



P.O. Box 41020
Bethesda, MD 20814

February 2, 2016

Casey Anderson
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Via email: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Dear Chairman Anderson,

The East Bethesda Citizens Association, EBCA, is one of the largest citizens associations in Montgomery County, Maryland. It was started in the 1930's and represents over 1,200 households east of Wisconsin Avenue, north of East-West Highway, west of Columbia Country Club, and south of Jones Bridge Road.

We are concerned with the Planning Board's recommendations to add more Density and Height to the Bethesda Sector Plan.

Since East Bethesda is directly adjacent to downtown Bethesda, the encroachment on neighboring single family residents is of particular concern. The increased density and traffic due to the Bethesda Sector Plan will impact the residents of East Bethesda and the greater community in many ways including greater risks to auto and pedestrian safety, overall quality of life of residents, and the ability of the B-CC Cluster schools to meet the needs of the community.

In particular, we are alarmed by the increased Density and Height building allowances granted by the Planning Board. Per the public agenda posted online, every single property owner has requesting zoning in excess of the sector plan, and we implore you to adhere to the sector plan guidelines until impact from existing construction – already approved in excess of the sector plan – can be assessed. We are also dismayed to see that there is not a Bethesda resident on the Planning Board. This makes it less likely that you can comprehend existing day-to-day congestion issues in Bethesda, and all the more important to give weight to the voices of residents in the area who attempt to explain the challenges we face. In addition to local concerns, we have the added burden of being a major commuting corridor, which is further exacerbated by traffic from NIH and Navy Medical, two of the largest employers in Montgomery County. New development will be compounding the effects of local and commuter traffic with every additional residence and office space created.

The likely effects of development on the public schools in the area are alarming, and to develop at this rate without foresight and planning for the increase in the school populations is extremely troubling. MCPS has neither the capacity nor the resources to react quickly to the growth we can expect.

We support the actions suggested by the Edgemoor Citizens Association in their letter dated January 25, 2016. East Bethesda would like also to give the Board members greater insight into the concerns, frustrations and hurdles that need to be addressed.

We urge greater consideration on the part of the Planning Board as they approve plans going forward, and higher regard for residential concerns, sector plan recommendations and staff recommendations. More specifically, we ask that you do not exceed sector plan zoning recommendations on any development projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa V. McCabe".

Lisa V. McCabe
EBCA, President