

Capital Reporting Company
Proposed Changes to WMATA Facilities 06-18-2014

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WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

COMPACT PUBLIC HEARING

DOCKET NO. R14-01

PUBLIC HEARING NO. 595

PROPOSED CHANGES TO WMATA FACILITIES

AT TAKOMA METRO STATION

WEDNESDAY,

June 18, 2014

Takoma Education Campus

Auditorium

7010 Piney Branch Road, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

Reported by: Christine Allen,
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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 J. BLAIR FISHBURN

3 Acting CFO
4 WMATA

5 KATHRYN PORTER

6 Board of Directors
7 WMATA

8 STAN WALL

9 Office of Real Estate and Planning
10 WMATA

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

2 (5:02 p.m.)

3 MS. PORTER: Good evening. I'm Kathy
4 Porter. I'm a member of Metro's Board of
5 Directors representing Montgomery County.

6 With me tonight is Blair Fishburn, or he
7 will be with us tonight, Metro's Acting Chief
8 Financial Officer, and Stan Wall, Director of
9 Metro's Office of Real Estate and Station
10 Planning. He's the person who will be giving
11 tonight's presentation.

12 This hearing is being convened by the
13 Metro Board of Directors to gather comments from
14 the public on proposed changes to Metro's
15 facilities at the Takoma Metro Rail Station.

16 Notice of this hearing was made by
17 publication in the Washington Post and was sent to
18 area locations for viewing as well as posted on
19 the WMATA Website.

20 Briefly, I will now cover the procedures
21 that we will follow during the hearing. First, we
22 will hear a staff presentation on the proposal.

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1 Secondly, we will hear from those persons who are
2 registered in advance to speak at this public
3 hearing.

4 Public officials will be heard first and
5 will be allowed five minutes each. Then those who
6 registered in advance will be heard in the order
7 in which they registered and will be allowed three
8 minutes each.

9 Third, we will hear from anyone present
10 who indicates a desire to be heard and who will be
11 allowed three minutes each.

12 If you see Mrs. Pena, who is standing
13 outside, right outside, she can put you on the
14 list if you wish to speak.

15 If you have copies of your testimony to
16 distribute, please hand them over to the Board's
17 Secretary, who is right there in the red dress.

18 If you would like to have the microphone
19 brought to your seat, please stand up and wave
20 your hand when your name is called and we will
21 bring the microphone to you.

22 There is a time in front of me that will

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1 count down how much time you have left to speak.
2 It will give you a warning beep when you have 20
3 seconds left, and will beep continuously when your
4 time is up. I will be fairly strict this evening
5 about enforcing time limits because we have a lot
6 of people who want to speak. We have so far
7 signed up almost 50 people to speak, and we want
8 to make sure that we have a chance for everyone to
9 speak before we run out of time.

10 We have to vacate this building by 10:00
11 or the security alarms will go off. This is a
12 hard time line and we can't move it.

13 If you would like to have your testimony
14 recorded, if you can't stay for the entire hearing
15 until your name is called but you would like to
16 have your testimony recorded, staff is available
17 to record your testimony separately, and they will
18 include it in the transcript of the hearing. You
19 would also see the Board Secretary about that.

20 This would be in addition to your
21 ability to submit written testimony. Just see any
22 of the staff at the registration table if you want

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1 to take advantage of that option.

2 Before you begin your remarks, I will
3 ask you to state your name and the organization
4 you represent, if any. Please note that any
5 personal information such as your name, your e-
6 mail address, your address or telephone number, if
7 you provide that in your statement, it is
8 releasable to the public under WMATA's public
9 access to records policy.

10 Further testimony may be submitted and
11 must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, June 30,
12 by e-mail to: Writtentestimony@wmata.com, or you
13 can fax your statement to 202-962-1133, or you can
14 mail it to the Office of the Secretary at WMATA,
15 600 5th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

16 If you have any questions about these
17 different ways to provide testimony, please see
18 any of the Metro staff at the registration table.

19 Your comments will be made part of the
20 public record that will be examined by the Metro
21 Board of Directors for their approval.

22 Following a review of all the testimony

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1 received for the public hearing record, Metro
2 staff will prepare a draft staff report, which
3 will be available for public comment in September,
4 before it is presented to the Metro Board of
5 Directors.

6 Changes to the options presented here
7 tonight may be proposed in response to testimony
8 received and subsequent staff analysis.

9 Please note that the use of profanity
10 will not be tolerated during this public hearing.
11 In addition, if you have not already done so,
12 please silence all mobile devices.

13 A verbatim transcript is being prepared
14 of this hearing and a copy of the transcript when
15 it is available may be purchased from Capital
16 Reporting Company, whose telephone number is 202-
17 857-3376.

18 One last bit of housekeeping before we
19 begin. I want you to know that there is a shuttle
20 that is running every 20 minutes back to the
21 Takoma Metro Station, and the last shuttle going
22 back is scheduled to leave here at 10:00 p.m.

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1 I will now call on Mr. Wall for the
2 staff presentation.

3 MR. WALL: Thank you, Ms. Porter, and
4 thank you, members of the public for joining us
5 this evening at this Compact hearing to provide
6 testimony on the proposed changes to transit
7 facilities at the Takoma Metro Rail Station.

8 I am Stan Wall, Director of Real Estate
9 and Station Planning at Metro. This presentation
10 is the same as the hard copy that was made
11 available to you as you arrived this evening. I
12 will be walking through nine topics to provide
13 context for this evening's hearing:

14 Background and overview of existing
15 conditions, a summary of the station access
16 analysis, review of a proposed concept plan, an
17 overview of how the project addresses
18 accessibility, a review of circulation by all
19 modes, an overview of our proposed interim parking
20 approach, a summary of the traffic analysis, and
21 finally a quick review of next steps that will
22 follow this hearing.

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1 On March 27th of this year, WMATA's
2 Board of Directors authorized a negotiation
3 execution of an Amended and Restated Takoma Joint
4 Development Sales Agreement, and the holding of
5 this public hearing is required by the WMATA
6 Compact among its member jurisdictions to receive
7 public comment on the proposed changes.

8 Existing facilities' proposed changes
9 and the reasons for the changes are described in a
10 Docket that has been made available to the public
11 on line at www.wmata.com/hearings, and hard copies
12 have been made available at the Library in Takoma
13 Park, Maryland and Takoma Park, D.C. There are
14 also a few hard copies of the Docket available
15 this evening for review at this hearing.

16 Existing conditions at the Takoma
17 Station consist of an elevated Metro Rail Station
18 with two entrances, the one to the north having
19 elevator access to the platform, and the one to
20 the south having escalator access to the platform.

21 A Kiss & Ride lot with access from
22 Eastern Avenue containing 141 metered spaces, six

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1 reserved ADA spaces for disabled customers, three
2 motorcycle spaces, five "A" spaces for waiting
3 motorists, and five additional spaces.

4 There are nine bus bays with access from
5 both Eastern Avenue and Cedar Street, and there
6 are bicycle facilities consisting of bike racks
7 accommodating 104 bicycles and bike lockers for up
8 to 60 bicycles.

9 The proposed changes result from the
10 findings of the Station Access Analysis and a
11 proposed housing development on part of the site,
12 and from community input informing that proposed
13 development.

14 Metro staff focused first on accessing
15 transit access requirements and potential
16 enhancement to those requirements.

17 Findings and recommendations of this
18 analysis included the existing metered lot is only
19 used 50 percent of its capacity and other parking
20 facilities are adequate for the foreseeable
21 future. It would be desirable to have additional
22 curbside queuing space for passenger pick-up.

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1 Two main pedestrian desire lines should
2 be accommodated by dedicated walkways across the
3 grassy area east of the bus bays to Eastern Avenue
4 and Cedar Avenue, and across the parking lot from
5 the bus bays to the northern entrance of the
6 parking lot.

7 As the station currently has high
8 bicycle ridership, future plans should accommodate
9 additional expansion of bicycle facilities.

10 Consideration should be given to adding
11 a new bus bay so an existing bus bay might be used
12 for passenger drop off, and although there are no
13 current private shuttles providing service to the
14 station, with future development, including the
15 Walter Reed Campus, provision should be made for
16 new spaces for shuttle access.

17 An earlier development proposal took up
18 an extensive portion of the site, including most
19 of the existing open space area, and resulted in
20 an expensive reconfiguration of WMATA bus bays and
21 parking facilities.

22 Following consultation with local

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1 community leaders and the developer, WMATA
2 proposed an apartment complex in the space now
3 occupied by the Kiss and Ride lot, without
4 disruption to the existing open space area or the
5 bus loop that surrounds the open space.

6 The resulting plan for WMATA facilities
7 shown on the concept plan includes a Kiss & Ride
8 lot with access from Eastern Avenue. The lot now
9 contains 85 metered spaces, 27 spaces for taxis,
10 shuttles, driver-attended waiting spaces, and
11 reserved spaces for people with disabilities and
12 drop off areas for customers.

13 The proposed plan also shows a new bike
14 station for 105 bikes that will be installed by
15 WMATA, an additional bus bay, a layover bay, and
16 pedestrian sidewalks through the open space area
17 and through the new Kiss & Ride lot connecting
18 Eastern Avenue.

19 These conform to the recommendations
20 that were found in the Access Analysis.

21 This cross section shows a cutaway view
22 through the building to provide a better

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1 understanding of how the proposed new Kiss & Ride
2 lot will be located below the proposed building
3 toward the north entrance of the Metro Rail
4 Station. The proposed Kiss & Ride lot also has
5 enough height to accommodate future shuttle buses
6 in the Kiss & Ride lot.

7 On this slide, a parking accessibility
8 diagram is shown comparing the existing and
9 proposed distances for the reserved spaces and
10 drop off area for people with disabilities. The
11 new location of the accessible spaces will be
12 approximately 120 feet from the elevator entrance
13 of the station, 30 feet closer than today's
14 accessible spaces.

15 The proposed curbside accessible drop
16 off will be approximately 65 feet distance from
17 the station entrance.

18 Circulation by pedestrians, residential
19 parking, Metro parking and buses are depicted on
20 this page. Coming out of the recommendations from
21 the Station Access Analysis, one of the most
22 significant enhancements will be to upgrade

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1 informal pedestrian paths to paved sidewalks
2 throughout the open space.

3 Further, we have also accommodated
4 walkways for the Kiss & Ride parking area to
5 enable safe passage for pedestrians through the
6 building to Eastern Avenue.

7 During the construction of the
8 replacement Kiss & Ride lot, anticipated to last
9 approximately 20 months, the Kiss & Ride lot will
10 be considerably reduced. Approximately 50 spaces
11 will be available for parking in contrast to the
12 160 total spaces that are currently available.

13 Pick-up and drop off of passengers can
14 occur at curbside as is informally done at the
15 present. The interim parking plan is shown on
16 this page.

17 As the developer has zoning and building
18 entitlement processes to go through, it is not
19 likely that construction would start on the
20 project for another two to three years.

21 WMATA also conducted a Traffic Analysis
22 to assess the expected impact of the proposed

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1 development on the Kiss & Ride lot, bus
2 operations, and surrounding streets. The analysis
3 is described in the Takoma Metro Station Traffic
4 Analysis Technical Memorandum, April 2014 that was
5 provided as an exhibit in the Docket.

6 The Traffic Analysis concludes that the
7 proposed development will add only 44 and 54
8 vehicles, respectively, in the morning and evening
9 peak periods, a negligible addition to the
10 existing and projected traffic.

11 To improve overall traffic conditions,
12 whether or not development at Takoma Station
13 happens, the Traffic Analysis suggests optimizing
14 signal timing in the vicinity of the site and
15 providing lane configuration improvements,
16 including adding a 100 foot long right turn pocket
17 on westbound Carroll Street before Cedar Street,
18 and eliminating curbside parking on northbound
19 Piney Branch Road between Dahlia Street and
20 Eastern Avenue.

21 At this point in time, the public record
22 is open. Any comments that are not provided

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1 through this evening's hearing must be received by
2 5:00 p.m. on June 30 via e-mail or Postal, per the
3 instructions in the hearing notice.

4 WMATA staff will then compile all these
5 comments and provide responses and circulate them
6 in the form of a draft report for public comment
7 in September. The final Compact hearing report
8 will include a recommendation to amend the adopted
9 Regional System Plan, and the report and the
10 amended plan will be subject to WMATA Board
11 approval.

12 After Board approval, the developer will
13 then begin the formal pursuit of the D.C.

14 entitlements through the planned unit
15 development process.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. PORTER: Thank you, Mr. Wall. We
18 will now go to public comments. As I said, I'm
19 going to start with the elected officials. Is
20 Danielle Perry representing Congressman Chris Van
21 Hollen here? Could you come up to the microphone
22 right here?

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1 MS. PERRY: Thanks. Good evening. My
2 name is Danielle Perry. I am here representing
3 Congressman Chris Van Hollen. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to speak tonight. I have a letter
5 from Congressman Van Hollen that he would like
6 read into the Docket.

7 "Dear WMATA Board: I'm writing on
8 behalf of my constituents in the City of Takoma
9 Park to express concerns about the Joint
10 Development Agreement under consideration on the
11 Takoma Park Metro site.

12 As I understand it, WMATA intends to
13 sell property adjacent to the Metro station and
14 locate it in the District of Columbia, to a
15 private developer, for a multi-family residential
16 development.

17 While the developer has made significant
18 improvements over the initial design proposed
19 several years ago, my constituents continue to
20 have serious concerns about the impact of the
21 development on the neighborhood, which includes
22 parts of both the District of Columbia and

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1 Maryland, and as part of National Register
2 Historic Districts in both jurisdictions.

3 As you know, the current plan presents
4 higher densities and greater heights than the
5 Takoma Park Central District Plan adopted in 2002,
6 and incorporated into the current comprehensive
7 plan.

8 While I understand WMATA's primary focus
9 has been on transportation elements of the plan,
10 the process prevents a critical avenue for my
11 constituents who do not currently have party
12 status in the D.C. planned unit development
13 process to be heard on a development that has
14 significant impacts on their neighborhood.

15 Additionally, a number of their
16 concerns, including pedestrian safety around the
17 position of the building's loading dock and the
18 increase in residential parking spaces, have an
19 impact on transit functionality and revenue.

20 Of particular concern is an independent
21 traffic analysis that says the traffic study
22 provided from WMATA significantly understates the

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1 traffic impacts that will be generated by the
2 development.

3 I ask that you respond to the issues
4 raised in that report and if justified, prepare an
5 amended WMATA traffic report. Any project in this
6 space should endeavor to maximum utilization of
7 the Takoma Park Metro Station and limit additional
8 vehicular traffic.

9 Additionally, I call your attention to
10 the station's unique position within the District
11 of Columbia's Takoma Park National Register
12 District, and adjacent to Maryland's Takoma Park
13 National Register District.

14 Section 106 of the National Historic
15 Preservation Act calls on Federal agencies,
16 including the Federal Transit Administration, to
17 take into account the effects of projects on
18 historic properties and resolve adverse effects.

19 I expect that this review will be part
20 of the development process and ask that you keep
21 me informed on its progress. Given the direct
22 impact of this project on my constituents in the

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1 City of Takoma Park, I ask that you continue to
2 work with local residents to come to a mutually
3 agreeable result prior to final WMATA Board
4 approval of the Joint Development Agreement.

5 Thank you for your consideration of this
6 request. Sincerely, Chris Van Hollen, Member of
7 Congress."

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. PORTER: Thank you, Ms. Perry. Can
10 I ask that people not applaud each speaker? It
11 will cut into the time that we have for people to
12 speak, and I'd appreciate that. Thank you.

13 Is Tom Hucker here? He was speaking on
14 behalf of District 20. I see State Senator Jamie
15 Raskin is here. Are you here in his place or
16 would you like to speak in his place? Shall we
17 skip you and go on?

18 STATE SENATOR RASKIN: (Off microphone.)
19 Yes.

20 MS. PORTER: All right. If there are
21 elected officials when I call them, they are not
22 here, what we will do is we will wait until they

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1 get here and then we can move them into the queue
2 at that point.

3 Mayor Bruce Williams?

4 MAYOR WILLIAMS: Good evening. My name
5 is Bruce Williams. I'm Mayor of the City of
6 Takoma Park. Thank you for providing this
7 opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to
8 the Takoma Metro Station.

9 The Takoma Metro Station is a primary
10 gateway to our community. A large percentage of
11 our residents use the station on a regular basis,
12 and Takoma Park homes on Eastern Avenue look
13 directly at the station and the site of the
14 proposed development.

15 Maintaining easy access to the Takoma
16 Metro Station is critical to the City of Takoma
17 Park, and because of its location, so is ensuring
18 that any development on the property is attractive
19 and well designed.

20 Because the Takoma Metro is such a
21 critical facility to residents and businesses
22 throughout Takoma Park, the City of Takoma Park

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1 has monitored the development proposals of the
2 site from the beginning, and has consistently
3 provided comments that are factual and
4 constructive.

5 City Council Resolution 2013-68 is
6 attached to our testimony, and it represents our
7 position on the proposal being considered today.

8 Takoma Park was built around transit in
9 the late 1800s. Our community continues to
10 strongly support transit and walkable communities.

11 As noted in the Access Analysis provided
12 by WMATA, 55 percent of the people entering the
13 Takoma Park Metro Station come by walking to the
14 station, and 29 percent come by bus, primarily
15 ride on. Many other transit riders come by
16 bicycle or are dropped off at one of the two
17 station entrances.

18 In the final design for the development
19 of the Takoma Metro site, the access by
20 pedestrians, bicyclists, handicapped patrons and
21 bus riders should be easy, safe, comfortable and
22 attractive, and the transit facilities must be of

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1 an adequate capacity to accommodate the
2 community's transit needs for decades.

3 The Access Analysis provides helpful
4 data and recommendations concerning pedestrian,
5 bicycle, and bus access for the transit
6 facilities.

7 Special attention should be paid to the
8 need for wide sidewalks where pedestrians want to
9 walk, benches for those who need to rest,
10 convenient parking and drop off areas for
11 handicapped patrons, a good pathway for and
12 connections to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and
13 sufficient bicycle parking.

14 There should also be enough short term
15 parking spaces for transit users, so that our
16 residents can continue to find a space to park at
17 the Metro Station to go downtown for appointments.

18 Any development of the property should
19 be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods
20 in Takoma Park, Maryland and Washington, D.C.

21 Takoma Park City Council Member Seth
22 Grimes, will present comments concerning

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1 development impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.
2 Council Member Grimes represents Ward 1,
3 immediately adjacent to the Takoma Metro Station.

4 In general, Takoma Park is concerned
5 with the design of the proposed building along
6 Eastern Avenue and with maintaining green park
7 land on the property. We are also concerned about
8 traffic congestion on Eastern Avenue, which the
9 Traffic Analysis shows will worsen from Piney
10 Branch Road to the Metro property, and for which
11 no recommendations for improvement were proposed.

12 Redevelopment of the Takoma Metro
13 Station property will establish the image of
14 Takoma, D.C.

15 and Takoma Park, Maryland for decades.

