

Good evening, my name is Leila Afzal. I am an ANC commissioner representing ANC3C05. However, I am here to testify on my own behalf and as a resident of the neighborhood impacted by Giant Food's PUD application.

I thought it would help to give some of the reasons I voted for the ANC3C resolution. I am very much in favor of a new and improved grocery store in the proposed location. However, the PUD application continues to fail to address several areas of concern, as identified in the ANC resolution. I will just mention three of those areas: loading docks, parking and traffic management.

First, the location and number of the loading docks are simply not tenable.

Giant proposes to use a residential street to accommodate their supply trucks and is asking long-standing neighbors who had the reasonable expectation that their street would remain residential to bear the brunt of Giant's convenience. Access to the loading dock should be moved to a more appropriate street.

As for the number of loading docks, Giant believes their plan is sufficient to serve approximately 80,000 sq ft of commercial space and 124 apartments. Their plan is contrary zoning regulations requirements. Additionally, there are no staging areas in case there is a back up of trucks waiting to unload. Giant's proposal is to reserve the right to use a public street for staging and possible off-loading. DDoT testified that they have no concerns about this, even though the community will be losing multiple parking spaces. DDoT was not able to identify another project of a similar scope (multiple uses, possibly multiple owners, and multiple loading dock managers) where this has been successful. Without a staging area as a fallback, it is unreasonable to believe the PUD plan is workable. If the Zoning Commission does not require Giant to comply with the regulation from the outset, this is not a mistake that can be corrected or mitigated once the project has been built.

Second, Giant provides no parking for the commercial establishments in the North Block. Ironically, they are oversubscribed in parking spaces for the residences. It is unreasonable to believe that shoppers would park a block and a half away in an underground parking lot, and walk all that distance back to shop rather than park on nearby streets. Requiring a Residential Parking Permit for all hours would not resolve this problem since most customers would come from Ward 3. Additionally, DDoT has no authority under law to shrink the RPP zones. The Zoning Commission should require the developer to provide the 93 spaces of commercial parking in the North Block as called for in the regulations.

Third, Giant has still not provided a traffic management plan, which is required by the regulations. Stating that traffic issues will be dealt with after the fact simply is not acceptable. DDoT and Giant are obliged to articulate how traffic will be managed. Both have failed to do so and are hoping the Commission will allow them to punt their responsibilities until it is too late to avail themselves of the full panoply of choices that is now available. This is a disservice to the community.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.

ZONING COMMISSION
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CASE No. 08-15
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RE: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FRIENDSHIP SHOPPING CENTER (CLEVELAND PARK GIANT)
CASE NO. 08-15

Dear Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is ~~Tom Hier~~ Tad Baldwin. I am a ~~lifelong~~ 40 year resident of the District of Columbia and I live in Ward 3. I am also a founding member of Ward 3 Vision, a group of Ward 3 neighbors actively advocating for positive growth and environmentally responsible development in our area. Our supporters are drawn from all parts of Ward 3 including citizens in the area near the Friendship Shopping Center. It is on behalf of Ward 3 Vision that I offer this testimony. Mindful of the extreme interest in this project and the number of voices to be heard, my comments will be short and to-the-point.

The mission of Ward 3 Vision is to encourage quality development that embodies the principles of Smart Growth and Transit-Oriented Development, including the opportunity for expansion of civic and environmental amenities and housing choices for all income levels. In simpler terms, our goal is to promote actions and developments that:

- Provide for a livelier, more diverse urban experience
- Strengthen the sense of community in our neighborhoods, and
- Achieve these goals in an environmentally responsible way.

Ward 3 Vision has reviewed the redevelopment of the Friendship Shopping Center, as proposed in this Planned Unit Development, and believes that it contributes substantially to these goals in the following ways:

Providing for a Livelier, More Diverse Urban Experience

Neighborhoods along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor suffer from a bewildering lack of neighborhood-serving retail, given the economic capacity that exists in our community. Basic services that make a community – places to hang out for coffee, variety in restaurants and bakeries to grab an interesting meal or a locally-made baked good – let alone more unusual offerings that provide entertainment options – movie theatres, neighborhood playhouses, bowling alleys, etc. – are few and far between.

Accordingly, we believe and strongly advocate that it is critical for this project and every other major development along Wisconsin Avenue to ameliorate these deficiencies and create a more vibrant urban environment. This means more ground floor retail, small scale offices providing venues for neighborhood services, interesting live-work arrangements to create 24 hour life, and more density in housing to achieve a critical population mass to support neighborhood commerce.

