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February 23, 2022

The Honorable Gabe Albornoz, President
and Members of the Montgomery County Council
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan – Planning Board Public Hearing Draft/Testimony of National Ready Mixed Concrete Association

Dear President Albornoz and Members of the County Council:

Our firm represents the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, the owner of property located at 900 Spring Street and 717 Ellsworth Drive (the “Property”) within the boundaries of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan (the “Plan”). The purpose of this letter is to provide the County Council with comments on the Property as it relates to recommendations contained in the Planning Board’s Draft of the Plan (the “Planning Board Draft”). The Property is located within the Ellsworth District and is identified on page 35 of the Planning Board Draft as Parcel 4A. We are attaching an exhibit that depicts the location of the Property (*see Attachment “A”*).

The Property, which was home to the former headquarters of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, is primed for redevelopment. The Property contains approximately 0.54 acres and is prominently located at a gateway entrance to Downtown Silver Spring. The Property is presently zoned CR 5.0 C 4.0 R 4.75 H 75 T. The Planning Board Draft recommends rezoning the Property to the CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H 110’ zone. We support this zoning recommendation as well as equalizing the Commercial and Residential components of the zone. The Planning Board Draft appropriately recognizes that this equalization is important for maintaining maximum flexibility in future redevelopment. The Planning Board Draft also appropriately recognizes that the Property is part of a “residential gateway” for the District.

We support many things related to the Planning Board Draft, including but not limited to creating a robust Downtown Silver Spring, identifying the Property as an Opportunity Site, and including the Property in the Silver Spring Downtown Building Height Incentive Zone (BHIZ). The Planning Board Draft Plan also calls for additional density to be made available through the Connectivity and Infrastructure Fund (“CIF”) to ensure properties have the ability to achieve heights desired in Silver Spring (either the base mapped heights or heights through the BHIZ). We would note that, like Bethesda, the cost of the CIF contribution cannot be prohibitively high. This was addressed in Bethesda and the PIP payments resulted in significant BOZ density allocated to highly desirable projects. The BHIZ also requires that in order to qualify for the additional height, projects must provide a combination of greater than the minimum 15 percent MPDUs on-site, a contribution to the Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund (HIF), and/or including an activating ground-floor Neighborhood Services. This requirement, in addition to paying for the excess density through the CIF, may be too great a burden for development in Silver Spring. We urge the Council to carefully consider this aspect of the Plan so that there are no unintended consequences that would divert the goal of facilitating development in Silver Spring.

We appreciate the Council’s consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



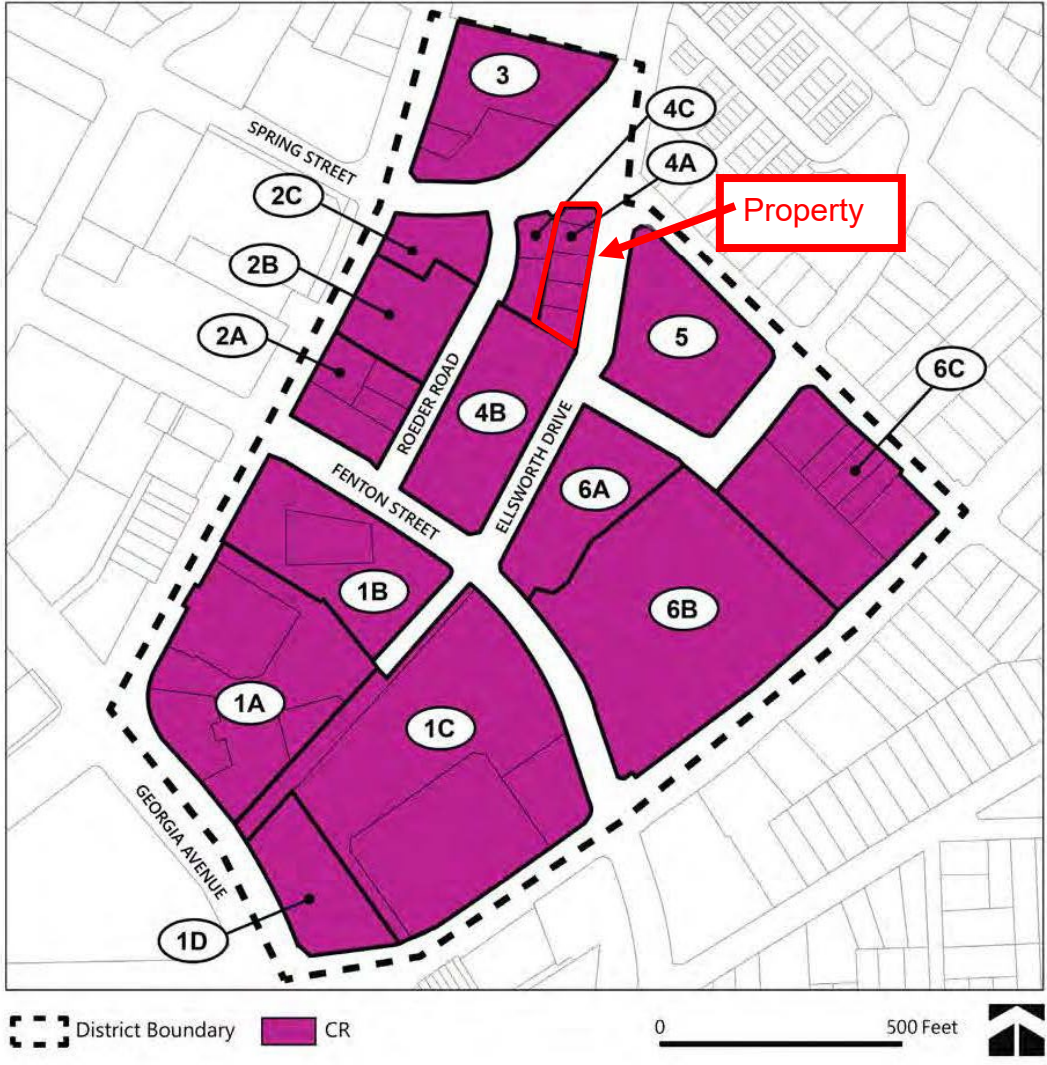
Steven A. Robins



Elizabeth C. Rogers

Cc: Michael Philipps
Nicole Maher
Atara Margolies

Attachment "A"



Map 7. Proposed Ellsworth District Zoning

Note: Overlay Zones are not shown on district zoning maps for clarity; see Map 16 Proposed Zoning.