

## Valor PUD Testimony for Ward3Vision

October 10, 2019

### INTRO

W3V –

Advocacy Group for Smart Growth

Interested in improving the

- vitality,
- walkability
- availability of amenities in the neighborhoods here

Committed to

- increasing availability of multi-modal forms of transportation
- promoting the use of public transit
- increasing housing and housing density near transit

### SUPPORT

We support this PUD because it advances these goals.

### MERITS:

Written submission (#157) is in the record.

Associate ourselves with the excellent submissions and testimony of ANCs 3E and 3D and CSG

Highlight a few points --

[Process:]

- The proposal before you has been changed and amended and downsized over the course of four years to respond to opponents' concerns. There has been an extraordinary amount of community input via two ANCs and otherwise.

**This is an excellent illustration of how the PUD process provides an ample amount of due process for everyone, contrary to the claims of many development opponents!**

- *E.g.*, The grocery store has been made smaller from the original design, and the residential component has been downsized.

- The design and façade has been changed to blend in better with the area,
- There are more setbacks near existing residences. In addition, to address concerns over the project's height, the structure has been lowered.
- **Thus, the opponents' position has been accommodated already.**

[Amenities:]

- The **grocery store** is an amenity we strongly support.
  - It makes the project better than a residential-only one, because it makes for a more walkable and vital neighborhood; provides a business for the community that many will use often and reduce car use.
  - There has been a grocery store in Spring Valley for over 60 years until the Superfresh at the site closed about 6 years ago. So this is not actually much of a change. And, with the closing of both the Tenleytown and Palisades Safeways, a grocery store is even more desirable for the neighborhood.
  - This stretch of Spring Valley is recognized as a "neighborhood commercial center" with a number of existing businesses and shops. This project is wholly compatible with that this concept, both
    - i. in providing a grocery store **and**
    - ii. in increasing the pool of residents to support these local businesses. Density of housing is critical to support local retail.

[Other amenities:]

- The other amenities offered also enhance the neighborhood, such as the alley improvement, public open space and a traffic signal on Mass Ave.
- We especially applaud the money being set aside for transportation to the Tenleytown Metro. This service will supplement an existing private shuttle service offered by AU.

This makes the development, which is already close to bus service on Mass Ave., even more **transit-oriented**. (And we expect that with additional use, this bus service will be enhanced by Metro.)

This is a plus for the environment to cut down on car-generated pollution and control traffic congestion from commuters.

- **Housing:**

- As the recent and on-going debate on amending the Comprehensive Plan before the DC Council illustrates, building more housing and more affordable housing is critical to keep up with the growth in population and demand.
- This project will provide over 200 apartments, townhouses, including a significant number of larger units, lacking in some other recent developments here.
- Why force people out into MoCo, with the attendant loss of tax revenue in DC and increase in commuter traffic?
- We welcome the addition of a **diversity of housing options, including multi-family housing and townhouses**. Ward 3 now mostly offers super-expensive single-family houses. Not everyone who desires to live here can afford a house or wants one. And some will find this project a good place to transition out of a single-family house but stay in the area.
- **Affordable housing** is a big issue in DC, as it should be. This project contributes to the fix through application of the IZ rules. There will be about 26 lower-than-market-priced units, 11 percent of the project square footage. And more than half of that will be larger apartments.

This could be life-changing for some people who cannot otherwise afford to live in Ward 3.

- **And a bonus:** This housing will displace exactly NO ONE. If you allow existing residents to block development like this, it will be pushed into areas where displacement of existing affordable and low-rent housing is a huge and difficult issue. That is bad policy.

So, we strongly urge you to end this years-long process of getting this development built by approving the PUD before you ASAP.