

BZA Case 19377
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As longtime residents of NE DC and Ward 5, we have witnessed the growth, change and development over nearly 20 years. In general, the addition of new housing, new businesses and new families has been welcome. As with all growth, there also includes an addition of school-aged children- and the need for high-quality schools. We are fortunate to have a child who attends Lee Montessori and another who may be attending Washington Leadership Academy in 9th grade. We are expressing our concerns as both residents and parents.

Our concerns, as parents and community members (who live near another school and see some of the problems of limited parking and drop off space as well as lack of public play spaces) include:

- Pedestrian access to Lee Montessori and Washington Leadership Academy. There needs to be safe sidewalks allowing pedestrian access from 4th (at minimum), also taking into account those who arrive/depart via Metro. We are concerned about limiting pedestrian access due to "private sidewalks" that makes it inconvenient to access the schools.
- Pedestrian access unrestricted by racial or other profiling, by neighbors or police. It is imperative to the school community that pedestrians be treated equally.
- Safe vehicle access from 4th Street for school traffic, including a driveway entrance that is wide enough fit two cars across (unlike the current narrow driveway entrance)- new development in that area will make it even more difficult. .
- Clear and sufficient plan for vehicle flow during the busy drop off and pick up times, based on a traffic study and taking into account the planned growth of the schools.
- Sufficient curb space for drop off and pick up at the schools (not reduced or complicated by changing parking configurations).
- Sufficient parking for the schools to accommodate the expected growth in school staff that comes with growing the student population, as well as occasional school events.
- Preservation of green space, especially near the school. Once developed, green space is not easily reclaimed. Mature trees are not quickly replaced. The loss of green space must be considered in the broader context and trends of the neighborhoods, ward, and city as a whole. A publicly accessible natural play area/nature playground would be an attractive feature for both school families and resident families.
- Clear and sufficient plans to minimize and mitigate construction-related disturbance for students, such as dust and noise.
- Clear and sufficient plans to accommodate school access throughout the construction process, both on foot and by vehicle.

On a personal note, one of the things we have loved about Lee Montessori is the beautiful campus, which includes the grounds. The surrounding area is limited in this. Our older two children attend a charter school around the corner that has had its play space limited by an ongoing plan for construction that affects not only their school but at least 3 other schools in the area. Our daughter has often come home

excited about playing in “Weeping Willow Hollow” and the other areas they have named and mapped. Students have been able to go sledding on the hill-with CR neighbors who were also sledding. The ability to be able to drop off and pick up children without impeding the traffic of the CR neighborhood is a blessing. (As mentioned, we live by another school and our driveway is often blocked by parents picking up children). Having a parking lot with additional spaces makes it possible to volunteer at the school without concern about violating DC parking rules (and getting ticket). Lee also sponsors a Girl Scout troop that meets on Sundays. Again--parking outside space for activities is available that does not infringe upon the current residents of the area.

The consequences of developing additional private streets is a serious concern because of the resulting heightened sense of protection by residents due to their clear financial stake in the maintenance. The District should not be promoting private developments such as this because it does not promote a collective sense of community ownership and shared responsibility.

The demand for new housing should not take precedence over the need for safe and high-quality schools for our children and the need for green spaces and play areas for all residents.

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