16 We want to see our gateway be designed
17 and constructed to the highest standards. The
18 whole area around the station should function
19 smoothly as a transit hub. The building should be
20 very attractive and meet LEED standards for
21 environmental design and the redevelopment should
22 complement the surrounding neighborhoods.

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1 Because of the critical role of the
2 Metro station in our community, we ask to be a
3 partner in the design and design review process
4 and we ask for the WMATA Board's assistance in
5 assuring that a partnership is a reality.

6 Thank you for this opportunity to
7 comment on the proposed changes.

8 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Next is Council
9 Member Marc Elrich.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ELRICH: Thank you all
11 for giving me the opportunity to come and speak
12 today. As I think the Mayor knows, this is
13 something that I'm vaguely familiar with, since
14 you were dealing with eight years ago, when I left
15 the City Council.

16 My formal statement is I'm writing to
17 express concerns about the planned development
18 project at Metro's Takoma Station. As you may
19 know, this site will affect not only D.C.
20 residents but also many residents that live in
21 Maryland and close proximity.

22 Many of my constituents have indicated

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1 there has been very little effort on the part of
2 the developer to engage them. While they're
3 generally supportive of smart growth, development
4 near Metro stations, they would like to have their
5 voices heard on those aspects of the plan which
6 will directly affect them.

7 This is a reasonable request that I
8 wholeheartedly support. I request that you
9 carefully consider concerns about whether the plan
10 exceeds zoning limits is based on inadequate
11 traffic studies, is inconsistent with the Takoma
12 Park Master Plan, is too close to the street, is
13 poorly designed, and is esthetically incompatible
14 with the residential and historic district.

15 I also request that the developer agree
16 to the establishment of a neighborhood design
17 working group which includes appropriate Maryland
18 representation before you hold the final vote on
19 the hearing record.

20 I hope you will consider seriously the
21 impacts of this development on our jurisdiction.

22 I want to add a couple of other notes

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1 related to that. The first is the importance of
2 the timing of when you make a deal. I've watched
3 a lot of stuff in the County from the other side
4 of the world of deal making. It is very hard to
5 claw back from a developer the things the
6 community wants once the deal has been made.

7 Your leverage and the community's
8 leverage is before you make a deal. Having the
9 community and the developer work together to get
10 something both of them want will ensure the deal
11 can go to WMATA without a substantial amount of
12 rejection, and the developer won't face a long
13 term fight at the other end of the process.

14 In my experience, making deals first and
15 hoping to negotiate a happy ending at the end of
16 that doesn't always work so well.

17 The other thing I want to talk about is
18 neighborliness. We had a development on Eastern
19 Avenue in Montgomery County that was proposed. I
20 thought it was excessive. The neighbors on the
21 D.C. side of the line thought it was excessive,
22 that it violated their understanding of what was

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1 going to be built on the Montgomery County side of
2 the line, and for years, had been assured there
3 would not be these negative impacts on their
4 neighborhood.

5 The County went ahead and was proposing
6 to approve a plan that was in their mind very
7 excessive, very tall, very dense.

8 I supported the neighbors both on the
9 Montgomery side and on the D.C. side because I
10 thought they had the right to a community on the
11 terms on which they had bought there, moved there,
12 lived there, with the expectations that were in
13 the Master Plans.

14 Miracle of miracles, a court actually
15 ruled in favor of the neighbors and said what the
16 Planning Board had done was unacceptable and
17 violated people's expectations, and actually ruled
18 in favor of the neighborhood groups.

19 The important point of that is we share
20 borders.

21 I don't believe as a Montgomery County
22 elected official that I should do things on my

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1 side of the border that have detrimental impacts
2 on the Washington side of the border. I would
3 hope the approach would be the same from the
4 District, and I would hope that WMATA in general
5 would look at places where we have shared
6 interests.

7 Friendship Heights is another place
8 where we would be really sensitive to what
9 everybody feels about the project and not just say
10 this is in one jurisdiction so in the others,
11 there is no concern to anybody else.

12 I think how we share space and how we
13 develop together is really, really important. I
14 think we can go forward successfully.

15 I've talked to a lot of the folks
16 involved in this. Nobody is saying don't build
17 anything, and nobody is saying you should only
18 build single family homes here and that's the only
19 thing that's compatible.

20 There is a recognition, as there was
21 eight years ago. The debate in Takoma Park then
22 wasn't whether you should build something on that

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1 property, the debate was the number of units, and
2 it wasn't like zero or some tiny little number, it
3 was a larger number or a much larger number.

4 As I understand the discussion from
5 people I have talked to, they recognize this is a
6 good place for development, we should take
7 advantage of it, but in that context, you really
8 should pay attention to and be sensitive to the
9 neighborhood around it.

10 I think it's possible to get units
11 there, a decent number of units there, and still
12 respect the surrounding community in Takoma Park.

13 I hope that WMATA will consider that,
14 but I really hope you will avoid making a deal
15 until you have a better agreement. This has been
16 going on for eight years, so I hardly see the rush
17 to closing the deal, as the letter from the
18 developer suggested, in the next few weeks. There
19 is no need after eight years to rush into a deal
20 if there is the need, I think, for a broader
21 community buy in.

22 I thank you. I look forward to

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1 following up on this.

2 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much. I
3 don't think our 20 second warning beeper is
4 working.

5 WMATA STAFF: It is not.

6 MS. PORTER: All right. It's being
7 fixed. We are just going to change our microphone.
8 Sorry, it appears not to work on the new one
9 either.

10 The next person is Council Member Seth
11 Grimes.

12 I apologize for the problems with the
13 microphone. We have to deal with what is here at
14 the site, so thank you. Go ahead.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GRIMES: Thank you. I'm
16 Seth Grimes, a City of Takoma Park Council Member,
17 and the City's representative on the
18 Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan
19 Washington Council of Governments. Thank you for
20 the opportunity to speak this evening.

21 The Takoma Park Ward I represent is
22 directly adjacent to the Takoma Metro Station. My

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1 constituents walk and bicycle to the station and
2 occasionally drive there using the station's
3 transit user parking spaces. They are heavy users
4 of Metro Rail and the station's Metro Bus and ride
5 on buses.

6 I will say it's great to see so many of
7 my constituents and other Takoma Park and Takoma,
8 D.C.

9 neighbors here tonight. I do recognize
10 a few people whom I know to support the current
11 plan, just a handful in the audience, including
12 Cheryl Cort from the Advocacy Coalition for
13 Smarter Growth, which is funded by the developer,
14 EYA.

15 Takoma Park was founded in 1883 by
16 Benjamin Franklin Gilbert. Gilbert bought land
17 and sold lots in the Washington, D.C. and Maryland
18 area surrounding a station on the Metropolitan
19 Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway.

20 Takoma Park was the region's first
21 railroad suburb. B.F. Gilbert and Takoma Park
22 pioneered transit oriented development in the

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1 Washington, D.C. region. We remain dedicated to
2 transit oriented development 130 years later.

3 The City of Takoma Park and the Takoma
4 Metro community will gladly welcome true transit
5 oriented development. The proposed EYA building
6 does not qualify.

7 I urge WMATA to reject the building and
8 to compel the developer to create a building that
9 instead favors transit users, integrated with
10 rather than in defiance of, the surrounding
11 neighborhoods, working in true cooperation with
12 stakeholders, whether than in the opposition that
13 we have experienced to date.

14 The Maryland residential neighborhoods
15 closest to the Takoma transit facility consist
16 almost exclusively of single family homes,
17 including directly across Eastern Avenue, N.W.,
18 from the planned development.

19 The nearby Washington, D.C. residences
20 are single family homes and small scale
21 apartments.

22 Our historic designation is official.

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1 The Washington, D.C. and Maryland residential
2 neighborhoods, the old Takoma commercial corridor
3 and the Takoma Metro Station are within the United
4 States National Register of Historic Districts.

5 The Takoma Metro parcel that would be
6 developed is split between two zoning
7 designations, residential fronting Eastern Avenue,
8 N.W. with a height limit imposed by Zoning of 40
9 feet, and commercial on the rear of the property
10 toward the Metro and railroad tracks with a 50
11 foot limit. A nearby Takoma neighborhood
12 commercial overlay district was created in 2005,
13 years after this project first surfaced, with a
14 height limit of 55 feet, and this parcel was not
15 included in that overlay.

16 Clearly, it is the intention of the
17 Washington, D.C. Government that the development
18 not rise to the 72 feet currently proposed in a 40
19 foot zone by EYA.

20 Scale matters. Neighborhood
21 compatibility and impact matter. Transitions
22 matter. They matter to residents and as embodied

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1 in the site zoning in the Historic District
2 regulations and the Takoma Central District Plan,
3 they regulate factors that include height, set-
4 backs, and compatibility. They govern development
5 at the site. Therefore, they must be considered
6 by WMATA.

7 Height 80 percent in excess of zoning
8 limits with massing of five stories just 23 feet
9 from Eastern Avenue, even with the upper two
10 stories set back an additional eight to ten feet,
11 all within a residential zone, fails
12 compatibility.

13 The current building design includes a
14 multi-level parking deck in the rear of the
15 building with far too many residential parking
16 spaces--a ratio of four spaces for each six units--
17 - given the location next to a transit station.

18 A Washington, D.C. zoning rewrite
19 currently underway would reduce the required
20 parking ratio for a site in close proximity, like
21 this one, to a transit station to one to six,
22 rather than four to six, a quarter of the ratio

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1 EYA proposes.

2 The excess of residential parking will
3 cost WMATA transit user revenue. It is a direct
4 contribution to the excessive size of the building
5 and to the traffic and transit user parking impact
6 which WMATA commissioned studies already
7 underestimates.

8 If the developer reduced the number of
9 residential parking spaces or located them under
10 the building, like every other recently
11 constructed apartment building in the Takoma Metro
12 area, the building size could be reduced.

13 Further, there would be fewer new cars
14 on surrounding residential streets, answering
15 community concerns about traffic impact that will
16 hamper Metro and ride on buses that use those same
17 streets.

18 Excessive residential parking creates
19 the need for three lanes of surface driveways to
20 the rear of the building. Space for these
21 driveways comes at the expense of transit user
22 parking and buffers to the neighborhood apartment

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1 building.

2 The proposal reduces the number of
3 metered parking spaces for transit users from 114
4 to 85. Fewer transit user parking spaces will mean
5 reduced use of Takoma transit facilities, and
6 again, lower transit revenue.

7 The issues can be fixed. I ask WMATA to
8 create a new neighborhood design working group and
9 mandate that the developer work with that group
10 and the City of Takoma Park and other concerned
11 parties to the satisfaction of those parties to
12 revise the design before WMATA accepts the Compact
13 hearing report.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much. State
16 Senator Jamie Raskin.

17 STATE SENATOR RASKIN: Thank you, Ms.
18 Porter. I am delighted to be here with the Board.
19 With your permission, I'll just use about 90
20 seconds and save the rest for Delegate Hucker, who
21 is on his way, if that is okay.

22 MS. PORTER: Okay.

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1 STATE SENATOR RASKIN: I am entering a
2 letter on behalf of the legislative delegation
3 from District 20, which is Delegate Hucker,
4 Delegate Sheila Hixson, and Delegate Heather
5 Mizeur, as well as myself. I am the State Senator
6 for the delegation.

7 I am not going to read the whole letter
8 but essentially we're just asking the Board to
9 schedule action on approval of the report for the
10 Compact hearing on the development, only after
11 there has been more comprehensive consideration of
12 the concerns that have been raised about how the
13 proposed development will affect the adjacent
14 residential neighborhoods, both on the Maryland
15 side and in D.C.

16 We're convinced that a neighborhood
17 design working group launched by EYA and
18 representatives of the affected neighborhoods in
19 cooperation with the Board would ensure balanced
20 consideration of neighbors' concerns and their
21 ideas about how to make the development a complete
22 success for the community.

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1 While we have been and remain very
2 supportive of residential development at the Metro
3 site, we are concerned the project has not yet
4 been subjected to a level of review sufficient to
5 ensure that the Board has all the information
6 necessary to move to final approval.

7 As elected officials of Maryland, we
8 believe for several reasons that it might be
9 premature for WMATA to take action at this point,
10 sending the development proposal to the planned
11 unit development process.

12 The letter outlines several reasons why
13 we think this might be one additional step, not as
14 some kind of delaying game, you could build a time
15 certain into it, but just so the kinds of concerns
16 that you're hearing raised tonight can be more
17 thoroughly ventilated and then integrated into the
18 proposal.

19 With that, I will leave further
20 substantive remarks to Delegate Hucker when he
21 comes.

22 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

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1 STATE SENATOR RASKIN: Thank you so
2 much.

3 MS. PORTER: Commissioner Sara Green.

4 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Good evening, Ms.
5 Porter, Mr. Wall--I'm sorry, I don't know your
6 name, sir.

7 MR. FISHBURN: Blair Fishburn.

8 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Mr. Fishburn. Good
9 evening. My name is Sara Green. I am the
10 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for 4B01 in the
11 District of Columbia. This is a community of
12 about 2,000 people, including a whole lot of
13 people on Eastern Avenue who are incredibly
14 affected by this project.

15 This includes people who live in
16 apartments. They live in a cooperative, they are
17 home owners, in a cooperative apartment building
18 on Eastern Avenue. Many of these people have
19 lived, whether they are owners of apartments or
20 tenants, in their communities, in their homes, for
21 20 years.

22 I think I should not right now first of

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1 all that Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has
2 already sent you detailed resolutions about this
3 project. They will be submitted again for the
4 record.

5 I am speaking at this point for myself,
6 because some of the comments I am making are not
7 part of ANC 4B's recommendations. ANC 4B's
8 recommendations stand, and I support them.

9 One of the things that I think is really
10 angering to me about this, in addition to the fact
11 this is a very large project, it's way too big, it
12 does not conform in so many ways to the Takoma
13 Central District Plan, which is the Master Plan
14 that I helped develop along with about 100 other
15 people in a very hot room over about a year. We
16 developed this plan and WMATA is ignoring it.

17 One of the other things that I think
18 people are not aware of about this proposal is the
19 impact on affordable housing. I think there is a
20 huge irony here that a number of people who do
21 support this project will say well, more density,
22 more affordable housing, the City needs affordable

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1 housing, that is important.

2 Well, we have affordable housing on
3 Eastern Avenue. We have about 100 units of it
4 right now. If you build this project the way you
5 are proposing to build it, you are going to go
6 very high, you're going to shut out their light
7 and air, you're going to loom over it.

8 It's a 72 foot building. You're going
9 to loom over a three story brick apartment
10 building. You're going to run your driveway.
11 You're going to run all these cars past windows,
12 very close to somebody's window and front door.
13 Now, they have a buffer park. They won't.

14 You're going to degrade the quality of
15 life for the 100 units of affordable housing
16 already on Eastern Avenue for what? To put a
17 handful maybe of affordable units into a building
18 that is going to have a lot of small studios?

19 This is not honest. It is not a
20 community spirited proposal. What people are
21 asking for is something that fits this
22 neighborhood, that respects the Takoma Historic

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1 District, both in D.C.

2 and in Maryland, that will operate like
3 a neighbor.

4 One other last thing, I was just
5 particularly offended by the letter that EYA sent.
6 They have a bunch of money so they can send out a
7 bunch of letters, and they did. It was a very
8 cleverly, carefully written letter. I just want
9 to read one quote from it.

10 What Mr. Lester said was "WMATA recently
11 voted unanimously to approve a contract with EYA
12 to develop their property. This process will take
13 a number of years to complete and we are at the
14 very beginning stages.

15 We are currently finalizing the details
16 of our agreement with WMATA and look forward to
17 beginning the detailed design process in the
18 coming months."

19 I really hope he was misstating that
20 because it really sounds like if EYA is finalizing
21 an agreement with WMATA, it leads me to ask why
22 are we here. You should not be finalizing

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1 anything with EYA until you listen to testimony,
2 at least listen to the testimony. Really, at
3 least listen to the testimony before you allow
4 anybody to finalize anything.

5 That is just offensive to me. EYA
6 didn't mention this hearing or anything else.

7 We are asking for basic fairness, both
8 in the way you are running this hearing and
9 listening to us, and in the way eventually you
10 will design a building that I hope a lot of people
11 in this community will support.

12 Thank you again for listening. I
13 continue to have faith in government despite some
14 of these issues. Thanks again.

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Commissioner
16 Faith Wheeler.

17 COMMISSIONER WHEELER: Thank you for the
18 opportunity to speak and for holding this Compact
19 hearing, which I understand is required in any
20 case by you.

21 My name is Faith Wheeler. I am
22 staunchly pro-development. I first came to D.C.

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1 in 1962. I have lived in Takoma, D.C. since 1978.
2 One of the several reasons that I moved here was
3 to do my part in helping this community improve.
4 I have worked on this project since 2001, and have
5 been an ANC Commissioner since 2003. I am,
6 however, speaking for myself, as Commissioner
7 Green did, and in any case, supportive of the ANC
8 resolution.

9 Also, I would like to say I happen to
10 have a personal stake in climate renewal. What
11 does "development" actually mean? Looking at the
12 word "development," we see phrases such as
13 "viability," "standard of living," "economic
14 health," "quality of life," and "consideration of
15 community-wide or regional environmental
16 implications."

17 In my 30 years of evaluating programs
18 for the Board of Directors of the Inter-American
19 Development Bank, and training international
20 staffs and project teams for the International
21 Inter- American Development Bank, I learned that
22 promoting development is far more than bricks and

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1 mortar, even if placed next to a transit station.

2 Some folks would have you believe that's enough.

3 The basic principle is how would a

4 development project actually affect the community,

5 how would it affect people, what would be the

6 lasting implications and impact economically,

7 financially, environmentally, regarding

8 transportation, socially. In other words, what is

9 the entire picture? What is the whole picture in
10 the near and distant future?

11 This particular project could be an

12 outstanding model of sustainability and diversity,

13 reinforcing a strong sense of community and sense

14 of place, sorely needed in this society in this

15 day and age.

16 Instead, we have interests taking over

17 that transgress those critical values. Here, I'm

18 going to be a bit sarcastic because it makes me

19 angry.

20 Terry Eakin and Bob Youngentob of EYA

21 still see this as a good opportunity to make some

22 money. They, through Jack Lester, hope that no

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1 one notices their current proposal soars 30 feet
2 above the D.C. zoning limits next to Eastern
3 Avenue and 20 feet above D.C. zoning limits in the
4 zone a few feet back.

5 Not one of the other three multi-family
6 units built in recent years or the three more
7 approved are above the D.C. zoning height limit of
8 50 and 55 for Takoma Central, which is in a Takoma
9 reg zone.

10 Terry Eakin and Bob Youngentob are
11 apparently not bothered that their proposal would
12 take away a lovely wooded grove enjoyed by
13 residents in the three story modest apartment
14 building next door and lay in its place three
15 access egress lanes to EYA's parking garage.

16 Affordable housing be damned. Those
17 people should just go out and get a good job,
18 right? The single family homes across the street,
19 who cares about them? After all, they're in
20 Maryland, right? Just suck it up.

21 Takoma Park Historic District, what's
22 that? Who cares? That is so yesterday. To save

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1 the planet, we have to pack in as many people as
2 possible right next to the Metro station, the
3 more, the better. Bring them on.

