



February 26, 2013

Chairman Anthony Hood
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., NW
Room 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Hood,

I am writing with some concerns about accessibility for persons with disabilities related to the proposed development at Spring Place, NW.

Prior to my retirement in 2010, and establishment of my consulting business, I was the Transportation Accessibility Specialist for the United States Access Board, the Federal agency which develops accessibility guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act. During my 29 years in that position, I developed accessibility guidelines for transportation vehicles and facilities. I was also one of the developers of the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) recommended by the Federal Highway Administration.

The Spring Place development exhibits some serious problems for access to the Tacoma Metro station. Currently, the only paths to the station involve climbing over a retaining wall behind Cedar Crossing or along Chestnut to the Blair road sidewalk. A wheelchair user must travel in the street to reach Blair. Constructing a sidewalk along Chestnut would be desirable, but the current Blair Road sidewalk has several deficiencies. The bricks are set incorrectly for accessibility (they should abut one another with no grout between) and the curb ramp crossing Blair at Cedar is a perpendicular-type rather than the correct parallel-type. There is also a dangerous split elevation at the junction between the Gables and Cedar Crossing.

If the developer wants to provide fewer parking spaces because the building is near public transit, it must provide a clear accessible path behind Cedar Crossing to Cedar Street. I understand the developer is assuming that a future portion of the Metropolitan Branch Trail will provide such a link, but that development is far from assured. The developer of the Spring Place building should create the link as a condition of reducing its parking. Since the Fair Housing Amendments Act will require all units to be accessible, it is likely that people with disabilities will find the location attractive. An accessible connection is, therefore, imperative.

Sincerely,

Dennis Cannon
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