

Dear Planning Board Members,

I am writing this letter in support of the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application for 5500 Wisconsin Avenue in Chevy Chase. There have been many discussions and modifications to the original plan to satisfy the County, Friendship Heights Village Council, concerns of residents, and town hall meetings.

Below I outline several reasons.

- As noted, the developer has worked to incorporate all the input and modifications possible in collaboration with various entities. To not add to the concern of having Wisconsin Ave. be canyonlike, the residential portion of the building has been moved and there have been modifications to the loading dock portion of the site. This will relieve contention on South Park Ave.
- To address concerns about drivers using the shared street as a cut through, this has been converted to one-way only. As this will also be the point of vehicle entry to the building, this also adds to pedestrian safety and maintains the walk-ability aspect of the neighborhood that many residents have been concerned about. This is especially important given the increasing dining experiences on Wisconsin Ave and potential for increased pedestrian traffic.
- The work on the DC side of Wisconsin Ave has started, a plan to have considered flow across the general corridor is important. Most people will not care if they are on the Maryland or the DC side of the Friendship Heights area. All businesses will thrive – and will provide benefit to the number of parking establishments in the area too.
- The plans integrate well with properties in the area – especially The Collection just across the street.
- My balcony at the Elizabeth will look out directly on the site – currently I can see the Tiffany's. It will be nice to have something that is not just another brick building, represents a piece of architectural art, and reflects based on the exterior, ambient lighting, clouds, etc.
- I think it is safe to say that the development of City Ridge has been well done – and this is the same development team.

I am writing this as a private citizen and owner of a unit at 4601 N Park Ave. I am currently President of the Board at that address (The Elizabeth) and serve as the Chair of the Village of Friendship Heights Community Advisory Committee, where we recently completed a report and recommendations on reinforcing Identity for the Village. When I purchased several years ago it was on the promise of development and expanded retail and entertainment venues – lets continue the progress which I believe will increase the area's vitality, attract new residents, and raise the values of owners.

Sincerely,



Joseph V Bucherer
4601 N. Park Ave #1715
Chevy Chase, MD. 20815
856-986-8107

jbucherer@gmail.com

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Pat Donovan <pdonovan43@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 1:19 PM
To: mpc-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: Bartley, Shawn; Hedrick, James; Pedoeem, Mitra; Piñero, Roberto; Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; tanya.stern@mountgomeryplanning.org
Subject: 5500 Wisconsin in Friendship Heights

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

I am a resident of Friendship Heights in Chevy Chase. When I moved into my condo in 2008, Friendship Heights had a vibrant commercial area; indeed, it was one of the reasons I moved here. Sadly, those days are over. Friendship Heights has become a dead zone commercially.

I have been heartened by the plans to develop 5500 Wisconsin Avenue and I understand the Planning Board is considering the developers' Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application, following the Planning Board's unanimous support of the Sketch Plan last year.

If Friendship Heights is to thrive again, it needs new residents with a broader demographic profile, which I believe a new rental building can address, and a new approach to retail. I like the design of the building, especially the setback and the plans for inviting seating areas and cafes at various points around it, the fact that it would offer both small and large units, and the idea of "locally sourced" retail, which may have a greater likelihood of success than many of the establishments that have gone out of business in recent years.

The Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan show further improvements from the initial Sketch Plan. I was very disappointed when the Village Council opposed the Sketch Plan, as they were not representing the many Village residents who supported this redevelopment. Since the Planning Board's support of the initial Sketch Plan, the developer has worked to address the Village Council's concerns. Thankfully, the Village Council is now supporting the 5500 Wisconsin redevelopment, due to changes made by the developer.

Among those changes are the relocation of the entrance to the building to the new shared street, maintaining the maximum height of 18-stories and decreasing the number of apartments.

I have loved living in Friendship Heights for the past 15 years. I believe the addition of 5500 Wisconsin will inject new vitality into the community. I hope the Planning Board will support the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan.

