

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Darwin Walker <dlwalkerdc@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 29, 2024 6:00 PM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Nigro, Rachelle (SMD 2G06)
Subject: Case 21177 District of Columbia Department of General Services

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Dear Chairman Hill and Board Members,

Our names are Darwin and Karen Walker and we reside at 301 Massachusetts Avenue NW. The following is our Written Testimony in Opposition to Case 21177.

We urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny special exception relief sought by the District of Columbia Department of General Services for the proposed temporary relocation of the Central Cell Block to 501 New York Ave NW. The construction of the Central Cell Block, necessitating special exception relief, will detrimentally, adversely, and significantly impact the neighboring properties in direct violation of the Zoning Regulations and Maps. The substantial increase in cells and detainees will lead to heightened traffic, noise, and security concerns, including but not limited to:

- ~ Disruptions from the facility's 24/7 operations due to six police forces transporting detainees to the facility.
- ~ Noise pollution from potentially over eighty detainees and from increased activity at the building. Residences directly across from the proposed temporary location will undoubtedly experience an increase in noise pollution.
- ~ Increased traffic from police, employees, vendors, etc., leading to congestion. The intersection of L Street, 5th Street, and New York Ave NW is already an extremely busy and dangerous intersection for pedestrians without increasing vehicle traffic at that location.
- ~ Safety risks associated with the potential release of detainees into the community - most notably to the community organizations and businesses that cater to children. The facility's proximity to Bambini Child Care Center is causing great distress among parents and staff. The proposed cell block is also just feet from residential properties.
- ~ The proposed temporary relocation of the Central Cell Block to 501 New York Avenue, N.W. will have a direct, significant, and adverse effect on the residents, business owners, and community organizations nearby. This neighborhood has undergone transformation over decades from a state of neglect, characterized by parking lots and dilapidated houses, to a vibrant area with mixed-use residential developments. We are asking that this Project not be allowed to undo that progress and that DGS be directed to find a more appropriate and less impactful location. With all of the vacant commercial buildings downtown it is difficult to believe there is not a more suitable location away from residential property and child care facilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

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