4 Taking off my sarcastic hat, the fact is
5 we already have some 650 relatively new units
6 built or approved to be built within two to three
7 blocks of the Metro station. That does not
8 include Whittier Gardens and Butternut Court, both
9 in my district, beautifully renovated in the past
10 few years in a way that truly enhances our
11 community.

12 Takoma is a special place with the
13 unique history of pioneering public transit, true
14 diversity, and healthy green living. This is what
15 we need to celebrate and enhance with something
16 that exemplifies Takoma, a building that looks
17 something like this (indicating), drawn in 2006.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much. We
20 will now take non-elected officials. What I'm
21 going to do is I'm going to read a name and then a
22 second person who will be the person right after

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1 the first name I read.

2 Joseph--I apologize for the name--Joseph
3 Radzievich, to be followed by Sabrina Eaton.

4 MR. RADZIEVICH: Good evening. My name
5 is Joseph Radzievich. I'm a proud resident of
6 [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] Apartments. I
7 rise tonight in strong opposition to the current
8 WMATA/EYA proposal, and I want to share with you
9 this sign that my neighbors and I have put
10 together, a collective cross border effort, Takoma
11 Park, Maryland and Takoma, D.C.

12 It reads "Right-sized, not super-sized
13 development." That really sums up the way we feel
14 about this proposal.

15 I'll note that the ANC, Advisory
16 Neighborhood Commission, at Takoma Park, Maryland,
17 passed resolutions regarding this development, and
18 since those resolutions have been passed, not a
19 single change to my knowledge has been made. What
20 does that say about this process?

21 There are issues with this process in
22 terms of the height of the building, as tall as 70

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1 feet, not within the zoning regulations. The
2 overall density is so large, the footprint of the
3 building takes up not just the existing parking
4 garage--excuse me--parking lot, but it destroys
5 the green space buffer area next to the garden
6 apartments, of which I am a resident, and my
7 fellow residents are very concerned.

8 There are issues with traffic. Already,
9 we have seen that the traffic study from WMATA is
10 flawed. There are also issues with compatibility,
11 with pedestrian and disabled access.

12 This is a historic district. What about
13 the character of the neighborhood?

14 We recommend a neighborhood design
15 working group, and not a work group that is
16 stocked full of development friendly people who
17 have connections to the development industry, but
18 people who have a connection to this neighborhood
19 and this immediately adjacent neighborhood.

20 Further, I recommend that we not approve
21 any Joint Development Agreement unless it is fully
22 compliant with the zoning regulations, including

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1 the Takoma Central District Plan, which requires a
2 50 foot buffer.

3 Lastly, I will just end on this. I
4 think that clock is wrong. This is a very special
5 place. We live in a country, the United States of
6 America, where I can get up in front of an
7 audience like this, and tomorrow, I will wake up
8 in the morning. In another country, that may not
9 happen.

10 There are a lot of people over the years
11 who have fought in this very neighborhood. The
12 only Civil War battle fought in this area was
13 fought right here in this neighborhood, to
14 preserve the right for what I'm doing now, to
15 preserve the right to have development that is
16 sensitive and compatible to all of the community,
17 not just those who are wealthy and well connected.

18 Back in the 1950s and 1960s, we had a
19 group called Neighbors Incorporated. We had great
20 community activists like Sam Abbott from Takoma
21 Park, who prevented this neighborhood from being
22 destroyed by a highway.

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1 We stood up to the powerful in the Civil
2 War. We stood up to the powerful in the 1950s and
3 1960s, and my friends, today, 2014, we will stand
4 up to injustice today. We will ensure that the
5 community will be heard and the development is
6 compatible with the community, compatible with
7 real transit, compatible with the interests of
8 this community, and sensitive to all members of
9 the community, not just those with deep pockets.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Sabrina Eaton,
12 to be followed by Jeffrey Silverstone.

13 MS. EATON: Hi. Thanks for coming out
14 here today to hear our testimony. I'm Sabrina
15 Eaton. I live [REDACTED] Eastern Avenue from
16 the Metro parking lot this proposal would occupy.
17 I've lived there for 20 years.

18 While this design is an improvement over
19 the two car garage townhouses that EYA previously
20 wanted to build on the property, the present
21 incarnation is still too large for the site and
22 would tower over adjacent apartment buildings and

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1 single family homes such as my own.

2 Their last plan was horizontal sprawl.

3 This is vertical sprawl. The area zoning caps the
4 height of buildings on that site at 50 feet. Yet,
5 EYA's plan would be 72 feet tall, roughly 20 feet
6 higher than any other apartment building in a
7 Metro station area.

8 The Takoma Central District Plan calls
9 for a landscape buffer of 50 feet around the
10 existing apartment buildings and condominiums on
11 Eastern Avenue. Yet, EYA's plan shows no buffer
12 whatsoever to protect surrounding properties.

13 EYA's proposal also doesn't meet the
14 Takoma Central District Plan requirement that
15 development on the site mesh with the existing
16 community to preserve and enhance Takoma's small
17 town village character. Its current super-sized
18 plan undercuts the historic small town vibe that
19 draws people to this area. It should be scaled
20 back to fit in with the rest of the neighborhood.

21 Overgrowth is not the same thing as
22 smart growth. The only parties for whom this

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1 development is smart is EYA, which wants a super-
2 sized building to get super-sized profits, and
3 entities funded by EYA, like the so-called
4 Coalition for Smarter Growth, whose leaders have
5 endorsed every EYA plan for this site, including
6 those that the developer and WMATA subsequently
7 rejected. That group is clearly a cheerleader for
8 its corporate donors and its input should be
9 viewed with great suspicion.

10 Misleading sales pitches for this
11 project by EYA and its cheerleaders is another
12 concern. They say it will provide a 90 car garage
13 for Metro patrons without mentioning the 60 space
14 loss of public parking that entails. They
15 describe the current parking as under-utilized
16 without mentioning the bizarre hours WMATA has
17 imposed on the lot are what curtail its use.

18 They describe the building as three to
19 four stories tall without mentioning it will
20 really be six or seven stories tall because it
21 sits on top of parking.

22 They say they will work with residents

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1 on its design when all they have done so far is
2 host sales parties where they seek endorsement
3 letters from people whose lunch they just bought.

4 If they really intend to partner with
5 residents on the design as they claimed in the
6 letter they sent out, they should actually do it
7 and stop dishing out baloney.

8 The developers of the under construction
9 Takoma Commons Building also under play the actual
10 size of the structure to the neighborhood's
11 subsequent dismay. We won't be fooled again.

12 This project is way bigger than that
13 one, and would be way more destructive to our
14 neighborhood. Please send it back to the drawing
15 board. Thanks for listening.

16 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Jeffrey
17 Silverstone, to be followed by Peter Kovar.

18 MR. SILVERSTONE: I'm Jeffrey
19 Silverstone. I represent Seekers Church, a D.C.
20 church located across Carroll Street from the
21 Takoma station. We walk, bike, drive, and take
22 the subway to church.

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1 Last year, we also hosted over 600
2 events. We consider the station site to be a
3 gateway between D.C. and Maryland and the center
4 of an integrated Takoma community.

5 Like us, WMATA recognizes the importance
6 of biking. The notice for this meeting cites the
7 improvement of pedestrian/bicycle access to the
8 station. The Takoma Station Technical Memorandum
9 of 2013 notes Takoma has the second highest level
10 of bike parking in the Metro system. This was
11 before the recently installed and heavily used
12 ride on station, as well as the planned bike
13 station for 105 bikes to be installed this year.

14 While all this bike parking is good, the
15 EYA planned development does nothing to improve
16 bicycle access to the station. The Circulation
17 Plan Analysis, which is Exhibit 4 of the handout
18 for this meeting, omits bicycles.

19 This is because the proposed building,
20 by providing a narrow sidewalk along Eastern and a
21 narrow path through the garage blocks bikes from
22 accessing the station from the north.

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1 We believe that the building must
2 provide a zoning compliant set-back from Eastern
3 in order to allow bicycle access.

4 The Metropolitan Branch Trail is an
5 eight mile trail that runs from Union Station to
6 Silver Spring. It connects to the Takoma Station
7 along the east using an on street alignment along
8 Cedar and Eastern Avenue. Moreover, the MBT is
9 being designed to also run on the west side of the
10 rail tracks.

11 The proposed building blocks the eastern
12 alignment, while the EYA plan from 2007 provided
13 an 11 foot shared use path, five foot buffer, and
14 a 24 foot travel lane to support the alignment,
15 this 2014 EYA plan does none of this.

16 Furthermore, while the western alignment
17 runs just a few feet from the bicycle entrance to
18 the station, this plan does nothing to allow
19 western access to the entrance. Even with a
20 jogger on the elevator room to save the cost of
21 moving the machine room, this plan passes on an
22 opportunity to finance opening up the bicycle

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1 entrance to the Trail, as is called for in the
2 D.C. Central District Plan.

3 Furthermore, a through tunnel would
4 provide handicapped access to new residential
5 development on the western side of the tracks.
6 Such as the 150 units planned for Spring Place.

7 The Takoma station should promote
8 bicycle traffic, not block it.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Peter Kovar, to
11 be followed by Loretta Neumann.

12 MR. KOVAR: Thank you. My name is Peter
13 Kovar. I've lived in Takoma Park, Maryland for
14 about 22 years, about five hours from the
15 development site. I'm a member of DC-MD Neighbors
16 for Takoma Transit.

17 We can create an attractive transit
18 oriented building at the Metro site, if there is
19 serious engagement by EYA. That hasn't happened.
20 I know of just one public EYA meeting for Maryland
21 residents held last year.

22 The current proposal is incompatible

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1 with the surrounding neighborhood in part because
2 there has been so little consultation. I join my
3 neighbors in asking the Board to insist on the
4 creation of a formal process for community
5 engagement.

6 Without that, although the project's
7 impact falls heavily on Maryland residents because
8 the site is solely in Washington, D.C.,
9 Marylanders will have little influence on design
10 and structural details. Those will be decided
11 mainly in the D.C.

12 zoning process.

13 Thus, this hearing could be the last
14 chance for Marylanders to communicate with the
15 body obliged to consider our views.

16 Like many of my neighbors, I have
17 concerns about the size of the building, cuts in
18 public parking, loss of green space, access to the
19 station, set-back from the street, and impact on
20 traffic.

21 A general give and take with the
22 community would help us reach consensus on those

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1 points and produce a win/win/win project, one that
2 enhances transit, creates more housing, and is
3 compatible.

4 Last week, EYA sent a letter stating "We
5 are in the very beginning stages," and then "We're
6 currently finalizing the details. It is
7 discouraging to hear that EYA is both in the
8 beginning stages and finalizing the details. They
9 apparently want WMATA approval before key
10 community concerns are resolved.

11 But WMATA can help ensure there is real
12 community involvement and avoid protracted legal
13 and political challenges. EYA's latest letter
14 says they "plan community meetings, here are our
15 thoughts on design, landscaping, and
16 architecture." Without a formal structure for that
17 community input, the outreach will be just PR.

18 Therefore, I agree with those who
19 expressed support for creating a neighborhood
20 design working group.

21 EYA says the development process will
22 take years, so a few months of work by a committee

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1 of residents, business owners, transit users, and
2 other stakeholders will not cause a significant
3 delay.

4 I urge EYA to support the establishment
5 of the neighborhood design working group, with
6 everything on the table, and I urge the Board to
7 vote on the report for today's hearing only when
8 there is a commitment to establish that group.

9 This recommendation doesn't exceed the
10 Board's mission. The hearing announcement states
11 the Board is required to consider, among other
12 things, land use, population, environmental
13 amenities, esthetics, and the beauty and dignity
14 of the Nation's Capital City.

15 Now is the time for the Board to
16 recognize the unique cross border nature of this
17 proposal and strike a blow for community
18 engagement rather than rubber stamping a
19 development plan.

20 In closing, I note that the name of the
21 proposed development is "Takoma Connected."
22 Moving forward on Takoma Connected without

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1 including the Maryland side of that connection
2 would render the name meaningless.

3 Thanks.

4 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Loretta
5 Neumann, to be followed by Sara Hayden.

6 MS. NEUMANN: Thank you for the
7 opportunity to speak tonight. I do hope that the
8 purpose of this hearing is to hear from the
9 community and to take into account what we are
10 saying and maybe make some changes as you go
11 forward. Otherwise, you know, you are wasting
12 everybody's time, and I think that has been
13 pointed out before.

14 I live at [REDACTED].
15 I'm just three blocks from the Takoma Metro
16 Station. My husband has lived here for 15 years.
17 I've lived here for almost 40. We know this area.
18 We have been here before. We testified before at
19 the previous ones, and actually it was a decade
20 ago when this all started.

21 We are not opposed to the development
22 nor are we supporting the development. We really

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1 do seek some constructive changes, and here are
2 our suggestions for improvements.

3 First of all, the green space. There
4 are two green spaces actually on it, and I've
5 looked at all the maps, I've looked at everything
6 WMATA put up, and there is not a lot on the
7 Website, but what is there, I've looked at.

8 There are two green spaces, one on the
9 corner of Cedar and Carroll. I'm glad to see that
10 shows it being preserved as open space, but within
11 the text of the proposal or what's written, there
12 is nothing that says for sure that's going to be
13 permanent.

14 We want things in writing. We've
15 learned in the past with WMATA, if we don't have
16 it in writing, we can't count on it when years go
17 by.

18 Second of all, the buffer, as has been
19 pointed out before, between the parking lot and
20 the apartments and houses on Eastern Avenue, that
21 needs to be preserved. We are very saddened to
22 see that road.

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1 Actually, it wasn't until tonight I
2 realized that not only is that strip coming into
3 the driveway where trucks and such will access,
4 but there is a whole piece that looms into the
5 rest of that buffer area.

6 At any rate, we urge you to save the
7 buffer area and find another way to access into
8 the area.

9 The size and scale as has been pointed
10 out looms, it dwarfs anything that has ever been
11 built in Takoma, D.C. It's not that it can't be
12 big, but this is too big, 70 some feet is higher
13 than anything we have in our community. This is
14 in the heart of our historic district, so we ask
15 you, please, that can be lowered.

16 If it means that WMATA gets a little
17 less money from the developer, then the developer
18 will make the same amount of money they would make
19 anyway because they are just making fewer units.
20 We urge you to reconfigure that.

21 Multi-family units. You talk about
22 multi- family. There is nothing in the written

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1 statement about how many units are going to have
2 two bedrooms. If you're going to have families in
3 an apartment, you have to have at least two
4 apartments. There is nothing in there to say
5 that.

6 Lastly, I live on Piney Branch Road. I
7 was shocked just this afternoon--I had already
8 written this, and then I discovered in your
9 traffic analysis, this proposal to eliminate
10 curbside parking on northbound Piney Branch Road
11 between Dahlia Street and Eastern Avenue.

12 If you all know where that is, that is
13 where Trinity Church is, and then it goes in front
14 of my house--please let me finish because it's not
15 fair to the church, it's not fair to us.

16 MS. PORTER: I'm sorry.

17 MS. NEUMANN: Also, you have no
18 jurisdiction over parking on our streets. That is
19 a City decision.

20 MS. PORTER: I'm sorry. Thank you very
21 much.

22 MS. NEUMANN: Thank you.

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1 MS. PORTER: Sara Hayden, to be followed
2 by Christine Simpson.

3 MS. HAYDEN: Hi, good evening. Thank
4 you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Sara
5 Hayden. I live in Takoma Park, Maryland.

6 I have two main points. One, Board of
7 Directors of WMATA, do your job. You have an
8 independent responsibility here to evaluate the
9 project in its entirety.

10 This is a responsibility that includes
11 evaluation of the design and impacts, not just on
12 parking, which hasn't been fully analyzed under
13 your traffic study, parking and traffic, but also
14 as other people have mentioned, in your Compact,
15 you have the responsibility to consider data with
16 respect to current and respective conditions in
17 the transit zone. That includes Maryland as well
18 as the District of Columbia.

19 And including without limitation, land
20 use, population, and preservation of the beauty
21 and dignity of the Nation's Capital.

22 You need to look at the design and you

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1 need to independently approve the design before
2 you pass it on to D.C. This is not a
3 responsibility that you can advocate or delegate
4 to D.C.

5 I urge you to stop, don't approve any
6 Joint Development Agreement, but fully vet this
7 design independent of D.C.

8 Also, you need to comply with Federal
9 law, which includes but is not limited to Section
10 106 review under the National Historic
11 Preservation Act.

12 In these discussions and the propaganda
13 from EYA and information from WMATA, I find it
14 unfortunately absent, the fact that this is in a
15 national and local historic district as well as it
16 abuts another national and local historic district
17 in Maryland.

18 Obviously, the community members keep on
19 reminding you, but I see that as a huge fatal
20 omission in the public information provided on
21 this project. I want to assure you that the
22 community will take any and all necessary steps to

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1 ensure that WMATA complies with all laws and
2 fulfills its responsibilities.

3 Two, I'm addressing this to WMATA and
4 EYA, stop wasting our time. Come up with a
5 project that at least complies with current D.C.
6 zoning. You are on the cusp of approving a design
7 that doesn't comply with D.C. zoning, and are
8 hopeful that the D.C. Zoning Commission will
9 approve this.

10 As many may be aware, EYA and its other
11 partners in a joint venture have not fared very
12 well in front of the Zoning Commission with
13 respect to the McMillan Reservoir project. They
14 were shot down.

15 It's a waste of time for you to approve
16 a project that may not be even approved by D.C.,
17 even if you could delegate that authority to
18 review the design to D.C., which you can't.

19 So, stop wasting our time. Do a project
20 that is thoughtful to the community. You have
21 provided two designs that are fatally flawed.
22 Work hard on a design that everyone can get behind

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1 and support so we can get this thing built.

2 Secondly, and this is to EYA, stop with
3 the fluff propaganda. You're speaking to--you're
4 promising a vibrant community. We are a vibrant
5 community. We are a transit oriented community.
6 Stop with that.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

9 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you.

10 MS. PORTER: Christine Simpson, to be
11 followed by James DiLuigi.

12 MS. SIMPSON: My name is Christine
13 Simpson. I live on [REDACTED] Avenue in Takoma Park,
14 Maryland, about two blocks from the Takoma Metro
15 Station.

16 I support sensible development at the
17 station but I do oppose the current redevelopment
18 plan because it is too big and does not fit in
19 well with the surrounding neighborhood.

20 I'm asking you, WMATA, to require the
21 developer, EYA, to engage in real public dialogue
22 with our community before you move this project

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1 along.

2 Here are my reasons. EYA has not
3 communicated in any meaningful way with those of
4 us who live near the development. It has only
5 held one public meeting, in August 2013. Although
6 it claims to have held other public meetings, in
7 fact, those meetings were by invitation only to
8 certain select individuals.

9 There is also a lot of confusion about
10 the plan. The materials that are publicly
11 available are inadequate and raise more questions
12 than they answer.

13 For example, the drawings that are
14 included in the Docket are too tiny or blurry to
15 be legible, even with magnification. The Docket
16 includes no massing studies. Those are the
17 drawings that depict the building in three
18 dimensions. We need massing studies that include
19 the adjacent apartment buildings so we can see how
20 well the proposed structure fits with its
21 surroundings. There have been massing studies in
22 the past. Why not now? Is it because they so

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1 clearly reveal the massive size of the proposed
2 building?

