MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

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PUBLIC HEARING: TAKOMA PARK MINOR MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

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THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

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The Montgomery County Planning Board met at 2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, Maryland and via Video-Teleconference, at 6:26 p.m., Artie Harris, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT
ARTIE HARRIS, Chair
MITRA PEDOEEM, Vice Chair
JAMES HEDRICK, Commissioner
JOSH LINDEN, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT MELISSA WILLIAMS, Planner III, Downcounty Planning

This transcript was produced from audio provided by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (6:26 p.m.)

CHATR HARRIS: Welcome and good evening. My name is Artie Harris. I'm the Chair of the Planning Board. We have four planning board members serving tonight besides There is Vice Chair Pedoeem. myself. James Hedrick to her left, and there's Josh Linden to my right. So welcome here. Welcome to Takoma Park Municipal Center. So tonight we focusing on the public hearing for master plan item Takoma Park Minor Master Plan So thank you very much. Amendment. This is just for public testimony tonight. No one has asked, I believe, for any translations but -to help with translations. But we do, if someone needs help, we have a French, Amharic, and Spanish to help if anyone needs that assistance.

So of the board members, from time to time, some may leave, but they're only in the back and they're -- it's on -- there's a

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television in the back or -- that's projecting this. So if a board member is not here, they are also listening in the back. So just wanted to let you know that.

So we'll start tonight. The project manager for this minor master plan is Melissa Williams. She'll make a brief announcement, and then we'll get going with testimony. We'll bring up five at a time and then we'll start from there. We'll do first in person. Well, based on this list is mostly -- we'll start the in person, and then we'll go to Takoma Park. So thank you so much for coming. We really, really want to hear your testimony. Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. And thank you,
Chair. For the record, my name is Melissa
Williams, and I'm the Lead Planner for the
Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment. I'm
with the Montgomery County Planning Department
Downcounty Planning Division. This public
hearing for the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan
Amendment was advertised in the Washington

Times on June 26th, 2023 and duly notified via
hard copy and/or electronic formats on or
before June 30th to the city of Takoma Park,
the Takoma Park City Council, Montgomery County
Council, Montgomery County Executive,
Montgomery County Planning Board, applicable
Montgomery County Departments and other public
agencies, public libraries near the plan area,
the residential neighborhood, community
organizations, homeowners associations, and
other interested parties. The public hearing
is an opportunity for the Montgomery County
Planning Board to receive testimony on the
public hearing draft of the Takoma Park Minor
Master Plan Amendment. The Planning Board will
continue to take public comments on the draft
plan until September 30th. And there will be a
series of Planning Board work sessions
beginning October 19th to incorporate public
comments and review and revise the draft plan.
The Takoma Park Minor Master Plan
Amendment Public Hearing Draft is an amendment

to a portion of the 2000 Takoma Park Master Thrive Montgomery 2050, the county's general plan, the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan as amended. the 2018 Technical Update to the Master Plan of Highways and Transit Ways as amended, the 2018 Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan amended, and the Master Plan of Historic Preservation as amended. I'd like to enter into the public record the following documents: the 2000 Takoma Park Minor -- I'm sorry, 2000 Thrive Montgomery Takoma Park Master Plan, 2050, the county's general plan, the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan as amended, the 2018 technical update to the Master Plan of Highways and Transit Ways as amended, the 2018 Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan, and the Master Plan of Historic Preservation as amended.

The following supporting studies and reports are also entered into the public record: the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan

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Amendment Community Engagement Update Report, the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment, Existing Conditions Report Presentation, and the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment Appendix. All of these documents, as well as other meeting materials and recordings, are available via the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment project website, which is located at montgomeryplanning.org/tpmma.

I am also entering into the public the following documents, which attached to the agenda report for this meeting item: we have Resolution 202316 from the Takoma Park City Council recommending support of the Planning Board designation of the public hearing draft of the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment, а letter transmitting public hearing draft to the County Council President Evan Glass dated June 26th, a letter transmitting the public hearing draft plan to the County Executive Marc Elrich dated June 26th, a letter transmitting the public hearing

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draft plan to the Mayor of Takoma Park, Talisha Searcy, dated June 26th, and all of these are June 26th, 2023, and a proof of publication from the Washington Times Newspaper ad in the papers June 26th, 2023 issue. I'd also add that the staff supports the Takoma Park City Council request that the public record remain open until September 30th, 2023, at the close of business. And that completes my statement for the record.

CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. Thank you very much. So we'll have the first five speakers come up to the table, please. Mayor Talisha Searcy, David Reed, if he's here, Michael Douma, Carrie Ann Hamilton, and Robert Dreher.

Oh. Oh, we have another one? Okay.

Is Mica Bevington here? Salim Furth? Thank

you. So individuals will have three minutes

for their testimony. And groups will have six

minutes. So we'll start with Mayor Searcy.

You will have six minutes, please. Please

state your name and then you can begin your

testimony.

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SEARCY: Good evening. MAYOR МУ name is Talisha Searcy and I'm the Mayor of the Takoma Park. Thank you for city of opportunity to speak tonight on behalf of our residents regarding the minor master plan I also want to thank the Montgomery amendment. County planning staff who worked on this plan. The city of Takoma Park's housing and economic development goals are threefold: preserve, protect, and produce. We want to preserve existing businesses and affordable housing in Takoma Park, including in revitalizing areas, produce more housing and opportunities businesses to start and grow across the income spectrum, and allow the city to meet diverse housing and economic needs, and protect renters, homeowners, and local businesses from discrimination displacement and and our environment from destruction. With the unexpected relocation of the Washington Adventist Hospital, the minor master

amendment opens a door for our community to realize what is needed to advance its housing and economic development goals as well advancement of vital the city support resources, such as: affordable housing, schools, parks, and municipal buildings.

However, the plan needs to revised to better reflect the city's values as well ensure that the plan takes as necessary steps to protect the most vulnerable among us. Resolution 2316, the council stated that the minor master plan amendment should include zoning amendments that are designed to incentivize the creation of a range of housing types, retain and improve existing affordable housing, retain existing and attract new local businesses, create public new space opportunities, and strengthen social and environmental assets. this To ensure that happens, the Takoma Park City Council passed Resolution 202333 and the planning -requiring the Planning Board to hold work

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sessions on four topics of great importance to the community.

The first topic is the potential redevelopment of the Washington Adventist site and the Flower Avenue District. We implore you to take a closer look at the plan to examine development requirements, including the setbacks, building heights, and step-downs, lot and density of the newly proposed coverage, zoning for the Washington Adventist site impact neighboring single family housing. The plan height, and apply should reduce the scale, appropriate setbacks of parcels adjoining Maplewood and Greenwood Avenues. Additionally, the plan should retain the green space Hospital Hill and increase the recommended onehalf acre central public open space. The plan should also clearly state the allowable line of development for property abutting Sligo Creek.

The second topic is promoting a diversity of housing in the plan area. Like other communities, the city of Takoma Park

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needs missing middle housing. It's important that the plan aids in providing a diversity of housing options. The plan should recommend that any new units constructed within the plan area help meet the city's objectives increasing the number of units, the variety of housing types across the affordability spectrum that result in economically diverse communities. Where appropriate, the Maple District and Avenue plan should encourage innovative infill development and opportunities on underutilized portions of parcels that do existing affordable not adversely impact The board should also hold a work housing. session on the public space infrastructure and amenities within the plan.

Please examine the impact of the density proposed on access to and provision of public space, infrastructure, recreational facilities, school capacity, roads, public utilities, and healthcare. The plan should include more specific recommendations around

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the activation and creation of usable space, including the activation of the green neighboring Essex House and space identification of additional opportunities for ball fields and structured play areas. plan should also clearly support improvements in multimodal transportation, help to meet city and county climate goals, and address current and future challenges of local vehicle traffic in the plan area. Lastly, the city of Park contains four percent of county's housing stock, but we make up nine of the county's affordable housing percent It is vital that we protect affordable units. housing in the city and demand the board hold a work session focused on protecting existing housing affordability in the plan area.

Specifically, the board should examine how the plan stakeholder can retain existing housing affordability while improving the quality of existing housing. Additionally, the board should explore what protection

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in the plan mechanisms are to prevent displacement of current renters and ensure no net loss of affordable housing. In addition to the affirmation work session, the city would also submit for the public record additional comments and information requests that we would like for the board to address prior advancing the revised plan to the city council Montgomery County Council. and the As а critical partner in future success of the plan, the city expects the opportunity to review and to the findings of the upcoming work react prior to the sessions advancement of planning board draft. The city of Takoma Park supports the re-envisioning of the Washington Adventist Hospital campus and the enhancement civic of critical economic and housing resources in the surrounding neighborhoods along Maple Avenue corridor. However, it must be done in a manner that enhances the quality of life of residents and is environmentally and financially sustainable. The plan is a vital

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step towards realizing the shared goal. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much for your testimony, Mayor Searcy. So next will be David Reed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. MR. REED: My name is David Reed. I'm an economist. also the President of the Long Branch Sligo Community Association, and I'm a founding member of the Community Equity Coalition that I'll be representing tonight. A fundamental controversy, the MMPA regards the urgently rehabilitation of needed the high-rise buildings along Maple Avenue. The MMPA proposes upzoning as a sole instrument incentivize that rehabilitation process. Unfortunately, privileged of use instrument disregards two basic economic facts. One, upzoning does not mobilize private sector investment without raising the cost of housing. Private investors need a robust stable return on their investments. Rent increases, hence

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are inevitable. Second, upzoning does not promote renovation without major dislocation of tenants, unless accompanied by public financing. Absent such funding, displacement of many vulnerable families is inevitable.

How then can the MMPA claim that it aspires to achieve no net loss of affordable housing by using this very blunt economic without public instrument and financing? Further, cursory reading of American even а urban change over the past five decades highlights how upzoning has been a privileged in displacing hundreds of thousands tool of low-income families, largely Brown and Black, from urban centers.

I therefore propose two steps to try to address this important challenge. One, that the Maple Avenue District be severed from the MMPA so that construction of urgently needed housing in the Flower Avenue District can move forward expeditiously. And second, I propose that the planning board mandate a tailored

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urban design process on Maple Avenue, among other things, among other options, one, explores expansion of public ownership opportunities, MHPas main target а and opportunity for them, Т believe, that encourages economic cooperative development and opens missing middle opportunities options for other folks. Two, that it convenes forum with private owners to explore obstacles, financing, and timing regarding rehabilitation of their properties. And three, that it identifies sources of public financing that are needed to ensure temporary relocation residence of in buildings undergoing rehabilitation.

A dedicated planning process along

Maple Avenue will be required to meet the requisites of the equity and master planning framework by which you are guided, to which the department must incorporate racial equity and social justice when preparing master plans. I close in thanking Mayor Searcy for her

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dedication and that of the city council in trying to find inclusive answers that the challenge posed by the current MMPA. And I close expressing the ardent commitment of the hundreds of residents that I represent to work with you in finding equitable and enduring solutions to our city's needs. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Reed.

Next will be Michael Douma. Thank you.

MR. DOUMA: Hi, I'm Michael Douma. I live on Garland Avenue, east of the upzoned land on Greenwood Avenue. And Ι have one picture I wanted to show. It's the one that's kind of green and pink, but you can put it up So tonight I want to talk about the later. Green Promenade. So I love that the planners suggested a pedestrian path on the west edge of the old hospital site. I love that the idea of visual connection to Sligo Creek and proposed connection to Long Branch. But I want to emphasize that the neighborhood is hilly. It's tricky to move east and west between the

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Sligo Creek and Long Branch Stream Trails. Promenade diagram that's in the draft Figures 1 and 8, it's not realistic on the east Maplewood, it's steep for kids to bike side. up or to push a stroller. Even the dogs don't Maplewood. like going and down the up In middle Adventist of the site, it's steep.

So to add some ground truth to this conversation, I prepared this map from the data on the MC Atlas site. So this is the two-foot contours and the lidar kind of mixed together. Guess you guys can see it. So you can see that the cliffs and the hills really kind of stand out there. So if there's a diagram that's like this, it helps you know what routes are going to make sense and where they don't make sense. And I -- my request is for the county planners to make a map really similar to this so that we can see where the bikes should go, where the walking should go. I'm happy to share my map. GAS Department I'm sure can make one.

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1	So how do you go up a steep hill?
2	Well, you don't go up a steep hill. You use
3	switchbacks. That's what people do when
4	they're hiking. And so I am proposing a route
5	that kind of weaves back and forth, and so I
6	want to make the suggestion. And so looking at
7	this map, you can't really see where folks are
8	sitting, but on the top edge, there's, like,
9	there's a dotted line that goes along
10	Maplewood. That's the one that I think is
11	unrealistic. There's also one that just kind
12	of arches right through the middle of the
13	property. And maybe that was a concept, that
14	line. I don't think that's realistic either.
15	So what could happen? So we could extend from
16	the bridge that's on Carroll Avenue all the way
17	around on the west side of the hospital site
18	over to Maplewood and Maple, so just as was
19	proposed. But I'd like to see this on a map so
20	that people can really see where it could be.
21	And that's a really nice path
22	because you can walk it. It has a bit of an

uphill climb. Then from the east side of it, you can swing around to Carroll and Flower, which was proposed also, and that's walkable. From the corner of Flower Avenue and Carroll, the sidewalk is perfectly good. And that brings you up some more of that hill. So that brings people all the way around in a way that they can walk.

Then how do you get down to Long Branch? Because Maplewood isn't going to work. And my suggestion is to have something else way behind Greenwood. that weaves all the There's a swath of right of way that the city then there's the back of and those owns Greenwood properties and there's lots of space there. And if a path was put there connecting to Garland, it could go across. And that might be my timer. There's no timer up here. the basic idea is, make a map and then see if we can weave through something that people can walk, because I think people would love to use that.

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CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you so much.

Next is Carrie Ann Hamilton and Robert Deher.

Robert.

MR. DREHER: Good evening. My name is Bob Dreher, and I live in Takoma Park. you'll hear tonight, the proposed master plan amendment has raised deep concerns community. People are taken aback by the sheer size of the development that would be allowed under the proposed plan. 150 and 120 foot tall residential and commercial buildings throughout the inner core of our city, increasing city's population by as much as 40 percent. People are apprehensive that the economic incentives provided by this massive upzoning will lead to replacement of existing, highly affordable apartment buildings along Maple Avenue, displacing residents and destroying the affordable and diverse neighborhood Montgomery County. People are concerned about environmental impacts from all this construction, including stormwater, climate

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impacts, and harm to our park lands along Sligo
Creek. And they're worried about what this
huge increase in our population will do to
traffic, schools, and other infrastructure.