Sincerely,
Pat Donovan
4620 North Park Avenue, #607W
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-986-8455

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Dan Dozier <DDozier@pressdozierlaw.com>
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 11:47 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Stern, Tanya
Subject: 2200 Wisconsin Avenue Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan approvals

Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Dear Chair Zyontz and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board and staff:

Pasted below is my letter to the Board about approval of the Sketch Plan Amendment and the Site Plans for the redevelopment of a property located in my neighborhood at 5500 Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and particularly for your services on behalf of the residents of Montgomery County.

Best regards,

Dan Dozier

Daniel Preston Dozier
4550 N. Park Avenue, #501
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
301-654-8846 (home)
301-922-2704 (cell)
He/Him

March 10, 2023

Dear Chair Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board:

I write to support the redevelopment Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application as submitted by the developer of 5500 Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights. This letter expresses my views.

My wife and I currently own a condominium in the Village of Friendship Heights, where, as seniors we moved during the late summer of 2019. We previously owned and lived in a single-family home located nearby. I know the surrounding communities well and was an active member of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) for many years.

Based on discussions with my Friendship Heights friends and neighbors, many others living here share my opinion that commercial and housing real estate in Friendship Heights – both DC and Maryland – needs more and better retail, restaurant, and housing options.

Friendship Heights – in both DC and Maryland – has suffered economically; as many retail shops and restaurants have closed. The changes in population demographics and the long- and short-term changes in retail have had a major impact on the Village of Friendship Heights and indeed all the Friendship Heights area. Friendship Heights has lost a competitive edge in both retail and housing markets, resulting in a declining neighborhood and fewer thriving retail, restaurants, and housing options. Our community is not appealing to younger shoppers and potential residents.

I see this change in my own family; our three children all live in downtowns (D.C., Chicago, and Seattle). All looked for housing located where they can walk, bike, or ride public transportation to work, eat, and shop. Along with many of their peers, they often favor eating out over cooking at home. Also, as with their peers, they have concluded that owning cars is a burden and expense, unlike my generation, which saw cars as freedom.

In the past decade or so I understand that the median market value of Village condos has been flat or slightly declining. Even prior to the Covid pandemic local businesses were in decline and several anchor stores have closed. Many restaurants have closed. And, importantly no new housing, especially affordable housing units, have been opened. Montgomery County, the Friendship Heights area, and the Village of Friendship Heights specifically, have a long history of racial segregation. Largely white, affluent homeowners have actively objected to almost any form of new residential housing from luxury townhouses to low-income apartments to tiny homes — and even affordable housing for seniors. And these protests have often been successful.

Already, the delay in the construction of the Project has damaged the interests of potential new residents seeking market rate or affordable Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (“MPDU”) housing in Friendship Heights. The Village of Friendship Heights currently has no MPDU units or other designated affordable housing. The Project will provide about 380 new units of housing, of which 15% will be affordable under County guidelines. Up to approximately fifty-seven (57) new MPDUs in the Village, where currently there are none, will have a significant impact and will increase the demographic, age, and racial diversity of residents in the Village.

Delay damages the interests of Village residents who look to benefit from new commercial development and increase in local property values. This delay of the Project has prejudiced residents of the Village and others living nearby. Living near a vacant or nearly vacant commercial building, as is 5500 Wisconsin Avenue, has an adverse effect on residents’ quality of life and property values. Vacant buildings contribute to reduced pedestrian traffic, especially during the evening and night. Deserted sidewalks, even when well-lit are unattractive and over

time attract crime and become unsafe. This reduces property values and increases the risk of crime, vandalism, and blight.

The 5500 Wisconsin Ave. Project has the potential to meet many neighborhood needs, particularly reducing historic past segregation efforts and, I believe, increasing the economic and racial diversity of our neighborhood. Similar projects (mixed-use redevelopment and affordable housing units) are beginning to occur on the D.C. side of Friendship Heights; the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project and hopefully others will do so on the Maryland side.

The Project serves a critical Montgomery County need: multi-family housing in areas where public transportation and other services are already available. A new rental building with affordable units and with apartments ranging from studios to three-bedroom units will provide necessary competition for owners of older rental buildings which will lead to better maintenance and services and amenities.

