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October 14, 2025

DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Opposition to ZC Case 24-11 concerning New York Avenue NE between Montana Avenue NE and Bladensburg Road NE

Chairperson and Commissioners,

I write in strong opposition to ZC Case 24-11. Ward 5 has carried a disproportionate share of truck-heavy and pollution-prone uses for decades, and New York Avenue NE remains lined with aging, auto-oriented sites. This case is a once-in-a-generation chance to replace blight with a mixed-use neighborhood where residents can thrive. Converting large portions of the Montana Triangle area to industrial zoning would lock in single-use warehousing and heavy truck activity at a key Ward 5 gateway. That outcome undercuts District goals for housing, equity, health, and walkability.

Conflicts with the District's adopted vision

The New York Avenue NE Vision Framework sets a clear direction to guide the corridor's transition from an industrial hub to a mixed-use community, explicitly identifying the Montana Triangle as a mixed-use center with housing, retail, and safe streets. A broad industrial map amendment would reverse that trajectory and foreclose the very outcomes the Framework calls for.

Undermines housing and neighborhood vitality

The District's Housing Equity Report established the goal of 36,000 new homes, including 12,000 affordable, and emphasized distributing those homes across all wards. The Framework identifies New York Avenue NE as a corridor that can accommodate substantial new housing. Industrial rezoning that removes mixed-use capacity at the Triangle pushes in the opposite direction and squanders a rare chance to add homes near jobs, services, and frequent transportation.

Adds environmental burdens where they are already concentrated

OP's Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) Land Use Report documents that most PDR land is concentrated in and around Ward 5 and that nearby residents are disproportionately Black and lower income. Many already face worse health outcomes. Expanding warehouse uses here will intensify truck traffic, noise, and air quality concerns, contrary to the Framework's call for safer, more walkable streets and improved public health.

Reverses long-standing public expectations for mixed-use

For years, the Montana Triangle was publicly advanced as "New City DC," a large mixed-use district with housing and retail. Coverage in 2024 reported a pivot to a 186,000-square-foot warehouse tied to a rezoning filing. That shift erodes community trust built around mixed-use commitments.

Better tools exist than a broad industrial map amendment

OP's PDR Report recommends new mixed-use PDR approaches that co-locate low-impact production with housing and neighborhood retail where compatible. The Zoning Regulations already treat PDR uses as carrying external effects that must be

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managed, and the Zoning Handbook explains that PDR zones are oriented to production, distribution, and repair while constraining residential use. Where some PDR functions are warranted, they should be tightly designed, mitigated, and integrated rather than enabled through a sweeping industrial upzoning that forecloses mixed-use.

Requested action

Please deny the requested industrial map amendment. In the alternative, require a mixed-use program consistent with the New York Avenue NE Vision Framework and the Comprehensive Plan's High-Density Mixed-Use guidance for this corridor, including new homes, neighborhood-serving retail, safe street design, and only low-impact PDR that is demonstrably compatible with residential uses, paired with enforceable truck, loading, and air-quality mitigation.

Thank you for protecting a rare opportunity to transform a long-blighted site into a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood that advances Ward 5 quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zahid Rathore', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zahid Rathore
Commissioner, ANC 5B07

References

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