What's striking to me is how little we actually know about the consequences of this do have any not environmental plan. We analysis, any analysis of stormwater impacts, any socioeconomic any traffic studies, or analysis of the impacts of upzoning on existing buildings and residents. There's been alternative consideration to apparent approaches to planning for this vital area of Zoning schemes will lower building our city. heights and less density, for example, zoning schemes that focus on the Adventist Hospital site and defer changes to Maple Avenue. As someone who has spent much of his career working on planning for federal lands Ι find this astonishing, and resources, frankly. Federal decision making for development is governed by the National

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Environmental Policy Act, which requires public disclosure thorough analysis and potential environmental impacts at the proposal consideration of alternative stage and approaches that would cause less environmental It requires transparency and public damage. involvement throughout the planning process. Although the NEPA process doesn't eliminate federal disputes over proper management of lands, it ensures informed decision making and it can lead to development of alternative approaches that can win broad public support.

the Planning Board should Ι think follow that model here. I know NEPA doesn't apply to you, but the reasoning of NEPA to look before you leap seems eminently sensible. So I think you should direct your staff to study the environmental climate potential and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed plan and compare those impacts to alternative approaches that establish lower building heights and less density and that separate out Maple Avenue from

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the current plan. And you should disclose those studies and the alternative approaches to the public and take more public comment before voting on a plan.

I know this will require effort and take but it will provide some time, the information that our community and you need to understand the likely consequences of major change to our city. We can't afford to simply sign a blank check for developers. it may help bring people together around an approach that promotes new affordable housing in our city without endangering the environment and the welfare of existing residents. you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Dreher. Next is Salim Furth.

MR. FURTH: Thank you Chair and commission members. I appreciate your time.

My name is Salim Furth. I'm a Takoma Park resident and an abutter to the current plan boundary. I'm also a housing economist. The

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land directly behind where I live is already zoned for 100-foot height limits, as is much of the Maple Avenue Corridor. So there isn't really an upzoning going on here. I understand the county is, you know, updating the zoning. I'm fine with either Т way. What's important to me as an abutter is that as that building, which is already not great structurally, it reaches the its as end οf natural life, that the condominium owners can responsibly take action to either rehabilitate or replace the building in a way that doesn't leave a vacant structure waiting for variances, for appeals, going through a waiting process because the zoning is not clear and permissive.

So my interest is in having clear permissive zoning that maintains the existing high height limits and allows us to continue to have tall buildings on Maple Avenue Corridor.

I'm also very concerned about the rising cost of housing in Takoma Park. On my block, houses

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now go for about \$1.5 million. My brother, two years ago, looked to move to Takoma Park with his growing family, and it just was unrealistic. Nowhere in the city could he afford to buy a house. And the only way, you the know know status zoning has we quo brought us here. So we know how to get where we are and that's what we've done so far, which is to put shrink wrap zoning over almost all of the city. The only way to bring down housing costs and to make space for new neighbors is to build more housing.

There's no amount of rearranging the deck chairs or studying things that is going to make housing more affordable, and no number of restrictions that is going to add units in Adventist site, Takoma Park. The which really the core issue here, is the only one of its kind in Takoma Park. There's no other If we decide to make this a park, we're going to build housing somewhere else. There's nowhere else anywhere near the core of

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Takoma Park that could house a significant amount of housing. If we fail here, then new people can, as now, only move to Takoma Park by outbidding, buying out, or displacing someone else. That's the status quo. Thank you for considering this amendment. I -- this -- and I support it in its current form. I look forward to the improvements, but I really hope that you don't back down from the core of the plan, which is to allow significant amounts of dense housing at the Adventist site. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Furth.

And thank you, all of you, for coming. we'll call up the next five people. So the Anne Hollander next is in here? Aaron Seyedian, Naomi Edelson, William Hernandez, Frank Demarais, Jacqueline Moore, Rachel Hardwick, Susan Miller.

MR. BENAS: It looks like several of the people you're asking about are online, if you'd give them a chance to respond.

CHAIR HARRIS: Oh, okay. I'm sorry.

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MR. BENAS: You might want to just start over at the beginning.

CHAIR HARRIS: Yeah. Yeah. T'll start again. So is Mica Bevington online? Anne Hollander? Naomi Edelson? about. Oh, and William Hernandez, there is So who did I miss that was online? online? Okay. Okay. So why don't Oh, Frank. we do this? Why don't we take Frank first? And Frank, you're representing the Sligo Creek Parkway, Kennebec, Flower, Maple, Maplewood Neighborhood Association. thank you So participating. You have six minutes for your testimony. You need to get off of mute, Frank, please.

MR. DEMARAIS: Thought I had it.

Thought I had it. Thank you very much. Yeah,

again, my name is Frank Demarais. I live on

Maple Avenue, Takoma Park. And I submitted a

written statement with a series of observations

and recommendations on how to improve the plan.

Fundamentally, I personally am in support. I'm actually speaking on behalf of myself and only myself at this point.

CHAIR HARRIS: Okay.

But the plan is well MR. DEMARAIS: aligned in its stated objectives and intentions Ι think, the Takoma Park community, with, Takoma Park city values, and you know, what the city was intending when it advanced this idea. The one thing I do want to speak to this evening that I highlight in that written submission is that the minor master plan as the first plan under the new Thrive General Plan speaks to and stresses the importance of preservation of existing affordable housing. Takoma Park has a rent stabilization structure that for the past 40 years has protected residents from rent increases, exceeding inflation. It's created extraordinarily an mixed income and diverse community where significant percentage of the population each of our racial and ethnic categories at the

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median incomes for those categories can afford the median rents in Takoma Park. That doesn't exist anywhere else.

Our rents are 20 to 30 percent lower than adjoining areas and countywide averages. It's critical for the county to recognize that when you create this level of density, the plan as it's proposed, particularly on the occupied increases the incentives parcels, and the likelihood of redevelopment, which is the purpose, create new units. But every single redevelopment will result in the elimination of affordable housing. That the 12 and a half, if 15 percent MPDU, even you went to redevelopment will eliminate significant majority of the affordable units on those sites. And that's because any new construction is going to be looking to rents that are substantially above market averages and above the current rents in Takoma Park. And that the county has recognized this, stresses it in all of the plans, but has not provided in the minor

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master plan any structure, any requirements, any limitations that would really protect existing residents.

And the county has done that, has done that in the Veirs Planning Corridor Plan, particularly the Twinbrook on It's provided that for property. identified properties in the Silver Spring Business District and adjoining communities And in the Takoma Park Minor Master plan. Plan, the plan needs to adopt no net loss. county can and should protect the numbers of existing units with a requirement that when a property with affordable units is redeveloped, and with the Takoma Park rents and the rent stabilizations, well documented the rents, that the replacement units should include one for one replacement of those existing units at a minimum. As someone in the affordable housing industry, I fully appreciate the impact, the cost, et cetera. But also as a member of this community, recognize, you know, the absolute

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value and actually irreplaceable value.

though we have restricted So even units that are 20 years or better in terms of the restrictions, at some point, those expire. A significant number of unrestricted units and every redevelopment that produces desired new housing will, by definition, replace. if you have 101 unit building and you could build 250 units on that site and you replace it with 12 and a half and MPDUs, that's 32 units. 101 affordable units would be lost, 32 replaced at MPDU rents above the existing rents on that property. It's doable. It puts the onus on the development community, the property landowners to work with that requirement find a solution generally will require public involvement. But right now, the plan only requires a best effort, a striving for that.

And the fundamentals with no net loss in all of our plans of striving and best efforts, et cetera, are insufficient,

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particularly in the community where that is the fundamental component that keeps this community are residents able to live here, multigenerational, and builds the sense of community that comes with security that you will be able to stay here. So I just want to, you know, stress this as the most critical. And it's the first opportunity coming out of Thrive really do this right. And you know, fundamentals here are you either do or do not. Try is not good enough. So thank you very much and leave you with that.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Damarais. The next person will be -- is it

Aaron Seyedian?

MR. SEYEDIAN: Hi there. My name's

Aaron Seyedian. I live on Garland Avenue, so
just across the way from the plan area. I've
lived in Takoma Park since 2018. And I also
operate my business outside of 6930 Carroll
Avenue, which is another repurposed Adventist
building, I believe used to be Adventist World

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Headquarters. You know, my story in town starts with me and my wife moving into a multifamily building on Tulip Avenue that probably couldn't be built today, smacked in the middle of single-family homes. It was where we moved when we had our first child. Now we own a house on Garland Avenue. And then of course, I did mention my business. You know, I employ 35 people. We're proud to operate out of Takoma Park. And the people that come to work every day spend money in our community and, you know, liven up the streets.

I don't think that the presence of the old Adventist building on Carroll Avenue, if you know it -- it's 10 stories right on your way to the Metro, I don't think it takes away detracts from anything on Willow, Maple, all iconic Tulip. These are Takoma Park people living kind beautiful of of Takoma Park lives. So anyway, when I think about the proposed plan, I really don't have quibbles. If it has more kinds many of

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commercial land, I think that's great. brings more multi-family housing into the city, I think that's wonderful. I think about how those kinds of things have impacted my life for the better and how if we build more of it, it'll lives for impact more people's the I know that some folks have kind of mentioned traffic, storm water, affordability. Those tend to be, I think, the key things that people are worried about. From my perspective, you know, the plan as proposed would address things instead of create all of those more issues.

MS. WOLCHIK: Oh, would not.

MR. SEYEDIAN: Please be respectful.

MS. WOLCHIK: Would not.

MR. SEYEDIAN: Please be respectful.

You can talk later. Anyway, stormwater, you know, it's an inactive site right now. Me and my son play on the hills and he loves -- when I drive through the parking garages, it's a bunch of impervious surfaces. I can't imagine that

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this kind of crumbling campus manages stormwater better than something, you newly construed and newly built. In terms of traffic, you know, if Ι got to fill prescription at CVS, I hop in my car, I'd drive down either to Old Town or New Hampshire Avenue If there were things that I could walk to, I'd walk to them. So that gets me out of my car, that reduces traffic.

And in terms of affordability, Ι mentioned I am a businessman. I believe in supply and demand. I agree with Mr. Furth, who spoke before me. I think that building more housing is the way to have cheaper housing. And also, you know, smaller size housing, right? Part of the affordability of apartments is just that they're not as big. And so we need all kinds of sizes apart from just supply and demand in order to have affordable options in Takoma Park. So lastly, I just want to highlight, you know, Mayor Searcy mentioned the city of Takoma Park's council passed

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resolution supporting this. From mу perspective, the last two elections in Takoma Park for the mayoralty were a referendum on think that those development, I are democratic avenues that feedback has solicited. And I hope that, you know, we don't bogged qet down in endless process on weeknights when I think the people of Takoma Park have already spoken. Thanks.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr.

Seyedian. Thank you for your presentation.

Next is Naomi Edelson.

EDELSON: Hello. I'm Naomi MS. I'm a wildlife biologist by trade, Edelson. and here's my binoculars to prove it -- my beat-up binoculars. I live at 716 Erie Ave in Ward 5, one block from the hospital, two blocks from Sligo Creek. I am for the development of hospital like grounds to be more what Walter Reed is. I'm here to raise grave concerns about the density and height of the It's very much an overreach, and I'm plan.

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very worried about the worst-case scenario. I love Takoma Park. We moved here in 2010. I especially love Sligo Creek. It's the heart and soul of Takoma Park, and people of all stripes and backgrounds use it extensively. I walk and bike along it every day. The path is so busy that I bike on the street and I actually fell on it today, but I didn't break my arm, but it's a little bruised.

But this Sligo Creek is beloved. And I just want to say, as an example, tomorrow eve, as some of you may know, is Rosh Hashanah, which is a time of reflection and renewal to Jews, myself. It's a tradition where you throw bread into a body of moving water and express regret for your sins. But I don't put bread in a wildlife Sligo Creek because Ι know as biologist, it hurts the fish, the turtles, and the ducks, of which all live there. little broken up leaves, which there plenty. And I just want to say, you know, Sligo Creek, people don't realize that there

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are kids playing in it, there are dogs drinking out of it. It is an unhealthy creek. And it used to be worse. It has had so much county money and other funds put into it that it has gone from three species to now 15 or more. It's getting better. I saw a bald eagle there. I didn't have my binoculars, but I knew what it was because it -- it's easy, and I've seen fish ducks. Ι love it so much that I and And applied for county grants, which I got from RainScapes and DEP, which is right in building, help congregations to remove impermeable space like lawns and put in native plant gardens to slow the flow of storm water runoff and help people in wildlife.

And it turns out that Takoma Park section of Sligo Creek is the most degraded, and the county as you know, manages it, but it's the city that's contributing to it. More density, which height increases density. More density is going to lead to more traffic, more lawns, more impervial pavement, more poop,

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which is one of the biggest problems, that dog going and it's to create , goog more degradation. I think Takoma Park, Sligo Creek is the heart and soul, and we need to keep it that way. We need to keep this beautiful place that's important spiritually, to us, physically, and emotionally. And I wish youall a sweet and healthy happy new year, and I wish that for Sligo Creek. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms.

Edelson, for your testimony. Next will be
Jacqueline Moore.

My name is Jacqueline MS. MOORE: Moore and I'm a resident of Takoma Park. Takoma Park, we have a historic Black community that's dealt with the consequences of racism throughout the history of the city. film short produced bу Historic Takoma They Called Him Incorporated, ${\tt Mr.}$ Lee, Cedric Boatman discusses how he felt be to tolerated, but not accepted by the white residents of Takoma Park while growing

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When Black residents wanted a playground, they were told by the city council to clear the land and raise the needed funds themselves. The playground was built in the early 1950s, but by the mid-1950s, it was seized by the cities to be used for the Department of Public Works.

There are still some Black residents today in 2023, who feel tolerated rather than accepted despite our city council's stated priority of being a welcoming community.