3 Likewise, there are no floor plans. The
4 floor plans give the beet idea of how the ground
5 floor would relate to Eastern Avenue.

6 People who have been following this
7 issue closely disagree on how far the building is
8 proposed to be set back from the Eastern Avenue
9 curb. Is it now only 13 feet? Was it 23 feet
10 below? Where are the loading docks? Are they
11 still located on Eastern? Is it really an
12 improvement if they have been moved to the public
13 access road?

14 Pedestrians and cars when they enter the
15 station will still have to cross in front of these
16 loading docks. Such a path endangers pedestrians
17 and is ripe for traffic back-ups.

18 These are details but they are important
19 details and they are unclear in the information
20 currently available.

21 The Takoma Metro Station is unique. It
22 is located on a jurisdictional boundary line

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1 adjacent to a historic residential community.

2 While I have heard that WMATA typically expects
3 issues of design to be worked out by local zoning
4 boards, in this case, the local board is the D.C.
5 Zoning Commission, and Marylanders will have no
6 guaranteed rights to participate.

7 There was plenty of authority for you,
8 WMATA, to require the developer to engage in real
9 design dialogue. The public notice for this very
10 hearing states, as others have said, that the
11 WMATA Compact requires the Board when it is
12 amending the Mass Transit Plan, which it would be
13 doing by approving this redevelopment, to consider
14 conditions in the transit zone, which includes the
15 District and Montgomery County, Maryland.

16 The list of conditions that the Board is
17 required to consider includes factors affecting
18 esthetics and preservation of the beauty and
19 dignity of the Nation's Capital.

20 Requiring EYA to work with the community
21 on design concerns would be a way for WMATA to
22 meet this obligation under the Compact.

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1 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

2 MS. SIMPSON: I urge you to delay your
3 vote on the staff report that will follow the
4 Compact hearing until EYA in fact engages in--

5 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

6 MS. SIMPSON: Real conversation with the
7 community about design issues. Thank you very
8 much.

9 MS. PORTER: Thank you. James DiLuigi.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. PORTER: To be followed by Antonio
12 Estrada.

13 MR. DiLUIGI: Good evening. My name is
14 James DiLuigi. My wife and I have lived at the
15 same address in Takoma Park for more than 40
16 years. I have voluntarily served my community in
17 various capacities over these years.

18 Currently, I am Vice President of
19 Historic Takoma, an organization with memberships
20 addressing historic aspects of Takoma in both D.C.
21 and Maryland.

22 I'm an architect with sufficient

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1 expertise in both residential and commercial
2 development. I'm also a nationally recognized
3 expert on accessibility regulations, including the
4 Americans With Disabilities Act and various state
5 and city accessibility regulations.

6 I'm here to ask and encourage that the
7 WMATA Board do its rightful duty by rejecting this
8 development proposal and to instead direct the
9 developer to work effectively with the local
10 community to create an acceptable proposal that is
11 sensitive to the neighborhood which it will
12 inhabit.

13 The basis for which WMATA should do so
14 is as follows: (1) Section one of the WMATA Joint
15 Development Policies and Guidelines identifies ten
16 objectives for developers who enter into a
17 development agreement with WMATA.

18 This proposed development plan fails to
19 meet a number of those objectives, not the least
20 of which are relative to safe pedestrian and
21 bicycle access.

22 It is my understanding that the WMATA

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1 Board may have indicated a disinterest in the
2 design aspects of this proposal. If so, such a
3 position would be clearly disingenuous considering
4 both the development objectives adopted by WMATA
5 and the fact that WMATA's staff has actively
6 participated in defending certain aspects of the
7 design during past public hearings. The gentleman
8 on your left is one of those persons.

9 Two, the proposed design grossly exceeds
10 current applicable zoning regulations. A primary
11 purpose of such regulations is to protect
12 neighborhoods from the negative impacts of
13 inappropriate developments. This is accomplished
14 by various methods, one of which is properly
15 allocating densities by means of height
16 restrictions and building set-back lines, both
17 which will be violated by the proposed
18 development.

19 In addition, the proposed design as has
20 been presented by the developer in various
21 iterations is incompatible with the existing
22 historical neighborhood in terms of scale,

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1 massing, and materials, as well as not being
2 compatible with vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian
3 circulation paths.

4 Third, the proposed design is not
5 representative of a healthy environment.

6 Virtually all the living units look across narrow
7 courtyards and other traffic areas which are in
8 very close proximity to the building.

9 Since I only have a few seconds left, I
10 would just add I urge WMATA not approve this
11 project at this time but rather have the developer
12 work with the local community interest groups and
13 neighborhoods to create a design that is
14 reasonably acceptable and supportable.

15 Thank you very much.

16 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. PORTER: Antonio Estrada, to be
19 followed by Ruth Foster.

20 MR. ESTRADA: Thank you. My name is
21 Antonio Estrada. I'm a Takoma Park resident. I'm
22 a MBA in finance, mechanical engineering, and

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1 recently, an executive, career and life coach.

2 We all have an opportunity to make a
3 difference here because we are all in this
4 together. It's June 2014. It's been 52 years
5 since Silent Spring, Rachel Carson's book, that
6 started an environment movement, was released.

7 It has been already eight years after
8 "Inconvenient Truth" was in the movie theaters.

9 Nowadays, we all have great awareness
10 about the unsuspected adverse consequences of
11 wrong-sized developments as the one proposed can
12 cause.

13 I want to emphasize we have four reasons
14 why all the parties in this project want to make a
15 difference. The first one, we have the
16 opportunity to develop a right-sized development
17 that becomes a smooth transition between Takoma,
18 D.C. and Takoma Park, Maryland. This means that
19 no section of the development should exceed the
20 height of the existing neighboring buildings.

21 The proposed plan requires to go as high
22 as 72 feet. That's 80 percent above the actual

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1 neighboring buildings.

2 Also, the proposed number of units, six
3 years after 2008, 235 percent larger. These
4 numbers are not aligned with right-sized
5 development.

6 The second opportunity we have is to
7 enhance green spaces. As of now, the plan calls
8 for elimination of part of the 50 feet landscape
9 buffer. What is planned is really a reduction of
10 the green areas, instead of an enhancement.

11 Again, we are hoping that this project
12 be revised and conform to what we want to have.

13 The third opportunity we have is to
14 expand the parking area for growing needs, not
15 only of the current residents, but also the
16 increased needs everyone will experience with new
17 residents. In this regard, it doesn't make sense
18 that as a result of the proposed project parking
19 spaces will be reduced by 40 percent. We all want
20 to park and ride.

21 Finally, a fourth reason we can take
22 advantage of this opportunity is we can really

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1 make a difference in the community and we can set
2 a landmark that can be an example for the future
3 developments.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Ruth Foster, to
6 be followed by Elise Ambrose.

7 MS. FOSTER: Hello. I was included in
8 the development of the Takoma Metro Station, so
9 I'm very familiar with what happened in the
10 beginning. I also know that WMATA can't be trusted
11 to keep its word, because it did not do a lot of
12 things they said they were going to do.

13 My problem is with the traffic study
14 that EYA did. I want to know why you didn't use
15 the statistics that the D.C. Government did on the
16 traffic study in this area. You could have used
17 them, and if you didn't agree with them, you would
18 have had a chance to refute what they said, but
19 you chose not to do that.

20 Piney Branch and Eastern. That has
21 always been a failing intersection, even with the
22 light there, it has not helped a great deal.

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1 There's no way to widen that to make things any
2 better. Blair Road, 4th Street, that area,
3 Carroll, all that area, they studied that before.
4 Blair Road is a secondary road. 4th Street, the
5 buses use and parking for the businesses on that
6 street. There is no way to change the
7 configuration of that. There's nothing you can do
8 about it, you have to live with it.

9 You should take into consideration the
10 development in the area. For instance, Walter
11 Reed reuse which estimates 2,197 vehicle usage
12 during peak hours. Takoma Central, 235 to
13 255 Carroll Street, the proposed development of a
14 brownstone into 160 rental apartments,
15 approximately 8,300 square feet of on street
16 retail located near the Takoma Red Line Metro
17 Station. Takoma Park, 6924 Willow Street. It
18 goes on, about eight other things that you have
19 not considered.

20 Another thing that I want to say is that
21 you also have to consider the environment,
22 especially the air quality control. I live on

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1 Piney Branch. When they had the traffic going
2 south in the AM and north in the PM, I have a side
3 porch, and we couldn't sit out there at all
4 because the air was so bad you couldn't breathe
5 it. You'd start chocking and coughing and your
6 eyes would start running.

7 What makes you think that when you put
8 all this traffic in this area, it is not going to
9 affect the air quality in this area? All of that
10 needs to be taken into consideration. Thank you.

11 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. PORTER: Elise Ambrose, to be
14 followed by John Rectenwald.

15 MS. AMBROSE: Hi. I'm Elise Ambrose.
16 I'm pretty sure there won't be any applause when
17 I'm finished because I'm actually for the
18 development.

19 This is the most recent picture I've
20 seen. I think it's interesting that everybody has
21 opinions as to what EYA has done wrong, when the
22 design actually hasn't been finished, has hardly

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1 been started.

2 I have been to a few meetings of EYA.
3 They didn't buy me lunch. I don't know why. I
4 wouldn't be bought quite that cheaply in any case.

5 I understand they have fixed some of the
6 problems with the set-back from Eastern Avenue,
7 and the 72 feet that everyone keeps talking about
8 is actually up against the Metro. It is well set
9 back from anything anybody is going to see at
10 street level or even from a second story of their
11 house across the street.

12 My understanding is that 16 years is
13 what EYA has been involved with this project for,
14 that's absurd. That development should have gone
15 through years ago, although granted, they weren't
16 right about the townhouses. I think that was a
17 silly development.

18 There are around 200 units, I think. If
19 anything, I think it's not dense enough for a
20 major transit hub that costs a huge amount of
21 money to maintain.

22 I didn't laugh at you. I'd appreciate

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1 it if you would give me the same respect.

2 At any rate, I'd like to say that I
3 think it's a great development. I think there
4 will be a lot of changes in the design as it goes
5 forward. I'm sure the neighborhood--I'm sure EYA
6 will hopefully hold a lot of meetings and dispel
7 some of the rumors that are wandering around
8 continuously here.

9 Thank you for letting me speak.

10 MS. PORTER: Thank you. John
11 Rectenwald, to be followed by Valerie Tennant.

12 MR. RECTENWALD: Hello. I'm John
13 Rectenwald. I'm a registered architect. I've
14 been involved with urban planning/site planning
15 professionally and involved with transit stations.

16 MS. PORTER: Could you hold it a litter
17 closer? Thank you.

18 MR. RECTENWALD: I'm sorry. I'm a
19 registered architect. I've been involved with
20 urban mass transit and site planning, city
21 planning, as well as architecture. I can say in
22 my experience that this site could hold a lot more

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1 of development rather than less.

2 The community through input has decided
3 that a lot of the site should be set aside for
4 public use, which is admirable, and I think it
5 reflects well upon Metro.

6 I think WMATA is very well aware of what
7 its responsibilities are and the process we are
8 undertaking here. I think this is part of a
9 continuing effort on WMATA's part to develop their
10 site, which they have the right to do, and I also
11 think it is very reflective upon the community
12 that there is all the input that has been going on
13 for many years, far more than my experience would
14 ever suggest would take place. It's kind of a
15 Guinness Book of World Records' kind of thing, in
16 my experience.

17 As far as accessibility, circulation,
18 parking, those things obviously are part of this
19 and the reason for this particular hearing. Once
20 that is set, my understanding is it will allow the
21 architect then to look at what the floor
22 elevations are, the configuration of the first

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1 floor, as well as the configuration of the
2 building.

3 Once those things are settled, then I
4 think the time comes to look at whether this is
5 what people like or they don't like. My
6 understanding of what the process will give is the
7 final definition of what now is the base that you
8 can build a building on.

9 This has to happen first, it seems to
10 me. The community will be well served, as it
11 intends to be, but when you get all said and done,
12 I think it is an excellent process, a process that
13 will provide for some real economic base, which
14 will be positive for Takoma Park, and I think it
15 will be something that everybody can be proud of,
16 and the process should go ahead.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. PORTER: Valerie Tennant, to be
20 followed by Bill Walde.

21 MS. TENNANT: Hi. I'm a commercial
22 property owner [REDACTED] across from the Metro

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1 Station that is currently being leased [REDACTED].

2 There is a huge development going in right behind
3 7-11, which is within the zoning requirements and
4 completely dwarfs the 7-11 property and the home
5 that is right next door. It has cut off the light
6 to the homeowner's property, even cutting down
7 some of his tree limbs.

8 It does impact people in the area. They
9 really don't need to go above the zoning height,
10 it's already dwarfing the neighborhood.

11 One of my big pet peeves is the loading
12 dock that's planned on Eastern Avenue, where
13 trucks would have to stop on Eastern Avenue, back
14 up over the sidewalk. There are pedestrians going
15 by, bicyclists. How are they going to see if a
16 bicycle is coming? It's just not safe.

17 There needs to be that buffer between
18 the apartments and this huge building. They don't
19 need a driveway taking out the green space buffer.
20 It needs to be redesigned so that the green space
21 stays by the apartments, and the loading dock is
22 not a danger.

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1 The Takoma Central District Plan calls
2 to improve pedestrian environment and quality of
3 streetscape, especially to and from the Metro, and
4 make major pedestrian corridors pedestrian
5 friendly. The plan really needs to follow that
6 kind of design.

7 EYA's traffic study, I don't believe,
8 incorporates the massive development that is
9 already in progress right across the street, and
10 then several more that are planned already, so if
11 they think well, a few more cars aren't going to
12 have an impact, I disagree. I don't think the
13 traffic study is accurate.

14 I do believe that EYA should be required
15 to work with the suggested neighborhood group and
16 come up with a plan that would fit better and be
17 safe for the community.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. PORTER: Bill Walde, to be followed
20 by Linda Gray.

21 MR. NORDHEIMER: Actually, my name is
22 Rob Nordheimer, filling in for my partner, Bill

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1 Walde, if that's okay. I checked in up front and
2 they have made that change.

3 MS. PORTER: Okay. If they let you do
4 that at registration, then--

5 MR. NORDHEIMER: They did. Good
6 evening. My name is Rob Nordheimer and I am a
7 principal with the company that owns [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED], which is the apartment building located
9 next to the proposed EYA development.

10 The development plan for Takoma Park
11 Metro raises several concerns for our residents,
12 other apartment building residents, as well as our
13 neighbors.

14 A few of our concerns: the adjoining
15 park that provides an open green space environment
16 for the community located between our building and
17 the Metro property was dedicated space in the
18 comprehensive Metro Plan. It has been an approved
19 dedicated space prior to the Metro development.

20 The park setting is used on a daily
21 basis by many Takoma Park residents. The majority
22 of our residents have been in the building for

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1 over 20 years, and residents in other buildings
2 near us have enjoyed picnics and outdoor
3 recreation since the property was dedicated.

4 The proposed plan calls for the main
5 vehicle traffic to be right next to 7036 Eastern
6 Avenue, which will take away from the park, the
7 green space environment, and it just really needs
8 to be thought out a bit differently. We believe
9 that actually the main entrance to the property,
10 the new development, should be on the other side
11 going south.

12 The park setting serves as a natural
13 setting for birds, wildlife, and the community
14 already lacks this type of open space.

15 We do request that EYA leave this space
16 intact. It's a 50 foot buffer. It's actually
17 part of the Takoma Park Central District. It
18 states that a 50 foot buffer must always separate
19 our building from the Metro property. I don't
20 know if you all have actually reviewed that.

21 I have a feeling there are certain
22 people in my building and the buildings next to

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1 the building that I own that are going to be very
2 direct and they are not going to let that buffer
3 go away. I certainly won't.

4 The height and scale of the proposed
5 apartment building as it approaches Eastern Avenue
6 is a major concern. The building's scale is out
7 of place. It will negatively affect our
8 residents, our neighbors, and others. The
9 proposed mass will greatly affect air and
10 sunlight.

11 It is our opinion the building height
12 should mirror 7036 Eastern Avenue and gradually
13 step back higher going towards the Metro Station.

14 Thank you very much.

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Linda Gray, to
16 be followed by Nick Casey.

17 MS. GRAY: Good evening. My name is
18 Linda Gray and I represent the Eastmont
19 Cooperative, [REDACTED]. I'm
20 sorry I don't have written testimony. I don't
21 need written testimony. Testimony was written for
22 me and signed by Jack Lester in a letter dated May

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1 27.

2 The fact that we received this letter
3 has confirmed to us that WMATA and EYA have no
4 intentions of acting in good faith with the
5 affected community.

6 This letter that was sent to the
7 community, including us, states that "The new
8 development will turn the under-utilized parking
9 lot into a vibrant residential community." The
10 parking lot is not under-utilized.

11 Secondly, it says "Your input during the
12 design phase is most important to us, and we will
13 be reaching out to the community throughout."
14 There has been absolutely no input from the
15 affected community, although we have asked time
16 and time again to meet with you.

17 Mr. Wall, you and I shook hands on that
18 at the ANC meeting. To this date, we have had no
19 meeting.

20 It further states that "All of EYA's
21 neighborhoods blend with surrounding communities
22 and respect their unique characteristics." We

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1 don't know that because you refuse to talk to us,
2 and if it looks like some of the other
3 developments at other Metro stations, then we
4 already disagree.

5 "We will continue to reach out to the
6 residents." We're still waiting for the first
7 meeting.

8 Because of this letter being sent to us,
9 which made absolutely no sense to us, we don't
10 believe you have any intentions of acting in good
11 faith, so what we are suggesting is that you
12 simply stop using these "get over tactics" to get
13 what you want done, and to fully engage the
14 community so that you have a project that you can
15 be proud of, and one we can live with. That is
16 true community engagement and it's the right thing
17 to do.

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Nick Casey, to
21 be followed by Leonard Rubin.

22 MR. CASEY: Hi. My name is Nick Casey

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1 and I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

2 I live in Takoma, D.C. and I support this

3 proposal.

4 It will remove an unnecessary parking

5 lot and replace it with badly needed housing. The

6 housing stock in Takoma is mostly detached, single

7 family houses. This gives the neighborhood a

8 quaint charm but the lack of density makes the

9 downtown a little sleepy.

10 I wish Takoma was more vibrant. That is

11 a common complaint that I hear from people my age

12 who moved to Takoma after having been priced out

13 of more of the central neighborhoods.

14 This development will bring more

15 residents into the neighborhood who will help

16 support local businesses and attract new ones.

17 Some people are saying this building is

18 too tall. Of course, there are always people who

19 say that about any proposed development. There

20 are already many tall buildings in the

21 neighborhood, including a ten story building two

22 blocks away in Maryland.

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1 Those have not destroyed the character
2 of the neighborhood and neither will this
3 building. Any questions about zoning will be
4 addressed by the D.C. Zoning Commission. We don't
5 have all the rights that Maryland residents have
6 in D.C. However, I'd like to hang on to the ones
7 that we do have.

