

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Elizabeth Mitchell <efcmitchell@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 3, 2019 5:36 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Jason Mitchell
Subject: RE: Case Number 16-23, Proposal for Design Review and Development by Valor Development, LLC, Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 806, 807. Letter in Opposition

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My name is Elizabeth Mitchell and I live less than a block away from the proposed development site with my two small children and spouse. I share many of the concerns that my neighbors and Citizens for Responsible Development have raised, but I want to focus on two issues close to my heart.

I am opposed to the development plan as it currently stands because it fails to address a number of concerns that the neighbors have brought to the developer's attention, on numerous occasions. Chief among those concerns, in my opinion, is the hazardous situation the increase of traffic will create both on the surrounding roads and within the proposed property itself. I know my fellow neighbors have raised concerns about the nature of the traffic study that was performed and its inadequacy, and I agree with those concerns, but I would like to point out that the proposed development threatens pedestrian safety in numerous ways.

Since the developer first conducted its traffic study, a number of significant changes have occurred. Two incredibly popular restaurants have opened up in the past two years, within one block of the development site. Millie's and Pizzeria Paradiso are both packed every weekend and most weeknights (the wait to get a table last night at Pizzeria Paradiso was over an hour and that's totally typical). This is wonderful news. The other piece of wonderful news is that the 4700 block of Warren Street now has a continuous sidewalk on one side. This has brought a significant increase in pedestrian traffic which is fantastic. Families and friends are all choosing to walk to these incredibly popular restaurants and that's great news all around. But what is terrible is that all of this new pedestrian traffic is being funneled into an incredibly dangerous intersection at the bottom of Warren Street at 48th. The bus stop for the American University Bus is at the bottom of that street (there are as many as 10 buses an hour and many of them park and idle there) and it creates a tremendously dangerous blind spot for pedestrians and cars. Valor is now proposing to add an additional 600 car trips and commercial tractor trailers to this very spot, as it has its delivery trucks coming up 48th Street and turning into a very small alleyway behind the bus stop. The latest proposal I reviewed suggested repainting the crosswalks. That's a great start but it does absolutely nothing to get rid of the blind spot created by the buses, to slow speeding cars coming up the hill from Mass. Ave., or to help cars trying to navigate the blind turn down 48th to Mass Ave. In short, this proposal is making an already dangerous intersection much more hazardous and potentially lethal. There are at least 30 children that live within a block of this development site and most of them are under the age of 10. My children are 6 and 3. I already don't feel safe crossing this intersection with them, even without the massive influx of car and truck traffic that the proposed development will cause.

I'm also disheartened to see that the developer still doesn't appear to have enough affordable housing. As you may recall this was a huge issue when we came before you a year ago. Valor had grossly "underestimated" the amount of affordable housing required by the inclusionary zoning rules. Rather than creating more affordable housing in the building to respond to those concerns, they appear to be sinking a floor of the development to try and skirt the legal requirements. They have made assurances that these subterranean apartments won't be "only"

for affordable housing but I am very skeptical. What is most likely is that Valor will use those undesirable basement units for affordable housing purposes, and in any event they seemingly have not added anything in terms of the number of affordable housing units. Furthermore, even if they did promise the Commission not to use those subterranean units for affordable housing purposes, I don't see how it will be possible to hold them to any of these promises beyond this hearing date.

I urge you to work with Valor and the community to correct these issues and so many more raised by my neighbors and community before allowing this proposal to progress. This entire process has been grueling and debilitating. The lack of candor and transparency on the part of the developer has seriously weakened an already strenuous relationship with the neighborhood. This development is going to put at least three long established businesses out of their homes and we still don't have a firm answer on who or what will be taking their place. I want to see this site developed as soon as possible but not at the expense of our pedestrian safety and not without providing enough affordable housing which we so desperately need in this area.

Thank you for your time.

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Elizabeth Callanan Mitchell
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