



GREATER WASHINGTON
Board of Trade

130
YEARS
STRONG

June 17, 2021

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

I am writing in response to the DC Council vote on June 8th passing a resolution requesting the permanent closure of Beach Drive (R24-0119 “Sense of the Council Requesting the National Park Service Permanently Close Beach Drive to Cars Resolution of 2021”).

There are still too many unknowns, and we will continue working with our members and partners to push for a more complete traffic study before any actions are taken. We plan to share our views with the National Park Service as they gather public comments, and we would welcome your continued support for conducting a more comprehensive study.

We recognize the importance of green space to our quality of life and the Board of Trade has a long history of supporting parks across the District. Yet, it is premature to conclude, as many have, that closing Beach Drive permanently won’t have an adverse impact on neighborhoods, traffic patterns and economic opportunities.

Our region ranks in the top five nationally for traffic congestion which is a drain on resources and productivity. Now, as we emerge from the pandemic, expand economic activity for all and anticipate a growing population, it is critical to make traffic and transit decisions strategically based on sound analysis.

For example, we need to better understand how developments along 16th Street where the former Walter Reed Hospital is located will evolve. These projects are expected to bring in more people and would include apartments, condos, townhomes, two schools, and housing for veterans. There are also plans for restaurants, a public pool, a hotel, bike lanes, and parks. There is no doubt this will greatly increase the number of vehicles from visitors, residents, vendors, and more.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack McDougale".

Jack McDougale
President and CEO