We also have a community of people along Maple Avenue, many of whom are recent immigrants to the US. The buildings they live in may not possess the same kind of cultural and historic -- historical touchstones that are present in Victorian houses and bungalows -- I don't live in one of those -- throughout Takoma park's historic district, but these residents bring with them their rich histories traditions. The residents in lower income housing along Maple Avenue have gone through severe economic stress caused bv the 2008

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recession and the housing crisis and the COVID pandemic. Most of the people who live in the apartment buildings will not be returning if they are pushed out of Takoma Park. Recent immigrants are in danger of having their lives upended once again. The fabric of our diverse city will be irreparably torn asunder. Babb, author of Black Georgetown Remembered, is stated, Bettering an environment about bringing your best self and welcoming diversity in others.

The displacement of Black families from Georgetown to Anacostia in the early mid-20th century is just one example of the harmful effects of gentrification in the DC, Maryland, Virginia region. This is not a history that I wish to see repeated, especially not in Takoma I ask you what exactly in the minor Park. master plan for Takoma Park betters environment and protects diversity. Are you, the planning board members and the planning best board staff, bringing your selves and

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welcoming the diversity that currently exists in Takoma Park? The people who live in the MMPA area now have a history, too. We just don't know it. Isn't it time we try to find out, recognize it and honor their history too? Most importantly, when will we validate their worth to our city and do everything possible to make sure that they get to continue to live in Takoma Park? Please sever the Maple Avenue corridor and the municipal corridor portions of the MMPA. These parts of the current plan can be revisited once we see what happens with the Washington Adventist Hospital site. History will remember our names, our words, and our deeds. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms. Moore.

Next is Rachel Hardwick.

MS. HARDWICK: Thank you. I'm Rachel Hardwick. I live at 7400 Flower Avenue,
Takoma Park, which is two blocks from the hospital site and the corner of Carroll and
Flower Avenues. I am in favor of housing at

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the hospital site and recognize as we all do, Montgomery County needs more housing units, especially for people who need middle income and affordable housing. Nevertheless, I'm very concerned that the proposed zoning changes will add far too many units to the site, making hospital our schools even more crowded and traffic and pollution in community unsustainable. Before we are too far into this process, please analyze the effects on traffic, stormwater runoff, demands on city and county services such as the police department, the impact on already crowded schools, and figure out how to solve problems that we know will come if 12-story buildings are allowed at the hospital site.

In front of my house, for example, we have a real and dangerous traffic problem.

That section of Flower Avenue is very narrow.

When it was built in the 1920s, it was not meant to handle the volume of cars of modern times. For over 17 years, I have shared my

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concerns with Takoma Park city leaders about the volume of traffic and the need for enforcement of the stop signs. The majority of drivers do not stop at the stop sign in front of my house, likely, because they're frustrated by the narrowness of the street and the volume of cars, which we have not yet solved despite lots of conversations. And we can only expect problems to greatly increase. Ιf those thousands of housing units and six to 7,000 people are added to a site over a mile from the Metro and over a half a mile to the purple will line, many, many cars travel on including surrounding streets, from Carroll Avenue to Sligo Creek Parkway on Flower Avenue, and vice versa.

As а parent of recent Blair High School graduates, I know that at a minimum, Blair Hiqh School and Rolling Terrace Elementary School are overcrowded now. Blair bursting and added portables through kids were there, for vears mУ save the

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are talking about pandemic. We increasing Park's population possibly Takoma bу percent. Where will the students go to school? many other communities outside And how Park will be affected by adding additional students to the public schools? Again, I am in favor of housing at the hospital site, but let's go into it with eyes wide open. the zoning Before agreeing to changes recommended by county planners, I implore you to ensure that an analysis of such building on the site will have on surrounding streets, government services, and on the schools. is conducted analysis in a meaningful transparent way.

Finally, know that whatever the zoning allows, that is what will be built when for-profit developers develop the site. We experienced that particular phenomenon at the junction in Takoma Park. The chosen builder worked very hard to maximize profit, which I understand, but it would've cost the community

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a lot. Let's not write that same blueprint
here. Please use your authority to plan as
best as possible for our beloved community.
Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms. Hardwick. I think everyone has spoken at -- oh, I'm sorry. Could you -- I'm sorry. Would you repeat your name and --

MS. MILLER: Sue Miller.

CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. Thank you, Ms.

Miller.

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MS. MILLER: Good evening. I'm here Community tonight representing Vision for Takoma, a community Group for almost a decade now, with over a thousand people on our list. I moved to Takoma Park, after living for years in West Africa, and then Brazil. Like many in our city, I chose Takoma Park because I wanted my children to continue to grow up surrounded racial, cultural, and socioeconomic bу diversity. My children attended Piney Branch Elementary, the school in the minor master plan

area, on Maple Avenue. At Piney Branch, they
were part of a student body made up of equal
proportions of White, Latino, multigenerational Black American students, and
students from African immigrant families.

As the Piney Branch PTA president, I got funding to enliven the front of the school facing Maple with the murals that are still There's a photo highlighting them in there. your planned draft, I think. And we waged two successful city and county battles to save the unique public pool on Maple, behind the school. These days, I volunteer for a nonprofit making grocery deliveries for seniors on Maple, in the building where my best friend lives. For me, Maple Avenue is the heart of Takoma Park. Ιt makes Takoma Park what it is. Decades ago, our community created а network of public, and private entities, to nonprofit, produce what we believe is the densest corridor of affordable housing in the county on Maple.

It's never been clear to us why

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Maple Avenue was appended onto this plan. conditions and built landscape on Maple present entirely different issues than the abandoned hospital site. We hope we will see new housing on the hospital site, but the issue of aging buildings on Maple will not be solved by this amendment except through teardowns that could lead to displacement and gentrification. only about half the buildings on Maple are protected by deeded covenants. So it feels like a plan developed under a previous planning going forward despite widespread board is opposition from the community's most impacted. Maple Avenue is а community, not an They did not ask for upzoning, and in campus. fact had no idea this was part of the plan, since outreach sessions were difficult in the pandemic and focused on questions such as, what would you like to see on the hospital site, or why do you like your neighborhood? We realized there is a commitment under Thrive to build more housing. But why

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should the Maple Avenue community absorb the additional density when they already live in our densest neighborhood? Why would we try to shoehorn new 15-story buildings into an already neighborhood outside any transit dense shed? And how could it be equitable to fill in the only open spaces on Maple? Spaces that bring light and sky and trees to people already living there in high rises. Taking all this into consideration, CVT urges you to remove the Maple district and municipal district from the Short amendment. of that, we urge you reduce the proposed zoning on the streets surrounding the campus and down Maple and Lee, instead match the current heights and density in order to protect our rent stabilized garden apartments and to protect current residents.

Please reduce the commercial quotient, which risks displacing more housing with entirely commercial buildings. And on the hospital site, please confine high rises to the

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1	center of the site away from the creek and
2	surrounding neighborhoods. This amendment
3	could set in motion the undoing of all that
4	makes these neighborhoods affordable. We urge
5	you to look at this plan with the fresh eyes of
6	a new board. Surely you do not intend to
7	trigger displacement and rising rents. There's
8	no reason to barrel forward with the totally
9	inappropriate broad brush upzoning in this
10	amendment. And so we urge you to take all
11	necessary time and make all necessary changes.
12	Thank you for your service to our community.
13	CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms.
14	Miller. I think everyone at this table has
15	gone now, so we'll bring up a new set. Karen
16	Elrich, I maybe you're are you in Takoma
17	or are you oh, you're here? Thank you.
18	Alexandra Rays Pinkston, are you here, or
19	online? Karen Burditt? Stuart Benas?
20	Weymouth Spence? Jason Klein?
21	MR. BENAS: Stuart Benas is here.
22	CHAIR HARRIS: Jason Jason's on -

1	_
2	MR. BENAS: This is Stuart Benas
3	online.
4	CHAIR HARRIS: Oh, Benas. Okay.
5	Tom
6	MR. BENAS: You've already
7	CHAIR HARRIS: Tom Hilde? Hold on,
8	please. Tom Hilde, are you
9	MR. BENAS: You already called my
10	name.
11	VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: He's writing it
12	down.
13	CHAIR HARRIS: And we're not ready
14	for yet. I'll call you. One second, please.
15	MS. WOLCHIK: Then why did you call
16	him?
17	CHAIR HARRIS: With Ms. Elrich?
18	Karen Elrich? Yes.
19	MS. ELRICH: Yeah. Hello. My name
20	is Karen Elrich, and I live in Takoma Park. My
21	home is just outside the area addressed by the
22	minor master plan. I appreciate the

opportunity to address you today regarding the master plan for our minor community. concern lies in the absence of inequity analysis within this plan, particularly as it pertains to the potential upzoning of Maple Avenue, an established low-income neighborhood with valuable affordable housing. I question why this street was included into our need to rezone the hospital. And I would prefer that it was dropped from the plan so that the residents on Maple Avenue could be involved in the actual planning of what happens in their neighborhood. But if we keep it in the plan, it is insensible for us to consider the long-term impact of any of the decisions made here.

Without comprehensive equity а analysis, risk opening the door to we unattended consequences for the Maple residents. The upzoning of this area may lead vulnerable to gentrification, displacing families who have called Maple Avenue home for

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decades. Equity should be at the forefront of our planning process. We must ensure that any changes made benefit all members of our community, especially those who are economically disadvantaged. This includes affordable housing preserving options, protected by rent stabilization and protecting the character of neighborhoods like Maple I urge the board to prioritize an Avenue. equity analysis as an integral part of this master plan to ensure that our decisions lead inclusive, to sustainable, and equitable, development. I'm concerned about why the board does not have to have a policy on having an equity analysis for all their plans and would like to know your rationale for not having this policy. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

Next is Karen Burditt. Who's --

MS. BURDITT: Yes. My name is Karen Burditt. I am the vice chair of the Historic Preservation Commission for Montgomery County.

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And tonight I'm speaking to you on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission. On May 10th, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission received briefing а from the planning department's historic preservation office staff, on the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment. The Historic Preservation Commission regularly provides comments to the planning board on master plan updates, which impact historic resources include or significant historical elements. The plan the historic designation proposes of several important resources through а concurrent for historic amendment to the master plan preservation.

As of HPCs role and part responsibilities under Chapter 24A of Montgomery County Code, I am pleased to offer the commission's recommendations the to planning board. The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that the planning board list three individual properties the in

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locational atlas and index of historic sites and recommend that the county council designate the properties in the master plan for historic preservations. three properties The are the Heffner going to talk about 42 Community Center, at Oswego Avenue, 7625 Carroll Krestview, at Avenue, and the Sligo Seventh-Day Adventist Church, at 77 Carroll Avenue.

The Heffner Park Community Center was built by Takoma Park in 1959 а segregated recreational facility for the city's Black residence. The building and park are the results of decades of advocacy by the city's American residents demand African to recreational outlets for Black children in the preceding the county's 1963 public accommodation law. The Heffner Community satisfies three designation criteria. Center 1A, it is a historic resource that has character interest or value as part οf development heritage cultural or

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characteristics of the county state or nation.

The Heffner Park Community Center is associated with the development of historically Black neighborhood of the hill within the city of the -- and the community building efforts of the residents.

Residents of the hill work decades to meet the community need for recreational outlets and outdoor gathering And Heffner park served as the social and community needs that were unmet during -due to racial segregation. It survives as a representation of these political institutions development of the Black community. and the The Heffner Community Center is also associated with the leadership and advocacy of Lee Jordan, who is recognized by the city of Takoma Park as one of the most influential residents in the community history, and it provides a direct link to Jordan's broad community leadership as well as his particular emphasis on the importance of recreation. The Heffner Park

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Community Center also stands as a reminder of racial segregation and discriminatory public policy in 20th Century Montgomery County. And the center was one element in the landscape of segregated recreational facilities within the city of Takoma Park and the county at large.

Moving on to the Sligo Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The Sligo Seventh-Day Adventist Church is a three-story wedge-shaped, streamlined, modern building of steel frame construction, built between 1942 and '44. church is as significant as the home of а progressive congregation within the qlobal Seventh Day Adventist Church and excellent representation of the streamline modern style. The project satisfies three designation criteria. The Sligo church reflects the growth of the Adventist community in Takoma Park and holds significance as the site of pioneering advances towards racial integration and gender equity that are distinctive within the Adventist faith.

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Through t.he mid t.o late 20th Century, the Sligo Church acquired prominence desegregating church membership before National Church Leadership was prepared to do for ordaining women as ministers direct response to a globally adopted Adventist policy against this practice. It is also an excellent and distinctive example of streamlined modern architecture. Architecturer, J Raymond Mims, design employees defining features of the style and the church exterior is predominantly composed of smooth panels of Indiana Limestone with limited ornamentation embellishment. and This restrained ornamentation is keeping with the streamlined modern style and also befitting the Seventh day Adventist values and design simplicity, precepts, which promote limited ornamentation, and avoidance of vanity. Sligo Church also occupies a prominent location at the corner of Flower and Carroll Avenues. And the other property is Krestview,

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a two-story craftsman style bungalow, built to house leadership of the Adventist Church. in particular, it was the home of Dr. Daniel and Loretta Cress who acquired the property in were prominent Adventist 1918. The Cresses medical missionaries physicians and who promoted faith-based healthcare, and the home is also a significant site of women's history for its association with Dr. Loretta Cress, one of the earliest female licensed physicians and surgeons in Montgomery County, and a leader of obstetric in the early 20th century. care Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

I think we're -- Mr. Spence?

DR. SPENCE: Here we go. Dear Chair Harris and members of the planning board, I am Dr. Weymouth Spence, the president of Washington at Venice University. I wish to thank the city of Takoma Park, the planning board and its staff, for the willingness to reimage what the growth areas of Takoma Park may

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become through the pending Takoma Park Minor

Master planned amendment. Our approximately

24.8-acre University is one of the potential

growth areas in the plan, and we welcome the

opportunities that the public hearing draft

presents to us. The university is bounded by

Maple Avenue, Flower Avenue, Carroll Avenue,

and the former Washington Adventist Hospital

site.

We have been in Takoma Park since 1904 and have been -- and I have been president since 2008. The university is owned by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and offers quality education to students of different faiths from around the world. There are currently a little over 600 students enrolled, with our highest enrollment ever, of 1498 in our undergraduate and graduate programs. have put together my tenure, Ι leadership team that elevated and transformed the former Columbia Union College to University status and is continuing to build on the legacy

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of former presidents to elevate the university's standing to one of international distinction. This is the right time and the right team for the university to capitalize on the opportunities that the minor master plan amendment presents.