We think it is important to point out that in our neighborhoods in Upper Northwest, Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues serve not only as our Main Streets, they are also our *only* public streets – that is, the only streets that are not predominantly residential. It is a curiosity that Washington, DC has evolved so differently from other major urban areas in that our commerce is concentrated on only a few major streets

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throughout the city – Wisconsin, Connecticut, Georgia/7th, Pennsylvania Avenue, 14th Street, H Street, P Street etc. If we wish to preserve our residential neighborhoods – and I believe that is a view that we all share – and yet still have a vital city, we must allow our major Main Streets to become truly great streets, to provide the commerce that is so vital to urban living.

Indeed, our long-term vision for Wisconsin Avenue is that it become a great “Main Street” stretching from Georgetown to Friendship Heights, with a lively mix of 1st floor retail wherever possible, and with adequate residential density and appropriate commercial spaces above. The proposed project would be an important early step in moving the upper parts of Wisconsin Avenue toward a vibrant Main Street, as the project affords critical elements such as:

- a state-of-the-art supermarket that would provide a greater range of goods and services – something sorely lacking in our community now.
- improved neighborhood-serving retail and office uses
- an increase in residential density over current conditions but at a very humane residential scale of up to 5 stories.
- the inclusion of 8% of the housing units as affordable housing.

We also believe that the proposed design is well-conceived from the perspective of an urban infill project – it replaces an undistinguished set of single story buildings and large surface parking lots with an appropriately scaled mixed use project that engages the street and that manages to accommodate the need for large volumes of space associated with a supermarket without compromising the urban character of the project.

Strengthening the Sense of Community in our Neighborhoods

Just as we lack diversity and breadth of retail, we also lack places for public congregation in Ward 3. In the way that retail contributes to the commercial lifeblood of our neighborhood, public spaces contribute to the intellectual lifeblood and well-being of our community. We are fortunate to have an extremely well-educated population in Ward 3, a population that is akin, in many ways, to a university community. But we lack the common spaces that are so important to creative congregation and dialogue in such a community.

These spaces do not need to be grandiose, but they do need to exist. A perfect example is the public “pocket park” in front of the Barnes and Noble in Bethesda – a relatively small space with a huge impact on community. Day or night, the park is filled with people – pedestrians, families with strollers, cyclists stopping off from the Crescent trail, etc. The proposed redevelopment, as we understand it, would provide similar types of public spaces such as the triangular public open space at the corner of Newark and Wisconsin. The need is great and the benefit of such a space to our community is immeasurable.

Achieving These Goals in an Environmentally-Responsible Way

Not too long ago, President Obama said the following at a town meeting in Florida – “The days where we’re just building sprawl forever, those days are over. I think that ... everybody recognizes that that’s not a smart way to build communities.” We couldn’t agree more.

This project *is* about building a community, and it is the antithesis of sprawl. It seeks to build – or really to strengthen – our existing community in a responsible way by employing well-tested principles of Smart Growth and Transit-Oriented Development to bring a more diverse mix of services and amenities to Ward 3.

Although the project is not directly at a Metro stop, its location adjacent to both the 30 series and 96/X3 Metro have long made this a desirable minor transportation hub. Adding almost 150 units of housing along this heavily traveled corridor is consistent with the TOD principle that areas served by transit should be primary locations for accommodating growth – to maximize a community's return on investment in transit infrastructure and to reduce the impacts of vehicular traffic. One could consider project enhancements to further encourage bus ridership.

We particularly appreciate that the project is designed for multiple modes of access – with easy access to important Metrobus lines and a relatively short walk to two Metro stations, car-sharing spaces, places to park bicycles, and adequate parking to accommodate those who necessarily need to travel by car.

Many will talk about the potential for increased vehicular traffic as a result of this development, but the Zoning Commission should also note the net reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with this development. Indeed, this project encourages heavier pedestrian and cycling activity and a more convenient shopping option for residents who currently travel to Georgetown, Friendship Heights or elsewhere for their grocery needs.

The project also creates environments that are friendly and welcoming to pedestrians. For example, Newark Street is designed to allow both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to co-exist in harmony through the skillful use of paving materials that accommodate cars, but also send the message that the road is not a major thoroughway, but rather a plaza-like setting intended for pedestrians.

Finally, we understand the applicant is studying the feasibility of LEED-ND (LEED for Neighborhood Development) and LEED for Homes for the north parcel. We strongly encourage this pursuit for this project.

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For these reasons and others, Ward 3 Vision supports the project and the PUD application, and respectfully requests that the Commission do so as well.

Sincerely,

Tad Baldwin,
Member, Steering Committee, Ward 3 Vision
3507 Morrison St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20015-1743

(F o A)

Tom Hier
Chair, Steering Committee
Ward 3 Vision

Home Address
3908 Ingomar Street, NW
Washington, DC 20015