

Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210 S  
Washington, DC 20001

October 3, 2019

RE: Case number 19-10 Valor Development, LLC Consolidated PUD Square 1499, Lots 802, 803, 806, and 807 Letter in Opposition

Dear Mr. Hood,

I live within 200 feet of the proposed Valor Development, Case 19-10.

My home is at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue, Fordham Road, and 48th Street. My property and the life of my family is adversely affected by the massive development proposed by Valor as the entrance for most trucks, cars, pedestrians, and ALL LARGE TRUCKS will be directly at my front door on 48th Street.

I strongly oppose this development. In short, this plan provides no benefits to the present neighborhood residents and creates multiple problems without solutions that will harm the families currently in the area. I urge the Commission to protect the character of the community and the way of life of local residents, including families, children, and senior citizens, and reject this out-of-scale proposal by Valor.

This proposal should be rejected based on current zoning principles.

This proposal is contrary to Zoning Rule 304.4, Document 11x304:

1. It is not in keeping with the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. It results in unacceptable project impacts that cannot be mitigated.
3. It does not include tangible public benefits and amenities.

There are many specific reasons why this project should be rejected:

- **The development is too dense.**
- **The development does not provide adequate parking.**
- **The development compromises residential safety.**
- **The development will negatively impact regional transportation.**
- **The development will disrupt the peace and the integrity of the neighborhood.**
- **The development is too high.**
- **The development does not provide tangible public benefit.**
- **The development will cause local businesses like Wagshal's to close.**
- **The development does not address the housing crisis.**
- **The time for this plan has come and gone. After several years of consideration, the needs of the neighborhood have changed but this old plan has not changed.**

**The development is too dense.**

The plan includes approximately 219 residential units in approximately a half-block of area. According to Valor, there will be 406 bedrooms which implies at least 500 (and legally upwards of 1000) new residents will reside in this half-block of property. This is many times out of proportion to current population densities in the area. My development at Spring Valley Court (the densest housing in the immediate area) has density of approximately 15 units per half-block of area as a comparison.

**The development does not provide adequate parking.**

Parking spaces for residents, although roughly one per unit, is grossly inadequate given the potential occupancy rate of at least 500 people. Inadequate parking will result in overflow to our local streets. As it stands, Fordham Road does not easily accommodate two-way traffic. This problem is compounded by the continued growth of local restaurants. We are grossly underestimating recent neighborhood growth on local parking and further growth in this area will definitely overwhelm the available parking.

**The development compromises residential safety.**

Trucks (and all large sized trucks) for deliveries, movers, etc. are to enter at the corner of Mass/48th/Fordham. Additionally, this will be an entrance for most cars and pedestrians. This intersection is already a high accident intersection according to DDOT statistics and further development will undoubtedly increase the accidents. Certainly this development risks the lives of local residents including children and senior citizens and should be a critical factor in rejecting this proposal. Furthermore the pollution caused by the inevitable traffic congestion will disproportionately affect the health of children and senior citizens.

**The development will negatively impact regional transportation.**

The increased population will increase traffic going north/south on Massachusetts Avenue. This will not only cause local problems but regional traffic problems given the fact that Montgomery County residents use this route daily. Additionally, since trucks of all sizes cannot easily negotiate the turn from Massachusetts Avenue onto 48th Street, traffic will be stopped on this regional artery on a routine basis, perhaps on both sides of Massachusetts Avenue.

**The development will disrupt the peace and the integrity of the neighborhood.**

Spring Valley and that portion of AU Park are known for families and peace. In fact, peace is the overriding character of the area. Peace and security is why most people moved to the area. This oversized development with its density of people and traffic will disrupt the way of life of this otherwise serene, secure environment.

**The development is too high.**

The building, including the penthouse and mechanical, will reach approximately 59 feet high. This is completely out of character for this neighborhood composed of single family homes.

**The development does not provide tangible public benefit.**

My Organic Market (MOM's) is a small, relatively expensive grocery store. Although this may provide limited convenience shopping, this is unlikely to provide full service shopping that families require. Therefore local residents will end up driving to full service supermarkets

anyway. Furthermore, Wagshals and CVS already provide incidental and specialty items and thus nothing is gained by adding another small grocer.

We have the following grocery stores established or forthcoming within minutes of this location:

- Giant - Cathedral Heights
- Giant - Westbard
- Whole Foods - Tennleytown
- Whole Foods - Friendship Heights
- Target - Tennleytown
- Wegmans - Tennleytown/Cathedral Heights
- Trader Joes - Glover Park
- Safeway - Glover Park
- Wagshals - AU Park
- Online: Peapod/Giant, etc.

Notably, Wegman's supermarket on Wisconsin Avenue is under construction and is located 5 minutes away from the proposed site. Wegman's is 80,000 sqft in size and will eclipse any small neighborhood store based on volume, variety, and especially price. Thus, given multiple grocery alternatives that currently exist, there is no public benefit provided by this development.

Finally, according to Zoning Rule 305.5, Document 11x305, a grocery store must be larger than fifteen thousand square feet (15,000 sq. ft.) in areas where a grocery store does not exist within a three mile (3 mi.) radius in order to be considered a public benefit. The proposed plan does not fulfill the latter criterion.

**The development does not address the housing crisis.**

Instead of focusing on housing for single people, DC needs to build housing for middle class families. Families are leaving the district according to 2016-17 census data, presumably due to affordability and lack of supply of family housing. HIGH END APARTMENTS ARE NOT NEEDED HERE...THIS APPROACH HAS FAILED TO ADDRESS AFFORDABILITY IN DC AND DOES NOT ADDRESS FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS. Ward 3 has built enough housing for young singles/couples. This younger population eventually needs housing for small middle class families which is not provided by this proposal.

**The time for this plan has come and gone.**

Due to competing construction projects, any benefits that the Valor development may have provided when proposed nearly 5 years ago have been completely eroded over time. The services that would be considered benefits/amenities and the type of housing that is needed have evolved over time. The plan has simply not evolved with the needs of the neighborhood.

Our neighborhood is a DC treasure that should be preserved and utilized responsibly. I urge the DC Zoning Board to reject this proposal so that a scaled down plan can be proposed that is in character with the neighborhood and is acceptable to the local stakeholders.

This project is ill conceived. This development will create unnecessary, irreversible problems for the area. Please, reject this proposal.

Respectfully,

Federico Mordini  
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