When the amendment first was introduced, the university partnered with our longtime affiliate, Adventist Healthcare, that controls а 17.4-acre former Washington Adventist Hospital campus to the west of the university. Together we wanted to envision how our combined portion of the mini master plan area could grow to address current and future university needs. We also understood that the combined campus could help address area-wide housing, recreation, and connectivity opportunities if the plan were done correctly. I'm pleased the public hearing draft recognized the need to rezone our university property and the former Washington Adventist Hospital property to a more flexible zone that

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also respects the building environment outside of the campus. Under its current zoning, the university must make comparison to other similar sized universities. The CR zonina public recommended in the hearing draft provides the critical flexibility for university to grow as needs and funding will allow.

The zoning further accommodates some creative housing and connectivity opportunities that could certainly invocate the area. changes present transformational opportunities for the university to ensure it may continue to students for and attract many support decades at the current location. We also look forward to discussing other recommendations in the public hearing draft that are currently unclear not align with our future or may vision. These include matters the proposed study to designate the university as a National Historic District. We also have concerns about the recommended permit alongside green

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Maplewood Avenue and into the campus. limited right of and great challenges way associated with these improvements should reviewed closely to ensure a realistic outcome for this aspirational vision. are interested in how the proposed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will coordinate with our campus plans and have concerns about blanket call for adaptive reuse of buildings.

As such, we look forward to staying engaged as the mini master plan evolves and look forward to working with the city, planning staff planning board and to ensure that the plan may accommodate the positive changes that are envisioned for Takoma Park. Thank you for your consideration of comments.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, President Spence. We appreciate your comments. So next we have Jason Klein.

MR. KLEIN: Dear Chair Harris and

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the planning board, members οf Ι am executive director of Corporate Klein, Estate for Adventist Healthcare, and pleased to offer some comments on the public hearing draft for the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment regarding the former Washington Adventist Hospital campus that is within the amendment area. As you are aware, Adventist Healthcare and its hospital were a community anchor in Takoma Park for well over a hundred In order to provide better regional access to healthcare, Adventist Healthcare made the difficult decision to relocate the hospital to the White Oak area of Montgomery County. However, Adventist Healthcare remains committed to coordinating with its the partner, Washington Adventist university to ensure that hospital the former site continues to be а viable and valuable community asset. The hearing draft is public а great start repositioning the campus for its next phase, in which it may continue to solve pressing

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community needs such as housing, open spaces, and neighborhood serving amenities.

The former Washington Adventist Hospital property is 17.4 acres, and is located east of Sligo Creek, between Maplewood Avenue and Carroll Avenue. The Washington Adventist University flanks the eastern edge of property. The former hospital campus currently the aging hospital contains structure, will be removed, and a medical office building that will remain. I note that the medical office building along Carroll Avenue is independently owned and operated, and any new site will development the to on need accommodate the existing structure and established access routes. Adventist Healthcare and Washington Adventist University have been active participants in the minor master plan amendment process by attending all the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission Open Houses, providing a community briefing in late 2022 and attending all

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planning board and Takoma Park City Council plan updates.

We are impressed by the efforts that staff and city staff have made planning Takoma Park residents and incorporate feedback in the public their hearing draft. The resulting land use and zoning recommendations for the hospital property and the public hearing draft respond to community comments by providing flexibility and density achieve the desired outcomes of housing, central gathering places, and trail connections within the property. The public hearing draft also accommodates the dedication of Sligo Creek Parkland from the hospital property in a manner that supports redevelopment through the density capture and other regulatory credits associated with the to be dedicated park out area.

Other recommendations in the public hearing draft meet laudable planning objectives, but currently lack the flexibility to respond to a likely piecemeal build-out with

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future market conditions. unknown include the following: a requirement redevelopment to occur under one sketch plan, dedication of significant Carroll Avenue right of way, a publicly accessible pedestrian path overlooking Sligo Creek Park, and retention of the crenelated stone walls along Carroll Such recommendations should be refined Avenue. conditions address in which the to recommendations are infeasible or cannot be met due to design or cost constraints. Adventist Healthcare will continue to remain engaged in amendment process the minor master plan address these issues and ensure that the former hospital property will remain a community anchor well into the future.

I close by commending the planning Park City Council board and the Takoma for undertaking this master plan amendment minor effort. It has the potential of addressing pressing city needs within an environment that city is welcome and accessible all to

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residents. Adventist Healthcare is proud to be part of this important process. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you so much. I appreciate it. So next will be -- is it Tom Hilde?

Hi. Thank you, Board, MR. HILDE: and thank you to the chair. I'm speaking as a resident on Greenwood Avenue, just outside of the Takoma Park city boundaries, and right next to Washington Adventist University in Montgomery County District 4, the Flower Avenue I'm a professor of Environmental and area. Climate Policy and Sustainable Development, and I've committed my life to the kinds of issues and values that are in the documents that we have thus far. Our community, however, was not consulted on this plan at all, and I don't know Washington anyone who reads the Times. Although we'll be directly impacted, community's already zoned for multi-family residences. which renders the community

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economically and ethnically diverse already, more than most, or if not all of Takoma park, apart from the Maple high rises. We have a neighborhood welcoming of and nurses construction workers, scientists and artists, government workers and homemakers, students and teachers, young families and retirees. community of people committed to the public good. Our community is friendly, tranquil, and eminently walkable already. It's home diverse flora and fauna. It also has a deep history, like other parts of Takoma Park, reflected in the land, in its residents, and in the homes themselves. It's therefore socially, historically, and ecologically important neighborhood, and this is the kind of community that many others aspire to.

I have a few points. One, scholarly research on upzoning is at an early stage and the results are inconclusive. It can lead to more diverse communities. It can also lead to accelerated gentrification and displacement.

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The plan doesn't speak to the risks of upzoning and, frankly, seems unaware of them. separate study commissioned by Takoma Park in 2017 found that a key weakness of its planning is that subsidized multi-family properties are dispersed throughout the city. the not On studies map, one sees that Ward 5 and our area are already dense in such properties, while Wards 1 and 3, for example, have little or zero subsidized rent-controlled multi-family property. This plan doesn't address one of the city's own weaknesses. Three, the proposed development is portrayed as green. However, the rezoning allows for much taller buildings that would -- as we've heard, in much larger footprints. This extends beyond the hospital.

The rezoning extends to Greenwood Avenue, which has hardly been mentioned here at all, which entails destroying green spaces.

More construction requires processes and materials along the supply chain that are leading causes of carbon emissions globally, no

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matter whether the final product is designed to attain lead certification. We haven't seen a comprehensive environmental and climate analysis and accounting of the proposed development. That would include GHG emissions, not only from operations but also the supply chain, land use change, and the loss of green space.

One last point. Our neighborhood's character is defined by its green spaces and wildlife habitat. The diverse wildlife uses the green corridors between Sligo Creek and Long Branch Creek, extending beyond Takoma Park This includes the woods and green areas city. the corner of Maple and Maplewood, at undeveloped area between Greenwood and Garland Avenues, which has been mentioned, and other for green spaces needed safety, raising offspring, and food. Dense construction, more traffic, more runoff, and more people will clearly impact wildlife in the neighborhood, but there has been no wildlife impact study.

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1 CHAIR HARRIS: Mr. Hilde, could you 2 wrap it up, please? Okay. 3 MR. HILDE: I'm sorry? CHAIR HARRIS: Another 15. You had 4 5 Was it three minutes he was -6 What? 7 8 Yeah. You -- you've exceeded your 9 three minutes. Take another 30 seconds and please complete your --10 11 MR. HILDE: Okay. I'm concluding 12 right here. Adding 3,500 new residents and 13 increased commercial and residential traffic in 14 our community, with inadequate understanding of 15 the broader economic environmental climate and 16 community impacts of upzoning, does not seem 17 terribly responsible to me. To do so without 18 the diverse consulting community members 19 outside of Takoma Incorporated, while couching 20 language of equity, the project in the diversity, 21 and in abundance of green 22 development planning buzzwords deeply

is

problematic. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

I think there's everyone at the table. We'll go back to -- is it Mica Bevington, who's in Takoma Park?

And then -- and so we'll also -- after you, Ms. Bevington, Marcia Morris can be ready and then Paul Huebner can be ready. Thank you.

We can't hear you there.

MS. BEVINGTON: How about that?

CHAIR HARRIS: Great. Thank you.

MS. BEVINGTON: Perfect. My name is Mica. I am a resident in Ward 2. I live two blocks from the Flower Avenue District. My comments are in particular around this section of the plan. I going to -- I -- other people have said otherwise, but I feel this process has actually not been rushed. I appreciate the efforts to engage neighbors, which reach back -- and in my experience, in our neighborhood, way back into the middle of the pandemic, when

we had calls with the university, kind of teeing up what was to come. I have a few concerns, but these are not red lights. And I'm going to extend some trust in regard to these concerns, trust to the county and the city to answer my questions and my neighbors' concerns and questions.

When and if developers ever turn up questions around public transport and roads, when the buildings come onto the drawing boards, I need assurance that the county and city will finally answer my neighborhood's serious concerns about traffic flows, questions around enrollment in our public schools. tight right now. It would be great to welcome new students, but where? And questions around stormwater runoff. We are at the confluence of two creeks in our neighborhood, and this flower district is right at the top of the between them.

And I know this is odd in this moment in time, but with trust, I look forward

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to the new zoning and to probably waiting decades for any developer to show up. But I hope with transparency, that when we get to that next point, we achieve some new zoning in this area, that the city and the council are ready to meet our pretty regular concerns about traffic flow, stormwater, and schools. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms. Bevington.

Next from Takoma Park, we'll have Marcia Morris.

MS. MORRIS: Hi. Thank you for letting me comment. My name is Marcia Morris.

I've been at 7710 Garland Avenue for 25 years, and I had several concerns: green space, height limits around the edge of the plan, stormwater, and net loss of affordable and rent-stabilized housing. Green spaces, my property is -- I'm on Garland, which is directly behind the university property on Greenwood. But right behind my house is a city right of way, which

is a wonderful green space that is not really recognized anywhere. It's trees, it's used by the deer every day. We have foxes in the spring. We have rabbits. There are owls.

It's really lovely, and it's not recognized and, surely, is only one of many places like that within this zoning area, which are green and valuable but not recognized. I would like to see that kind of my — the space behind my house recognized and I'd like to see spaces like that recognized in the zoning plan, so we don't lose them.

Height limits are important around the edges of the zoning plan. The university property on Greenwood comes right up to the back of my property, and it's now zoned or planned to be zoned for 55 feet height. The houses in our neighborhood along Greenwood are one and two-story. It's a long-established, warm, and welcoming neighborhood, and having those kinds of buildings put right up against us is not compatible with the kind of life we'd

like to have.

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I heard someone brush Stormwater. that question aside, but if they lived on Garland, behind the university, they would not be brushing it aside. Runoff from the land of the university has caused flooding in our yards and our houses. We had several meetings with the university and the city, but nothing came of those. I think the only people who got any relief were those who filed lawsuits against the university. This new construction is going to bring endless, endless numbers of projects, and my concern is are we, as homeowners, going to be forced to fight against each and every project and its problems on our own? I'd like to see the city and the county acknowledge our problems and be -- support us.

I have just one point. Net loss of affordable and rent-stabilized housing, that's not part of the Flower Avenue District but it's part of what's happening in Takoma Park. And I would like to see there be a requirement that

there is no net loss of that kind of house.

Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms. Morris.

And next will be Paul Huebner.

Look MR. HUEBNER: to you buddy? All right. You got it. Good evening. Huebner, Takoma Park, Maryland. As both a past president of the AIA and another noteworthy local resident have said, the MMPA is neither minor nor master nor an amendment. massive upzoning and permits an insidious form of urban removal. Any approvable plan should follow what residents are rightly trying create. Low and missing-middle-income housing on the old hospital fight alone. Instead, we get a blunt instrument that lacks any analysis of potential displacement of local residents, any analysis of traffic, stormwater, schooling, environmental impacts. Noticeably, neglects any equity analysis.

We asked but have not received any

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actual plan for a number of housing units per
sector. The plan merely acknowledges the
addition of some 3,500 new housing units, which
equates to nearly 9,000 new residents. Many of
us are mystified as to why the Maple Avenue
Corridor is even in this so-called plan. The
current MMPA will not just keep lower and
middle-income folks out. It will likely
displace many existing residents and will
effectively keep them out for the first five-
year period that any rent controls are
eliminated. The MMPA flips the script on
Montgomery County zoning, which has been
traditionally used to add residential units to
commercial corridors. The current plan allows
more and bigger commercial buildings into the
residential area that currently provides the
lowest per unit housing costs of any area in
Montgomery County. The allowance for these
massive new heights will increase property
values and further increase costs to build and
to rent. It will also potentially allow the

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most destructive thing that could possibly occur, tearing down the existing buildings on the Maple Avenue Corridor due to higher land values, increased density and commercial development. This plan will allow, by right, any developer to build anything included in the new zoning, unless specifically precluded in writing. Please consider carefully.

Why was the Maple Avenue corridor included at all? What specific protections will be afforded in writing to protect especially those residents, in current rentcontrolled units and to protect all city rent controls? When and how will you require a detailed and comprehensive environmental analysis? When and how will you require a detailed traffic study? When and how will you discuss a realistic stormwater management plan? And when will you release a detailed plan with the housing units and locations? I know how important affordable, stable, and safe housing is. in rental apartments. Ι grew up Му

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1	mother, sister, and I moved nine times during
2	my childhood, but I was one of the lucky ones.
3	I got to continue attending the same schools.
4	Protect the people in our community. Thank you
5	for your time.
6	CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr.
7	Huebner.
8	I think we just have one more person
9	in Takoma Park, so why don't we just take that
10	person and then we'll go back here. So Richard
11	Masterson.
12	MR. BENAS: Actually, you called my
13	name a half-hour ago and I am in Takoma Park.
14	CHAIR HARRIS: Who's that? Okay.
15	Who Richard Masterson, please
16	MR. BENAS: You called my name a
17	half-hour ago.
18	CHAIR HARRIS: You'll be next, sir,
19	after this person.
20	Mr. Richard Masterson, please.
21	Thank you.
22	MR. MASTERSON: Richard Masterson,

Ward 5 here in Takoma Park. And I want to thank the professional planners for coming up with something. I don't think the citizens themselves would've taken the initiative to develop anything. As diverse as we are, our interests and daily habits and practices would not do -- initiate such a thing. But what we need is for these professionals, who have their their skills in designing interests and developments, to work with the people who live The buildings are not going to be built for financiers. They're going to be built for I agree with most of those people residents. that are advising caution on several issues. Ι would like to see something about the streets' traffic. The bridge across Sligo Creek has about 12-inch turn radius on one corner. have three-foot Most streets in town turn radii, which is still way too small if you drive anything with over a 10-foot wheelbase, which is anything.

