

PRESS RELEASE

Friends of McMillan Park

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Mayor Gray Ignores Thousands Opposed to His McMillan Development Plan

DC Mayor Vincent C. Gray seems unaware of the widespread opposition to his plan to overdevelop the McMillan Park Sand Filtration Site and turn it into a suburban-like shopping center reminiscent of Tyson's Corner. Specifically, last Friday, in response to a listener question on The Kojo Nnamdi Show (*The Politics Hour*), the Mayor said: "I've followed McMillan and I haven't seen thousands of people who have indicated a resistance to [the plan], or overwhelmingly come forward saying we want to see parks at McMillan."

This statement ignores the widely publicized [petition](#) signed by over 5,200 people against the Gray Administration's plan to destroy McMillan Park, a local and national historic landmark. Friends of McMillan Park has presented the petitions to the DC Council and to the Historic Preservation Review Board, and informed the Mayor's office of these actions. The Mayor is also apparently unaware of the overwhelming [opposition to declaring the site "surplus" public real estate](#) expressed at a recent meeting called by his Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. Either his staff is keeping him in the dark or he is deliberately ignoring the thousands of signatories.

"How can Mayor Gray be unaware of the 5,000+ signatories against his plan to build a suburban-style development that would devastate the surrounding Ward 5 and 1 communities?," said Gwen Southerland, former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for the McMillan site. "To rectify this glaring gap in the Mayor's knowledge, the Friends will this week hand-deliver all 5,000-plus signatures to Mayor Gray."

The Friends of McMillan Park and the 5,000 signatories reject the Mayor's plan for high-rise office buildings, condos, gridlocked traffic, and minimal open space. "His proposal must be replaced by a new vision for McMillan Park," added John Salatti. "We want a plan that re-opens our grand city park, stabilizes our neighborhoods, and stimulates businesses that are integrated into the historic structures at McMillan and invested in and co-exist within our community. Think of [The High Line in New York](#), only better."

The 5,000 signatories and the Friends urge the Gray Administration and the City Council to consider creative alternatives for McMillan Park, such as the [Collage City Studio plan](#), that build on the site's integrity as an engineering marvel and a national landmark park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. The Friends and their supporting signatories want to preserve and adaptively reuse McMillan Park's historic resources, especially its majestic underground sand filtration caverns. The Mayor's plan would sacrifice all but one of the existing 20 unique vaulted one-acre caverns, offers little affordable housing, lacks any plan for reusing the above or below ground structures, and excludes any effective strategies for managing the significant increase in traffic that would cripple the surrounding neighborhoods.

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