

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

May 16, 2016

Chairman Casey Anderson and Members of the Board
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Bethesda Downtown Plan – Green Space by the Fire Station

Dear Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Wells-Harley, and Commissioners Dreyfuss, Fani-Gonzalez, and Presley:

I am writing on behalf of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) in support of the proposal of the Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Association, which is a member of CCCFH, to designate certain space in the Bethesda Downtown Plan as green space.

As you know, Chevy Chase West proposed that the green space between Nottingham Drive and Chevy Chase Drive, to the west of Fire Station 6, be designated and preserved as green, open space. This would provide non-vehicular connectivity to Norwood Park from the area of the Eastern Greenway, and would continue to serve the immediate neighborhood.

This green space is already used by the surrounding community. Children from nearby midrise apartment buildings (including the HOC property) and St. John's Church Oneness School and its summer program play there regularly. Pedestrians cut through now to the park. Some additional improvements (for example, installation of a sidewalk on the north side of Nottingham between this green space and the park, attention to drainage and plantings at the park entrance, and appropriate signage to and within the park) would make this both an attractive and valuable connector between green spaces and a compatible transition to a residential area.

Making this a designated green space would accomplish the following:

- Purchase or lease of the property by the County and/or Parks would maintain a sizeable green space in Bethesda, where such space is limited.
- Any funds generated for the Bethesda Fire Department might be designated for refurbishment or replacement of the standalone station.
- Although the MCFRS draft plan makes it clear that no expansion of Fire Station 6 is currently envisioned, maintaining the green space would leave open the possibility of expansion in the far future, a significant public safety consideration in light of continuing growth in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area and the geographical distribution of nearby fire stations. Fire safety is the stated mission of the Bethesda Fire Department.

We emphasize that there is more demand for parks and open space than is currently provided or anticipated as the plan builds out, and note that Norwood Park is not within the Bethesda

Representing the Citizens Associations of Brookdale, Chevy Chase Village, Chevy Chase West, Drummond, Glen Echo Heights, Green Acres-Glen Cove, Kenwood, Kenwood Condominium, Kenwood House Cooperative, Kenwood Place Condominium, Mohican Hills, Somerset, Springfield, Sumner, Sumner Village Condominium, Westmoreland, Westbard Mews, Westwood Mews, and Wood Acres

Downtown Plan boundaries. The substantial shortage in green and open space in downtown Bethesda will only get worse with the added density in the plan. The space by the fire station is approximately 30,000 square feet and it would make a significant contribution to green space within the plan area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Lloyd S. Guerci
Chair, Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

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