The developer has engaged in a dialogue with the Village Council, particularly after the litigation initiated by the Village was dismissed by the Court. This has resulted in modifications to the original plan that includes moving the apartment building entrance to the “new shared street.” The “new shared street” is designed to safely accommodate pedestrians and one-way vehicle flow. The 18-story height is like many of the condominium and apartment buildings in Friendship Heights. Happily, the Village Council now supports this project, including the height, street design, and parking. Many neighbors have supported the goals and overall design of the project since the Sketch plan was submitted to the Planning Board for approval.

Friendship Heights has the transportation and urbanity to become a very attractive community again *if* the commercial sector – shopping and restaurants – returns us to the vibrant and active commercial uses and community of our recent past.

Thank you for everything you and your staff do on behalf of the residents of Montgomery County.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Preston Dozier
4550 N. Park Avenue, #501
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-654-8846
dozier.dan@gmail.com

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: nancy peavy <nancypeavy@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 5:42 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bartley, Shawn; Hedrick, James; Piñero, Roberto; Pedoeem, Mitra; Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan
Subject: 5500 Wisconsin
Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Dear Chairman Zyontz,

We are residents of Friendship Heights in Chevy Chase. We moved here from Bethesda in 2002. When we moved here, it was an exciting place to live. My husband had retired by then and I continued to work, taking the subway downtown, while he enjoyed the grocery chains, the quick but good restaurants and the huge variety of retail options.

We are so sad that this is no longer Friendship Heights. Thus we were very pleased to hear about the plans for the 5500 Wisconsin development. The Planning Board unanimously approved the Sketch Plan last year, and we wanted you to know that we and a great many other residents are excited about revitalization. You may know that the Friendship Heights Village Council opposed the Sketch Plan last year, but thanks to the hard work of the developer and their willingness to make further changes, the Village Council now supports the plan.

We are pleased that the new building will have a variety of apartment sizes and costs, bringing in a new population, which is the only hope for our success. We have great hope that your appreciation of the need for changes in our community will help

you approve the Sketch Plan Amendment and the Site Plan application.

We thank you for your consistent concern about making Montgomery County a vibrant, successful County.

Nancy and Bob Peavy
4620 North Park Ave. 206W
Chevy Chase, Md. 20815
301-986-8778
202 549-5005 (cell)

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Sandie Preiss <spreiss@apogeecs1.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 5:37 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bartley, Shawn; Hedrick, James; Pedoeem, Mitra; Piñero, Roberto; Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Stern, Tanya
Subject: 5500 Wisconsin Ave
Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Dear Chairman Zyontz,

I am writing as a Village of Friendship Heights homeowner to ask that the Planning Board approve the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application for the redevelopment of 5500 Wisconsin Avenue. This proposal will give Friendship Heights the boost that it needs to enhance the viability and attractiveness of our neighborhood.

Friendship Heights has seen a dramatic increase in shuttered restaurants and shops over the past few years – an unfortunate trend that actually predates the pandemic. We need strategies that will make our community commercially viable so we can attract the kinds of retail and dining that serve our residents. The addition of a new, amenity-rich apartment community with locally serving shops and cafés will help get us there.

There are additional aspects of this proposal that make it a good fit for Friendship Heights. It adds much-needed Moderately Priced Dwelling Units to our community, something that has been missing for years. MPDUs will help attract younger professionals that can add energy to our community and attract retailers who cater to this demographic.

The Application modifies the design of the building to accommodate feedback from the community and Planning Board staff while maintaining the atmosphere of the Village. The 18-story height is similar to many high-rises in the neighborhood. Moreover, the developer has sited the building in such a way to avoid casting shadows on Humphrey Park, while making the streetscape on The Hills Plaza, South Park and Wisconsin Avenues much more attractive than it is today.

I'm also excited about the building's architecture. It's creative, airy and will help convey the image of Friendship Heights as an exciting place to live.

The developer has worked well with the Friendship Heights Village Council and gained the Village Council's support of the project. To address traffic concerns, the developer has moved the pedestrian building entrance from South Park Avenue to the shared street. This new shared street that accommodates off-street loading, unloading, rideshare pickup and garbage collection activity will minimize the traffic impact.

