

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

**From:** Jaime Harris <jaimeharris@gmail.com>  
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**To:** DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Case 21177 District of Columbia Department of General Services

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Nature of Documents: Written Testimony in Opposition, Case 21177

Name: Jaime Harris  
email: [jaimeharris@gmail.com](mailto:jaimeharris@gmail.com)  
Mailing address: 426 M St NW, Washington, DC 20001  
Telephone number: 202-670-6794

Dear Chairman Hill and Board Members,

My name is Jaime Harris, and I reside at 426 M St NW, #A, Washington, DC 20001 (Ward 2). I respectfully urge the Board to deny the special exception relief sought by the District of Columbia Department of General Services (DGS) for the proposed temporary relocation of the Central Cell Block to 501 New York Avenue NW. The request for this special exception, if granted, would result in significant, detrimental impacts on the surrounding properties and neighborhood, violating the intent of the Zoning Regulations and Comprehensive Plan.

The relocation of a high-traffic detention facility into a mixed-use and residential neighborhood poses several direct and adverse impacts, including:

- **24/7 Operational Disruptions:** The facility's round-the-clock operation, involving six different police forces transporting detainees, will significantly disrupt the peace and character of the community.
- **Noise Pollution:** Increased noise from detainee processing, transportation, and holding activities, potentially involving over 80 detainees, will degrade the quality of life for residents and businesses.
- **Traffic Congestion:** The influx of police vehicles, staff, service vendors, and other facility-related traffic will exacerbate already existing congestion on New York Avenue, compounding local transportation challenges.
- **Safety Risks:** The proximity of the facility to community organizations, including those serving children, creates significant concern. Most notably, Bambini Child Care Center is just steps away, causing distress to parents and staff regarding safety and security.

The neighborhood surrounding 501 New York Avenue NW has undergone a long and deliberate revitalization, evolving from an area of neglect to a vibrant hub with thriving mixed-use developments. Allowing the establishment of a detention facility, even temporarily, risks undoing decades of progress and harming the neighborhood’s residential and commercial vitality.

I urge the Board to direct DGS to identify a more suitable location that does not require zoning relief and would better accommodate the operational needs of the Central Cell Block without imposing such adverse impacts on the community. Relocating such a facility to a less densely populated area, away from schools, residential properties, and businesses that cater to children, would align more closely with the principles of sound urban planning and zoning.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this matter. I hope the Board will prioritize the well-being and safety of the community by denying this application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