8 The only complaint that I might have
9 about this project is that I think it includes too
10 much parking. It has .7 spaces per unit, but only
11 62 percent of D.C. households own a car. I'm sure
12 those numbers are even lower for apartments that
13 are right next to a Metro station.

14 I used to live in the Cedar Crossing
15 Building, which is right around the corner. I
16 always found it easy to park on the street, which
17 is free, so I'm not sure why anyone would pay
18 hundreds of dollars a month to park in a garage.

19 I'm excited to see this project move
20 forward. I hope construction begins as soon as
21 possible, and I look forward to welcoming our new
22 neighbors.

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1 Thank you.

2 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. PORTER: Leonard Rubin, to be
5 followed by Thomas Fedewa. I'm sorry if I
6 mispronounced that.

7 MR. RUBIN: We have lived, my family and
8 I, on Blair Road since 1965. When EYA and WMATA
9 first came out in the newspaper, in the Post, that
10 they were going to build on the Metro site, a
11 group of us got together, including many who have
12 testified here tonight, and wanted to get
13 involved. We didn't like a lot of what was going
14 on.

15 To cut a long story short, three years
16 later, everything seemed to sort of come to a
17 standstill, but the plan offered by WMATA and not
18 rejected by EYA and not rejected by WMATA remained
19 essentially the same.

20 From the point of view of smart growth,
21 environment and respect for the community, it was
22 irresponsible.

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1 Then everything got quiet. Last July,
2 there was a meeting at the 4th Precinct Police
3 Station. Gosh, things looked better. They
4 weren't going to build on the green space. There
5 were some comments about that. Suddenly, I see
6 the height of this new thing, no reference at that
7 time was made to how high this construction would
8 be and how dominant.

9 There is a great deal of density going
10 on now. There are two on Blair Road, two
11 apartment complexes, another across from WMATA.
12 Two are being built on Carroll. Lord knows what
13 will be built behind the CVS, owned by Douglas
14 Jemal, I believe.

15 It seems to me that the whole problem
16 here is EYA has not been trustworthy and WMATA has
17 not represented itself as a public organization.
18 It has a responsibility to the community which it
19 has not fulfilled so far.

20 We had many hearings back when this
21 first came out, to no avail. I hope that with
22 this hearing and with what I've heard and agree

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1 with that a process is set up so that input from
2 the community is available before EYA comes up
3 with this great idea.

4 Thank you very much.

5 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Thomas Fedewa,
6 to be followed by Elliott Queen. Mr. Fedewa?

7 (No response.)

8 MS. PORTER: All right. Elliott Queen,
9 to be followed by Cheryl Cort. Elliott Queen?

10 (No response.)

11 MS. PORTER: All right. Cheryl Cort, to
12 be followed by Jesse Thomas.

13 MS. CORT: Thanks for the opportunity to
14 testify. My name is Cheryl Cort. I'm the Policy
15 Director for the Coalition for Smarter Growth. We
16 are the leading organization in Washington, D.C.

17 region dedicated to making the case for
18 smart growth. Our mission is to promote walkable,
19 inclusive and transit oriented communities, and
20 the land use and transportation policies and
21 investments needed to make those communities
22 flourish.

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1 We are here to express our support for
2 moving this proposal forward and ask WMATA to
3 approve the proposed changes to WMATA facilities
4 at the Takoma Metro Station and to advance the
5 Joint Development Agreement.

6 We have followed this issue closely
7 since 2000, and I'm gratified to see that we have
8 come to such a good compromise, addressing all the
9 key issues raised by the previous proposal.

10 We support the proposed facilities'
11 changes and Joint Development as a way to
12 construct at least 200 units in a mid-rise
13 apartment building. The new proposal addresses
14 all the key concerns raised by comments to the
15 previous plan, most significantly, the plan
16 preserves the large open space in front of the
17 station, something that many people thought was
18 important.

19 The plan will add bus capacity and
20 retain the bus loop and future potential expansion
21 for bus transit facilities, which were also issues
22 raised in the past.

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1 The proposal will enhance pedestrian
2 walkways, replace under-utilized Metro parking,
3 and offer a lower parking ratio for new residents,
4 and bring the drop off and disabled parking closer
5 to the elevator entrance.

6 We are also excited to see the bike
7 station open shortly.

8 While addressing all the key objections
9 and concerns raised by the original proposal, the
10 new plan offers more than double the housing
11 opportunities that the townhouse proposal did, and
12 this means that more than twice the number of
13 households will have the opportunity to live more
14 sustainable, low carbon, transit oriented lives.

15 We do want to raise the issue related to
16 affordable housing. Originally, the D.C. Council
17 had adopted in its resolution of the Takoma
18 Central District Plan a set-aside of 20 percent
19 affordable housing units. We have attached to our
20 testimony the report from the 2002 resolution by
21 the City. We ask that WMATA honor that and go
22 beyond the standard law for any private

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1 development, which would just be a conclusionary
2 zoning obligation of eight to ten units of
3 moderately priced housing.

4 In conclusion, we urge WMATA to move
5 forward with this project so it can advance to the
6 Zoning Commission, where there will be a lot of
7 detailed design and transportation review, and
8 where stakeholders and city agencies will have the
9 opportunity to provide a lot more input.

10 We are enthusiastic to see this project
11 move forward in order to fulfill the City's goals
12 for creating a more sustainable transit oriented
13 City.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Jesse Thomas,
16 to be followed by Robert Whitaker.

17 MR. THOMAS: Hello. Thank you for being
18 here and having some community input that is
19 needed. I'm standing in support of the current
20 proposal.

21 I am noticing I'm quite in the minority
22 of voices here, the normal voice for this seems to

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1 be a middle aged or older person who has a single
2 family home in the area. I rent here. I have
3 only been here for a year, and I know people turn
4 their nose up to that and say well, I've been here
5 for 40 years, but I think I add value to this
6 community.

7 I didn't know very much about it before
8 coming here. I was priced out of places closer to
9 the City center, but wanted to have a more urban
10 lifestyle and live close to the Subway, so I am
11 here and have grown to love Takoma.

12 Me and my wife here have gotten involved
13 with many things, clean up days, the new Takoma
14 radio station, I'm going to volunteer for that.
15 We just had a meeting this week. My wife is
16 planning on selling some of her homemade products
17 at Trove. She also volunteers at the animal
18 shelter on Georgia. These are the kind of
19 opportunities that Takoma has offered us and we
20 love that about it.

21 I support the 72 feet and the units in
22 this building because it will open Takoma up to

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1 more people that like me are interested in the
2 community, interested in building relations with
3 neighbors, and having something that matters, some
4 kind of value of place.

5 I'm not interested in what Adams Morgan
6 has, and I'm not interested in like going to bars
7 and spending my money everywhere, like the
8 Washington Post likes to present people my age to
9 everyone.

10 I'm interested in things that are a
11 little more lasting, a little more important to
12 me, and those values line up with Takoma well, I
13 think.

14 People that move into this building will
15 flock to Takoma because of these things that
16 Takoma can offer and at a more affordable price
17 than other places near the City center.

18 I do think we should make demands
19 though. This is the first time I saw that color
20 graphic. It looks okay. The fan needs to match the
21 area. I agree with that. We need to demand as a
22 community that the green space, the existing one

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1 that is going to stay, becomes a park. EYA has
2 hinted they are willing to help fund things like
3 that.

4 Right now, it sucks. Like I went to
5 play Frisbee there a couple of weeks ago. It was
6 like really tall grass. I know WMATA is the one
7 that owns that, so they need to do better. EYA
8 has an opportunity to actually improve that, and I
9 think we should really fight for that.

10 This is for the future of Takoma, it's a
11 great place. It seems like most people are
12 unwilling to share it. I think that's a problem.

13 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. PORTER: Robert Whitaker, to be
16 followed by Tracy Kaufman.

17 MR. WHITAKER: Good evening. My name is
18 Minister Robert Whitaker. I've been living here
19 in the community around 40 plus years. I don't
20 have a prepared speech, but I have to say this,
21 what attracted me to the area is the bucolic
22 nature of this location in Takoma Park. It's

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1 unlike living in the City. We'd like it to remain
2 that way.

3 It's a low density area. It has always
4 been low density. A 72 foot high building is much
5 too high. It's out of context. It's like the
6 Exorcist. That is what this building is like, and
7 that took place over there on Bunker Hill Road
8 near Damascus High School, not over here in
9 Georgetown, as the movie depicted.

10 That is kind of what we are dealing with
11 here. You're telling us one thing and you are
12 doing something else. You want us to look to the
13 left and you're going to the right.

14 It is wrong for you to come into a long
15 established community and disrupt the tranquility
16 that exists here. We're not in opposition to the
17 building, but 72 feet is too high. Lower the
18 building to like the buildings being built right
19 now on the Maryland side. Seventy-two foot, no
20 way. We need a low building that is in conformity
21 with the existing Federal laws.

22 There is no high rise apartment building

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1 except the senior citizen building that was
2 mentioned earlier down the street on the Maryland
3 side. That is the only high rise building in
4 sight, and that's what we like.

5 You come out here, you can breathe fresh
6 air early in the morning. Me and my dog have done
7 it for 40 years, right, the third or fourth dog I
8 got that lasted that long.

9 Anyway, this is like I said a monster.
10 It's the Exorcist. We know what happened with
11 that type of monster. We don't want that in this
12 community.

13 Secondly, we can't trust the parties
14 involved because they are all about money, they're
15 money grabbers. There's more to life than money.
16 You need money because that's the new plow, that's
17 how we get things happening, that's how we plow
18 the ground now, with money, paper money.

19 We don't need money to replace the
20 tranquility and the lifestyle that people are
21 attracted here for. Sure, a big old high rise
22 building will bring a whole lot of people, and

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1 then you have all this congestion all of a sudden,
2 all this traffic pollution, all this other stuff,
3 that we don't have now.

4 That's the great thing about living
5 here. It's a wonderful place to raise a family.
6 It's like living in the country, and we want it to
7 remain that way.

8 We are saying just because we don't have
9 the right to vote and we didn't really lose that,
10 it's just people stopped voting, and now all of a
11 sudden we can't vote any more. You could always
12 vote in the District of Columbia. There was no
13 time you couldn't vote. You don't hear nobody on
14 the City Council talking about that.

15 They're talking about making this a
16 state. What the hell kind of situation is that.
17 How could D.C. be a state when it's the capital of
18 the whole country. Come on. We have to have
19 some kind of common sense. What are we paying
20 these people for, just to keep on sticking their
21 hands in our pockets and taking money and call
22 themselves politicians, everybody rob the people

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1 in D.C.

2 because ain't nobody going to do nothing
3 about it because we can't vote in Congress, and we
4 gave that up. Come up.

5 We're not going to give this up. We're
6 going to fight this thing all the way to the
7 ground. It is no problem for you all to lower
8 that building below 72 foot and be in conformity
9 with what is already here and let it stand.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Tracy Kaufman,
12 to be followed by Margaret Salazar.

13 MS. KAUFMAN: Thank you. My name is
14 Tracy Kaufman. My husband and I have lived in
15 Takoma Park for almost 20 years, and like everyone
16 in this room, we love our neighborhood.

17 I believe this is one of those rare
18 moments when a good opportunity presents itself at
19 the right time and hope that we will not allow
20 what I believe to be a vocal minority of people to
21 squander this opportunity.

22 I have several specific points I'd like

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1 to make. Location. We have a location that is
2 not only currently under-utilized for the valuable
3 real estate it occupies, but a site that is
4 appropriate to build on and is begging to be used.

5 Sustainability. We have an opportunity
6 to build higher density, multi-family housing
7 near a transit center. We can all build solar
8 panels and buy geothermal systems and push mowers,
9 but these all pale in comparison to our individual
10 consumption for our transportation needs.

11 Size of the project. This seems to be
12 the crux of the debate tonight. Originally, I
13 understand this property was designated for many
14 more units. Lots of folks complained and that
15 number has been lowered. To me, this means fewer
16 opportunities to incorporate affordable units on a
17 site that should include opportunities for low
18 income people to live.

19 The height of this project is dictated
20 by zoning and planning boards, as has been talked
21 about before. I believe the height currently
22 slated for this property is appropriate for this

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1 location.

2 Easy access. Buses, cars, bikes, and
3 pedestrians all need access to this site. The
4 site offers ample opportunity to coordinate all
5 public access. I believe the developer has
6 succeeded in doing this well for many of its other
7 projects.

8 The developer. We have a really good
9 developer with a solid track record who is
10 committed to doing the right thing for our
11 community. Let's try to work with them.

12 Overall design. While the real design
13 phase of this project is yet to come, I
14 particularly like the fact that the development as
15 is currently designed has a parking garage that is
16 strategically tucked into the building.

17 The development team has also created
18 courtyards along the building's eastern facade to
19 add relief and scale to the project.

20 What I've seen and heard during this
21 conversation over the last several months is a
22 vocal set of friends and neighbors who are

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1 appropriately advocating for their own self-
2 interest. I don't begrudge them that, but I
3 believe there are larger neighborhood-wide
4 interests at play as well.

5 This is a long process with lots of
6 opportunity for community input throughout. We
7 should undertake this process with respect,
8 honesty, and open conversation, and not name
9 calling and personal attacks on those of us with
10 whom you disagree.

11 Let's all agree on one thing, we all
12 want what we believe is best for the community.
13 I, for one, believe that building high density
14 housing next to Metro--

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

16 MS. KAUFMAN: Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. PORTER: Margaret Salazar, to be
19 followed by Alex Salazar.

20 MS. SALAZAR: Good evening. My name is
21 Margaret Salazar. I reside in [REDACTED], a
22 condo building, which is right next to the Metro

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1 tracks, and very close to the proposed project
2 site.

3 I am very proud to be a renter here in
4 Takoma. I'm a very strong supporter of the
5 proposed development for a number of reasons.
6 First, it will continue to draw more local
7 businesses to the area, contributing to the
8 vibrant walkability of the Takoma neighborhood.

9 Second, it will help connect the D.C.
10 side of Takoma, where I live, with the Maryland
11 Takoma Park side, creating a more coherent and
12 inclusive experience for all of us.

13 Third, it will improve the green space
14 in front of the Metro so that we all can have an
15 usable public gathering space. Finally, it will
16 improve foot traffic so that I feel safer walking
17 around the neighborhood at night.

18 Now those are my personal reasons for
19 supporting the project because I love residing in
20 this neighborhood and I want to see it continue to
21 thrive, but here is much more at stake.

22 You have heard a number of speakers talk

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1 tonight about the need for reduced density and
2 reduced number of units.

3 In my day job, I run national affordable
4 housing programs affecting hundreds of multi-
5 family properties and communities across the
6 country. As an expert in multi-family housing and
7 urban development, I urge you to approve the
8 project with the current number of units and the
9 current density. In fact, we need more units, not
10 less.

11 Here's why. The Washington, D.C. metro
12 area continues to experience tremendous growth.
13 In fact, D.C. was fifth amongst metro areas across
14 the country for population growth last year,
15 according to the Census.

16 The Washington Council of Governments
17 reports that we are expected to add 1.7 million
18 more residents by 2040. All of this population
19 growth is putting tremendous pressure on housing
20 costs, and it just underscores the tremendous
21 scarcity in rental housing in our region.

22 In 2013, the Washington Business Journal

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1 rated Washington, D.C. region as the least
2 affordable city in America, with median housing
3 prices 16.78 times the median income. Nearly one-
4 third of all homes in the D.C. area cost \$500,000
5 or more.

6 In order to afford a home renting for
7 \$1,400 a month, you have to earn at least \$56,000
8 a year, and by the way, good luck finding a home
9 at that price.

10 The evidence is clear. We need more
11 housing options and we need them yesterday. The
12 proposed development helps us to provide housing
13 for people at a mix of incomes and does it in a
14 smart, appropriate way, by setting the units back
15 from the green space, and promoting a transit and
16 walkable based lifestyle.

17 We can't turn our back on good
18 development now and wait for a further housing
19 crisis because if we do, we risk making ill-
20 conceived decisions later; car based, suburban
21 development, that will harm our environment and
22 destroy our Takoma urban village way of life.

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1 Please continue to support this
2 development with its current density. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Alex Salazar,
5 to be followed by Lorraine Pearsall.

6 MR. SALAZAR: Thank you. My name is
7 Alex Salazar. I'll be a little bit briefer. I
8 support everything my wife just said, and she's
9 much more eloquent than I am, of course.

10 I think a big reason I support the
11 development is because I know EYA is--

12 PARTICIPANT: We can't hear you.

13 MR. SALAZAR: One of the big reasons I
14 support the development is because I think EYA has
15 proven to be a very good partner with these kinds
16 of developments throughout the region.

17 I think whatever concerns there are that
18 have been voiced should be left at ease because
19 there will be a whole process so people can give
20 input. EYA, in what they have expressed to
21 residents who have been willing to listen, is to
22 go through some sort of community process to

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1 really listen to the concerns around the building,
2 around density, around the park.

3 I think there is a huge opportunity to
4 bring the community to actually involve people,
5 particularly on the park, which is very under-
6 utilized. Metro has a lot of land, it's probably
7 really hard to manage all of that. This is an
8 opportunity to really redevelop the park in a way
9 that really stitches together not just the housing
10 around it but also the path as people go through
11 it, and the businesses that are adjacent to it.

12 I'm speaking off the cuff here. I was
13 speaking to one of the businesses there. They
14 didn't even know that the development at this
15 point was going to redevelop the park as well.
16 Once I told him that, he was ecstatic, because he
17 himself sees the amount of people who will be
18 coming in once that gets cleaned up will really be
19 a positive benefit to the neighborhood.

20 I think the other reason is really from
21 a family perspective. My wife and I moved here a
22 few years ago. We love the neighborhood and its

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1 character but we also love a little bit more
2 excitement at night, it would be nice to have a
3 few more businesses to go to, and we really want
4 it to be a little bit safer so that we are happy
5 walking our kids, our future kids, our dog, and it
6 is just a really great atmosphere.

7 I think this development will really
8 improve the overall neighborhood and really help
9 people like us who really care about the
10 neighborhood and want to live here to continue to
11 live here.

12 Thank you very much. I appreciate your
13 time.

14 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Lorraine
15 Pearsall, to be followed by George French.

16 MS. PEARSALL: My name is Lorraine
17 Pearsall. I am here on behalf of Historic Takoma.
18 Historic Takoma is the local historic preservation
19 group for Takoma Park, Maryland and Tacoma, D.C.

20 In order to protect our community, we
21 have retained the services of two law firms, the
22 Law office of Michelle Rosenfeld, and also

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1 Cultural Heritage Partners. They have submitted
2 testimony today, and will be continuing to submit
3 things to you for the record.

4 Our attorneys request that the WMATA
5 Board defer further action and table its
6 consideration of proposed development at the
7 Takoma Park Metro Station until such time as FTA
8 has completed its statutory obligations to review
9 the project pursuant to Section 106 of the
10 National Historic Preservation Act and Section
11 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.

12 Two. The development is inconsistent
13 with the District of Columbia's Central District
14 Plan in several material respects. WMATA's
15 actions should be deferred until either the
16 development is redesigned to be consistent with
17 the comprehensive plan or the comprehensive plan
18 is revised with due public process.

