

**ANC 3/4G Commissioner Peter Gosselin, Testifying as an Individual  
DC Council Roundtable on the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan  
July 5, 2022**

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and Councilmember Cheh. My name is Peter Gosselin. I'm testifying solely in my own capacity as a commissioner with ANC 3/4G and a 24-year resident of Chevy Chase DC. Our chair, Randy Speck, has spoken on behalf of the Commission majority.

I have only two, fairly straight-forward points to make today. The first is that I hope you'll listen to Chair Speck's call for you to include language in the SAP as you incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan that gives our ANC and our community a substantial role in the drafting of the new zone for our Main Street, the upper Connecticut Ave. commercial corridor.

There is plenty of precedent for commissions and communities to participate at the drafting stage of zoning changes. Consider, for example, the H Street overlay. And on the flip side, Chevy Chase has just gone through the experience of being presented with a complex document – the Office of Planning's (OP's) draft SAP – and told we had 30 days, later extended to 60, to comment. In my view, we were unable to build a community consensus around a full response in that limited time. We'd face the very same problem if the only role you accord us in the process going forward is as one among many commenters on an OP-drafted zoning designation.

I offer my second point not to re-open old wounds, but in hopes it prompts you to add the participation language we seek and to keep a close watch on OP as it conducts small area plans in other neighborhoods in the coming months.

In my view, the document you have before you does not live up to its claim of growing out of the views of community residents. That's especially so on the critical issue of the balance between change and continuity.

OP planners simply would not take up many issues that commissioners and community residents repeatedly raised, for example, about ensuring our infrastructure – especially overcrowded schools, roads and parking – grow in tandem with our population.

The planners essentially refused to address the fear of many residents that allowing some change in the community's built environment will result in unfettered change.

So for example, while the plan offers exquisite detail on page 58 about how every single foot of our generously wide Connecticut Avenue sidewalks should be used, when it comes to the issue of building height -- an important proxy for development intensity -- the only numbers you'll find in the document are in the legend for two pictures near the back, and even there the numbers are treated as illustrative only.

I'd be happy to answer questions about why I think this happened. But the result is that the planning process and this document have left our community more divided, not less. If we cannot find ways to reduce these divisions – by, for example, giving us a substantial role in drafting the new zoning area – this bodes poorly for being able to make the kinds of changes here that will help our community, our city and our diverse population.

Thank you