There is much to recommend the redevelopment of 5500 Wisconsin. I respectfully ask that you approve the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application.

Sincerely,

Sandie Preiss. 301-913-5415

4620 North Park Ave. Apt 306w

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Clara Lovett <clara0804@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 11:01 AM
To: Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Stern, Tanya
Subject: Fwd: Development project at 5500 Wisconsin Avenue, Friendship Heights

Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Clara Lovett** <clara0804@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 9, 2023 at 10:54 AM
Subject: Development project at 5500 Wisconsin Avenue, Friendship Heights
To: <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Message for Chairman Jeffrey Zyontz

I write to urge the Planning Board to approve the site plan for the above mentioned redevelopment project. I have owned a condo apartment in the Village of Friendship Heights since 2003 and have lived in the Village full-time since 2012.

On September 24, 2021 I wrote to the Planning Board in support of this much needed redevelopment project in an area that needs to offer additional housing units and to revitalize its nearly defunct retail/commercial sector. On November 18, 2021 I testified to this effect before the Planning Board.

It is unfortunate that the traditionally anti-development governing Council of my community chose to file suit against the Planning Board after the Board gave approval (with several conditions) to the sketch plan. It is time to get on with the project and, if possible, to make up for lost time.

I note that several redevelopment projects are underway on the DC side of Western Avenue. Montgomery County needs to do its part to address the housing shortage, especially the shortage of rental apartments, and to recoup the loss of revenue from business activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Clara M. Lovett
4550 North Park Avenue, Apt. 508
Chevy Chase MD 20815
301 408 8017

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: richard gross <rbgrossmd@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 10:10 AM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bogdan, Grace; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Stern, Tanya
Subject: 5500 Wisconsin Ave

Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Chair Zyontz,

Please support the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan Application to redevelop 5500 Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights.

I am a relatively new resident of Friendship Heights, having purchased my condo at 4620 North Park about five years ago. I'm also a real estate agent so I have the perspective of a newcomer, as well as someone who understands what drives the real estate market.

I moved to Friendship Heights in the hopes that this would be a vibrant, energetic place to live with plenty of retail, restaurants and amenities within walking distance. Unfortunately, our community has become quite stagnant, with multifamily buildings showing their age and little to no new housing in our future. This unfortunate lack of vibrancy brings with it shuttered stores, restaurants and block after block of empty store windows.

That's why we need to move forward with the new apartment building at 5500 Wisconsin Avenue. It's vital that we create an environment that draws new people to our community. A new building featuring up-to-date amenities and including 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units will attract new (and hopefully younger) residents to the neighborhood. The building design will add an air of sophistication to Friendship Heights that has been lacking. The end result will hopefully be an increase in consumers and an environment that will be attractive to neighborhood-serving stores and restaurants.

The streetscape surrounding this proposed new building, particularly on the Hills Plaza is in dire need of improvement, as it looks more like an unattractive service road than something enjoyable to walk on. I was very happy to see the applicant's plans for improvements there, as well as on South Park and Wisconsin Avenues.

The amended Sketch Plan shows the changes the developer made in response to the Friendship Heights Village Council's initial opposition, to the extent that the Council has now joined Village residents in supporting the redevelopment.

These are just a sampling of the reasons that the Planning Board should approve the 5500 Wisconsin redevelopment application.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Richard Gross

4620 North Park Ave. Apt. 1002W

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Cell: 410-913-7757

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Noel Mccaman <nmccaman@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:49 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bartley, Shawn; Hedrick, James; Piñero, Roberto; Hisel-McCoy, Elza; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Stern, Tanya; Pedoeem, Mitra; Bogdan, Grace; Dickel, Stephanie
Subject: Letter Supporting Development Of 5500 Wisconsin Avenue
Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Dear Chair Zyontz,

Twenty-plus years ago, my husband and I lived in Logan Circle, DC. I would frequently drive to Chevy Chase to shop at its four department stores and the other shops that dotted the area. When we retired and decided to move from our four-story, vertical living, townhouse, we chose a condominium in Chevy Chase with its many restaurants, medical offices, and overall great shopping--all within walking distance.

