

OFFICE OF ZONING

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February 10, 2009

DC Zoning Commission
Anthony Hood, Chair
441 4th St NW, Suite 210
Washington DC 20001

In re: Case 08-15

Dear Sir:

I am writing in opposition to the PUD for the Wisconsin Avenue Giant redevelopment (Case 08-15).

From 1977 – 1980, I lived on Macomb Street above what is now Cactus Cantina. I have lived in McLean Gardens since 1980. I have always considered this neighborhood, as representative of what is best about city living: a residential area where the surrounding services and businesses are “right-sized”. I can walk out and visit my bank, the coffee shop, the dry-cleaner and the Laundromat. As I have watched the suburban areas ruined by sprawl and thoughtless development, their small businesses destroyed by Big-Box and shopping malls, I have always congratulated myself that I lived in the city, in a neighborhood with community oriented zoning.

The only flaw with the neighborhood in recent years has been the increase in the number of cars competing for parking in the area, and the number of cars which use Newark street as a shortcut from Wisconsin Avenue to, one assumes, Massachusetts Avenue.

Now, the Giant redevelopment project threatens to destroy what I value, and to deepen the flaws. It seems, to me, to be entirely the wrong scale for the area, and destined to add to the traffic and parking burdens of the residents.

We already lost a number of our small businesses when the Giant started this development process by closing the buildings on the South side of this property. Although they were told they could return, the reality, of course, is that a small business cannot afford to close in one location, relocate for an indeterminate time, then return. Once they are gone, they are gone.

In this neighborhood, already, if I come home after 9:00 p.m., there is no street parking left near my building on Newark Street. As the parking restrictions end in the evening, I don't know if this overload is from residents or guests, but there is clearly already an abundance of automobiles trying to park on the streets. While there are certainly some residents of the area who don't own cars, the reality is that most of us do. We have work or family in the suburbs, or travel on the weekends, and need a car for those times.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 08-15
EXHIBIT NO. 106

Proponents of the project argue that residents will commute using public transportation -- although, the Metro stops are about a twenty minute walk from this area, and the bus service erratic. What this would mean, of course, is that their cars would then be parked in the neighborhood all day long, adding to the hours when it is hard to find parking.

I hope that you will scale back this project.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Barton
3821 Newark St NW
Washington, DC 20016