The exclusion of rent control for

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five years after building is, apparently, a law that's widespread, but I don't understand it. I think a building is built in the market it's built in. I don't know why they get five years to manipulate things. And any roof or paving is something that sheds water and takes water out of the groundwater. Most water supply, most vegetation relies on groundwater, so we're defeating ourselves when we allow stormwater to escape. And I haven't heard a lot of detail from the Washington Adventist Hospital and the Washington Adventist University about what their sites are for that Green Hill acreage. Do they plan on high-rise schools? Are they going to stop with the buildings they have and consider that the end of their physical growth? Is all their property going to be put on the Is that what they want? market?

And building heights. We don't picture ourselves a high-rise urban center. We would like some staging, some stepping in those heights so that we don't have 10-story

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1 buildings next to two-story houses. And I'll leave it to the architects to define that and 2 3 explain it. We like sunlight and we like 4 green, and we like to be able to meet people. 5 I would like to see that our designers discuss all the details and of otherwise 6 as many 7 unintended consequences a professional designer can predict before construction is initiated. 8 9 Thank you. 10 CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. 11 Masterson. Thank you very much. So next we'll have Mr. Stuart Benas. 12 13 MR. BENAS: Thank you. 14 Thank CHAIR HARRIS: for you 15 waiting. 16 MR. BENAS: Ι live on Greenwood 17 I've been here for about nine years 18 block from where and I'm about one this 19 upzoning will occur. I find the plan, frankly, 20 naive, and the people of downtown Takoma Park 21 who support it probably will be unaffected by 22 Putting 3,500 units in this area will it.

drive most of the traffic onto Flower Avenue and the surrounding streets. When we put a few stop signs on Flower Avenue just to create some traffic smoothing, what I noticed immediately was that Greenwood Avenue and Garland Avenue became racetracks during rush hour. I dare any member of the planning council to come to the corner of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch at 5:00 p.m. and watch the reckless way in which people try to get through that light within three cycles. The streets in this neighborhood are too narrow and do not support any increase in growth, much less what has been proposed. This plan is naive.

I would recommend that you limit the growth to three stories or to townhouses only.

The -- once this goes on the market, you are drawing people from the -- with housing that is within a mile of DC will be advertised as walking distance to two metros. It will drive prices out of sight. The idea that this would be affordable housing is not realistic. I

would encourage the people that live in Takoma Park to go ahead and widen streets like Park Valley so there are other ways out of t.he neighborhood to support this proposed growth. I think that Park Valley makes an excellent exit from this neighborhood. I think widening it to four lanes would be a great way to start this project off. I want people to volunteer to have their houses eminent domain so that we have the roads necessary to accommodate half the proposed growth.

I just do not understand how this plan was proposed and I think that it needs to be rejected outright. I think that the idea of studied and a the plan needs to be more realistic plan put forth to the people that be affected by it before anyone even considers voting on it. Or we can start killing kids on Greenwood and Garland, which is going to happen with the traffic what's It's your call. overflow.

CHAIR HARRIS: Yeah. Thank you.

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We'll now have five more people to come up front here.

Mr. Martin Shore, Colleen Cordes,

Jennifer Martin, Robert Goldman, Mark Brochman.

Okay. Okay. We'll start with Mr. Shore.

Hello. MR. SHORE: Yeah. My name I've lived in Takoma Park is Martin Shore. since 2009, but I really discovered Takoma Park to University of Maryland went architecture school in 1989, so I've known the neighborhood for a long time. And the first thing I noticed about Takoma Park was, when I came from the University of Maryland, all of a Hampshire Avenue sudden, you reach New East-West Highway, and you know, four-lane highway becomes a two-lane highway. And it immediately told me that something's different Takoma about Park. That was а conscious decision to keep that someone made, In fact, all the highways and highway narrow. all the streets in Takoma Park that are major at routes are two lanes, and that's important.

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It's one of the things that gives Takoma Park its character.

Yeah, I want to talk also about the environment a little bit. You know, first of all, I want to say everybody who went before me, they said it so eloquently. I'm so happy I live in this neighborhood with so many talented people. You know, the worst intersection besides the one at Piney Branch, which the man said before, is at the Sligo Creek Parkway in Maple. Awful. Awful, awful, awful. I think the man said that it has a three-degree turn. It can't take the traffic. Plus, at certain times of the year, I don't know if you know this, but it floods. You can't use it because it floods. So I just wanted to say those two things.

Secondly, I'm an architect. I'm not against development. I appreciated the mayor's notion about preserve, and the woman from the Historic Preservation Council. I have -- my -- I work at an agency that also the mission is to

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preserve. I'm in the camp where the greatest preservation, the most important sustainable building is the building that's already there. We have buildings that define the character of the university and the hospital. By the way, I did develop a plan. I'll share it with you. And you have school buildings there, use the -do you need more schoolrooms, use that schoolrooms. You have apartment houses there, double-loaded corridors with bathrooms. That's why office buildings can't be transferred to apartments easily, they don't have enough bathrooms. Hospitals, each room has It would be -- it makes reusing and bathroom. recycling that apartments much easier. as Anyway, that's all. Thank you. Thank you very much. CHAIR HARRIS: Next is Colleen Cordes. Good evening. Colleen MS. CORDES: Sorry. Colleen Cordes, Takoma Park Cordes.

Resident, former chair of the city's

Commission. First, I urge you to remove the

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Maple Avenue and Municipal Districts from the plan area. No persuasive rationale has been offered for their inclusion, yet it poses a grave threat of displacement for current Maple This may be the most affordable residents. neighborhood in the entire county. It's also rare affordable neighborhood, rich public services and amenities, good schools, three parks, bus line access, and a wide range of city services, all within walking distance. gamble with this neighborhood's through careless upzoning would reinforce systemic racism.

Second, please oppose the racially and economically inequitable goal for tree canopy cover that is proposed for the plan area. The proposed goal of 45 percent directly conflicts with the citywide tree canopy goal set by the city council in 2020 of 60 percent.

A 45 percent goal is unfair, especially given the severity of the heat island effect in the plan area documented in the draft plan. It

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would continue the inequitable access to trees many benefits for residents of the plan area. The estimated tree canopy in the area now is That's well below about 43 percent. current city average of about 58 percent. the plan area is Appendix В shows majority residents of color and majority residents with low and modest incomes. The city council has set a clear policy of prioritizing planting and preserving trees in areas with a lower canopy to improve equity. This is one such area. expanding tree canopy should be prioritized in Instead, it undermines Takoma Park's the plan. citywide goal. Again, please avoid perpetuating systemic racism. Raise this goal to 60 percent.

Third, the draft states the plan could yield as many as 3,500 additional housing units. However, it does not calculate how many new units each of the three districts would contribute. That's obviously critical information for planning purposes. Please ask

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the planning staff to prioritize doing that calculation and sharing it with you and the public, the city council, and city staff ASAP.

and last, Fourth the proposed upzonina unwisely allows redevelopment of almost all sites in the plan area for 100 percent commercial uses. The reason given: to increase flexibility for future development. Such extreme flexibility looks like a plan not to have a plan. For example, the old hospital site offers the prime opportunity for housing, urgently needed affordable to with middle, moderate, residents and incomes, but the plan allows it to be developed with no residential units at all. That major housing opportunity could be lost to totally commercial uses like a new hotel. Even worse could happen to Maple Avenue. Almost through. many residents, a permanent Displacement of actual loss in affordable housing could be lost to some commercial use, again, for example, a hotel. Please correct that glaring flaw in the

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plan as well. Thank you so much.

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CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

And next is Ms. Jennifer Martin.

MS. MARTIN: Good evening. I arew up in Takoma Park. My family moved there in I am here tonight representing Historic 1963. Takoma, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve the Heritage of Takoma Park, Maryland, and the Takoma Park neighborhood of the District of Columbia. Having reviewed the proposed minor master plan for the Washington Adventist Property and Maple Avenue, we urge the planning board to focus solely on development of the hospital site at this time. We fully support redevelopment of the site of the family hospital but urge the planning board to consider rightsizing the minor master plan the with to be compatible surrounding neighborhood, particularly paying attention to the scale and architectural character of the existing adjacent buildings, limited street capacity, the potential environmental and

impact on Sligo Creek. At the same time, we strongly recommend the changes in zoning on Maple Avenue from Sligo Creek Parkway to Philadelphia Avenue be removed from the minor master plan.

Perhaps the affordable most neighborhood in the whole of Montgomery County, as many have mentioned, Maple Avenue provides housing for lower and moderate income residents and is home to hundreds of families. The rental units serve people of many backgrounds and ethnicities, including many recent arrivals is a harmonious to this country. Ιt welcoming community that deserves stability and affordability. We are concerned that the minor master plan, as currently written, threatens to displace these residents and introduce gentrification at their expense. Changes to current zoning restrictions would open the door to developers who could then tear down replace existing buildings with new and much larger structures. Owners would be able to

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market rates for five years charge before Park's highly Takoma regarded rent stabilization restrictions would apply, further reducing possibilities for affordable housing. Moreover, with the introduction of upzoning and the resulting increase in height and density along Maple, this would erode the more gradual transitions moving from multi-family housing to the single-family homes on adjoining streets.

Some argue that there's been no major new development in the city of Takoma Park for many decades. This may be true, but that's because we're already densely developed, greater proportion of affordable with a moderately priced rental units than any other segment of the county. Moreover, the on Takoma, DC, side, there's significant redevelopment underway adjacent to the Takoma Station and at Laurel and Metro Avenues, that will impact our roads and other infrastructure on the Maryland side. This increased density must be taken into account

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when making plans in the city of Takoma Park. Finally, our understanding is that Montgomery County land use planning follows the principle that upzoning should be considered for sites public transit hubs. close to Neither t.he Corridor the Adventist Maple Avenue nor adjacent property is near or to a station, therefore the density of development the minor is proposed in master plan practice elsewhere inconsistent with current across the county. As a mature suburb, the city of Takoma Park deserves sensitive planning to preserve its affordability and livability as a diverse community with a rich architectural and social heritage. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

Mr. Goldman.

MR. GOLDMAN: Mr. Chair and members of the planning board, thank you for this opportunity to address you on the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment. My name is Robert Goldman, and I am president of Montgomery

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Housing Partnership, or MHP. By way background, MHP is one of the largest nonprofit affordable housing providers in Montgomery County. Our mission is to preserve and expand quality affordable housing in Montgomery County and the region. Our success over the years has result of taking a comprehensive approach to developing affordable housing that integrates three things: housing people, empowering families, and strengthening neighborhoods. We serve over 4,000 residents and provide close to 3,000 quality affordable homes.

MHP is one of the largest multifamily property owners within the master plan's boundaries. We own five separate properties, comprising over 400 homes within the master of plan area, most which are located along Maple Avenue. Between our ownership another affordable housing group's ownership along Maple Avenue, the city and the county can assured that there will be affordable be

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housing in the community for the long term.

MHP does not have any current plans to redevelop its properties now, but we do support the zoning being recommended by staff as it would provide an opportunity to increase the amount of income-restricted affordable housing if redevelopment is deemed necessary.

As properties along Maple Avenue continue to age and come to the end of their useful life, Takoma Park will face a number of very difficult challenges. Additional density will provide a tool for redevelopment over the redevelopment, if it long term. Any occur, should be done in a way to minimize and The site of the former prevent displacement. Washington Adventist Hospital provides an exciting opportunity for the community. We urge the planning board to incentivize encourage affordable housing on this site. site represents a generational opportunity to address the acute need for affordable housing in Downcounty and enhance the quality of life

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for all city residents.

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We are generally in support of the recommendations in the affordable housing section of the plan. We especially support the language seeking to increase the amount of new affordable housing, prioritize two and threeand encourage developers of bedroom MPDUs, lots to partner with private residential nonprofit affordable housing providers to reach deeper levels of affordability. While support the general comments in the early part of the plan suggesting the encouragement of no net loss of affordable housing, we did not see that in either the affordable housing section or the district recommendations.

In addition, we note that in many of the -- or some or many of the CR zones in the county, especially in areas where there has been an increase in density, the county has been moving to increase the MPDU requirements to 15 percent. Given the higher densities being provided to owners in this plan, we would

encourage a 15 percent MPDU requirement instead of the 12.5 percent currently being proposed. Lastly, we recommend strengthening the language in the plan regarding pilots or payment in lieu of taxes agreements as a tool to preserve and expand affordable housing within the master In 2021, Montgomery County revamped its plan. policies and procedures around pilots provide for automatic tax abatements that meet affordability levels. Whereas in the city of Takoma Park, these agreements are executed on a provides case-by-case basis, which less certainty for pilots. The new county policy -and currently the city has put on hold all requests for pilots. The new county policy has had a significant positive impact the on ability of nonprofits to acquire naturally occurring affordable housing. And we believe that strongly encouraging the use of Buy Right pilots in Takoma Park will help to preserve existing affordable housing within the master plan areas boundaries. Thank you for

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CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Goldman. Next will be Mark Brochman.

MR. KLEIN: Hello. My name is Mark I live at 8305 Roanoke Avenue in Ward 5, and I've lived in Takoma Park for over I'm looking forward to affordable 25 years. housing at the old hospital site. I understand the need for rezoning on that site. Ideally a height limit of 75 feet would be enforced in to keep the cost down so that resulting apartments will be affordable housing instead of luxury apartments. Specific to the changing building codes along Naval Avenue I may have missed it, but in the plan, I didn't see the part of the plan that states where people will live temporarily while the building is being constructed to replace their current one. And I didn't see the part of the plan that covers the financial assistance that would be provided to them if their temporary housing costs more per month than what they had been paying.

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And I didn't see the part of the plan that states who would be paying expenses for the tenants to move out and then back in when each project is complete. And I looked, but I didn't see the part of the plan that provides financial assistance to residents during those first five years without rent control. I'm sure the information is in there somewhere because know that people we aren't going to just stand at the bus stop while the crew is putting up steel beams. They got to live somewhere. Don't get me wrong, I know you guys have worked really hard for the past two years on this. So the plan must be comprehensive in scope. I'm sure since, you've been so kind as to invite us here to give public comments on the plan that it includes things, like a traffic all the necessary analysis for how new construction will affect our local streets or an environmental study of how the project will affect the existing green

spaces in the area, as well as the nearby Sligo Creek.

