

Public Hearing Before the Montgomery County Council
On The County's Recommended Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Budget and
FY 23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
February 9, 2022

Testimony of Lloyd Guerci

I'm Lloyd Guerci, appearing on behalf of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendships Heights -- an association of 20 communities in and around Friendship Heights.

Our communities are infuriated by the County's failure to carry out its commitment to provide a park on a lot on Willard Avenue in Friendship Heights. TWENTY-SEVEN years ago, the County recognized that the very dense development authorized in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan required additional parks. The County said it would provide park land as a necessary amenity.

In 1995, the county bought, for conversion to park use, an acre of land adjoining the existing Willard Ave Park. For 27 years this acre has NOT been converted to park use. It sits there, surrounded by a chain-link fence and encumbered by a single-family house that Parks has rented to the benefit of private persons.

Our repeated efforts to get Parks to convert the acre into park use have been denied, with claims of no funds. Again, the proposed CIP before you has no funds specifically for this. While the **URBAN PARKS ELEMENTS PROGRAM** in the CIP has funds to be used for projects at the discretion of the Parks Department, Parks have advised us they have no plans to use any money for the Willard Avenue Park.

We ask that the COUNCIL insert language in the Urban Parks Elements Program that requires some of these to be funds be used to convert the Willard Avenue acre into park use.

As we see it, this is a test case for the County's land use policy emphasizing densification near Metro stops and, accompanying that, more parks. So far, Parks and Planning has abysmally failed the test. The Council needs to demonstrate that density is serviced with parks.