

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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**From:** Salvatore Taillefer, Jr. <s.taillefer@protonmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 18, 2021 2:32 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Opposition to Park Tower (Case 16-11)

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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to the replacement of Bruce Monroe Community Park with a 9-story-or-more penthouse tower, currently designated Case 16-11. As you know, the city's new Comprehensive Plan requires a thorough impact assessment -- ensuring that negative impacts on neighborhoods, transportation, environmental quality, and other issues are assessed and adequately mitigated. Beyond the addition of public housing units, which are indisputably valuable, the benefits asserted by the applicants are underwhelming at best, and fall well short of the public benefits provided by the existing green space.

The community makes extensive use of the existing green space and facilities. Recently, a series of block parties have been thrown there, including music and bounce houses and other amusements. The basketball courts see regular use, as does the open space in general. The Community Park was a major consideration of my purchasing a home in the neighborhood, where I have lived for five years now. This Park was a godsend during the pandemic, when outdoor environments and proper social distancing made indoor socializing impossible.

The applicants allege that "the Project will develop significant new open spaces and will undertake greening and planting projects along the streetscape," yet any open space as part of the project will necessarily reduce the amount of open space available now. Further, there is no clear description of how these decreased open spaces will compensate for the loss of the Community Park. Why is 'less' better in this case? The applicants allege that the current facilities are outdated, they propose no replacements or upgrades, and do not make clear exactly what will be available to the public and what will be reserved for residents.

The applicants' claims regarding favorable impact on the surrounding area and the existing community are likewise dubious. "Exceptional architectural design" is not a worthy replacement for open space, which the applicants recognize is in short supply in the city when they cite policy MC – 1.2.4: New Parks and Policy MC – 1.2.5: Neighborhood Greening, which states that the "dearth of parks in the Mid-City area is a serious problem that must be addressed as its population grows." I cannot fathom how removing a park could support this goal.

Claims that "the Project will significantly enhance the walkability of the neighborhood by establishing the new street connection between Irving Street and Columbia Road, putting additional "eyes and ears" on the street,

and improving the pedestrian environment through significant new streetscape improvements” are similarly overstated. Colombia and Irving are one way streets that see significant traffic during rush hour. It is unclear how a single street connecting the two roads, which run in opposite directions will decrease traffic at all, let alone offset the additional traffic generated by 200+ new apartment units. There is likewise no support for the statement that the new units – half of which will be higher up than any other unit on the block – will increase safety in the area. And lastly, any “streetscape improvement” benefits will pale in comparison to the loss of the Community Park and the addition of a 9-story apartment building.

In conclusion, I would encourage the Commission to review the applicants’ statements carefully, as they do not appear to demonstrate that the project will adequately mitigate the loss of Bruce Monroe Community Park.

Sincerely,

Sal Taillefer

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