

ZC Case 25-09 - Cleveland Park and Woodley Park upzone Testimony in opposition of Judy Chesser

RE: Tax increase immediate: Development maybe never

December 1, 2025

Why exactly are we upzoning these 101 lots at this time?

Looking at the Economy. These are observations made by DC officials.

- **Poor market conditions and federal contraction are delaying construction.**
- **DC's economic outlook is currently one of mild recession, driven by federal spending cuts, layoffs and the government shutdown.**
- **The DC Chief Financial Officer (CFO) projects a recession in FY 2026 followed by a gradual recovery but there is significant uncertainty due to ongoing federal policy decisions.**
- **Total DC revenue is expected to be lower next year (FY 2026) than this year (2025), with a forecast of a total revenue loss of \$1 billion through FY 2028 compared to previous estimates.**
- **Most businesses are pessimistic about the local economy and are not hiring or expanding.**
- **The DC Office of Revenue Analysis is forecasting a slight population decrease in 2027, which is expected to further impact tax collection, particularly property and business taxes.**

https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/release_content/attachments/Updated%20Revenue%20Estimate%20Letter_September%202025.pdf

- **The DC Office of Planning states that actual development and growth from these upzones before you "is not expected to occur for decades (if ever)..."**
- **Although this quote is in relation to a memo regarding the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor upzone, there is no case to be made that the economic conditions are different a few blocks down the hill on Connecticut Ave.**

See OP Memo provided here:

To: Vahid Bilvardi, Manager,
Permit Operations, DC Water
Ogechi Okpechi, Director,
Permit Operations, DC Water

From: Ryan Hand, Associate Director, Citywide Planning, DC Office of Planning
Martin Brown, Senior Cross-System Planner, Citywide Planning, DC Office of Planning
1100 4th St SW, Washington, DC 20024

Re: Infrastructure Assessment for the *Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework*

Date: January 23, 2024

EXCERPT - Specifically, OP needs to know for the *Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework* study area if there is sufficient capacity to handle 10,100 additional households, which OP estimates will house 13,900 additional residents, and 5,600 fewer jobs. The reduction in jobs is driven by the conversion of large commercial and office buildings to high-density residential buildings with ground-floor retail.

Because this additional population growth is not expected to occur for decades (if ever), the answer is likely to be no. To provide a more realistic picture, OP would also like to know if there is sufficient existing capacity to handle some additional population, but less than full buildout, 8,800 additional households (or 12,200 additional residents) and 4,000 fewer jobs. OP would also like to know generally if there are existing planned improvements that will help absorb some of the increased demand. (Bold and underline provided.)

- **And now we get to the immediate tax implications - increases.**
- **I turn to the DC Code.**

Code of the District of Columbia

§ 47-820. Assessments — Estimated assessment roll; frequency of assessments.

(a)(1) The assessed value of all real property as of the valuation date shall be listed annually on the estimated assessment roll for real property taxation purposes.

(2) Repealed.

(3) The assessed value for all real property shall be the estimated market value of such property as of the valuation date, as determined by the Mayor. In determining the estimated market value for various kinds of real property, the Mayor may do so manually or through the use of an automated system or systems such as the Computer-Assisted Mass Appraisal System. The Mayor shall take into account any factor that may have a bearing on the market value of the real property, including, but not limited to, sales information on similar types of real property, mortgage, or other financial considerations, reproduction cost less accrued depreciation because of age, condition, and other factors, income-earning potential (if any), zoning, and government-imposed restrictions. Assessments shall be based upon the sources of information available to the Mayor, which may include actual view.

.....

(b-1)(1) Beginning with tax year 1999 and for each tax year thereafter, all real property shall be assessed at least once every 3 years and the resulting assessment shall be in effect for the next 3 consecutive tax years unless the assessment is otherwise revised as a result of any of the following:

- (A)** An appeal filed pursuant to [§ 47-825.01a](#);
- (B)** An administrative correction made in accordance with [§ 47-825.01a](#);
- (C)** A supplemental assessment conducted pursuant to [§ 47-829](#);
- (D)** A substantive change in the use of the real property;
- (E)** A change in the zoning for the area in which the real property is located;
- (F)** A change in the classification of the real property, unless the change in classification is in furtherance of [§ 47-813\(c-4\)](#) due to the mergence of former classes into a single class by operation of law;
- (G)** A substantial change occurs to the physical make up of the real property; or
- (H)** A substantial error occurs in the assessment of the real property.

<https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/47-820>. See section 3.

CONCLUSION

Although development may not take place for decades, if ever, the tax increases will be immediate.

The Statute I just read does not say the Mayor *may* take into consideration zoning changes it says the Mayor *shall* take into consideration the zoning changes you are making.

These real property tax increases will be yet another burden on the DC business owners in these areas and if you are a tenant these increases will be passed along in rent increases.

Attached to my testimony are the maps where these changes will impact in the Cleveland Park and Woodley Park areas.

Many of these businesses struggled to make it through covid and are still struggling.

Will they be able to afford the increased taxes you are about to trigger or will they go out of business.

