

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission. I am writing in opposition to the proposed change in zoning. There is an appropriate plan for this multi-property lot, but this is not it.

I want to start by saying that I strongly support redevelopment in the district, and I thank all that this Commission and its predecessors have done to make that happen. My wife and I moved to Seaton St. in the summer of 2021 to take advantage of all this wonderful city has to offer. In the mid 80s, I lived at 19th and Kalorama and then relocated with my then future wife to 901 6th St., SW, before leaving this area for a number of years, so I know how transformed the city is and the role that redevelopment has played in that process.

After listening to the first hearing, it is clear that Commission sees the numerous flaws in the current proposal. The testimony offered in support was disingenuous, and that's without even going into the utter absence of thought to the temporary relocation of the existing police and fire stations.

The representations about the appropriateness of the building for this lot are not supported by a simple walk through the neighborhood. As one of the commissioners pointed out, this building would be an island. Furthermore, the testimony in support offered a number of supposed features and benefits, yet a number of problems about those alleged benefits became apparent. First, the claims are a laundry list of possible advantages that are not at all compatible with one another. More importantly, when pressed on the inconsistencies, opponents were largely unable to challenge them, since we were told that the hearing is not about any particular proposal but is only to change the zoning.

If this hearing is only to change the zoning, then it is imperative that the Commission not take for granted that any of the possible advantages will manifest themselves in a future building. You must use the zoning decision to constrain any future concrete proposals for the site, so that we get a building proposal for the site that is appropriate for it when one is forthcoming. Accordingly, I ask the Commission to please make these appropriate modifications in whatever way possible:

1. THE MAJORITY OF THE FACADE OF ANY HIGH RISE BUILDING BUILT SHOULD BE FACING U STREET. SPLIT THE PROPOSED LOT IN TWO, WITH THE HIGH RISE BUILDING ZONE COVERING THE LOT SOUTH OF SEATON STREET AND LEAVE THE EXISTING ZONE INTACT FOR THE REST OF THE LOT.

A setback from V and 17th, those narrow, one lane streets, is irrelevant. A single example of a setback on M Street that may have some features like the one proposed is not helpful. It is still inconsistent with this neighborhood. Large buildings on 16th street are farther back from that major road than what is offered for these narrow streets. A redevelopment that is appropriate for U street should be on U Street. End of story. I implore the Commission to ensure that this is the case.

Split zoning for the site is clearly required to ensure that what is built will fit the neighborhood it sits in. If the proponents came forward with a zoning proposal along these lines and were planning to redevelop the entirety of the lot under those rules, it is reasonable to think that the development would already be in progress and would be supported by me and the vast majority of my neighbors. It would also make sense and would be an appropriate way to contribute to the positive evolution of our city. That they are now proposing setbacks that were not part of the original proposals is a clear acknowledgement that what is enabled by the current proposal makes no sense.

During the hearing, the notion of split zoning was proposed, and the only basis for the response on why not was because split zoning was harder to work with. That is not an appropriate rationale, and there is no reason to have faith that a future development on the site will have appropriate modifications. Accordingly, the Commission should split the lot in two to ensure that any future concrete proposal for the site is appropriate for the site.

Now let's move on to the appropriate height for a building on U street. I made this point in my submission to the first hearing on this proposal back in June. When I stand on the balconies of my townhome on Seaton and look around, there is only one building that I can see in all directions that is the height of the what could be built with this rezoning. That building is the Washington Hilton, which does not sit in the middle of a low rise neighborhood. A building the size of the Washington Hilton does not belong on U street. Even the high rise apartments on 16th,

between U and Florida are less than 10 stories. The 14th street corridor does not have buildings that height.

The testimony at the first hearing made clear that no impact for the neighborhood was done. The small townhomes on V would likely end up with no direct sunlight any more for much, if not all of the year. This island would cast a literal and figurative shadow over the adjoining neighborhood.

Where do such buildings exist? One of the things we love to do is bike around the city. Washington is an amazing town for cycling. We ride all over the place, out the Capital Crescent trail, out Beach Drive, along the mall and down to Haines Point, down Pennsylvania Avenue, over to Anacostia, and out the Metropolitan Branch trail all the way out to Fort Totten. Where are the places where I see the kind of 10 story buildings that could exist on this lot? They exist in place like along South Capital Street, near Nats Park, along 395/695, and down in Navy Yard. I love biking down to the Navy Yard, where we stop and relax at an outdoor table and grab lunch and a beer. The buildings in that area make sense in that area. **THERE IS NO REASON TO ZONE THIS LOT FOR A BUILDING THE SIZE OF SOMETHING THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE AREAS SOUTH OF 395/695.** This means

2. ANY UPZONE FOR THE U STREET PART OF THE LOT SHOULD BE LESS THAN 10 STORIES AND BE RIGHT SIZED FOR THAT LOCATION

10 stories is too high. It should not be enable by the Commission simply because it is permissible under the plan, which is the rationale that was offered in support.

It abundantly clear that a 6 story building is consistent with development in the area, particularly with any penthouse overage. Moreover, those additional stories would only work if the building is of that height only on the lot south of Seaton St and is built to enhance the ambience of that location.

I urge the Commission to reject the current re-zoning proposal and allow only what makes sense for this location. The proponents for the MU 10 designation have put forward a proposal that is completely inappropriate. They made no effort to reach out to anyone in the area, did "outreach" only in reaction to opposition, and then claim that the details they offer cannot be challenged as there is no concrete proposal before the Commission. The "benefits" offered are not consistent.

You are the current stewards for the essential mission of building on the vibrancy of the city to create rich neighborhoods, so they can continue to help us relish this city and all it has to offer. I implore you to act upon the many flaws that you clearly perceive and exercise the power you have in a reasoned and measured manner to ensure a fair outcome.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bill Garber