

Dear Council Members,

I am writing this letter in support of **Expedited Bill 13-23, Montgomery County Urban Districts - Friendship Heights Urban District**. There is a definite need to better coordinate the planning activities for development along the Wisconsin Ave. corridor in Chevy Chase / Friendship Heights MD / Friendship Heights DC.

Below I outline several reasons.

- There is development along Wisconsin Ave in MD which consists of a Food Hall, plan to develop 5500 Wisconsin Ave, and the emergence of new restaurants and pubs. All have been either successful or have sought out community involvement. Many of the developers and vendors have set their plans based on expected development. Much of this was in place prior to the necessary Covid shutdowns, however, that caused diminished traffic and resulted in shuttered businesses as they could not support their staff salaries and rents (e.g., Little Beat Table).
- The work on the DC side of Wisconsin Ave has started, a plan to have considered flow across the general corridor is important. Most people will not care if they are on the Maryland or the DC side of the Friendship Heights area. All businesses will thrive – and will provide benefit to the number of parking establishments in the area too.
- The plans integrate well with properties in the area – especially The Collection on Wisconsin Ave. There is no impact to residents as the “tax” is supported by the businesses with the intention to support each other and bring services, programs, and other things necessary to support identity to the area.
- I think it is safe to say that the development of City Ridge has been well done – and some of the developers / businesses are the same in this initiative as well as downtown Bethesda. It is necessary that the planning be done in such a way that the broader Friendship Heights operate based on its merits and cannot be another Bethesda or Tenlytown. Too close to one another with similar services the areas will cannibalize one another – only the businesses can work to ensure they all thrive.
- Through several public sessions I have expressed my concern that there needs to be a coordinated flow across both sides of Western Ave. for the whole area to thrive. DC appears to be further ahead in this regard – the Alliance program offers the opportunity to achieve this goal.

I am writing this as a private citizen and owner of a unit at 4601 N Park Ave. I am currently President of the Board at that address (The Elizabeth) and serve as the Chair of the Village of Friendship Heights Community Advisory Committee, where we recently completed a report and recommendations on reinforcing Identity for the Village. When I purchased several years ago it was on the promise of development and expanded retail and entertainment venues – lets continue the progress which I believe will increase the area’s vitality, attract new residents, and raise the values of owners.

Sincerely,

Joseph V Bucherer