19 Three. An independent review has found
20 that the traffic study performed by WMATA
21 significantly under estimated traffic impacts of
22 the EYA development and is inconsistent with

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1 industry standard practices, and should be redone
2 before the project moves forward.

3 Four. WMATA, with this project, is
4 actually in violation of its own policies on sound
5 growth for communities. With the density,
6 heights, scale and massing, improper set-backs,
7 and the loss of green space and trees, you are
8 really harming our community, and you are causing
9 financial harm to our community with this
10 aggressive development. You are also violating
11 your own policies by not working cooperatively
12 with local jurisdictions.

13 Mr. Wall, I asked you to meet with
14 Historic Takoma and neighbors, and you refused.

15 The green buffer areas that were
16 established long ago were established really as an
17 amenity to our community, and their importance
18 then is the same today. Both of the green space
19 buffer areas are incredibly important,
20 particularly next to our apartment building.
21 These mature treed green buffers are important
22 character defining elements for our historic

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1 district, and that is very important.

2 Finally, I'd like to say that in 2000,
3 attorneys for Historic Takoma and the City of
4 Takoma Park requested the final site plan approved
5 by the WMATA Board in 1974 and 1975. To date, we
6 don't have it. The site plan approvals carry
7 regulatory weight, and we ask you to provide it.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. PORTER: Thank you. George French,
11 to be followed by Marcie Stickle.

12 MR. FRENCH: I have lived in Takoma
13 Park, five blocks from this Metro station, for
14 nearly 25 years, and have relied heavily on this
15 transportation facility since it opened.

16 I have followed this recent development
17 process from the beginning. I have enjoyed the
18 openness of Takoma Station, the green spaces, the
19 variety of trees so beneficial in so many ways and
20 crucial to the environment.

21 I do not mind the surface lot because it
22 is open, safe, supports trees and is a lot less

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1 unattractive than structured parking.

2 I do see an advantage to reasonable car
3 less or car limited transit oriented development
4 here, but only constructed on the footprint of the
5 surface parking lot.

6 The testimony of Coalition for Smarter
7 Growth is tainted, not to be trusted. They have a
8 conflict of interest when they accept funding from
9 the developer, and they lobbied hard for the
10 dreadful former project of nearly 100 two car
11 townhouses while saving only a dozen trees and a
12 postage stamp park.

13 It is time for EYA to go. They have had
14 several cracks at this development project and
15 just can't make it work. It is time to open the
16 process back up to other developers, those who
17 would respect the open green space, the two
18 buffering parks, zoning height restrictions,
19 traffic considerations, and the surrounding
20 historic districts.

21 I desire a firm that can use the
22 buffering trees as an enhancement to the new

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1 development, not as an obstacle to be removed.

2 EYA designers have failed too many times
3 to present a desirable concept and project.

4 Since the beginning of this Takoma
5 Station development project, there have been
6 hundreds of new units constructed and more to be
7 added to the immediate area. I am opposed to
8 doubling the density on this site from what was
9 proposed earlier. Increasing the density for an
10 allowable development on the site would have a
11 great effect on retaining more open space,
12 lowering building height, decreasing the traffic
13 and congestion, and increasing access to the
14 station. Also, fewer units mean less residential
15 parking spaces needed.

16 Another benefit of a less massive
17 project is shorter construction time. Recall the
18 never ending Silver Spring Transit Station fiasco.
19 WMATA allowed turning a nice open tree accented
20 station into a monument of cracking concrete and
21 construction arrogance; still unusable after six
22 long years, it has squandered millions of taxpayer

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1 dollars.

2 Lowering the project proposed density
3 should not harm legitimate developers' ability for
4 financial gain, since the land is a virtual gift,
5 a giveaway from WMATA.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. PORTER: Marcie Stickle, to be
10 followed by Pamela Ellison.

11 MS. STICKLE: Marcie Stickle, regular
12 Takoma Park Station Metro user. Maples, magnolia,
13 white pine, beech, elms, huge white oaks, willow
14 oaks, golden rain trees, honey locust, hollies,
15 chestnuts, cypress, weeping willow, creates a
16 cool, lovely fragrant, smoothing green grove
17 adjacent to the garden apartments on Eastern
18 Avenue. Celebrate a green theme, a human scale
19 garden city apartment theme. The grove is a
20 centerpiece to new development.

21 I oppose the currently proposed
22 WMATA/EYA gargantuan monolific structure that

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1 swallows up our breathable green space. Construct
2 instead human scale garden apartments joining with
3 the existing ones around the living, breathing
4 grove as their centerpiece.

5 The grove's mature trees provide
6 environmental and health benefits, lungs of the
7 planet. Trees produce and release oxygen, filter
8 pollution from the air, soak up storm water,
9 absorbs greenhouse gases, absorbs and blocks
10 noise.

11 Trees provide us and our homes shade and
12 cooling under their canopies and habitat for
13 wildlife, celebrate the grove. Remember, Takoma
14 Park is tree city.

15 I enthusiastically request that the
16 irreplaceable grove and all of the existing green
17 space at the Takoma Metro Station be protected
18 legally in perpetuity by WMATA and EYA for future
19 and current generations.

20 That is the park across from the station
21 and the grove. What an enduring visionary gift
22 WMATA and EYA can provide. Promote harmony with

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1 nature. The location is already walkable,
2 bikeable, busable, Metro commutable, to jobs,
3 schools, businesses, entertainment and recreation.
4 Parking can be incorporated above or below ground.

5 I believe that EYA is creative enough to
6 be able to incorporate garden city and garden
7 apartment ideals into its new development, quite a
8 enticement for prospective residents.

9 The grove along with its garden
10 apartments provides an oasis in perpetuity. Green
11 magnets for new and old residents as well as new
12 patrons from Metro bus and rail and to enjoy our
13 historic districts of Takoma Park and Takoma, D.C.

14 Garden city principles include
15 development which enhances the natural
16 environment, strong local cultural recreation,
17 shopping facilities, and walkable neighborhoods.
18 Integrated and accessible transport systems.

19 In fact, 75 years later, Greenbelt's new
20 deal garden apartments were designed and still
21 exist as pristine ribbons lying gently on the
22 land. That is our vision.

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1 Thank you.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Pamela Ellison,
4 followed by Richard Layman.

5 MS. ELLISON: Good evening. My name is
6 Pamela Ellison. I have lived in Takoma, D.C. for
7 28 years. I object to the characterization of the
8 folks with whom I agree about this development
9 that it is too big and there are other issues with
10 it, that we are here in our self-interest.

11 I don't live anywhere near the Metro
12 station, even though I'm in Takoma, D.C., and
13 there are many other people who have spoken today
14 against the development who do not live near the
15 Metro station.

16 None of us are here for our self-
17 interest, number one. My colleagues have been so
18 eloquent that I will just say a couple of other
19 things.

20 First of all, the buffer park needs to
21 stay, and everybody has said that. I would also
22 like to add that if EYA were a little bit more

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1 creative about the building design, they could
2 keep the buffer park, which is adjacent to the
3 building, to the parking lot, and configure it so
4 that the residents of the new building, which I am
5 not against--for their use as well. It needs to
6 stay.

7 Second, I think it's an insult that EYA
8 comes in with a proposal that is against D.C.

9 zoning regulations. That is an insult
10 to those of us who live in D.C.

11 The third thing that I am one of these
12 old folks, and I am not handicapped yet, but I
13 need my parking space so that I can go downtown
14 and enjoy the downtown part of the city.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. PORTER: Richard Layman, to be
18 followed by Chris Turner.

19 MR. LAYMAN: I'm Richard Layman. I'm
20 going to talk fast because I have three minutes.
21 I've submitted other testimony in 2006 and 2013.
22 Should be part of the record.

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1 Just going to address the points raised
2 in flyers and other materials by the Takoma right-
3 sized people. One about the size, this site
4 should be judged on characteristics appropriate to
5 the site. It is at the center of the community.
6 It has topographical issues that allow for a
7 taller building, besides the fact of which it
8 won't be the tallest building in the neighborhood,
9 there are already two much taller buildings.

10 The third point about traffic back-up on
11 Eastern Avenue, the biggest solution to Eastern
12 Avenue is to take off the D.C. residential parking
13 on the east--west side of the street. All those
14 apartment buildings have on-site parking. When
15 you have the ride on buses and cars, it's not wide
16 enough for through traffic because of the parking.
17 That would solve throughput issues on that street.

18 About pedestrian access to Metro, most
19 of the people come on Cedar Street from either
20 east or west. Eastern Avenue, walking to the
21 Metro, they go through the parking lot, which is
22 not best practice by any means. This project will

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1 result in significant improvements in that area.

2 Regarding parking for Metro riders, yes,
3 speaking of constraints, which we're not talking
4 about or trade-offs, a bigger building allows
5 underground parking, it's too expensive otherwise.
6 You can have your parking. I bike. I'm 54. I
7 hope to still be biking in 20 years or more.

8 These are trade-offs. If you shrink the
9 project, you can't do other things like keep green
10 buffers or have underground parking. Significant
11 improvements to the other existing open spaces
12 will be wonderful because yes, the space does
13 suck, as one other person said before.

14 Regarding zoning allowances in the
15 Master Plan, there's no question that Takoma's
16 Central Plan is out of date significantly. It was
17 designed during the 1990s when D.C.'s conditions
18 were so significantly different.

19 If you talk to anyone in the Office of
20 Planning, they would agree that the Plan's
21 precepts aren't really--they are out of date.

22 Finally, about visual blight and out of

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1 scale with the community, I can't think of a
2 bigger visual blight than that parking lot.
3 That's the worse visual blight in the
4 neighborhood, and this would be way better.

5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Chris Turner,
8 to be followed by Dr. Julie Boddy. Can you go
9 ahead and start your testimony?

10 MR. TURNER: Good evening, Ms. Porter.
11 My name is Chris Turner. I live here on the
12 Takoma, D.C. side. I grew up in Takoma, D.C. I
13 attended this school. I attended Gonzaga High
14 School. I did the Youth Orchestra Program at
15 Coolidge. I went to AU for undergrad, and I went
16 to Howard for law school.

17 Earlier today I spoke with Mr. Wall, and
18 I think we both agreed there is a Federal
19 Environmental Impact Statement on the Metro
20 Website. This is a big document that anybody can
21 look at.

22 When Cheryl Cort of the Coalition for

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1 Smarter Growth and Jack Lester of EYA talked about
2 the under-utilized parking lot or that it's half
3 empty, that's by design. The Federal
4 Environmental Impact Statement said there would be
5 no commuter parking here.

6 What I think is important is for
7 everyone at WMATA to remember that land, Federal
8 money was used for the Metro system. The Federal
9 Transit Administration, the Federal Government,
10 they have an interest in this land.

11 I think Mr. Wall, you agree that a joint
12 development project has to follow the Federal
13 Transit Administration's joint development project
14 guidelines. Those guidelines have very specific
15 requirements that I'm not sure EYA has even looked
16 at or are following.

17 The letter they sent is dated May 27,
18 the EYA letter to the neighborhood. It only came
19 a few days ago. It said "EYA is working with
20 WMATA to build a new residential apartment
21 community at the existing Takoma Metro Station
22 parking lot."

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1 Well, I'm for that, but they're not
2 going to build just in the parking lot, they're
3 going to build in the buffer park, and the buffer
4 park is part of the design. That Metro
5 station didn't just appear one day. It was
6 designed by WMATA, by the D.C. City Council. That
7 buffer park is there because in part, it's not
8 just a Metro station, it's a bus station, too.
9 There are diesel buses there, hybrid diesel buses.

10 Please be aware, there's a reason why
11 that station was designed that way. There is a
12 reason that parking lot is partially empty at
13 certain times of the day.

14 As someone else pointed out, if you go
15 to the Coalition for Smarter Growth Website, they
16 have an EYA logo on their Website. They're
17 getting money from EYA. They are not even a
18 501(c)(3).

19 They are using the Piedmont
20 Environmental Council as their parent in
21 Warrenton, Virginia. I question EYA and I
22 question the Coalition for Smarter Growth. They

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1 also, by the way, wrote build in the parking lot

2 or EYA said build in the parking lot.

3 I'm for building in the parking lot.

4 That would be great. Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Dr. Julie

7 Boddy, to be followed by Richard Van Metter. Dr.

8 Julie Boddy?

9 (No response.)

10 MS. PORTER: All right. Richard Van

11 Metter, to be followed by Catherine Tunnis.

12 Richard Van Metter?

13 (No response.)

14 MS. PORTER: All right. Catherine

15 Tunnis, to be followed by Gregory Bordynowski.

16 MS. TUNNIS: Hello, how are you?

17 Catherine Tunnis. I'm President of the South of

18 Sligo Citizens Association, a position that Board

19 Member Porter held 20 something years ago.

20 MS. PORTER: A few years; yes.

21 MS. TUNNIS: We discussed this

22 development at our meeting last October. The SSCA

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1 area is located about one to three miles away from
2 the Metro station. That neighborhood had some
3 particular interests they wanted to present to the
4 Board.

5 Number one is preserve the green space.
6 It is not an empty space, it is extremely
7 important for commuters and to maintain proper
8 mental health, good mood, and all sorts of stuff,
9 and also provides some shade while we're waiting
10 for the buses.

11 All developments should be transit
12 oriented, plan for growth, and have adequate
13 facilities for pedestrians, bus riders, and
14 biking.

15 We certainly agree with the concerns
16 expressed by the community members that this
17 building is too big, that it has a very strong
18 visual impact on the community, there is a serious
19 traffic impact, and will increase the demand for
20 parking in the area.

21 This is not, as currently designed, a
22 building that will fit into that neighborhood.

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1 This is a Godzilla that will loom over the
2 neighborhood threatening to eat it at any time.

3 The SSCA neighbors have a particular
4 concern about adequate public parking. The prior
5 gentleman made the point that the parking lot was
6 not half full, so that does not mean there is no
7 demand for parking, it was designed that way. For
8 the WMATA analysis to say there is currently no
9 further need for parking, that was incompetent and
10 inappropriate to say anything like that.

11 SSCA recommends that the development
12 have no fewer than the current number of parking
13 spaces, excluding those set aside for taxis, zip
14 cars, or any other purposes. There should be
15 adequate provision for parking for those with
16 special needs. People should be able to use their
17 Smart Trip card to get out of the parking lot.

18 We understand the community concern that
19 we do not want this to become a large commuter
20 garage. There could be limits on time that have
21 been suggested, such as seven hour limits, when
22 somebody starts parking. We encourage a special

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1 pass for people who live one to three miles away
2 and need special accommodations.

3 We should ensure that WMATA receives
4 adequate revenues for this development. WMATA is
5 ours. Metro is ours. I spend more time on the
6 Metro than I spend in my living room. This is why
7 people feel so strongly about this, this is ours,
8 our community is ours. We not only want to
9 preserve our community, but we want to preserve
10 Metro to make sure it is there for people in the
11 future.

12 We strongly encourage future discussions
13 with the community. They have been very few and
14 far between to date. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Gregory
17 Bordynowski, to be followed by Charles Gorham.

18 MR. BORDYNOWSKI: Hi. My name is Greg
19 Bordynowski. I've been an architect for 26 years.
20 I've lived in Takoma Park for 14 years, and I've
21 done a lot of work in and around historic
22 districts.

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1 I usually find myself on the other side
2 of the fence advocating for development, and
3 sometimes you find yourself in a position that you
4 wouldn't expect.

5 I'm going to limit my comments to just
6 some things that I saw in the plans that I think
7 could improve the project. I imagine that this
8 development is going to go forward. They usually
9 do. A couple of things struck me.

10 The first thing is Eastern Avenue is a
11 residential area. Its buildings are two or three
12 stories at most, so the precedent for a taller
13 building I find unconvincing.

14 The set-back to the fourth story, I
15 think, is not really working. I think what you
16 really need is something that is a series of three
17 story buildings across there.

18 Also, the loading dock. I'm not really
19 sure why you would put a loading dock on a
20 valuable piece of street frontage, basically a
21 residential street, when you have an alley you're
22 building as part of your project. There is no

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1 reason that I can see, and there is a step in the
2 grade that would allow you to hide it from the
3 adjacent apartments. I don't know quite why you
4 did that.

5 Recent developments in the area were not
6 more than five stories. I think if you stepped up
7 at the tracks, that might be acceptable, but the
8 bulk facing the neighborhood should definitely be
9 lower.

10 Finally, I think the park or the green
11 space in front of the building on the Eastern
12 Avenue side doesn't really acknowledge the
13 neighborhood. Again, I'm thinking in terms of how
14 to make something that's good development, and as
15 Jane Jacobs said, places where people want to be.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Charles Gorham,
19 to be followed by Bevi Chagnon.

20 MR. GORHAM: Hi. My name is Charlie
21 Gorham. I live in the [REDACTED]
22 at [REDACTED] Street, N.W. It is right across from

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1 the Metro, from the current proposed development.

2 I support the proposed development for
3 three reasons. One, it provides the best benefit
4 to the neighborhood. The neighborhood is growing,
5 and to support the recent development in the
6 community, we need more people. We're fortunate
7 to live in an urban neighborhood that has great
8 Metro and bus access. Since the parking lot only
9 offers hourly parking, people rarely park there.

10 We look to the greater D.C. area to use
11 the property to its greatest value, and that is to
12 offer a reasonable housing option so more people
13 can have access to what we have access to.

14 The specifications of the proposed
15 development are more than reasonable. Since I
16 have moved into the neighborhood, I've noticed
17 there is a vocal minority of people who
18 consistently oppose all development in the
19 neighborhood. Sometimes they are direct about
20 their opposition, and sometimes they are more
21 indirect, which is the case here.

22 Rather than offer more viable

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1 alternatives or work with people like EYA towards
2 reasonable alterations to current plans, we see
3 things like signs in yards and we see people
4 policed on community list serves.

5 Not every aspect of the development is
6 going to win everyone's heart, but the current
7 plans are more than reasonable. If you ask me, I
8 think it's too small.

9 The proposed building is aligned with
10 the rest of the neighborhood. It provides for
11 necessary parking for some but not all residents,
12 which is more than appropriate for the
13 neighborhood, and it maintains an adequate amount
14 of green space.

15 Third, the vocal minority that I spoke
16 of claims this development will harm the people
17 who live the closest to it. I live right there
18 (indicating). I live across from the Metro, from
19 the proposed development, and I think it will only
20 enhance my life.

21 The current parking lot is depressing
22 and it is useless. I welcome the idea of more

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1 people, more neighbors, and more activities.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Bevi Chagnon,
4 to be followed by David Frye.

5 (No response.)

6 MS. PORTER: Okay. David Frye, followed
7 by Elizabeth Merritt.

8 MR. FRYE: Thank you very much. I'm
9 David Frye. I'm a 26 year D.C.--Takoma, D.C.
10 resident, home owner, taxpayer, husband, father of
11 kids educated in D.C. public and chartered
12 schools.

13 The building can't happen soon enough
14 for me. Somebody talked about your
15 responsibility. To me, it's irresponsible that
16 this site has remained vacant and in public
17 ownership for 40 years.