And I have no doubt you've included equity analysis ensure that you an to promoting greater equity, diversity inclusion within our community because that's the kind of what Takoma Park is all about. maybe I missed that too. Or did these things come later after the new building codes have been improved, after the time for public comment to make any tangible recommendations to the plan has already passed? I'm sure all that information is in the plan now, it's got to be, and if it's not, it should be. Thank you for your time.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

So I think we're taking everyone at the table.

We'll go for the next group. Dennis Jones.

Oh, Denise Jones, I'm sorry. Jim Schulman.

Seth Grimes. Dan Reed. Okay. Oh, so is every

-- is anyone that's here that hasn't come to -
come up to speak? Okay. Why don't you come

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up, please? Please come on up. Yeah. Excuse me. What is your name, please? Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. So let's do these three, please. So Denise Brock -- Denise Jones, I'm sorry.

MS. JONES: Dear Chairman Harris and Planning Board, my graduate school daughter and I were talking today about a chapter she read about justice focused coaching, often aimed at transforming systems that are inequitable, unjust and insidious in power dynamics. immediately made me think of the city of Takoma Park and the Montgomery County Planning Board. We acknowledge the privileges must and identities we bring to our working and community relationships. And this is the heart of my objections to the minor master plan for Takoma Park. I am a longtime resident, a small business owner who lives on Maple Avenue. raised my daughter there and some years ago, I formed a tenant association to gather tenants to build trust and strengthen community before

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my building had a major renovation that was extremely disruptive. However, the pandemic did us in and today, I don't believe there are any tenants associations on Maple Avenue, which brings me back to my concerns of equity and power dynamics.

Why was this plan extended to Maple Avenue? In doing so you have created a classic gentrifying displacement plan. Gentrification Urban defined in US Housing and as а displacement Development report, of lower income families in urban defines areas, gentrification as a form of neighborhood change that occurs when higher income groups move into low-income areas potentially altering the cultural and financial landscape of the original neighborhood. Best practices on the ground have varied, but they're all strengthened by four key strategies that could address displacement of lower income families longtime residents in urban and areas alleviate the housing pressures on

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affordability and community resistance to change. Number one, preserve existing affordable housing. And you have -- we -- you've gotten a lot of questions, the board and your -- this board and the city council, but you haven't really told us how you're going to protect the homes of the current residents.

Number two, encourage greater housing development, including, but not limited to, affordable housing. I'm glad to see that our city council and many more residents have development been in support of the of reasonable height at the hospital site. existing community residents. This engage effort wasn't effectively conducted, not without centering the community. I'm active in Takoma Park but did not hear anything about this plan until this spring. Number four, take a broader look and use regional rather than localized strategies. Why is the county looking to solve a housing shortage in this developed dense corner of the county

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rather than developing acreage up county? Why must Maple Avenue bear the density impacts in building more housing? Why are the apartment dwellers losing the benefits of tree canopy in the reduction from the city's 60 percent policy to 40 percent. And lastly, why is the planning board determining the culture of the place we call home with its broad-brush approach of possible opportunities. Thank you for your consideration.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

Next, Mr. Schulman.

MR. SCHULMAN: Thank you. My name is Jim Schulman and the Alliance for Regional Cooperation, ARC, which I lead, is a nonprofit organization focused on sustainable regional economic development. The proposed plan amendments under consideration addressed many factors that can heavily impact quality of life for residents. And ARC does observe that there are a number of elements in the plan support community sustainability, including the

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green promenade, revitalizing the hospital site, the goal of protecting Sligo Creek, and on one of the very last pages, allowing food production and processing as permitted uses on the former hospital site. Given, however, the various eco crises it is now obvious that human civilization faces, any plan that does stringently stipulate the preservation of mature trees in the manner -- oh, sorry. the creation of more green space and a plan that does not incentivize the adaptive reuse of buildings, like Marty Shore mentioned, or is disconnected from sound transit infrastructure otherwise works planning counter to or Montgomery County's strong climate action plan.

Any of those circumstances should be considered by this commission to be dead on arrival. As ARC has testified before similar boards in Arlington, Virginia and the District of Columbia, we support and I -- forgive me for changing the negative to the positive in my -- from my written text. So it's positive now

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that we support to the greater provision of a variety of housing types, mixed use or mixed income neighborhoods, the adoption of alternatives to auto dominated land uses, and land use policies that will actually serve those with great financial need, whether or not they happen to own property. ARC, however, has strong concerns about the zoning that has been proposed. We consider the proposed across the board upzoning to be a form of quality-of-life confiscation that will eventually deliver an unprecedented increase in property values and tax dollars yet will displace the very people it folks claims protect historically to marginalized by government policies.

Land value inflation will only increase gentrification. Most importantly, we feel that any commercial zoning added to the properties with existing predominant residential uses limited to be one or floors at grade or above the residential floors, to prevent the wholesale conversion of

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Maple Avenue into a commercial strip. ARC endorses concerns that have been or will be brought to your attention by my esteemed design colleague, Carl Elefante, who I understand has submitted written testimony. ARC also endorses concerns articulated by the Climate Action Coffee, the Community Equity Coalition and Community Vision for Takoma. We appreciate your willingness to receive our input. Thank you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much,
Mr. Schulman. Next, Ms. Laurie McGilvray,
please.

MS. MCGILVRAY: Good evening. My name is Laurie McGilvray and I'm a longtime resident of Takoma Park. I'm also active in climate and equity issues at the county and state levels, and I use this lens to review the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan. I'll highlight four points from my written comments. First, housing, the proposed one size fits all CRT zoning in the Maple Avenue District conflicts

with some of the existing buildings, topography, proximity to Sligo Creek and the protection of affordable housing. It also is unlike other county plans that have zoning that fits with nuanced the existing neighborhood while also adding housing. An is the Forest Glen Montgomery Hills example Sector Plan, which retains some existing residential zoning and reserves the greatest density and 120-foot heights for parcels adjacent to the Metro, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all high-density CRT zoning.

I suggest Takoma Park could benefit from this fine-tuned approach, such as revising the zoning to allow flexibility for affordable housing nonprofits to add density while treating existing three to seven story condominiums differently than hiqh rise apartments retaining, residential zoning for two to four story garden style apartments and adding commercial development in service, not in lieu of residential uses. We'd need an

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approach which protects affordable housing and avoids making it harder for tenants to use the city's right to purchase law due to an increase in property values that are out of their reach.

Second, commercial development, the proposed CR zoning is perplexing. It would allow existing residential buildings replaced and new buildings to be constructed 100 percent commercial. This is contrary to the plan's goal of achieving no net loss of affordable housing. And I recommend the CR zones be limited to C1 or less. Climate, in general, the greenest building is one that's already built. While the plan notes the need for reinvestment in older buildings, it only recommends the city explore incentives and policies. Ιt doesn't mention the county's building energy performance standards new resources such as the Green Bank and Inflation Reduction Act, which can improve and extend the life of buildings. Regarding new buildings, the planning fails to encourage all electric,

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net-zero, passive house construction and doesn't mention forthcoming updates to the county's building and energy codes. I recommend the plan encourage climate friendly construction and retrofit, discuss the county's goals and regulations, and reference available resources.

Regarding storm water, a growing climate problem, I recommend revising the plan and zoning for appropriately sized infill developments, such as on parking lots and new construction to reduce storm water runoff to while the climate Sligo Creek. Finally, assessment is due seven days before the county council hearing, it would be very beneficial to have it sooner. And I recommend the draft climate assessment be completed and made publicly available before you make а final Transportation, as mentioned, need a comprehensive transportation analysis. Takoma Park is a wonderfully diverse community, we want to retain that diversity, and so I

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1 recommend that the planning board could make 2 consistent with my changes recommendations. Thank you. 3 4 CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much. 5 think we've taken everyone here. Just confirming, anyone else here has 6 not spoken 7 that wants to speak or that is signed up to 8 speak? Okay. We're going to go now, and I 9 think everyone in the city of Takoma Park has 10 spoken that is signed up to speak. Is that 11 correct? 12 MS. WOLCHIK: No, no, it isn't. 13 CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. We're --14 MS. WOLCHIK: This is Sharon Wolchik 15 and I've been here since 6:45 and I would like 16 to have my three minutes virtually. 17 CHAIR HARRIS: No, no. We're going 18 to go to the Teams after. I just want to make 19 sure I got everyone at the municipal building. 20 Oh, so we have one more. Okay. 21 MS. WILLIAMS: We do not. I am just 22 clarifying complete with that the we are

1	testimony from the Takoma Park Community
2	Center.
3	CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. Great. Thank
4	you so much. We'll go to Teams now.
5	Catherine, where should I start? Should I
6	start with Troy Jacobs? Yeah. Okay. We'll do
7	this order, so you can be ready. Troy Jacobs,
8	Ashley Brookshier, Seth Grimes, Dan Reed and
9	Tom Gagliardo.
LO	MS. WOLCHIK: I still am not
1	included, and I have been
L2	CHAIR HARRIS: Yes. Who?
L3	MS. WOLCHIK: Sharon Wolchik.
L4	CHAIR HARRIS: Who is speaking
L5	again?
L6	MS. WOLCHIK: Sharon Wolchik, and I
L7	have been here since 6:45. I'd like to at
L8	least know I'm on somebody's list to speak
_9	virtually. I didn't hear my name mentioned.
20	Are there still other groups?
21	CHAIR HARRIS: Yes. Yes. We
22	checked you in. You're, yeah, you're number 48

on the list that -- so yes, we haven't forgotten you. You -- we -- you will -- we will not leave without you. So we're number 33, Troy Jacobs. Welcome, Troy.

Thank you, Chair. MR. JACOBS: to the board for giving me thank you this I live at 8010 Flower opportunity to speak. Avenue in the Flower Avenue District of the minor master plan. I am -- on two sides of my property are businesses. And I want to say that, you know, from my perspective, I do not want to have further fragmentation of the plan because the coherency is very important. I have right now is piecemeal development and zoning, and that has been a real frustration. This plan offers coherency that doesn't exist currently. The second thing that I would say is that I'm very supportive of the direction is the minor master plan qoing, amendment. You know, what I am looking for is the maximum amount of flexibility in terms of density, in of height other terms and

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considerations, to address the uncertainties that we will have to deal with in the future, so that we can consider all options on the table going forward.

And there will be a time and place will have hopefully development where we proposals that we will have to consider. at that time, it will be very appropriate, in my mind, to delve into the minutia. this time, I am just very supportive of the plan going forward. The third thing that I would say is that, and others have spoken to is that we do have this, а racial equity problem in the city of Takoma Park. And this is not something that is being generated from the minor master plan. This is actually, if we are to believe the census data, it's been 40 years in the making. And while it is great to hear from the White residents of the city of Takoma Park and from the residents who've lived here for decades, it is very in -- we need to understand, and we need to know what has become

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over the last 40 years of the renters, the Black and Brown persons, the immigrants that were born here or settled here, you know, where did these people go?

Because our population has static for about 40 years. Did they go to Silver Spring? Did they go to Prince George's County? Did they go elsewhere? This is a shared problem. It is not a problem that the Montgomery planning needs to take on bу themselves and it's not incumbent in the plan. shared responsibility and mean, it is a hopefully going forward and I will commend the efforts of the city and the Montgomery planning in terms of bringing in voices, but we will need to incorporate these voices in the planning and hopefully in the development proposals that we'll get in the future. you.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you. Mr. Jacobs. Next is Ashley Brookshier.

MS. BROOKSHIER: Good evening. I

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live on Carroll Avenue, just over the bridge
from the plan area. I'm very excited about the
vision for the future of Takoma Park that is
offered by the draft minor master plan
amendment, and I hope the board will vote to
support it in full. Although I am speaking on
my own behalf tonight, I did help to draft and
also signed the letter of support from Takoma
For All, which is a group of Maryland and DC
neighbors supporting a sustainable, equitable,
transit-oriented community that includes plenty
of homes. My points tonight will perhaps,
unsurprisingly, since I drafted the initial
version of that letter, mirror those in that
written testimony, which was signed by 100
names. Takoma Park has to do our part to
alleviate our region's housing crisis. These
zoning updates are going to make plenty of
are going to make building plenty of new homes
possible, while also giving property owners the
flexibility they need to balance housing and
commercial interests.

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1 The board should not reduce 2 building heights or take any other action that 3 would limit the number of housing on this site. 4 especially important, This is given the 5 appalling fact that no new multi-family housing has been built in Takoma Park since the 1970s. 6 7 before born, That is Ι was and 8 unacceptable. Zoning on the Adventist site is 9 a generation opportunity, in 10 cannot mess it up by thinking small or caving 11 to a loud, but unrepresentative and ultimately selfish minority. I love living in Takoma Park 12 13 and I want as many people as possible to join 14 me and to have the same opportunities that my 15 family and I have living here. I'm excited 16 about the potential new businesses that the 17 will mixed-use zoning permit in my 18 Ι look forward to walking neighborhood. 19 towards them and spending lots of my family's 20 time and money in the plan area. 21 But the part that I am most excited

about is the green promenade. I have a four-

month-old son, and while we are close enough for him to eventually walk to school, there is no universe in which I would let him do so on the current configuration of Maple Avenue. Driver's speed, run stop signs, ignore lights or stop signs, crosswalks, excuse me, it's extremely dangerous. My hope is that a new configuration of the road will be safer for children, like my son, to be able to get to and from school independently. I think the promenade is going to be a beautiful sustainable space that will connect our whole community. In fact, I think the entire plan draft will promote a sustainable connection of different areas of our city and I urge the board to resist the calls from the usual voices to preserve our city in amber. In order to Takoma Park values of live our inclusivity, sustainability and diversity, we have to allow some change. And in this case, that means advancing this plan with minimal provisions. Thank you.

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CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Ms
Brookshier. Next is Seth Grimes.

