McMillan Park Reservoir Historic District

The Community Speaks

**Friends of McMillan Park**
http://friendsofmcmillan.org/
Outline

- McMillan Park at Risk
- Early History
- WWII to Present Day
- Current Development Plan
- The Future of McMillan Park
25 acres of the McMillan Park Reservoir, a historic landmark that provides clean water to DC residents, are set to be destroyed and “developed”
McMillan Park at Risk

The effort to destroy the park has been set in motion without serious attention to the concerns expressed by the community.
McMillan Park at Risk

Residents of DC must unite to halt this undemocratic process and ensure that the future of McMillan Park represents a vision shared by the majority of DC citizens.
Built in the early 1900’s to serve DC’s growing clean water needs, McMillan Reservoir receives water from the Potomac River via the Washington Aqueduct
The US Army Corps of Engineers operated the McMillan Reservoir Sand Filtration Site, which provided clean water to DC residents using a slow sand filtration system.
McMillan Park was also intended to serve as an open green space for the city’s residents and as an integral part of the “emerald necklace” that was to connect DC’s green spaces.
Famed architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. designed a circuitous drive and tree-lined walkways.
In 1906, William Howard Taft named the area “McMillan Park” in honor of Sen. James McMillan who developed the McMillan Plan, which created the National Mall and included the McMillan site.
The Three Graces bronze statue, a DC landmark that attracted many visitors, stood atop a granite staircase and is the only monument to the work of Senator James McMillan
DC’s first de facto racially integrated public park, McMillan was a major gathering place for residents and tourists alike.
A playground, fields, and courts hosted sporting events, concerts, and community gatherings
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Due to fears that the water supply was susceptible to sabotage during wartime, the park was fenced off in 1941.
Despite promises that the park would be re-opened during peacetime, it remains fenced off to this day.
After converting to chemical filtration in 1986, the 25 acres used for the slow sand filtration was decommissioned.
No longer needed for slow sand water filtration, most of the beautiful underground caverns remain empty
McMillan Park Reservoir

With no use for the land, the Federal government sold the 25 acres to the District of Columbia in 1987.
McMillan Park is on both the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.
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In 2006, the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) solicited a Request for Proposals for Phase I Land Development of the McMillan Sand Filtration Site
A few of the NCRC’s Revitalization Goals were to:

- Provide open space for the public
- Preserve views from the site
- Maintain architectural compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods
- Reduce noise, traffic, and parking impacts
The NCRC Request for Proposals clearly stated that multiple development partners would be solicited for the project in different phases.
Months later, the DC Council dissolved NCRC and chose Vision McMillan Partners (VMP) as master developer. How VMP was selected from at least 19 proposals remains a mystery.
Current Development Plan

VMP’s plan includes:

- High-rise healthcare facilities
- High-rise multifamily buildings
- High-rise grocery and retail stores
- Townhomes
- Small community center and swimming pool
- Limited open green space
The plan would preserve only 25% of contiguous open green space and just 1 or 2 of 20 underground caverns.
In 2013, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) found that VMP’s proposed development involved “substantial demolition… and [is] therefore inconsistent with the purposes of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act.”
Simultaneously, the National Trust for Historic Preservation formally objected to the proposed development of McMillan Park.
Despite historic preservation covenants protecting McMillan Park, VMP is petitioning the DC Mayor’s Agent to override the legal protections
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In 2002, the DC Office of Planning and Department of Housing and Community Development’s report suggested several recommendations to revitalize McMillan Park.
The report also featured an open space analysis, concluding “there is essentially no publicly accessible open space” in the surrounding area.
Call for a Democratic Process

It is **undemocratic** and unacceptable to leave DC residents out of the decision to develop McMillan Park
The current non-transparent development process should be halted and a conservancy appointed to determine the best use for McMillan Park.
Call for an Open Competition

Friends of McMillan Park proposes holding an international design competition to identify the optimal future for McMillan Park. Let the people decide what is best for the District!
If They Can Do it, So Can We!

The award winning Canal Park in Washington, DC is a model of sustainability
Seattle Gas Works Park, a 20-acre reclaimed industrial space once slated for demolition, is now used as an urban park.
The High Line in New York City, an innovative public green space built upon old elevated railroad tracks, was saved from demolition.
McMillan Has Endless Potential

What would you like to see at McMillan Park?

- Farmers market?
- Community garden?
- Sustainable water management exhibit?
- Cafes?
- Dog park?
- Soccer field?
- Volleyball courts?
- Water playground?
- Amphitheater?
- Local businesses?
- Housing?

The possibilities are endless!
The future outcome for McMillan Park will be a statement about the character and soul of DC
Call for Action

Is Washington, DC a city in which a major historically-designated green space can be stealthily demolished and developed without the involvement of residents?
Or is Washington a city that will fight to save a place with so much history, so much potential, and so much possibility?
Call for Action

GET INVOLVED!
Call for Action

www.friendsofmcmillan.org
Adaptive Re-Use McMillan Park and Underground

Sustainable Eco Campus
A DC Farm & Food Hub

5 times the yield of surface farms
98% less water used
NO commercial fertilizer
NO pesticides
Local nutritious food
Food security for DC

URBAN AGRICULTURE & AQUAPONICS
20 acres of under surface galleries

FOOD/Ted: http://youtu.be/lLzWmw53Wwo