

## CASE 16-23 – TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION BY LAURA IVERS

Chairman Hood and Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Laura Ivers and my family and I live at 4710 Windom Place, directly across the street from the proposed development. We are among those within 200 feet of the site. Our children are young - ages 3 and 6 – and we moved to the neighborhood a few years ago because of the amenities for family life, including good public schools and a quiet neighborhood where children can play outside.

We are extremely concerned about how the proposed large-scale complex would dramatically transform our neighborhood with several negative implications. I speak for many in the neighborhood who share these concerns as made clear by the many letters submitted in opposition to this case and by our petition, which has nearly 600 signatories from the neighborhood opposing the scale of the proposed development.

Our top concerns relate to pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, and overcrowding of schools, as well as deprivation of sunlight, loss of privacy, and noise and air pollution.

**Pedestrian safety:** The development as proposed would increase traffic significantly, making the neighborhood less safe for pedestrians, a special concern for children and elderly. Valor’s traffic study indicates a range of 150-305 cars **per hour** coming and going from the site during peak hours and 21 truck deliveries per day. **Such a significant increase in car and truck traffic in no way creates a more pedestrian friendly neighborhood.**

Even if Valor implements DDOT’s recommendations - curb extensions and striping missing crosswalks - the increased traffic flow, lack of consistent sidewalks on surrounding streets, and disregard for crosswalks will pose a risk to pedestrians. The claims of pedestrian friendly alleyways made by Valor are simply false – pedestrian walkways in front of truck loading docs and a parking garage entrance are not a viable pedestrian solution. Windom Walk - a publicly accessible linear park – ends in the alley. In addition, the HAWK light is not a priority amenity for many and will likely cause new traffic flow problems. Personally, I find the crosswalks at 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> street totally sufficient.

**Traffic congestion:** I work downtown and am familiar with the daily commute options. On the N buses or driving on Mass Avenue, traffic is heavily congested and slow going. I find walking to the metro more efficient. Unfortunately, the nearest metro stop is a mile away, a walk that isn’t for everyone both ways every day regardless of the weather, nor is the uphill bike ride. The significant increase in traffic implied by the proposed development – 305 cars/hour at peak times - would exacerbate the already bad congestion on Massachusetts Avenue during peak commuting hours. Presently there is no solution for metro access. The AU bus is slower than walking due to its indirect route.

A more immediate concern for neighbors is how traffic will flow in and out of the site. As discussed on January 11, most car trips and truck traffic will use the alley off 48<sup>th</sup> street. In accessing Mass Avenue from the alley, this traffic will bottleneck on the short block between

Warren Street and Mass Avenue. In addition to the limited space on that short block, cars and delivery trucks will need to navigate around the AU shuttle bus stop, which runs up to ten shuttles per hour. The alley behind the Spring Valley Shopping Center will also be clogged with truck deliveries for the center, during which times the alley will not be passable.

**School capacity:** My older daughter attends Janney Elementary school, and any child who would move into the proposed apartments would rightfully need to be accommodated at local public schools. However, adding 219 apartments to the site is roughly the equivalent of adding some 15 blocks of homes to the neighborhood, and unfortunately our schools are already at and beyond capacity. Last school year, Janney and Wilson High School utilization was 103%. Overcrowding of public schools is a very significant concern for many of the families in the neighborhood.

**Deprivation from sunlight:** If built, the seven-story structure would cast significant shadows on neighboring homes, depriving neighbors of sunlight. As discussed on January 11, the shadow study Valor provided with its pre-hearing statement was incomplete, only looking at seven hours of the day (9-4 pm). At our request, Valor provided a study showing shadows after 4 pm. My house is among the many that would be in Ladybird's shadow in late afternoon from March through September and through the evening in the summer. The shadow and canyon like feeling created by the building would have negative implications for our quality of life.

**Privacy issues:** Furthermore, the height of the proposed development relative to surrounding homes and the terraces proposed for the development raise concerns about personal privacy. Individuals residing in some units and those using the terraces would have vantage points where they would easily see into neighboring homes and yards.

**Pollution:** Increased traffic would bring an increase in air pollution from vehicle and truck emissions that would degrade air quality, potentially exposing residents to health risks. The additional traffic would also bring persistent noise pollution that would be a constant detraction from our quality of life. In addition, light pollution from the building and its impact on neighbors health and the well-being of birds and other wildlife is a concern.

**Electrical Wiring:** Valor's renderings do not include any electric wires. However, there are many on 48<sup>th</sup> St and Valor does not plan to put those wires below ground. This will remain a visual eyesore and a concern for electricity outages. It is also deceptive.

Unfortunately, Valor has not offered adequate amenities to offset these downgrades to the quality of life in our neighborhood. **I strongly urge you to oppose the development as currently presented.** A scaled back development – for example, two stories smaller – would have less negative impacts and be more in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Thank you Chairman Hood and Commissioners for your time and consideration of these issues.