18 Don't lock yourself in on the green
19 space. The one acre that was proposed in the
20 Takoma Central Plan is more than enough. You are
21 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Agency,
22 not the Washington Metropolitan Area Parks Agency.

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1 It is not part of your mission to provide parks
2 and recreation to this area or any area.

3 Effective use of the resources that you
4 hold for the benefit of the entire system is your
5 mission.

6 If you turn this entire site into a
7 park, the next time somebody complains to you
8 about delayed maintenance, higher fares, the poor
9 condition of cars, your response should be well,
10 we have some surplus land that we could sell, but
11 instead, we set it aside for a park in an upper
12 middle class area where you can hardly find a
13 detached single family house for under \$500,000.
14 Go and tell that in Southeast. No, we couldn't
15 use this land for the benefit of the intent to
16 sell it, for the benefit of the entire system, to
17 get land back on the tax rolls, to get taxpayers
18 back in the City. We had to provide a park for
19 these people.

20 Takoma Park, Maryland has its own park
21 system. There are 600 foot deep yards over there.
22 They have enough green space. You don't need to

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1 be providing these people with green space. One
2 acre is more than enough.

3 Thank you very much.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Elizabeth
6 Merritt, to be followed by Nancy Currier.
7 Elizabeth Merritt?

8 (No response.)

9 MS. PORTER: Okay. Nancy Currier, to be
10 followed by David Reiser.

11 MS. CURRIER: The green light means it
12 is on?

13 MS. PORTER: Green light means it is on;
14 yes.

15 MS. CURRIER: My name is Nancy Currier.

16 Hello to everybody. I live at [REDACTED]
17 in Takoma Park, Maryland. I have for 40 years,
18 and I've worked downtown for a long time using the
19 Subway. I do very much like the Subway.

20 I and my fellow Maryland and D.C.

21 neighbors frequently traverse the narrow
22 intersection of Holly and Eastern Avenues by foot

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1 and--

2 MS. PORTER: Can you hold the microphone
3 closer? Thank you.

4 MS. CURRIER: By adding 200 or more cars
5 to the immediate community, the EYA plan will
6 congest that intersection and promote accidents in
7 that intersection. It will pollute the air with
8 auto exhaust.

9 The 20 plus trees on the buffer green
10 space won't be able to help us for EYA plans to
11 completely eliminate that piece of land.

12 I feel that the EYA proposal discounts
13 my interests. It discounts those similar to mine,
14 of my Maryland and D.C. neighbors. I hope that
15 you will not accept it unless the number of
16 apartment units and therefore cars are
17 substantially lowered and with retaining the green
18 space buffer. I am in favor of that green space
19 buffer.

20 Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. PORTER: Thank you. David Reiser,

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1 followed by Bradley Green.

2 MR. REISER: I'll be very quick, because
3 you guys look like you're just enduring this, and
4 I think it's really important that you listen as
5 opposed to just--

6 PARTICIPANT: Put the microphone closer.

7 MR. REISER: I'm sorry. I think it's
8 important that you listen, not just endure. I
9 understand it's hard.

10 This isn't about Maryland versus D.C.
11 I've been a member of the Takoma community for 22
12 years, most of them in the District of Columbia.
13 I now live in Maryland. I was part of the
14 planning that went into the Central District Plan,
15 and I would have the same view if I was still
16 living right up the street on 7th Street as I do
17 now.

18 The plan you have is not smart growth
19 because you do not have a walkable community.
20 What you have is a plan that is designed to
21 maximize revenue from a particular parcel, not a
22 sensible integrated development.

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1 I would love it if you would put
2 together a plan to do economic development, to put
3 a grocery store and enough things in the immediate
4 neighborhood that people actually could, as EYA's
5 slogan, have "Life Within Walking Distance."
6 That's not true.

7 All I ask is that you stand, each one of
8 you, spend a week standing on Carroll Avenue at
9 5:00 in the afternoon, or on Eastern Avenue when
10 two buses are crossing against each other, and
11 then decide whether this is a good plan given the
12 limits of the existing non-Metro infrastructure.

13 I want Metro to succeed. I want
14 development in Takoma to succeed. This is a plan
15 that is constrained by the size of your parcel and
16 not by what makes smart growth.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Bradley Green,
20 followed by Jack Sullivan.

21 MR. GREEN: Thank you. My name is
22 Bradley Green and I live three blocks from the

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1 proposed development. I support EYA's proposed
2 development at the Takoma Metro Station. I
3 believe the development will benefit the entire
4 neighborhood and is of an appropriate scale, given
5 its proximity to high capacity transit.

6 People who live in this development will
7 do so largely because of the easy access it
8 provides to Metro. As a result, many occupants
9 will not own a car. Those that will do will drive
10 less than people living further from the station.
11 Thus, the impact on area traffic will not be
12 nearly as great as the size of the development
13 would otherwise suggest.

14 More importantly, however, this
15 development will energize the sleepy commercial
16 district adjacent to the station. These
17 businesses need more residents within an easy
18 walking distance to thrive. A thriving business
19 community in turn will enable these same residents
20 to walk to goods and services they would otherwise
21 have to drive to. Thus, further reducing the
22 number of cars on area streets.

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1 The larger Takoma community, of course,
2 also benefits from a successful commercial core,
3 while at the same time retaining its residential
4 character.

5 In other words, this is a development
6 that will improve both access to Metro and life in
7 the neighborhood.

8 For these reasons, I support the EYA
9 development. Thank you.

10 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Jack Sullivan,
11 followed by Barbara Whitney. I apologize. It is
12 not the best set up for the microphone.

13 MR. SULLIVAN: Hi. My name is Jack
14 Sullivan. I'm a resident of Takoma Park. I am a
15 landscape architect. Most of my issues are not
16 about the development itself. I think the idea is
17 great. I hope that something really beautiful
18 happens out of this development, but right now,
19 that is not what is happening, and therefore, I
20 don't support this particular scheme as it is
21 presented.

22 First of all, I think there is a little

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1 bit of a bait and switch that happened. If you go
2 on line and you start to look at some of the
3 illustrations for the proposed project, it
4 actually looks very handsome, with recessed
5 windows and a sense of masonry, good materials, a
6 nice solid feel, as if it has been and will last a
7 very long time.

8 What we see here, I think, is not that.
9 I think it is a very irresponsible design with bad
10 materials, and I think it has to be reconsidered.

11 More importantly, I think the idea of
12 saving the park is a very good thing that is
13 happening. That wouldn't have happened without
14 getting some height, and I don't mind that the
15 building is kind of on the high side. What I do
16 mind though is there isn't a buffer to the
17 apartments on Eastern Avenue. I think that is a
18 very big concern.

19 I think not only the size of the trees
20 but also the distance from the driveway and the
21 house of those apartments should be recognized and
22 those people who live there should have as much of

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1 the amenity of the green space as possible.

2 I think one of the biggest problems I
3 see is that they have not gone underground, and by
4 not going underground, they have gone higher up.
5 They are trying to avoid the cost of putting
6 something below grade, and in the process, they
7 are creating a very uncomfortable, very
8 unattractive building that we will see at eye
9 level, that we will see from the Metro, which is
10 elevated looking across at this building.

11 I really hope this will be redesigned,
12 perhaps lowering the number of units, but I don't
13 know--by my calculations, I think you can still
14 have a responsible development at about 165 to 175
15 units. I think they are planning somewhere around
16 215 at this point. I'm not sure.

17 I think there is something that needs to
18 be addressed in terms of the character of this
19 place, because that is what Takoma Park is all
20 about, whether it is D.C. or Maryland. I think
21 you have to have a really good building, and this
22 is not a really good building.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MS. PORTER: Okay. Thank you. Barbara
3 Whitney, followed by Peter Feiden.

4 MS. WHITNEY: Hi. My name is Barbara
5 Whitney. I'm not going to repeat things. I just
6 want to say I think what we need to think about
7 mostly and focus on is ease of accessibility and
8 safety. Those are the things that when I look at
9 the pictures and I look at the plans, I don't see
10 details for those things. It's like yes, we will
11 upgrade the sidewalks. Yes, there will be this.
12 I haven't seen real, real plans for the safety,
13 especially the safety, and then ease of
14 accessibility.

15 One person mentioned opening up on the
16 west side, a bicycle commentary, is there a
17 possibility of doing that, to really connect the
18 D.C. side on the other side of the tracks to the
19 D.C. side on the Maryland side of the tracks. I
20 don't know, but couldn't that tunnel be continued?
21 That is just one item.

22 Without a buffer and without a set-back,

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1 how safe is it really for all the people that are
2 going on all those sidewalks. I think that should
3 be the first concern really, and then after that,
4 you see how big a building you can build and
5 exactly where you can build it.

6 That's what I am hoping is going to
7 happen here after all our input. Thank you.

8 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Peter Feiden,
9 followed by Brian Robinson.

10 MR. FEIDEN: Hi. I'm Peter Feiden. I
11 live on [REDACTED] across from the project.
12 I've lived there for 25 years.

13 I have always loved the neighborhood.
14 The one negative from the day I moved in was the
15 fact that we were across from a parking lot, and I
16 had always hoped there would be some development
17 there.

18 I was guardedly optimistic when about 14
19 years ago WMATA's chosen developer, EYA, presented
20 a plan. Unfortunately, it was a plan that the
21 community could not support for two quite
22 different reasons. One was that it was going to

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1 use the bulk of both green spaces, and the second
2 was it was not smart growth in any stretch because
3 it was townhouses with two car garages.

4 After some very limited engagement and a
5 lot of conflict, the Takoma Central District Plan
6 was devised to create a Master Plan for the
7 community, not just for that site, but for the
8 whole area, including Blair Road, all the way to
9 the District/Maryland border. It includes all the
10 way up to the 7-11, the site that is currently
11 being developed.

12 The plan was a relatively good
13 compromise, I thought, and I think many others
14 thought, in that it limited development to four
15 stories, called for up to 95 units, called for a
16 50 foot buffer part between any development and
17 the existing apartment buildings.

18 Then after a couple more years of very
19 slow movement, the plan totally died because of
20 the recession. Then we have come back suddenly
21 five years later. The developer who fought
22 vehemently against any redesign to incorporate

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1 smart growth principles, suddenly was using smart
2 growth rhetoric to justify what you might call
3 "vertical sprawl," and has packaged a
4 redevelopment and has misconstrued opposition to
5 earlier development as opposition to development
6 per se.

7 I would say that everybody that I have
8 been associated with who have been opposed to this
9 project are for development on the parking lot,
10 and probably always have been.

11 The problem is this has taken 14 years
12 and nothing has happened. That is not a reason to
13 develop it now. It is a reason to get serious
14 about development. The seriousness has to start
15 with some reasonable constructive engagement where
16 we get beyond the rhetoric of smart growth and we
17 get beyond construing opposition as opposition to
18 development comprehensively, to a true dialogue
19 that incorporates issues of density, height, mass,
20 and borders.

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

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1 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Brian Robinson,
2 followed by Ian Barclay.

3 MR. ROBINSON: Hi. Brian Robinson. I
4 represent Friends of Old Takoma, a
5 bi-jurisdictional community development
6 organization. We also run the Electric Maid
7 Community's Art Center, which directly faces the
8 proposed development site, and we are one of the
9 businesses that EYA offered to tear down ten years
10 ago as a benefit to the community in turn for
11 taking away green space. Fortunately, none of the
12 businesses on our side of the street were
13 interested in their proposal.

14 They were actually going in the opposite
15 direction from what we and other organizations
16 were trying to convince them was needed.

17 This is the plan which we presented
18 then, over ten years ago. It is also a plan that
19 even the folks who are against development would
20 not let us present. We were not given a chance to
21 present it to the ANC. We were not given a chance
22 to present it to anyone. The local elected

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1 officials refused to meet with us.

2 Basically, our plan was all about smart
3 growth and also about dealing with the issue of
4 the green space. As you can see in this plan,
5 there are three parts to the green space. There
6 is the so-called "Village Green," which nobody
7 wants to get rid of. It's a very useable roughly
8 square area that is surrounded by businesses and
9 the active part of the Metro. It is very useable.
10 You see people picnicking on it, surrounded by
11 mature trees.

12 Then you have the so-called
13 "amphitheater," as I call it, which sucks. It is
14 surrounded by the bus turn around, nobody wants to
15 go there because you have fume sucking buses using
16 this turn around here.

17 They want to preserve the bus lanes
18 exactly as it is because they misinterpreted the
19 previous sentiments as saying we want to preserve
20 the bus lanes, which is a hideous suburban styled
21 bus turn around, which makes half of the green
22 space unusable.

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1 That is all in the current plan. The
2 current plan will not do anything to make the
3 green space usable because it would retain the bus
4 configuration as it is.

5 Also, it would eliminate the buffer
6 which is key because it is the only thing that
7 provides any kind of separation between the
8 development and the existing homes and apartments.

9 Basically, what we are saying is there
10 is also the issue of the underground stream which
11 the current building would be built right on top
12 of. This parcel here was the spring around which
13 the entire community was built in the 1880s.
14 There was a spring here, so they put a railroad
15 station here. It was called Little Spring. Big
16 Spring was in Maryland.

17 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

18 MR. ROBINSON: It went under Maple
19 Avenue and Cedar Avenue.

20 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

21 MR. ROBINSON: So basically--

22 MS. PORTER: Brian, thank you very much.

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1 Ian Barclay, followed by Shannon Cockett.

2 MR. BARCLAY: Good evening, and for Mr.
3 Wall, since you are a newbie in this area, I want
4 to point out to you that when the station was
5 originally built, which a lot of people didn't
6 want, we were content with it being in Silver
7 Spring, we saw it as a crime elevator, and it has
8 turned out to be that.

9 I get EYA. EYA wants to jump the shark.
10 They are about making a lot of money. I
11 understand that. This has to follow procedure and
12 it has to follow the Environmental Impact
13 Statement, which Chris Turner mentioned, and it
14 has to conform to the community.

15 I, for one, am opposed to development
16 because that land was taken through either eminent
17 domain or the threat thereof, and as such, it was
18 taken for transportation. It was not taken to
19 convert to private gain for EYA.

20 That land should be held in reserve, all
21 of it, for future transportation needs. I remind
22 everybody that London, England already has

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1 congestion charging, and it has been discussed in
2 Washington. It is being discussed in New York. I
3 see no end to the growing population in this area.
4 This is our Nation's Capital.

5 I predict that in the future we have to
6 look 75 years at least, that is what Social
7 Security does as actuarial, I think it is only
8 prudent to look at 75 years ahead in order to try
9 to gauge what transportation needs you are going
10 to have.

11 The Walter Reed development--as far as
12 I'm concerned, that green space, if you convert it
13 to private use, which is what you will do when you
14 sell it to EYA, you're going to acknowledge the
15 fact that it is no longer available for transit.

16 Who knows what is going to be needed in
17 the future. We could have future need for buses,
18 future need for bicycles, and everybody seems to
19 be into bicycling today. We could have some kind
20 of car share program.

21 Once you build on it, as Will Rogers,
22 one of my favorite people, God rest his soul, said

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1 "They stopped making land." John Muir said "Any
2 fool can cut a tree down.

3 Once you destroy that green space and
4 avoid it being saved for future transit needs,
5 which I suggest to you, that you folks at WMATA
6 are either fiduciaries, and I'm not going to argue
7 the legal technicalities of a "fiduciary," but you
8 are trustees and storer's of the future of our
9 Nation's Capital.

10 This isn't just any old city in the
11 United States. This is the gateway to our
12 community for the whole nation. When people get
13 off that Subway, they should see a little green
14 space.

15 For your information, the land there was
16 quid pro quo for land that was taken in Maryland
17 to widen the track bed. Us people in Maryland do
18 have some standing on this issue.

19 Thank you very much and I wish you the
20 best.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Shannon

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1 Cockett, and then Delegate Hucker has just
2 arrived, and we will get you in.

3 MS. COCKETT: Good evening. My name is
4 Shannon Cockett. I'm here on behalf of Carolivia
5 Herron. I'm representing North Washington
6 Neighbors, Inc. It is a non-profit educational
7 organization that really did a lot in the
8 Brightwood/Manor Park/Shepherd Park/Takoma, D.C.
9 neighborhoods to push for integrated
10 communities. It was founded in 1958.

11 We, as a Board of Neighbors, Inc., do
12 support additional development on the site of the
13 Takoma Metro parking lot, but we have five main
14 concerns about the proposed development by EYA. A
15 lot of those concerns have been expressed by
16 others.

17 I think the main thing is that as a
18 resident of this neighborhood in Takoma, D.C. for
19 over 30 years--let me just back off and say you
20 know, I've used the Subway. We understand that
21 WMATA needs to maximize development at the Metro
22 stations, and we do support that.

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1 However, this is a very historic
2 community, both in Takoma, D.C. and Takoma Park,
3 Maryland. I guess what we are looking for is
4 something that is more in keeping with the Takoma
5 Central Plan. That is not an old plan. Others
6 have characterized it as being out of date. It is
7 from 2002.

8 We think it needs to be a development--
9 well, the developer obviously has to make a
10 profit, but we are hoping that it won't be out of
11 character. I think you have already heard that
12 there are a lot of single family homes, both on
13 the D.C. side and the Takoma Park, Maryland side,
14 and then you have the affordable housing.

15 We are hoping that the height of the
16 complex won't exceed 50 feet. Even with the step
17 back, we think the 70 foot plus height of the
18 project is just a little bit--it's totally out of
19 character in a historic preservation district,
20 both in D.C. and Maryland. We think it could be a
21 fairly large complex.

22 The other concern we have is about

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1 keeping the green spaces as buffers. I'm not an
2 architect. I don't have the expertise, but other
3 people have spoken tonight and they seem to have
4 some interesting ideas about ways to improve the
5 project to make it more safe and still keep--I was
6 concerned when I heard about the loading dock,
7 maybe it being a hazard to pedestrians. That came
8 up this evening.

9 I'm hopeful--I realize my time is
10 counting down. I'm hopeful that the project can
11 be reconfigured to save those green spaces. We'd
12 like to have a tree preservation and mitigation
13 plan. We also would also like the traffic study to
14 take into account all the existing development
15 that is taking place in the area.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. PORTER: Delegate Tom Hucker.

20 DELEGATE HUCKER: Thank you very much,
21 Ms. Porter, and members of the Board. We are
22 joined by a very enthusiastic train rider, my son,

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1 Sam.

2 Thank you very much for holding this
3 hearing and for accommodating my family's
4 schedule. I appreciate it. I understand Senator
5 Raskin gave me the balance of his time, so I'll
6 try to fill in quickly.

7 I know you have a joint letter from him
8 and I and Delegates Mizeur and Hixson as well.
9 Let me just hit a few of the highlights rather
10 than repeating all that.

11 We're asking you to schedule action on
12 approval of the report for the compact hearing
13 only after a more thorough review of the concerns
14 that you are hearing tonight, which we have been
15 hearing for a long time, about the impact of the
16 proposed development on adjacent residential
17 neighborhoods, both in D.C. and in Maryland.

18 Specifically, we'd like to see a
19 neighborhood design working group created to
20 ensure proper consideration. Ultimately, we think
21 this will result in a better project.

