

Peters, Matthew (City Council)

From: Brad Rogers <brogers@sbgpartnership.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 10:05 AM
To: Peters, Matthew (City Council); natawanab.austin@baltimorecity.gov
Cc: Reisinger, Edward (City Council)
Subject: Testimony in support of 20-0497

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On behalf of the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, I am writing to support of Bill 20-0497, providing conditional use for a parking at the new Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center.

BCRP has worked closely with the community for the past two years to develop a plan that enhances the Cherry Hill neighborhood without causing it harm. Accessibility to the public has been critical to this plan.

After a lengthy discussion, BCRP moved the fitness center from an interior neighborhood location far from most public transit, to a spot along Potee Street with major bus lines and high visibility. The new site is also at the terminus of the Middle Branch Trail, so that people on bikes and on foot can easily get there. The Greater Baybrook Alliance even recently received a half million dollar grant to design a pedestrian and bicycle connection across the Patapsco.

Throughout the numerous community conversations, residents regularly expressed concern that senior citizens and the disabled would have a hard time accessing the facility, demanding adequate parking close to the main entrance. They were also concerned that visitors to large regional sporting events would overwhelm the surrounding neighborhood, and specifically asked the department to provide additional on-site and off-site parking to accommodate this demand.

BCRP has done a wonderful job creating an exciting public amenity that is certain to attract large numbers of users. They have also behaved responsibly in trying to provide multiple non-automotive options for residents. However, given that the facility is designed to host regional sports events, on-street parking will likely be inadequate and will certainly burden nearby neighbors.

We should support the wishes of the residents of Cherry Hill and help them get the Wellness & Fitness Center they asked for.

Sincerely,

Brad Rogers
Executive Director, South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
101 W. Dickman Street, Suite 1000, Baltimore, MD 21230
410.493.0852 (Mobile)
brogers@sbgpartnership.org