

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Carolina Hidea <calacr78@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 5, 2018 12:33 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Case: 02-381 - Construction at 4th and M St SW

This email is to oppose the proposed change to the request to change the primary use of of the lots at 4th and M Sts SW from office to residential.

The Waterfront area around 4th and M St SW is primarily residential, with nine new apartment buildings having been added in the last few years that skew the statistics even more heavily towards residential. The open green space in SW helps to attract new residents, but the area suffers from a lack of commercial and office space.

Without office space, the flow of people in and out of the isolated SW quadrant is limited and cannot offer the customer base to help support thriving local businesses. As a result, commercial/retail offerings remain limited and the area struggles to fill the little retail space that's currently available because of high rents and low returns because of low customer turn over. Without a variety of the diverse residential and office traffic that would enlarge the customer base and allow for 24 hour turnover, there is little chance that our community will be able to support or grow the limited retail offerings available. The plan to add more apartments ignores the needs of the community completely - both the residents and the few local businesses that have taken the chance to invest in the area around 4th and M St. Allowing the 4th and M St SW community to become so heavily residential rather than mixed residential/office would repeat the mistakes of the past. The mall that once existed in this space was largely unoccupied because the residential base did not offer businesses enough of a flow and diversity of customers that a mixed office/residential community would offer. Please avoid repeating history and making the same mistakes that city planners made 50 years ago.

The lots at 4th and M St SW currently regularly recurring Friday night markets, Saturday Farmers markets, events like the food truck festival, DC fair, etc. This brings a vitality, variety of new retail/eating establishments, and sense of community to the SW quadrant the would otherwise be missing. These events attract both the current residents and outside visitors to our isolated part of the city. Replacing this space with more apartments and a community center would eliminate a vital open community space and replace it with something the community already has - plenty of new residences and a third community center within a 4 block radius. That seems completely indefensible and contrary to the needs of our small but vital community. This open space had increase the sense of pride and community in SW. It has attracted visitors, businesses, and residents to gather.

Replacing the current community space will remove an important element - an open gathering space that attracts people and businesses and decreases the sense of isolation in SW. Replacing it with office/retail options would not be my first choice, but at least office zoning will provide a mixed-use environment that can help support a retail/commercial offering that's currently missing. However, replacing the current community area with residential buildings tip the balance in SW too heavily towards residential use. This proposed change would once again isolate the quadrant and deprive the few businesses that exist of the office traffic with its variety of hours of purchase, customers and purchasing interests.

We have seen this mistake - to much residential-use space - in SW before. I urge you to oppose the proposed changes and the damage that it will do to our small, diverse, and vital community.

Thank you,
Carolina Hidea
SW DC resident
Carrollsborg Condominium
Edgewater Condominium