MR. GRIMES: Good evening. you, Mr. Chair Harris. I am Seth Grimes. a resident of Takoma Park and a former city council member. I don't want to bury the lead, I believe that the hospital site -- the former hospital site will support housing density, including buildings of 12 to 17 stories, matching others in the immediate area, without damaging property values or quality of life. In fact, I believe it will increase quality of life by welcoming new neighbors to Takoma Park, to provide housing that is much needed in our region, and I think that the impact is very manageable. I contrast this particular hearing today with one I testified on -- during -- in Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master May, the Plan, Dan Reed, who follows me, testified then, I think maybe there were maybe five or six people, not 48 or more who testified. I recall that that master plan recommendations included

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road diets and understanding that we want to transform areas by making them more friendly to pedestrians and businesses locally. And this plan before us today will do that with the higher density zoning and the commercial provisions that are part of the recommendations. So I wholeheartedly support them.

Let's address equity concerns, which has been noted by Mr. Jacobs, have often been articulated by representing people other than the people articulating them. I think that this plan is inequitable in the sense that it should be actually a Takoma Park Master Plan The Takoma Park rewrite. Master Plan enacted in 2000, it's over 23 years old. That is past the normal life cycle for these things. What is inequitable is that we do not have the missing middle housing, the provisions multi-unit housing in residential neighborhoods are now single-family homes with the exception dwelling οf accessory units.

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Councilmember Will Jawando's ZTA, Zoning Text

Amendment 2007, a few years ago, which was
withdrawn pending the enactment of Thrive 2050,
would have created this.

We need a systematic redo of zonings throughout the area, including the residents of single family home neighborhoods, like the majority of people who spoke today, to reestablish housing, multi-unit housing, like the four apartments in the single family, what's now a single family house across the street from me when I first moved in. So that is the only equitability -- inequitable portion of this plan, that it is not a larger, covering all of Takoma Park.

I am very appreciative of Mr. Robert Goldman from Montgomery Housing Partnerships' statements that his mission-driven and other mission-driven nonprofits will not sell or tear down their properties and displace tenants. That is very reassuring. And I do note that the opposition here is from people who claim to

Τ	support development, but they have
2	consistently, in fact, actually opposed it,
3	whether it is in Takoma Junction, at the Takoma
4	Metro site. We have seen development,
5	including high density, succeed here in Takoma,
6	District of Columbia without disruption,
7	without overtaxing the roads, without
8	overtaxing the stormwater systems. This
9	project will succeed with CRT zoning on the
10	hospital site. I urge you to move forward on
11	that basis. Thank you for the opportunity to
12	speak.
13	CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr.
14	Grimes. Next is Dan Reed.
15	MR. REED: All right. Can you hear
16	me? Oh, can you see me? Hello.
17	CHAIR HARRIS: Can't see you but can
18	hear you.
19	MR. GRIMES: All right. Well,
20	that'll have to do. My name is Dan Reed and I
21	serve as the regional policy director for
22	Greater Greater Washington, a nonprofit that

racial, works to advance economic, environmental justice and land use, housing and transportation here in the DC area. And we draft enthusiastically support the recommendations for the Takoma Park Master Plan. The hospital has been gone for four years and this plan is a huge opportunity to reimagine the campus. You know, I live about three quarters of a mile from here and I pass by frequently, usually when walking my dog through Sligo Creek Park. I think about this lot, especially in light of place a of former redevelopment the Walter Reed Hospital in Takoma DC. That hospital is now home to hundreds of new homes, including deeply affordable homes for seniors, significant amounts of public open space in the big plaza, and new retail, including a daycare, a grocery store and restaurants. It's а community destination and it's a gathering place. We can and should expect the same with the former Adventist Hospital, and this

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plan lays the groundwork to do so. As many have noted this evening, this section of Takoma Park is home to a significant portion of the city's market rate and income restricted and subsidized affordable housing, which is asset in an increasingly expensive important Takoma Park is already gentrified, community. it is a very expensive place to live, that horse is out of the stable. We need more homes and more permanently affordable homes. And this plan addresses that by rezoning hospital for housing at heights appropriate to the very tall buildings around it, as well as adjusting the zoning along Maple Avenue preserve the buildings that are already there. And then having opportunities to provide more affordable homes, ensuring that longtime residents have the chance to stay here.

I should note that my understanding from actually reading the plan is that staff did extensive public reach on Maple Avenue, including hundreds of in-person interviews with

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residents, 70 percent of whom identified African, African American or Latinx. We can only infer that this plan represents, to some extent, what they asked for. For instance, this plan creates opportunities for shopping and retail at the hospital including a potential for full-service a grocery store, something Takoma Park does not and the public outreach found people have, would like. I personally would love a grocery store а 15-minute walk from house. my Residents in this -- one of the city's most vulnerable communities could now have access to healthy fresh food without having to travel a long distance. Finally, this plan also identifies ways to make this community more in the face of climate change. resilient Flooding is already an issue here and it'll get in the future. I can worse speak to this personally, as someone whose basement used to flood multiple times a year until I got it waterproofed.

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This plan recommends expanding the tree canopy, reducing impervious services that cause stormwater runoff, restoring natural areas along steep slopes to reduce erosion, and expanding access to green space. Notably it possibility of discusses the outdoor an gathering and performance space, something this community could also benefit from. As an more equitable and advocate for sustainable communities, and neighbor, Ι urqe the as а planning board to approve this plan. The greenest most equitable thing that we could do is put a bunch of apartment buildings in this community right by Sligo Creek, as opposed to putting -- pushing people to live, you know, 20, 30 miles away. If we want people to drive less and have a smaller carbon footprint, if you want people to have a chance to live in a very expensive and very gentrified community, we need to give these people more places to live to be the welcoming community Takoma Park says it is. So our organization looks forward

to working with you and the county council to find ways to make these recommendations in this master plan a reality sooner rather, rather than later. Thank you for your time.

VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Thank you, Mr. Reed. Next, Mr. Paul Chrostowski, three minutes.

Excellent MR. CHROSTOWSKI: pronunciation. You must be Polish at heart. My name is Paul Chrostowski, I'm a longtime resident of Montgomery County, and I'm also a consulting environmental scientist in private I conducted practice in Takoma Park. technical peer review of of the aspects proposed amendment that could impact health of the natural environment. My detailed review is contained in written testimony submitted separately.

The development contemplated in the amendment area as written, likely will result and a severe environmental impact to Takoma Park and adjacent neighborhoods. Because of

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t.he board should undertake this, comprehensive environmental assessment covering climate change, air pollutants, water urban heat island effect, resources, the conditions chemical geotechnical and contamination. This assessment should be publicly transparent, performed in consultation with stakeholders and subject to independent peer review. The amendment process should be paused until the assessment is completed and subsequent problems are mitigated. any Assessment of greenhouse gas emissions should a conceptual site conducted using lifecycle analysis include approach and emissions from --VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Paul, you are muted. You are muted. If I can call you, Paul. Okay. MR. CHROSTOWSKI: Yes. I don't know happened. just

repeat, assessment of greenhouse gas emissions

should be conducted using a conceptual site

At any rate,

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model lifecycle analysis approach and include emissions from demolition and construction, as well as operation, maintenance, and end of life of structures. This assessment should include a discussion of the probability that the city and county can reach their net-zero goals if the development proceeds. A strategic plan is needed for strong mayoral management in the including amended area, impacts on Relic Brashier's Run (phonetic), Sligo Creek and Long Branch. These sub watersheds are currently poorly delineated and need better delineation.

Goals for permeability, evapotranspiration, soil storage, water quality and active treatment should be considered. Maple Avenue especially vulnerable is And this problem will only increase flooding. as climate change alters rainfall patterns and Currently, there is no comprehensive flood vulnerability plan for Maple Avenue and adjacent low-lying areas. This information gap direly be needs to corrected prior to

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implementation of the plans in the amendment. A geotechnical and seismic stability study should be performed on the hospital property, adjoining Sligo Creek, and on areas along Maple Avenue proposed for large multi-use development. Finally, an environmental site assessment based on ASTM guidelines, including the extent of asbestos, lead, PCBs radionuclide contamination should be conducted for the hospital site. Thank you for your attention.

VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Thank you,
Paul. Next, Ms. Bethany Mandel. Are you here?
Ms. Mandel. Okay. So we go to Mr. Keith
Berner.

MR. BERNER: My name is Keith Berner. I live at 7902 Flower Avenue in the Flower Avenue District of the MMPA. I would like to highlight five objections I have to the current MMPA draft. First, the MMPA areas are too large and contain elements that are best addressed separately. The context and needs of

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Flower Avenue District are completely t.he different from the Maple Avenue and Municipal core districts. For example, the appropriateness of new construction on t.he Adventist campuses is obvious and has displacement implications, which is not true of the Maple Avenue District. The MMPA should be split into two or three separate plans. Second, the building heights proposed for the Flower Avenue District are out of scale with the surrounding communities. Buildings on the Adventist campuses should be limited to seven stories and step-downs to the periphery of the district should also be proportionally reduced and existing single-family homes on Flower, and Greenwood should not be up zoned at all.

Third, potential displacement and of disadvantaged people and people of color in the Maple Avenue District needs to be taken seriously. Protections need to be in place for existing tenants and types of tenants, and

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rezoning should take place mostly only to match current conditions. I'm skeptical of planner's that the MMPA would not negatively claims impact diversity in Takoma Park. Fourth, it is unacceptable for consideration of the MMPA to proceed without ample time for the community to examine detailed environmental and climate analyses. Further, traffic studies cannot be put off. Flower and Carroll Avenues were close to failure back when the WAH was proposing its expansion in the mid-aughts, an expansion that now seems quite modest. We need to know now if development will require widening these or any other streets and how adjacent properties will be impacted.

Fifth, the planner's actions thus be too accommodating of WAU'S to interests. Ι note that the hospital and university have had contentious relationships with the community for decades. I acknowledge the legitimacy of their profiting from oncampus development at this point but call on

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planners to show some more skepticism vis-a-vis their wish list. This city should allow and embrace development that is good for it, but it doesn't owe anything to WAU. I'm in favor of dense development on the WAU campus, including more people in Takoma Park and increasing the city's tax base. But the zoning changes in the MMPA are maximalist. They need to be scaled surroundings fit their address back to and community concerns. Thank you. VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Thank you. Chair Harris is back here. I can introduce the next one, but he can drink his water. Mr. Kit -- Marty Ittner. MR. ITTNER: Hi, can you hear me? VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Yes. Yes.

MR. ITTNER: Okay. Great. Hi, my name is Marty Ittner and I've lived for 23 years -- 23 years on Flower Avenue, next door to the Washington Adventist University. I believe that climate change should be the top priority to making land use choices in this

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valuable green space. I have three examples.

Number one, the parking lot that slopes down to Sligo Creek at the Carroll Avenue Bridge. Over the years, I have seen a sinkhole, mudslides, and ice on Sligo Creek Path beneath after heavy rains. I think the master plan should mark this area on the map as a heavily flooded zone that could possibly be mitigated with a pocket park planted with native trees and plants.

Number two, the university campus is home to beneficial, mature many trees, including а beautiful stately willow oak in front of the library building, which I deemed to be the most beautiful tree in Takoma Park. I have seen squirrels, hawks, and many other bird species in these trees. It takes decades for trees to reach this size, and I advocate for their preservation.

Number three, the service road behind the hospital and campus sits atop a very steep wooded bank above Sligo Creek. The service road should be removed and planted with

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1	green plants and trees to merge the hillside
2	and create a green filter to keep pollution out
3	of Sligo Creek. I feel strongly that these
4	types of environmental insights be documented
5	in the minor master plan. I'm happy to share
6	my views from over 20 years of walking my dogs
7	near Sligo Creek and Washington Adventist
8	University. Thank you.
9	CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.
10	Thank you very much. This is your next is
11	Jim Delagiacoma. If I pronounce that
12	correctly.
13	VICE CHAIR PEDOEEM: Is he not here?
14	CHAIR HARRIS: Is Jim available?
15	Okay. Laurie Y. Okay. Laurie Yancey. Is Ms.
16	Yancey available?
17	COMMISSIONER HEDRICK: She's coming,
18	one second.
19	CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. Thank you.
20	And next will be Kacy Kostiuk. Is Ms. Yancey
21	available?
22	MS. YANCEY: Hi, my name is Laurie

Т live on Greenwood Avenue Yancev. outside of the city of Takoma Park. My main concern is that our streets don't support enough traffic or parking for the residents of our community. I'm also very confused as to the part of the plan that is asking for more affordable housing. I don't understand how any new development housing could possibly be any more affordable than what our neighborhood already has to offer. We have hundreds of apartments around Flower, Greenwood, and Garland Avenue, up to Piney Branch Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, University Avenue, that are very affordable. A lot of the single-family homes have basement apartments. They have attic apartments. Those are for rent. I just do not believe that any new construction could possibly more -- be more affordable than what we already have to offer.

I'm not opposed to development. I do appreciate the new small businesses in our neighborhood, like Monsa Kunda and Koma,

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1	they're great restaurants. And I look forward
2	to having new small businesses in our
3	neighborhood, but we do not want commercial
4	businesses in our neighborhood. The stormwater
5	issue is also a problem. We have been
6	reporting that to the county for more than 10
7	years, and nothing has been done about the fact
8	that our street turns into an ice-skating rink
9	every winter. So I don't know how this plan
10	will alleviate that. That being said, I think
11	that the plan should focus on the Washington
12	Adventist Hospital campus and leave out the
13	Flower Avenue corridor. Thank you.
14	CHAIR HARRIS: Yeah. Thank you.
15	Ms. Yancey. Next is Kacy Kostiuk.
16	MS. KOSTIUK: Can you hear me?
17	CHAIR HARRIS: Yes.
18	MS. KOSTIUK: Okay. Thank you for
19	the opportunity to comment tonight. I'm a
20	resident of Takoma Park and I live about two
21	blocks from the Washington Adventist Hospital
22	site. So for that reason, I'm keenly

interested in ensuring that the vacant hospital space is used to increase housing and benefit the community. I'm excited about the -- what the plan proposes for that location. want to provide my comments on the importance increased density. of As you know, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has forecast a significant shortfall of housing in our region. We need to build more housing units in order to meet the need, and those housing units should be built in activity centers in close-in suburbs that have access to high occupancy transit exactly like We need increased density for equity and Park. climate reasons. We need more housing in places where people can walk, bike, or take transit to their jobs where they have access to great schools and city programs, and where they feel part of a vibrant community. That to be built somewhere it housing needs and should not be built in places that encourage more driving, more sprawl, and less connected

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For this reason, I strongly support zoning that increases density in Takoma Park. At the same time, it is important to consider the potential impact of new zonina on affordable housing and the potential displacement. These are real concerns need to be addressed. And I believe they can addressed alongside increased density by be working together with the city of Takoma Park staff, the city council, property owners and managers, and residents. Careful assessment and implementation of protections can protect against problems. should not Ιt be either/or. We know that we need more housing, and that increased housing density is a climate imperative. We also know that we need more affordable housing, and that people should not be displaced. We should seek solutions that allow us to achieve all of this. Some of Takoma Park's existing housing policies can be utilized to protect against negative outcomes.