We have been living in Chevy Chase for over 14 years and, unfortunately, watched it change from a vibrant retail and restaurant hub to an area with many closed-up retail spaces, many great stores having left, and far fewer restaurants. In addition to losing those smaller businesses half of the remaining department stores are gone.

We attended a detailed presentation on the redevelopment plans for 5500 Wisconsin Avenue, and the plans appeared to us to be a good start at trying to revitalize our neighborhood. Now, we are especially pleased that the Village Council is supporting the redevelopment proposal.

The proposed architectural set-back and cap on the height of the building, the creative way they are proposing to handle new-resident parking, deliveries and move-ins and move-outs, and the prospect of more retail and restaurants look great to us. In addition, we feel the new building will enhance diversity in our neighborhood with additional younger residents and with much needed moderate priced housing.

We look forward to this exciting opportunity to revitalize the Friendship Heights neighborhood and hope that the Planning Board will support the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application for 5500 Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Pryor and Noel McCaman
The Carleton Condominium of Chevy Chase
4550 N. Park Avenue, Apt # 713
Chevy Chase, Md 20815

Morris Antonelli, D.D.S.
4620 North Park Ave., 906W
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

March 13, 2023

Mr. Jeff Zyontz
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

I live at 4620 North Park in Friendship Heights and am writing to express my strong support for the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application to redevelop 5500 Wisconsin Avenue, and to ask that the Planning Board support it as well. The site is in need of redevelopment with an infusion of desirable shops and cafes, along with new neighbors.

Friendship Heights has been faltering in recent years, accelerated by the COVID crisis. We have lost a good number of stores and restaurants, in part because so many of our residents – like me – are older and don't patronize the shops on a regular basis. I view the 5500 Wisconsin redevelopment as an important step to bringing our Village back to the vibrant community it once was.

The proposal is consistent with the Friendship Heights Sector Plan. The apartment building is consistent with the County's approach to smart growth, building density where it belongs - near our Metro station and bus transit center.

The proposed 18-story maximum height is entirely appropriate since the building is located directly on Wisconsin Avenue and away from the Village. The step back design will give architectural interest. The fact that the apartments will be rentals makes them attractive to younger professionals, which will give us the energy we need to bring our Village back to life. Even better, members of the younger generation tend to rely less on cars, purchasing them at much lower rates than prior generations. They rely more on ride-share and transit. So, while the new building will have an underground garage for parking, this doesn't necessarily translate into creating undue traffic problems.

The area along South Park and Wisconsin Avenues is in need of improvement, not just in terms of bringing back retail but also to make the sidewalks more attractive. The applicant's plans will make that happen.

I want to recognize the Donohoe/Carr team for working with the Friendship Heights Village Council to address its concerns about 5500 Wisconsin. Because the applicant has made several changes, such as moving the pedestrian entrance to the shared street and adding spaces on the shared street for ride-share and delivery vehicles, the Village Council now supports the application.

The plans for 5500 Wisconsin are just what we need. Please support the Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan application for 5500 Wisconsin Avenue.

Thank you for all that you do for Montgomery County.

Sincerely,



Morris Antonelli, D.D.S

cc: Tanya Stern
Grace Bogdan
Stephanie Dickel

Tsaiquan Gatling
✓ Elza Hisel-McCoy

Gatling, Tsaiquan

From: Nila Vehar <nilavehar@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:00 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Bartley, Shawn; Hedrick, James; Pedoeem, Mitra; eiza.hisel-mccoy@montgomeryplanning.org; Dickel, Stephanie; Gatling, Tsaiquan; Bogdan, Grace; Stern, Tanya; Piñero, Roberto
Subject: 5500 Wisconsin Avenue Amended Sketch Plan and Site Plan
Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

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Dear Chair Zyontz,

I remain supportive of the proposed Sketch Plan Amendment and Site Plan Application for 5520-5500 Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights. This block of Wisconsin Avenue is long overdue for an update and revitalization. The proposed project is forward looking. It will add value to the quality of life in our community. I was already supportive of the proposal, but am even more so, now that I have seen the exciting architectural design of the building. The plan includes moderately priced dwelling units, offering affordable housing, a welcome first for Friendship Heights.

