though we are not in Ward 5, we are literally right across the street.

Therefore, I and my neighbors have been watching this project with great interest; we have done our research on the District's Comprehensive Plan and the history of the site for water treatment, as well as confirmed the fact that the city bought this site for mixed use development. We have also consulted Ward 5 friends and neighbors, looked into the qualifications of the design team lead by VMP, and even talked to some of our own doctors and other health professionals casually about how expanding to the space can better serve us.

From all of this information it clear at least on the Ward 1 border which we share that this project needs to stop being held up, in perpetual and embarrassing fallow land and disrepair, and move forward immediately. We know this was always intended as a mixed use development. We know that it has much more open and park space than buildings, and that those buildings will incubate jobs, especially in a hot healthcare sector. We know that the height of those buildings is nothing that will destroy the neighborhood, especially since two giant world class hospitals are already there, and are bursting at the seams right before our eyes. We know that in addition to jobs, there will be new housing, and thus the addition of hundreds of new neighbors, new friends, new children. We know many of these people will have access to housing well under the market rate, thus it will be good for the elderly, families, or young people starting out.

We do NOT know how any of this is a bad thing, especially when the open space will be a park and include a community center. Taken with the vast open space and forested area in the Armed Forces Retirement Home which is slowly opening to families as it did before the ruinous riots of the 1960s, this area will be a crowning jewel of our neighborhood and the Nations Capital. Not Georgetown or downtown or H street, but our Ward 1 and Ward 5 border.

As a boy I thought those crumbling towers were castles. Then, as a young man and now as a middle aged man, I've often wondered what that site would look like with homes, trees, a store—all in that shape. And as a taxpayer, voter and property owner, I do NOT want to be an old man

and still see that site fenced off, crumbling, and useless. Because it's either that, or the jewel we
in Ward 1, would like to see.