

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Adam Green <adamgreen321@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 3:54 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: "I want to look out my window and see life" (Opposition to 16-11)

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DC Zoning Commission:

When I was thinking about being a first-time home owner in DC, I gave my real estate agent one top thought: "I want to look out my window and see life."

Below are my thoughts on why 16-11 (which I oppose) violates the newly-proposed and old Comprehensive plan. But first, some context for those thoughts...

As someone who has worked from home since 2005, and spent years looking out my window at concrete walls and very few humans, I prioritized seeing a community above all else. During COVID, many people experienced this same desire. **Especially during a pandemic, seeing community has been key to mental health -- and having nearby open space to exercise and be around other humans was key to both mental and physical health.**

I bought my first condo at 705 Irving in large part because I can look across the street during a long work day and see parents pushing kids on swings, older kids playing on the rainbow-colored gym, community members playing basketball and tennis, Howard students practicing dance routines for campus events, yoga and karate crews practicing, people having picnics, people planting in the community garden, and people throwing balls to happy dogs.

Many weeks, I see festivals, movies, and other community gatherings in the park. I'm often impressed at how every part of the park is used -- every single part. Seeing this improves my mental health and makes me more productive at work, especially during COVID. I walk or run in the park most days, and during the height of COVID when I was wary of being close to anyone, I was immensely thankful to have a place where I could throw baskets. I've met dozens of my neighbors in that park -- it truly grounds me in my community.

All of this while light -- not darkness or shadow -- comes in my window. People walking, running, biking, or driving by on the street also enjoy the sunlight that makes DC different from the towers of New York, Chicago, or other major cities.

The city's newly-proposed Comprehensive Plan requires a thorough impact assessment -- ensuring that negative impacts on neighborhoods, transportation, environmental quality, and other areas such as health are assessed and adequately mitigated. The DC Appeals court made clear this was not thoroughly done.

The Park Neighbors party described the worst fear of many community members in one of their court documents. **This new 9-story-plus-penthouse tower would entail "creating a cold urban canyon of dimensions that do not exist, and should not exist anywhere along lower Georgia Avenue." This is an existential threat to our community -- and contradicts why many of us moved here.**

I read many of the Exhibits in the case. I did not see any impact assessments on:

- Mental health for community residents, especially during a pandemic.

- Physical health for elderly residents, disabled residents, working people who exercise in the park during their lunch breaks, or others who cannot walk far away to another open space.
- Water impact for residents in the area -- as 300 new units use decades-old pipes and systems.
- Environmental degradation and impact.
- Emergency services impact. Children's National ICU physician Mekela Whyte-Nesfield recently spoke out publicly about how increased traffic will delay ambulances to the children's hospital, delaying life-saving care: <https://twitter.com/ParkNeighbors/status/1449487609831559168>.

It is notable that the fire department half-heartedly sent a 1-sentence impact assessment minutes before a deadline. As people dedicated to serving the community, I would hope you would be outraged by this lack of care and demand better.

I firmly support affordable housing, welcome it in our neighborhood, and urge the Applicants and Zoning Commission to find alternative options. I note that the residents of Park Morton oppose this building which supposedly was being built, in part, for their benefit. It is unconscionable and disrespectful that Applicants and the District would take families out of their current multi-bedroom homes and stick them in a studio apartment or 1-bedroom unit. Of course, the reason for this is that the penthouse suites, 3-BR, and 2-BR units are being reserved for those who can pay more. This has all the elements of a big developer giveaway -- and it's extra insulting that low-income neighbors are being used as the face of this project when they actively reject this project. Again, as people dedicated to serving the community, I would hope you would be outraged by this lack of care and demand better.

Know that there are many members of the community who would be your allies if you push Applicants and the District to propose alternatives that will not upend this community park.

If you read this far, I'm impressed. Thank you for your consideration.

Adam Green
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