



October 1, 2025

Zoning Commissioners
DC Office of Zoning
Board of Zoning Adjustment
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Zoning Commissioners:

The Arboretum Community opposes the locating of a warehouse on New York Avenue near our Neighborhood. Although there have been several meetings with Douglas Development on Zoning Case 24-11, the consensus from the deliberations of the attendees assembled at the meetings result in opposition to the proposed project for the following reasons:

1. No respect for the community: It seems that Douglas Development does not see our community. One might deduce from the interactions with Douglas Development that they would like to detach the Triangle from the Arboretum community which is illustrated using the name Montana Avenue Triangle. Montana Avenue anything to a Washingtonian invokes crime and drugs, so the name seems insulting. Furthermore, in the same article published in the "Urban Turf" on two different dates in the in 2024 stating that the proposed warehouse was in Ivy City. This reflects the deception that one might worry about reoccurring throughout the project. We were under the impression according to the meetings that the project was consistent with the FLUM's 200 ft limit of off New York Avenue for the building plus parking. But looking at the PDR-1 request on page 6, the area in red is 11.15 acres of the site. This is more than two-thirds of the site leaving less than one-third as MU-5B. The request in 24-11 does not reflect a good faith representation of what was presented in the meetings. Link to "Urban Turf" article shown below:

- a. https://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/douglas_development_files_pud_for_large_warehouse_at_new_city_site_along_ne/22555?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=keep_reading_link&utm_campaign=Thursday+July+25th%2C+2024&omhide=true

2. Aesthetics: We, the Arboretum Community, were expecting this project to imbue our community with new vitality. Something that would serve as a focal point when visitors enter Washington DC's Gateway to the city. But, along with the gas stations, Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center and warehouses turn into clubs and various businesses, when they look left, they will be greeted by a big edifice to nothingness. There is nothing warm and inviting about a big nondescript warehouse. This structure will not enhance New York Avenue nor the Arboretum Community.


3. Streetscape: A concern from the beginning of the planning process was the lack of activity on New York Avenue for the 832 feet façade of the warehouse.

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feel ominous and unsafe. It might help if the structure looked being broken into faux townhouse with storefronts along New York Avenue to enhance its appeal. The proposal enumerates enhanced lighting as a safety feature, but other streetscape elements may make the façade feel less ominous, safer, and more inviting. These following articles convey the vitality cause through enhanced streetscapes:

- a. <https://dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-opens-safe-commercial-corridor-hub-anacostia>
 - b. <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-celebrates-completion-historic-mlk-gateway-project-and-dhcd%E2%80%99s-new-headquarters>
 - c. <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/17/7727>
4. Zoning and Comprehensive planning outreach: Language, time, and outreach should be incorporated in this process to maximize citizen participation. Codes should be more plainly written so that all users can understand the codes, not just lawyers and zoning professionals. Ambiguous verbiage needs to be replaced with more simply and exactly stated verbiage so all users can understand the codes. The zoning workweek or hearing should stagger into weekends so that more residents can attend the hearings. Lastly, there needs to be better outreach to inform the community of zoning changes and changes to the comprehensive plan that not to be reconciled. Such changes should be posted in the media such as Nextdoor.com or local radio station and community meetings. How is outreach currently done?

Development that is more positive is needed along New York Avenue to transform it into a respectable Gateway corridor to the city. Thus, because of all the other unsightly and unsafe entities along New York Avenue, our community can no longer be used for warehouses and storage. Additionally, the proposed changes in Zoning Case 24-11 far exceed the FLUM and the footprint of the warehouse and parking, which is a misrepresentation of what the proposed changes to the zoning stated at the meeting. We, the Arboretum Community, do not support the proposed warehouse you are proposing. Douglas Development wants to make a living, but we will have to live with it.

Respectfully,
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Arboretum Neighborhood Association
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