

October 25, 2007

Cliff Valenti
President, United Neighborhood Coalition
3648 Park Place NW
Washington, DC 20010

To: Members of the Zoning Commission

RE: Case 06-48, Text & Map Amendments – Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay

Thank you for considering this important proposal for Georgia Avenue. The United Neighborhood Coalition is extremely excited and supportive of the Georgia Avenue Commercial Overlay district. It has been the topic of several meetings, and we have talked to the business owners on Georgia Avenue - many of whom are members – and marched door to door to discuss this proposal with the members of our community. The support for this case is over whelming.

In April of 1995, when a map amendment on this section of Georgia Avenue was approved (94-11Z), residents expressed a deep concern about the change from C2A to C3A. Even the ANC testified in opposition of this change. Residents were assured that through the use of an overlay district we could have relevant input, and standards assigned to development that would occur in the C3A area. Unfortunately, efforts fizzled out in early 2000 to complete and implement an overlay.

Those efforts were re-energized almost 2 years ago, and now the neighborhood is in agreement. The neighborhoods enthusiasm is amplified by recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan's Mid City Elements that specifically recommend implementation of an overlay district on the Georgia Avenue Corridor (P2-133).

The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the need for revitalization along this corridor (P2-132). When you compare the original intent of the zoning change back in 1995 to the type of development that has occurred on Georgia Avenue there seems to be a disconnect. In fact, looking south of the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro station you can see the effect of the zoning change has resulted in a net LOSS of neighborhood serving retail and residential uses.

The Georgia Avenue Corridor Plan put together by the Office of Planning and residents of the community - along with the Great Streets Initiative also try to right this wrong, but the overlay district provides the opportunity to fuse all of these elements together into one consistent plan.

Residents of the community feel their ideas are well represented by this plan. They have, however, expressed that they would like to see a clause added that requires the ground floor of any new development over 10,000 square feet be required to have a commercial use, unless otherwise approved. They have also expressed that they would like to see section 1329.2 (b) modified to read "Construction of a building on a lot that has 10,000 square feet or more of land area (instead of 12,000) be reviewed via special exception. While we would like to see these items added, we also believe the Office of Planning has done a great job on this proposal.

Park View is a neighborhood where nearly 50% of its residents are senior citizens. Some of these residents have fought for a brighter, safer neighborhood for more than 30 years. Other residents are new comers attracted by the many opportunities the area provides. The Georgia Avenue Overlay District affirms the many years of civic pride, positive growth, and revitalization our community has fought for. I urge you to support the overlay district.

Sincerely,

Cliff Valenti
President, United Neighborhood Coalition

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE No. 06-48
EXHIBIT No. 38
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.06-48
EXHIBIT NO.38