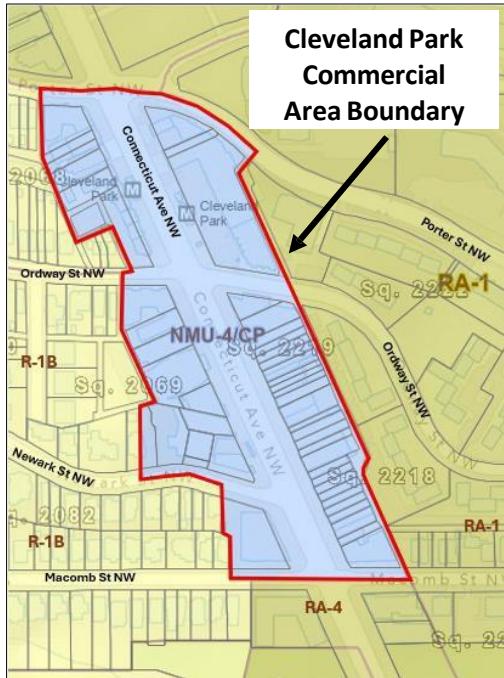
This seems like a very, very important issue to consider. I urge you to do so.

Thank you.

ATTACHMENT:
THE 101 SITES BEING UPZONED IN
CLEVELAND PARK AND WOODLEY PARK

Cleveland Park

Figure1 – Cleveland Park Area



The Cleveland Park Neighborhood Mixed Use Corridor is the area generally between Porter Street, N.W. to the north and Macomb Street, N.W. to the south and includes properties fronting both the east and west sides of Connecticut Avenue, NW. There are a small number of lots or portions of lots which face side streets, Ordway Street, N.W. and Newark Street, N.W., and are typically part of larger development sites fronting onto Connecticut Avenue NW. (Figure 1). The area is within the Cleveland Park Historic District.

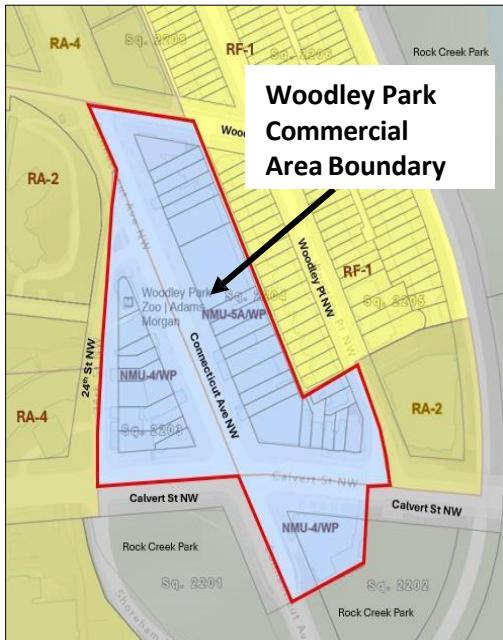
Properties within the boundary include a variety of lot shapes and sizes, and buildings are mostly one or two stories in height, with a variety of architectural styles. The corridor also has a variety of restaurant, retail, service, and government uses which serve the local community.

The northeastern side of Connecticut Avenue has a gas station and a mainly one-story strip mall with a variety of retail, restaurant and service uses fronting a parking lot and the Cleveland Park Metro entrance/exit. Farther south are relatively small rectangular lots interspersed with larger lots that are developed with mostly one-story buildings also housing a variety of retail, service and restaurant uses. At the southernmost end of the area, at Connecticut Avenue and Macomb Street, is a five-story building with commercial uses on the ground floor facing Connecticut Avenue and five stories of residential use along Macomb Street.

On the west side of Connecticut Avenue, the lots are generally larger, and buildings range in height from one to five stories with a variety of retail and service uses, some three- to five-story buildings housing residential uses. Some significant buildings on this side of Connecticut Avenue include the Cleveland Park Fire Station, the Cleveland Park Library at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Macomb Street and the historic Uptown Theater.

Woodley Park

Figure 2-Woodley Park Area



The Woodley Park Neighborhood Mixed Use Corridor is the area generally fronting on the east and west sides of Connecticut Avenue, N.W. between Woodley Road, N.W., Calvert Street, N.W., and the east side of 24th Street, N.W., with a small number of lots fronting Calvert Street and Woodley Place, N.W. (Figure 2). The area is within the Woodley Park Historic District.

The area to the east of Connecticut Avenue includes a variety of lot shapes and sizes, and buildings' height range from one to four stories with a variety of architectural styles. The corridor also has a variety of ground floor retail uses, mostly restaurants, service and residential uses which serve the local community.

There are several buildings along Calvert Street, which are developed with mainly service and office uses and with some retail uses along Calvert Streets. There are also two lots that are out of character with the uses along Connecticut Avenue and Calvert Street as they are developed with residential uses along Woodley Place.

On the west side of Connecticut Avenue, is a triangular parcel bounded by Connecticut Avenue, 24th Street, and Calvert Street. On the northern tip of the square is the Woodley Park Metro Station, while most of the buildings are one-story with a few two- and three-story buildings. Some of the buildings front onto both Connecticut Avenue and 24th Street. The uses are mostly ground floor retail, mostly restaurants, and other service uses.