I have lived in Friendship Heights since 1995. It's a welcoming place to live, yet we are stagnant in planning to meet future needs. This is a plan that will address unmet needs in retail, eating establishments and housing. The property will be attractive and welcoming.

The Donohoe and Carr Companies have engaged with the public, listening to and addressing pros and cons of this project. Their proposed plan incorporates many of the suggestions from Friendship Heights residents. The developers have agreed to many changes that were recommended through community outreach and meetings with the community. The Village Council is now supporting this development, a welcome change from their initial opposition.

I urge the Planning Board to support this plan. It is a thorough and thoughtful one. It will make our wonderful community even more vibrant and diverse. In my view, it is short sighted to oppose this development, especially when our neighborhood is behind the curve In encouraging new development that will refresh Friendship Heights.

Many of my neighbors are supportive of this plan. We are grateful to the Donohoe and Carr Companies for their prompt attention in responding to residents' concerns and ideas.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nila Vehar
4620 North Park Avenue 1602 W
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 654-3969
Cell (703) 609-5007

From: [Carrie Kisicki](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Bogdan, Grace](#); [Hisel-McCoy, Elza](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#); [Gatling, Tsaiquan](#); [Stern, Tanya](#)
Subject: RE: Support for Site Plan Application to redevelop a portion of the 5500 block of Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights.
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 4:57:50 PM

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Good afternoon,

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

Best,
Carrie Kisicki
726 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Cell: 224-522-2040

March 24, 2023

Mr. Jeff Zyontz
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902
Via email: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

RE: Support for Site Plan Application to redevelop a portion of the 5500 block of Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights.

Dear Chair Zyontz:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for the Site Plan Application to redevelop a portion of the 5500 block of Wisconsin Avenue in Friendship Heights.

This proposal for a new multi-family apartment community addresses a critical need in Montgomery County. With the county projected to grow by 60,000 households by 2040, providing more housing close to high-frequency transit is essential for the county to thrive as a sustainable, equitable, and economically-competitive community, accommodating expected growth while minimizing driving and generating the tax revenues necessary to maintain high-quality services. We wish to note a number of specific reasons why we support this

application:

- The proposal is consistent with the core tenets of smart growth. It places density where it belongs – just ¼ mile from the Friendship Heights Metro and bus station, minimizing combined housing and transportation costs, providing walkable access to nearby services, and maximizing non-auto travel, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The proposed shared street - or Woonerf - will significantly enhance the walkability of the community by breaking up a superblock and inserting an attractive, pedestrian friendly connection from Wisconsin Avenue to Hubert Humphrey Park. The applicant's plans to improve the streetscape on the Hills Plaza, South Park Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue will further add to the area's walkability.
- The proposal addresses our housing shortage by adding up to 300 new apartments. Additionally, it addresses our affordable housing shortage by bringing Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) to Friendship Heights. No affordable housing exists in the Village of Friendship Heights, which hurts its ability to attract young professionals, and provide access to opportunity for families that are seeking to climb the economic ladder. Fifteen percent of the 300 units (up to 45) will be MPDUs.
- The design of the new building is compatible with its surroundings. The 18-story maximum height is entirely appropriate for Friendship Heights, where the heights of the existing multi-family buildings go up to 21 stories. The applicant changed the original design of the building to create a stepped-back design, based on Village Council and community comments.

Overall, for the reasons listed above, the Coalition for Smarter Growth respectfully encourages the Planning Board to approve the Site Plan application for 5500 Wisconsin Avenue.

Sincerely,
Carrie Kisicki
Montgomery Advocacy Manager
Coalition for Smarter Growth

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Carrie Kisicki | Montgomery Advocacy Manager

Coalition for Smarter Growth

carrie@smartergrowth.net | calendly.com/carrie-csg

www.smartergrowth.net | [@betterDCregion](https://twitter.com/betterDCregion)

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