

OFFICE OF ZONING
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3635 Ordway St NW (at Idaho)
Washington DC 20016
January 31, 2009

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

Dear Chairman Hood,

I am writing you about the Giant PUD, case 08-15. I want the new super market, just like everyone else, but not in its present form. Giant wants zoning changes that would increase traffic, parking, and noise on residential streets. We need you to stand up for our interests, and retain our zoning protections.

My first concern: Commercial parking for the North Block would be in the South Block, contrary to zoning. This parking will be much less convenient to North Block destinations than spaces on my block, particularly with a proposed traffic light at Ordway/Idaho/Wisconsin. And most people choose convenience. I fear Ordway, Idaho, and Norton will become commercial parking lots. Zoning calls for 93 commercial spaces in the North Block. That's a lot of cars. The 2-hour parking limit provides residents little protection and the thousands of zone 3-sticker-holders can park as long as they want. My driveway holds one mini-car. Giant should build more parking spaces, build fewer residential units, and/or shift parking to free-up spaces for commercial use.

Second is overall parking. The PUD is 47 spaces short of zoning requirements. Giant would add only 80 off-street spaces, yet generate a lot more car traffic to this much more "vibrant" shopping center. The Metro is a mile away. Cross-town bus service is completely inadequate, and few would take a Wisconsin Avenue bus for major grocery shopping or to eat out. The neighborhood is already short of parking. Giant isn't responsible for the shortage, but that's the environment they want to build in. There are 5 restaurants (with more than 1,100 seats), within a block of the site, and none provide any off-street parking. They can bring in several hundred cars, which now use the Giant parking lot or local streets. Numerous older apartment buildings without off-street parking (some quite large), are within 2 blocks and one more is coming on line, with 99 units but only 37 spaces, and all these residents qualify for zone 3 parking stickers. Single-family residences, visits by guests of local residents, and other businesses in the surrounding area further strain local parking. McLean Gardens has inadequate evening and overnight parking. Giant says they can accommodate more cars by "making the spaces work harder", but we have no specifics, and nothing is in writing. They should build more parking in the South Block and give us parking plan details in a contract.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO.

08-15

EXHIBIT NO.

145

Third is restaurants. Giant wants the overlay zone's restriction on restaurants and bars lifted. Restaurants and bars generate more vehicle traffic than do stores and operate late into the night, exacerbating our problems.

Fourth is traffic. The development will add passenger vehicle trips on residential streets, creating more noise and pollution. There will be more trucks and they will enter and exit at Idaho and Wisconsin, a largely residential intersection. The consultant, paid by Giant, says there won't be traffic back-ups at intersections, but ignores the impact of vehicle flow on the neighborhood. Giant offers to fix problems after the project is done, with a traffic calming escrow account, administered by DDOT, but doesn't say how big. Should residents hope problems are fixable, and not too expensive? That DDOT will take care of everything?

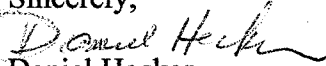
Fifth, loading docks are to be on a residential street, contrary to zoning. Plus, they may also be inadequate to handle the expected number of vehicles, so trucks will queue-up or load from the street. Docks should be moved and expanded.

Sixth is size. This PUD would throw out virtually all existing zoning and transform a neighborhood shopping area into a regional one. And yet the plan ignores traffic and parking impacts—and offers trivial benefits. How can that be done? If it is done here, it can be done in other neighborhoods.

Overall, Giant would get greater profits from the new store and a real estate windfall from the residential units. Cleveland Park and McLean Garden folks who now shop in Georgetown or the suburbs will switch to this "one stop, state-of-the-art" store, as will many in Woodley/AU/Glover Park, and Wesley Heights. And Giant will sell a lot more high-mark-up gourmet and prepared food. Plus, they get the right to build almost 150 residential units in a high-value real estate area. Giant already owns the land (and can't sell it for higher-value use), so their development costs can't be that high. Even so, they want: 1) a megabuck, up-front windfall through rezoning for a large residential building (that even exceeds C-2-A specs), 2) no burden to provide adequate on-site commercial parking, and 3) more high-rent-paying restaurants.

Would Giant settle for a smaller profit and lower windfall? Let's find out. Please help us. As it stands, they reap millions, while we get more parking, traffic, and noise.

Sincerely,


Daniel Hecker