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January 11, 2024

Submitted Electronically Via County Council Website

Council President Friedson and Members of the Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Zoning Text Amendment No. 23-10 – Parking, Queuing, and Loading-Calculation of Required Parking (the “ZTA”)

Dear Council President Friedson and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

On behalf of White Flint Plaza LLC (“WFP”), we are submitting this written testimony for the Montgomery County Council’s public hearing scheduled for January 16th, conveying our strong support of the ZTA. WFP is the owner of 5100 Nicholson Lane, located in the Pike District approximately one-third of a mile (straight line) and just under one-half mile (walking) from the North Bethesda Metro Station. The property is currently an active but aging shopping center and one which, in the future, may seek to redevelop with a wider mix of uses consistent with the overall turnover in the Pike District area as envisioned by the 2010 White Flint Sector Plan and 2018 White Flint 2 Sector Plan.

This ZTA is necessary to further “right size” parking requirements in transit proximate areas, continuing the efforts of the now current Zoning Ordinance that was adopted in 2014. This is particularly vital at this time given the escalating construction costs of the past several years and widespread recognition that the lack housing affordability is one of the top public policy needs across the country generally, and in this County and community specifically. This ZTA, if adopted, will provide a property owner or developer with the flexibility to determine the number of parking spaces practically needed to serve the planned uses at a qualifying site, without requiring them to construct more spaces than is necessary at significant cost (one might even say exorbitant if the spaces would be underground). Parking costs are a major determining factor in the feasibility of potential new developments.

We also support the changes recommended to the ZTA by the Montgomery County Planning Board (the “Planning Board”) in their discussion on December 21st. The Planning Board members expressed their desire that the ZTA be more expansive, rather than less, in terms of qualifying distance from various modes of transit. In particular they noted that the ZTA is permissive, rather than mandatory, which we believe is the correct approach as the County continues its efforts to create greater flexibility with respect to parking in transit proximate areas.



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We thank you for your consideration of our comments. One of WFP's representatives also plans to testify in person at the public hearing on the ZTA to be held on January 16th, and we look forward to seeing you at that time. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Wire Gill LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Dlhopsky". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Heather Dlhopsky