22 We know projects like this have a lot of

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1 unintended consequences. We think we are going to
2 get a better project if they are all considered on
3 the front end rather than trying to mediate them
4 on the back end.

5 We certainly don't want our constituents
6 and ourselves to be shut out of future decisions,
7 so specifically we urge you not to take action
8 that would send the proposal to the District's PUD
9 process, and we say this--Ms. Porter, you
10 especially know this very well--we are supporters
11 of smart growth. We are supporters of transit
12 oriented development. We're not NIMBYs. We want
13 to get the details right on this project.

14 Again, we think we have the time to do
15 that. According to EYA's own time line, this will
16 be years in the making, so it makes sense to get
17 the details right on the front end.

18 Thoughtful concerns have been raised in
19 specific areas you have heard tonight, about the
20 overall height of the project, about the extent of
21 the set-back from roads, the loss of green space,
22 the increased traffic into our Maryland

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1 neighborhoods, and less access to the Metro
2 station.

3 None of these have been accurately
4 addressed, and again, we have the time to do that.
5 One in particular we have heard about is reduction
6 of public parking spaces. We have heard from
7 constituents who are daily WMATA riders who
8 usually walk to the Metro but they have pointed
9 out on certain days when they are picking up their
10 kids, they are picking up groceries, they like to
11 drive. They know the parking lot now fills up very
12 quickly.

13 If there is a loss of parking spaces,
14 they feel like they will be driving to work now,
15 not taking WMATA, because they won't be able to
16 run their errands and take care of their families
17 the way they can now, if we lose those parking
18 spaces.

19 Importantly, neighbors have expressed
20 widespread concerns about why a project like this
21 would exceed D.C.'s zoning requirements and the
22 parameters of the set-aside as set out in the

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1 Takoma Central District Plan. Why would we have a
2 Central District Plan if it could be so easily
3 dismissed when it has been agreed on by all the
4 stakeholders.

5 Leaving concerns like that just to the
6 PUD process, we feel, will shut Marylanders out of
7 key decisions that will affect our constituents
8 greatly.

9 In summary, let me just join my
10 colleagues in asking for a neighborhood design
11 working group with appropriate representation from
12 Maryland, D.C., and managed by WMATA and EYA.

13 Please don't proceed to final action to
14 advance the project to the PUD process until the
15 working group finishes its work and takes these
16 into consideration.

17 You know the phrase about "Good fences
18 making good neighbors." There is no fence in this
19 case, nor do we want one, so to continue to be
20 good neighbors without the accountability that a
21 fence provides, we really need a path to a policy
22 that respects all the stakeholders rather than

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1 shutting any of us out.

2 Thank you very much again.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Robert Miller,
5 followed by Kathy Carroll.

6 MR. MILLER: I'm Bob Miller. I live
7 across the street. My wife and I have been long
8 time members and supporters of historic Takoma.
9 In fact, she designed the current newsletter. She
10 lives now in Boulder, Colorado in a ranch house
11 after Stinson/Los Angeles/San Francisco, so yes,
12 we are together. We are just almost bicoastal,
13 but not yet bipolar. We're working on that.

14 I was a developer for many years. I did
15 95 Victorian rehabs. I live in my last one right
16 now. I like everything on one floor. I do have
17 balusters on my staircase where I can pull myself
18 up and grab them on my way down.

19 I live in effect two blocks from where
20 this development takes place. EYA is an excellent
21 developer. They have many different developments
22 of similar size around the metropolitan area. We

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1 are lucky basically of having the best developer
2 of this type of project in the metro area.

3 I don't want a smaller development. We
4 should have density around major transport nodes,
5 and what is interesting about--what is the
6 demographic housing role of Takoma versus other
7 parts of Washington?

8 This is where young people move when
9 they have decided to sleep with the same person
10 time and time again. I know about this because I
11 control some rental properties in the area. This
12 is why people move here, because they want kind of
13 a bit of the 'burbs in town. They want to be away
14 from frantic interactions down on DuPont Circle.

15 This is an appropriate development for
16 the Metro. It is an appropriate developer. There
17 will be some changes made there. A lot of people
18 talked about that green area across the street
19 from the 7- 11. I've never seen anybody use that
20 space. I'm not camping out there. It's not where
21 you graze sheep.

22 Happy to give part of that up if it was

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1 designated as a place where the people come
2 together for Takoma Park for celebratory
3 activities, but it doesn't seem to be serving any
4 purpose at all.

5 Okay. I encourage you to back this and
6 thank you for letting me talk.

7 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much. I
8 would ask that the people in the audience please
9 respect the speakers.

10 Kathy Carroll, followed by Clifford
11 Schwartz. Kathy Carroll?

12 MR. MILLER: She was here.

13 MS. PORTER: Clifford Schwartz, followed
14 by Diane Vidutis.

15 MR. SCHWARTZ: Hi. My name is Clifford
16 Schwartz. I live in Takoma Park. I'm a
17 homeowner. I've lived in Takoma Park for about ten
18 years with my wife and my daughter. We have
19 invested in a house that we own. It was important
20 to us to move to a beautiful community with this
21 type of character.

22 I am for reduced density, but for a

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1 reason that I haven't heard too much focused on,
2 and that is for safety with the roads in the
3 surrounding area.

4 I specifically live on Route 410, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], where the congestion is so high, and
6 it is right by what is called the Takoma Park
7 junction, and it is so high already that fire
8 trucks, ambulances, police cars have to go around
9 cars in opposing lanes, forcing the cars in those
10 opposing lanes to literally drive on the sidewalk,
11 and for pedestrians to have to get out of the way.

12 I know this because I live on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], and I see this every single day
14 because ambulances, fire trucks, police cars need
15 to go especially to the hospital, and they are
16 traveling west toward that God awful Takoma
17 junction, with the dysfunctional light, with only
18 one lane going in either direction.

19 It is a danger to the people in the
20 ambulances that they can't get through. It's a
21 danger for the pedestrians. When cars have to
22 drive on sidewalks to get out of the way of

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1 emergency vehicles, something has to be done about
2 it.

3 I'm told because it is a state road,
4 there is a two to three hour wait for them to
5 address the lights and the issue. My point is by
6 increasing the density of this development, that
7 is going to make the peripheral roads worse, and
8 in particular, a road like 410 even more dangerous
9 than it already is.

10 I hope that if this development does
11 move forward, that you or EYA or whoever it is
12 works a lot closer and better with the State
13 Highway Commission or Agency, whatever it is
14 called, to remediate those kind of issues.

15 Thank you very much.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Diane Vidutis,
18 and followed by Paul Weckstein.

19 MS. VIDUTIS: Good evening. I've been a
20 commuter. I've been using the Takoma Park Metro
21 for 30 years. I hope to use it for another 30.

22 I just want to say a few things. First

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1 of all, do no harm. Secondly, leave well enough
2 alone. Thirdly, if it ain't broke, don't fix it,
3 and fourth, don't take paradise and put in a
4 parking lot.

5 We already have a parking lot at Takoma
6 Park Metro. I am sorry some people consider it a
7 blight. I wish it were planted with cherry trees.
8 All I know is it is a beautiful site, as I come
9 back from downtown Washington where I work every
10 day.

11 I did look at the plan that EYA has
12 proposed. One thing that I really like about it
13 is the swimming pool. Wow, they are going to have
14 a swimming pool. I hope they really enjoy it,
15 maybe I'll get a glance of it from the platform.
16 No, I won't, because my view will be blocked. The
17 building will be that high. The green space by
18 the 7-11 might as well not be there because I
19 won't see that either.

20 I know many people think the green space
21 is unfunctional because they don't see people
22 picnicking on it and children playing. I don't

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1 want children playing in bus fumes. That green
2 space is there to filter the bus fumes.

3 Once anything is built in that area,
4 there is going to be a limit to transit
5 development. That is the reason I moved to Takoma
6 Park, because it provides easy access to
7 Washington, D.C. Hopefully, it will provide easy
8 access for the incredible number of people who are
9 moving into this area.

10 I see the development. I see in the
11 past ten years the high rise buildings, apartment
12 buildings in Silver Spring, and the development in
13 Takoma Park. It's not about saving parks and
14 recreation for those of us who do have single
15 family homes.

16 It's about preserving a little bit of an
17 oasis for all of you, so you can breathe a little
18 bit as you get off the Metro and walk through an
19 open area.

20 One thing I did want to say is if EYA is
21 really interested in building in the community,
22 build a community pool there. That would be

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1 fantastic, right on the site of the parking lot.

2 Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Paul Weckstein,
5 followed by Thomas Fedewa.

6 MR. WECKSTEIN: I've been a resident in
7 the area for 33 years, first in D.C., for D.C.
8 purposes, a high rise apartment, which I
9 enjoyed tremendously, and then Takoma Park,
10 Maryland.

11 MS. PORTER: Can you hold the microphone
12 a little closer?

13 MR. WECKSTEIN: I have relied very
14 heavily on the Metro for all that time. I moved
15 to Takoma Park not to be away from the City, but
16 to be part of an urban village, a green urban
17 village, so I'm not against development by any
18 means around Metro.

19 However, there are clearly a lot of
20 issues that have been raised about this particular
21 development and trying to make it fit well, and
22 meet all the requirements that it should be

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1 meeting, which have now been exacerbated with a
2 large development like this by what one speaker
3 described about the change in the building plans
4 and architecture plans.

5 Whatever your approach to those issues,
6 to then go and say we're going to stick this
7 building in that part of the property that is
8 most--to begin with, is out of place
9 architecturally with everything else--to put it in
10 that part of the lot which is closest to the
11 residential areas, both the apartment buildings
12 and houses, is really to stretch the limits, with
13 very little set-back and destroying what is the
14 densest green space on the whole property. It is
15 the most critical to housing around it.

16 I think it needs to go back through the
17 process that Representative Hucker has described,
18 where these things get taken more seriously.
19 Thank you.

20 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. PORTER: Thomas Fedewa, followed by

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1 Jessica Landman.

2 MR. FEDEWA: Good evening. My name is
3 Tom Fedewa. I graduated from Catholic University
4 in 1960. I've been around town for a while. I
5 left and have returned, and we have chosen to
6 retire here. We live at [REDACTED], not
7 far from the project.

8 A lot of good points made tonight. It's
9 not necessary to repeat them. However, I would
10 think the choices are do we want a Metro station
11 that looks like Silver Spring and the community
12 that surrounds it, or do we want a Metro station
13 that looks like Columbia Heights and the buildings
14 that surround it, or do we want something that
15 looks like more like--I don't know the name of the
16 station but it is out there by Denny's in
17 Southeast, and the buildings that are not around
18 it.

19 There will be buildings. However, I
20 remember working in Camden, New Jersey, and we
21 took children out to feel grass and to look at
22 trees. They had never seen them in their lives.

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1 That's not going to happen here but that building
2 sitting right over there, that just doesn't cut it
3 for a beautiful piece of architecture in a city
4 whose--I think our motto is the City of Trees.

5 I will just close by saying I am one of
6 seven boys. My father insisted that we all know
7 that well begun was half done, badly begun,
8 probably never done.

9 Good luck to you. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Jessica
12 Landman.

13 MS. LANDMAN: Good evening and thank you
14 for your patience. I'm not going to repeat many
15 of the excellent arguments that you have heard
16 tonight in favor of a fair process that yields
17 excellent results by including neighbors on both
18 sides of the line.

19 I am hoping that you heard our Maryland
20 Representative loud and clear talking about a
21 process that would yield fair and reasonable
22 results.

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1 Instead, I want to talk about
2 specifically two fallacies that I heard repeated
3 here this evening that I find troubling. First is
4 the park, nobody uses it, it is not usable and it
5 "sucks."

6 Well, let's talk for just a moment about
7 why the park--let's say has a lot of potential and
8 hasn't had much of that potential realized.

9 The reason is because WMATA has actually
10 actively discouraged anybody in the neighborhood
11 from turning it into an active and functional park
12 because it has been land reserved for transit
13 uses, which follows WMATA's Charter to do that.

14 Let's not think of this as a park that's
15 failed. Let's think of it as a park that has not
16 been able to be properly developed as green space
17 because that opportunity has not existed, and
18 let's build into what happens at this site an
19 opportunity to turn that into a vibrant green
20 space that we need.

21 Indeed, it's been studied and found that
22 this lower part of Montgomery County and this area

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1 of D.C. has a deficiency of green space, given the
2 density of population.

3 Secondly, comments that the parking lot
4 is under-utilized, well, what do you expect. The
5 parking restrictions are so complicated that you
6 need a Ph.D. to figure out when you can park, all
7 designed to prevent commuter parking.

8 If the neighborhood could use that
9 parking lot in an efficient and effective way,
10 there is plenty of demand for neighbors to park
11 there from time to time and use that site for
12 neighborhood needs.

13 In short, the neighbors around the
14 Takoma Metro expect and deserve a chance to be
15 part of the design process, both from the Maryland
16 side and the D.C. side, and the current residents
17 in the neighborhood, both homeowners like myself,
18 and renters like the ones who live next to the
19 site, should wind up--they deserve and expect a
20 site that is at least as neighborhood friendly for
21 them as it will be for whatever new residents wind
22 up in the building, which I anticipate will be

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1 built.

2 Please don't sacrifice the current
3 quality of life of the current residents for new
4 residents, find a way to accommodate the needs of
5 the existing community as you figure out how to
6 make new housing available for new neighbors.

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. PORTER: Thank you. That is the end
10 of the list of folks who have signed up to speak.
11 Is there anyone else who would like to speak this
12 evening?

13 MR. QUEEN: (Off microphone.)

14 MS. PORTER: If you could take the
15 microphone and introduce yourself.

16 MR. QUEEN: Good evening, everyone. My
17 name is Elliott Queen. I'd first like to say that
18 obviously this project is going forward. I think
19 that is just the reality of it.

20 There are some assumptions that are
21 being made. First, the number of cars this is
22 going to bring into the area because you are close

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1 to Metro, that folks will not drive. Well, I'm a
2 living example that's not the case. I live three
3 blocks from the Metro. I drive every day and I
4 work downtown. That's an assumption, that's not a
5 fact.

6 I've lived in Takoma Park, D.C. for 40
7 plus years, as a kid growing up here, and then
8 when I chose to purchase a home, I purchased here.

9 I think it is important for WMATA to
10 remember that people buy in communities for the
11 character of the community. That's the reason you
12 put your money down, the largest purchase you will
13 ever make; your home.

14 WMATA talked about smart growth and EYA
15 talked about smart growth. This isn't smart
16 growth on this parcel. Now, there is smart growth
17 at Fort Totten. There is smart growth on the
18 Green Line at Georgia and New Hampshire. That is
19 smart growth. This is not smart growth on a site
20 this small. In fact, what it does is it makes it
21 high density.

22 Keeping in character with the community,

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1 if you're going to build an apartment building,
2 make that apartment building conform with the
3 existing apartments that it will be right next to.
4 You have to remember, you have homeowners that are
5 directly across the street. Those homeowners,
6 with a building the size that is proposed--it will
7 dwarf the homes.

8 You talk about there are other large
9 buildings that are right behind the 7-11. The
10 difference is they are not directly across the
11 street from residences. They are across the
12 street from businesses and other apartment
13 buildings. That makes a difference.

14 So again, since we know this is going to
15 happen, build the apartment buildings, but make it
16 conform to the rest of the community. Make it
17 fit. Don't make it an eyesore. I think someone
18 described it as Godzilla. Don't make it look like
19 Godzilla. Make it fit with the community.

20 There are so many other things that
21 could be pointed out that I think has already been
22 covered tonight, so I won't go over those.

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1 I'm just saying make it fit with the
2 community. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Is there anyone
5 else that would like to speak? Yes, would you
6 come up and introduce yourself.

7 MR. KNICKERBOCKER: Good evening. I'm
8 Scott Knickerbocker. I live down at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], just down the street.

10 MS. PORTER: Your last name is?

11 MR. KNICKERBOCKER: Scott Knickerbocker.

12 MS. PORTER: Knickerbocker. Thank you.

13 MR. KNICKERBOCKER: I'm sure you have
14 heard many of the arguments against the
15 development as it stands. We know something is
16 going to go in that spot, and like everybody else,
17 I would just like to see it done right.

18 It's been called "smart development,"
19 but I believe as the plan stands right now, it's
20 just housing units. It would be good to see
21 retail and office space there, too, to truly
22 promote a walkable community.

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1 Another concern that I have that I
2 haven't heard too much about is whether or not
3 Metro itself--the infrastructure as it exists
4 right now really supports more people.

5 I don't know how many of you came back
6 tonight, this evening. Because of problems on the
7 Red Line, it was a mess at Takoma, bottlenecks
8 going through the fare gates.

9 When you add more people, especially
10 right on top of the Metro, I'm afraid of how that
11 would affect commuting.

12 I don't know what was said before, so
13 I'm going to keep my speech short. Thank you for
14 hearing us and listening to our concerns.

15 MS. PORTER: Thank you. Anyone else?
16 Could you come up and introduce yourself?

17 MS. MIKULAK: My name is Lucy Mikulak.
18 I'm a resident of Takoma Park, Maryland. I've
19 lived here for 35 years. I take the Metro to work
20 every day. My family has used it. My husband has
21 used it to go to work.

22 I have to say I came to this meeting

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1 about 7:30 or 8:00, so I missed a lot of the
2 beginning things, but I don't think this
3 development is at all in keeping with what Takoma
4 Park represents, D.C. side or Maryland side.

5 I think it doesn't look green at all to
6 me. You know, with the environment the way it is
7 nowadays, I can't believe there is no green on the
8 roof, and there is not a set-back. I just feel
9 like this is not representative of what we stand
10 for here, Takoma Park, on either side.

11 I'm very disappointed in the size of
12 this. Thank you.

13 MS. PORTER: Okay. Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. PORTER: Is there anyone else who
16 would like to speak?

17 WMATA STAFF: There is one more.

18 MS. PORTER: Alex Jaffe.

19 MR. JAFFE: I'm Alex Jaffe. I'm a
20 Takoma, D.C. resident. I just want to say how
21 excited I am about the development moving forward
22 and taking the next steps towards building and

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1 connecting my side of Takoma, D.C. to the Takoma
2 Park, Maryland side of the border, making it safer
3 for us to walk back and forth around the Metro,
4 and bring some more liveliness and walkability to
5 the area as well.

6 Thanks again.

7 MS. PORTER: Okay. Thank you. Anyone
8 else? Is there anyone else who wants to speak?

9 (No response.)

10 MS. PORTER: All right. Seeing no one,
11 we will conclude the public hearing.

12 (Applause.)

13 (Whereupon, at 8:16 p.m., the
14 public meeting was concluded.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, CHRISTINE ALLEN, the officer before whom the
3 foregoing hearing was taken, do hereby certify
4 that the witness whose testimony appears in the
5 foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; that
6 the testimony of said witness was recorded by me
7 and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction; that said deposition is a true record
9 of the testimony given by said witness; that I am
10 neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by
11 any of the parties to the action in which this
12 deposition was taken; and, further, that I am not
13 a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney
14 employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or
15 otherwise interested in the outcome of this
16 action.

17

18

19

20

CHRISTINE ALLEN
Notary Public in and for the
District of Columbia

21

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