Τ	And there could be additional
2	policies or plans that need to be created or
3	modified to ensure the outcomes we want, as
4	well as other types of support. This is our
5	opportunity to dream big and design a plan that
6	gives our community and region everything we
7	want. And what we want should be increased
8	density, no loss of affordable housing, in
9	fact, a gain would be good, and supports and
10	protections for people who currently live here.
11	I ask you to embrace all of those points,
12	including the importance of density as this
13	plan moves forward. Thank you very much.
14	CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.
15	Next is we had skipped Carter Dougherty.
16	MR. DOUGHERTY: Can you hear me?
17	CHAIR HARRIS: Yes.
18	MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Thank you
19	very much. Go Blair Field Hockey. They won
20	tonight. That just complicated my
21	participation earlier. So my name is Carter
22	Dougherty. I live in Takoma Park, a little

street called Crescent Place iust off Carroll. I think a lot of things in these hearings end up getting said over and over and So I don't want to waste your time saying what's already been said. I just wanted to say in broad brush something that I have emphasized to the Park City Council, Takoma which is that the main -- you hear a lot about racial equity and socioeconomic diversity and all those values that we all feel strongly. In my day job, Ι worked for nonprofit called Americans for Financial We were formed to fight Wall Street, to fight the financialization of the economy, and to pass significant reform of the financial system. And affordable housing and the conditions that that created are one of the things we work on.

Right now the thing that is most averse to racial equity and justice and housing is scarcity. We simply need to build more.

And I think when -- in situations like this,

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when you are balancing various competing interests that you really should err on the side of simply building because of all solutions we can think of for Montgomery County's housing shortage, all of them include simply building so that more people can have a roof over their head. So consider arguments, use your expertise, I'm of the mind that what I very much would like to see is our institutions function effectively. Ι don't want to be a technical expert who sits here and tells you exactly what to do. I believe you have the expertise to do the right thing. build.

Put roofs over people's heads and do it in Takoma Park. I live a quarter mile away from the area in question. I'm a regular user of Sligo Creek Park. Nothing would make me happier than to see more people in Takoma Park enjoying what I get to enjoy. Thank you. Enjoying what I get to enjoy.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you for your

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comments. I really appreciate them. Next is

Ismail Lapp-Kamara. Did I say that right,

Ismail?

MR. LAPP-KAMARA: Yeah. You said that correctly. Thank you so much. evening, everyone. My name is Ismail. I am a resident of the Maple Avenue District in Takoma I'm excited, but also skeptical about Park. the planned investment in Takoma Park. Before anything, I want express thanks to to mу everyone who has worked on this matter. However, I also have a few concerns regarding this plan. Number one, the mayor of Takoma Park in the last informational session for the Takoma Park Master Plan mentioned Takoma Park needing a cheap eats and/or dollar store. These stores do not represent what is needed in the community. We need quality and affordable businesses that provide quality employment and goods to our community. Development in Takoma Park should continue to promote and encourage small businesses to come into the community,

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not big corporations. We have enough of those in nearby Silver Spring, Langley Park, and Wheaton.

Over the years, Takoma Park has done growing the number of great job preserving its historical businesses and architectural character in the area, and I hope we continue to do so. Number two, I also have concerns regarding the possible increase well, more than likely increase in traffic regarding the plan that mentions the possible addition of 3000 units in the area. There should be a plan to protect the walkability and safety of residents here. Takoma Park has always been a very walkable city and safe for families. I hope this can continue to preserve what makes Takoma Park a beautiful place to live?

Number three, lastly, but most importantly, I am concerned about the displacement of the Takoma Park, our diversity of residents. Most people of color and low-

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income residents in the Takoma Park live in the Maple District. We must protect the residents that don't seem to have a voice at this venue. Affordability is essential to protecting most valuable -- or vulnerable residents, and improving this area should not come at the cost of displacing those most vulnerable. Overall, Maple Avenue District has always been left behind in terms of its development for many So I am excited to see how it is years. updated to reflect the rest of the Takoma Park Main Street. Takoma Park has a great sense of community that has taken generations to created. Please take into account the history of Takoma Park when it comes to this investment in the community. Any development should fit the current diversity of cultures and existing soul and values of Takoma Park. Thank you so much.

CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you, Mr. Lapp-Kamara. So the next is Sharon. We haven't forgotten you, Ms. Wolchik. We -- you're next.

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You're muted now. Please unmute yourself.
You're still muted. Oh yeah, you're --

MS. WOLCHIK: Unmute.

CHAIR HARRIS: Oh, there you go.

MS. WOLCHIK: Am I okay now?

CHAIR HARRIS: You're --

And I did Thank you. MS. WOLCHIK: not mean to be impatient. I just had no idea, how we're going through people. know, My three minutes. First, I have to say that unlike some of the recent speakers, I am not in favor of this proposed amendment. I'm not going to talk about that part of it which deals with the former Washington Adventist Hospital site or the section around university there. I think that's something that will have to be worked out with neighbors in that area and also the university as it goes So I would urge you to eliminate the section from Maple Avenue this proposed amendment. And I'd ask you to do that on several grounds. Again, and I don't want to

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repeat what many people have said. Laurie McGilvray has very adequately and very eloquently, I think, summarized many of our objections to this plan, especially as it has to do with the Maple Avenue area.

I want to make just a few additional One, Takoma Park is a small town. propose putting a corridor of what, 12, 15, 17 story buildings up Maple Avenue right next to our Victorian designed and inspired community center, city hall, et cetera, seems to me to be absolutely ludicrous. And it also does not fit with the neighborhood of low scale, multiple housing units and single-family homes in the The issue of displacement of the most area. vulnerable is a serious issue that I don't think is adequately addressed in this model. If there -- someone has said that there's not an army of developers waiting to descend on Takoma Park, well, there will be if there is profit to be made. So let's not assume that we can increase zoning height, and nothing will

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happen. Something will happen and it's not going to be favorable, at least in my view.

I also want to emphasize something that the spokesperson for Historic Takoma did. the fact. t.hat. t.hat. is we can't what's been happening just across the boundary into There DC. have been and are construction, 2000 new units in what is effectively Takoma Park in terms of traffic on the streets and density. Density is a very nice key word, but we're already pretty dense compared to some other aspects of the county that need perhaps to bear their share of the burden without overburdening us with thousands of additional new residents who will need city services and will imperil the nature of our community. And I have lived here since 1980, and I hope that you will seriously rethink this proposed amendment and at the very least get rid of the Maple Avenue segment of it until that area and some of the issues my colleagues, my neighbors, have raised have been addressed.

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Thank you for the time.

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CHAIR HARRIS: Thank you very much.

Next is Michael English and the last person I

have on my list is Christine Kenngott, but
there may be others.

Thank you very much MR. ENGLISH: for agreeing to hear my testimony a little bit of housekeeping before I get started. I think it's been resolved, but just in case. Ι unfortunately, unintentionally, initially registered on my work email address. So I just want to clarify for the record that I'm testifying in my personal capacity. So like the testimony and views I'm about to present are my own opinions and not the position of the Department of Transportation or any federal That out of the way, I, Michael agency. English, private citizen am here to speak in the planned amendment. I did support of prepare remarks. I frankly plan to ignore most of what I prepared because I feel compelled to respond to a lot of what was said today. And I

want to be careful how I do this, because I do sincerely think most people mean well, but we always do this.

We always say that housing's okay, but somewhere else. We always say, I'm not opposed to housing but, or housing's okay in this site. That is not where I am, it's down the street, right? And some speakers have brought up the fact that the rest of Takoma Park should bear more of a burden. That is And I mean, I personally don't think single family zoning that only allows single family homes should exist anywhere let alone in Montgomery County. And I encourage people to say this when these plans come up, like Seth Grimes had pointed out. But this is not just the Washington Adventist site, but, you know, there's vacant parking lots. There are, you know, other opportunity sites where housing and should be built. Т do take seriously the concerns about displacement the currently affordable housing.

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The plan does have language about prioritizing known and less affordable housing. If that can be strengthened by all means, but like -- with things like stormwater, new housing development, generally improves that, I'll tell like, you right now, the vacant parking lots have worse stormwater runoff than whatever will be those bioswales, there's green roofs, these tend to improve, not stormwater worse. Again, I think people have sincerest motivations and I think people do truly value the diversity of their community. But many people have come here and said they value that while opposing the very kind of housing that non-White, non-rich people tend to live in proportion to the population. And like don't take my word for it, the county has this data available.

We always make an excuse and somewhere else will also make an excuse, and we need to stop making these excuses. This area and many other good progressive areas are very

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1	good at patting ourselves on the back and
2	saying, we're good progressives and saying that
3	we don't really oppose this. We just want to
4	preserve our quality of life and our
5	sustainability. And we, you know, we're
б	concerned about profits and all that while we
7	sit in, like I'll tell you right now, I'm
8	very used to people in 800, 900,000 and seven
9	figure homes calling my sub \$300,000 condo
10	luxury housing because it's dense and
11	relatively new. These things are not simple.
12	Market rate housing doesn't solve at all. Rent
13	stabilization helps. I was happy to see the
14	law that the county passed recently. We need
15	social housing. We need LIHTC housing. We
16	need all of this, but we need this, too. I see
17	my time is running out. Thank you very much.
18	CHAIR HARRIS: And thank you,
19	Michael, Mr. English. Appreciate your
20	comments. And next is Christine Kenngott. Are
21	you there, Christine?
22	MS. KENNGOTT: Yeah. Can you hear

me?

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CHAIR HARRIS: Yes.

MS. KENNGOTT: Hi. I'm Chris Kenngott and I live at 7711 Garland Avenue near I've lived in Takoma with my wife and two teenage daughters since 2017. I'm a Takoma Park soccer coach, a landlord with two rent controlled affordable units on my property. And this year, my house turns 100 years old and comes with a lot of very expensive issues. Ι want to thank the board for having us taking the time to hear all of us. I also want thank 5 Takoma to our Ward Park City Honzak, Councilperson, Cara because she's really worked tireless tirelessly to educate people about this and really give people I think sometimes people have said that voice. there's been plenty of information about this, reality, a lot of people in but in neighborhood haven't heard any of it because they fall just like, you know, right outside the zone and so they weren't included, and we're very surprised and really just found out about this a couple of weeks ago.

I think that development is critical to creating affordable housing, but I do have concerns about maximum density zoning commercial that's being suggested, with upzoning quarantees that won't create displacement. But also without considering the realities of our current infrastructure, this is not good for current residents or future residents. I think sometimes everyone's talking about doing this for future residents, but if you -- this won't be your Takoma for them if we destroy what Takoma is. I hope the board adopts the city council's amendment for setback and step-downs. It seems that the MMPA is max out first and deal with all the fallout later. We qet one shot at developing hospital space and we should prioritize careful planning and development. Our neighborhood of Garland, Greenwood is uniquely -- Garland, Maplewood, and Greenwood are uniquely affected

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We had one small development project t.hat. went terribly wrong. An Adventist University parking lot wreaked havoc on houses. turned backyards in our streets mosquito swamps, flooded houses, polluted the creek, cost homeowners thousands of dollars. It's one thing to have the issue, but then to add insult to injury, nobody cared. Takoma didn't care. Adventist didn't care. Montgomery County didn't care. So buyer So you can see that the Garland area beware. has a trust issue with any development. really what I want to talk about is lack of infrastructure. It's really surprising that there's been no traffic study done. Actually, it's not surprising because if you want to max it out, you can't do the traffic study because you'll realize it doesn't work. Infrastructure Silver Spring has Georgia Avenue Colesville Road.

We have two lane roads. Carroll and

Philadelphia, already maxed out bumper during rush hour. bumper Those two lanes service school buses and city buses. Tt's already dangerous with at least one death on Carroll that I know of and many accidents on Piney Branch, and Carroll. Flower, Parkway sometimes up five lights to to through. Garland Avenue is becoming a busy passway with drivers looking for new ways to rush through traffic. Any parent knows that Takoma Park Junior High is an accident waiting to happen with children and cars chaotically That's no joke. Let's talk about everywhere. Ward 5 schools, Rolling Terrace and SSI are unhealthy buildings. How is it fair for those new residents? Hey, welcome to Takoma Park now go to outdated aging and unhealthy crowded schools.

Т also want to talk about green space really quickly. Turf and grass. We have turf crisis in this area in Downcounty. fields for Upcounty, you've days. got

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adult Downcounty, you've got teams children's teams fighting over grass and the one field that exists, not that we get to use it, but on the campus is going to be placed into building. So anyway and more transparency on the land behind Garland, what's going to happen with that? It doesn't look clear on the map. So please make that more. And I'll stop there. I just want to say thank you again for all your work and all that you've done for the community. Thanks.

CHAIR HARRIS: Yeah. Thank you, Ms.

Kenngott, is there anyone that we did not hear

from that signed up that's on Teams tonight?

Well, I'd like to -- if not, I'd like to end

this public testimony and I'd like to thank,

first of all the people that testified tonight

either by providing written testimony or in

public. And also, I'd like to thank the staff

of the MNCPPC tonight for putting this on and

the staff at the city of Takoma Park by doing

it both from there and from here. So thank

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1	you. And good evening and have a safe trip.
2	MR. HISEL-MCCOY: Mr. Chair, one
3	thing I just wanted to clarify, we are holding
4	the record open, is that correct? Until the
5	end of the month?
6	CHAIR HARRIS: Yeah. And what's the
7	fund? It's
8	MR. HISEL-MCCOY: Elza Hisel-McCoy,
9	chief Downcounty Planning for the record,
10	September 30th, close of business.
11	CHAIR HARRIS: Okay. So thank you,
12	and everyone have a safe trip home.
13	(Whereupon, the above-entitled
14	matter went off the record at 9:16 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

MATTER: Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment

DATE: 09-14-23

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of pages 1 to 187 inclusive are to the best of my belief and ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording.

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