



Capitol Park IV Condominium Association, Inc.

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July 31, 2014

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Colleen Hawkinson

c/o moveDC

District Department of Transportation

Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

55 M Street, SE, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20003

RE: Multi-Modal Long Range Transportation Plan

Dear Ms. Hawkinson:

The Board of Directors of Capitol Park IV Condominium Association (“Board” and “CPIV”) strongly objects to Recommendation A.8 of the DC Department of Transportation’s (“DDOT”) Draft Multi-Modal Long Range Transportation Plan - Part II, Vehicle Element, (the “Plan”) which proposes to connect 3rd Street, SW underneath I-395. The Board requests that Recommendation A.8, as it pertains to the reconnection of 3rd Street, SW under I-395 for vehicular traffic, be deleted from the final version of the Plan.

CPIV is the largest linear condominium association in the District of Columbia. Comprised of 243 family-style townhouses covering over 13 acres of land, CPIV is home to many as a garden of quiet solace uniquely hidden in a cul-de-sac, surrounded by ramped and large high-rise development and ongoing redevelopment in Southwest. CPIV is considered by some to be the largest, best-preserved multi-family mid-century modern architecture in America. CPIV is a stable community, and is currently undergoing a major rejuvenation.

The Plan states that Recommendation A.8 is viable only as the immediate area is redeveloped. Understandably, the exponential population increase in the District requires flexibility by all to sustain the well-being of those who traverse and live in City. However, there are no short or long-term plans to redevelop CPIV or the immediate area surrounding it. Therefore, the recommendation to reconnect 3rd Street, SW under I-395 is in gross error. We advocate that 3rd Street, SW remain as-is for the following reasons:

1. Unauthorized Taking of Private Land for Public Use

To reconnect 3rd Street, SW would require a government taking of over 28,000 square feet of CPIV private property. This includes over a dozen private parking spaces, 25,000 square feet of gorgeous green space, and the destruction of several trees, one of which is a grand, fully mature oak tree that is over 50 years old. This property is invaluable, and should not be disturbed. There are several other vehicular and/or pedestrian venues that should be explored to facilitate north-south movement through Southwest without disturbing CPIV's private property.

2. Removal of Use by CPIV Residents

a. Green Spaces

The beautiful, well-maintained open green spaces and courtyards, as designed by famed architect Chlothiel Woodward-Smith are a part of the overall plan of the Capitol Park community. The current green space, which would be lost if 3rd Street, SW were reconnected, provides a wealth of recreational accommodations for our residents. Residents walk their pets, play with their children, and exercise at this location. Annually, our Board hosts a community meet and greet in this space with catered food, a moon bounce, and games. Recently, there was even a tented wedding reception in the green space that is exactly in the path of the proposed reconnected 3rd street. Unlike many apartment-style condominiums, CPIV does not have a resident meeting room, pool, or gym. This open green space, combined with our other green spaces and courtyards throughout the property, are tantamount to such amenities, and crucial for the enjoyment of our residents.

b. Private Parking

Approximately fifteen (15) private, deeded parking spaces are threatened to be taken with the reconnection of 3rd Street, SW under I-395. With the exponential growth and influx into the District, parking is at a premium. To be able to provide our residents with private parking so they do not have to compete for on-street parking is a significant factor in CPIV's marketability and value to our residents. To remove our private parking spaces to accommodate an active street for vehicular traffic will force our residents to compete for severely limited parking on the street. Our property sits in the midst of four (4) high-rise buildings. The guests that visit these buildings often stay overnight, and far out-number the 6-8 visitor parking spaces that each building provides. Many of these guests park on the street, and, at times, park illegally in our private spaces. Reconnecting 3rd Street, SW, will only exacerbate this situation.

The increased competition for on-street parking, will no doubt, cause owners to move from CPIV, and significantly diminish our marketability. The inability to attract or keep stable resident owners may become a substantial factor that leads to our financial instability over time. The fact is that despite the use of the subway system, bicycles and walking, people remain reliant on vehicles. Although they may not use them exclusively, there are times when people will need a vehicle and a place to park it in their neighborhood.

3. Safety

As stated in Recommendation B.3 on page v-58, "While the District will seek to create new street connections, it should not generally seek to add vehicle lanes or vehicle capacity in the

street system by moving curbs and reducing the quality of the pedestrian environment.” Currently, the existing north end of 3rd Street, SW is a residential street lined with trees, bushes and grassy areas. There are four (4) speed “humps” and horizontal private parking on both sides. The average vehicular speed is 5-8 mph. There is a consistent pedestrian and bicycle presence throughout CPIV along 3rd Street, SW, as neighbors egress and ingress to and from their homes to reach nearby shopping, the subway, parks, schools, retail and businesses. Were 3rd Street, SW reconnected under proposed Recommendation B.8, there would be a significant increase in traffic flow, speed, and accidents, which would “[reduce] the quality of the pedestrian environment” that the Plan seeks to protect and preserve.

4. Historic Preservation

At their July 10, 2014, meeting, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board determined that the apartment building at 301 G St., SW, along with its grounds, qualified as an historic landmark. This property may also be part of a re-established 3rd Street should the Plan be implemented as-is. Obviously, such an infringement on a protected landmark is unacceptable. In addition, at the July 10th meeting, the Chairman of the Historic Preservation Review Board, along with several CPIV Board members, strongly encouraged CPIV to submit a nomination for the entire Capitol Park community to be designated as an historic zone due to its exemplary mid-century modern design. Recommendation A.8 is incongruent with such an historic designation.

Southwest has already suffered through one massive episode of dislocation, demolition and redevelopment over the last half-century. Thankfully, some parts of the resulting community - like Capitol Park - turned out to be supremely livable and desirable residential enclaves. Today, Southwest is quickly becoming the District’s sports and arts district. With the National’s baseball stadium, Arena Stage, and the pending Wharf and soccer stadium developments, our residents have already experienced a monumental level of change in our neighborhood. Compounded with an increase of vehicular traffic in our tucked-away, cul-de-sac neighborhood, the negative impact on our residents will be substantial. Reconnecting 3rd Street, SW will only frustrate the calm of our neighborhood and destroying the delicate fabric that makes CPIV so sought-after and special for those of us who have made it our quiet home and nook in the City.

We have completed the online survey as well to express our concerns regarding Recommendation A.8. As this is a draft proposal subject to change and revisions, we respectfully request that DDOT exclude 3rd Street, SW from its recommendations, and permit 3rd Street, SW to remain unchanged. We look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Felicia Coutts, President
Capitol Park IV Board of Directors