

I am writing specifically in respect of Applicant's proposal to modify Parcel 4 to lower the minimum square footage of the grocery store space to 10,000 sf. As a neighbor and a staunch supporter of this development, this request feels like a slap in the face. The inclusion of a full service grocery store has always been, and remains, a critical promise that Applicant has made to the community. Applicant is bringing a large new residential development to a small neighborhood; it is critical that Applicant stick to its promise to provide the types of amenities that this new development requires. Applicant now seeks permanent relief from the Commission from having to deliver on the promises it made to the residents, while reaping the benefit of the development that those promises enabled.

The grocery store on this site was, and always has been, intended to be approximately 55,000 square feet -- representing a true full service grocery store. A real grocery store is desperately needed by this neighborhood, which is otherwise only served by bodegas and small markets.

Applicant, in its Application to the Commission of December 23, 2024 admits that the modification it is requesting would be a material departure from the original character of the grocery store, stating that initially, Applicant had "interest from large grocery stores" but that now "only small-to mid-size grocery stores are interested in the Parcel 4 Building" (*Application*, 6). While Applicant has not provided an exact timeline in the Application, it does indicate that it has interest from two large grocery stores and now one medium-sized grocery store that would require about 22,500 square feet.

The amount of interest being shown by sizeable grocery stores in this site is not consistent with Applicant's assertion that "the minimum grocery store size in the building must be decreased to something more consistent with the current grocery store interest ... within the range of 10,000 - 22,500 square feet). While Applicant perhaps could have shown that some reduction in minimum square feet is warranted, its reliance on the hypothetical that the current interested store "could pull out as well if additional delays from appeals or more proceedings arise" does not do that. Applicant has, in short, gone out to find a tenant who is interested in a store half the size of what they committed to provide, and is now seeking to reduce the required size *even further* because of hypothetical concerns that this new tenant (which already does not meet the size commitments) might pull out at some point in the future.

The relief Applicant seeks is permanent. If the Commission agrees to allow a 10,000 square foot neighborhood market in place of the promised full service grocery store, that is all the neighborhood will ever get. This is a challenging year for everyone in DC, but we should not lock the neighborhood into insufficient services for life in response to those challenges.

If Applicant needs relief from the grocery store size requirements, it should request something reasonably consistent with the promises it made to the community. A 10,000 square foot neighborhood store is not enough.

Submitted on 7/15/2025 by:  
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