

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

---

**From:** Sharla Rivera <sharla.j.rivera@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 9, 2022 4:05 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Cc:** ANC 4C Office (ANC 4C); Rubio, Vanessa (SMD 4C01); Barry, Maria (ANC 4C02); Campbell, Ulysses E. (SMD 4C03); Marbury-Long, Yvette (SMD 4C04); Duckett, Audrey (SMD 4C05); Mansaray, Namatie (SMD 4C06); Johnson, Paul (SMD 4C07); Botstein, Clara (SMD 4C08); Wehler, Alan (SMD 4C09); Goodman, Jonah (SMD 4C10); jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.us  
**Subject:** Letter of Support: PUD Case No. 21-18 (Dance Loft)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sharla.j.rivera@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the DC Government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. If you believe that this email is suspicious, please forward to [phishing@dc.gov](mailto:phishing@dc.gov) for additional analysis by OCTO Security Operations Center (SOC).

Members of the Zoning Commission, ANC, and DC Council,

**I am a resident of 16th Street Heights in Ward 4, and I write to you today to express my support for the project at 4618 14th St. NW, which has been proposed by Heleos and the Dance Loft on 14 (PUD Case No 21-18).** I have attended a few neighbourhood meetings/presentations hosted by Heleos and Dance Loft, and was impressed and excited to see this type of project being proposed in our neighbourhood. Furthermore, I am encouraged by Heleos' experience in developing affordable and sustainable projects in the District.

The proposed project will tear down an aging commercial building and put an innovative mixed-use building in its place. The new building will add nearly a hundred residences, two-thirds of them affordable, to welcome more families into our community. It will also house an arts space in the form of the Dance Loft, preserving and nurturing a vibrant community staple. My daughter currently attends ballet classes held at the Dance Loft, and while the classes themselves are enriching and vibrant, the space itself is in dire need of updating. I believe in our Sixteenth Street Heights community and welcome the new neighbors, families, and visitors that would come thanks to this project.

It is exactly this type of development that I would like to see happen across DC: rehabilitating aged buildings in dire need of repair and modernizing them with a mix of community spaces, commercial or retail spaces, and affordable housing for families. I believe that these kinds of mixed-use, green, and affordable projects are sorely needed to ensure that the neighbourhood and the District continue to grow, develop, and invest in its future. This project is consistent with the DC Council's goals to blend development and affordability throughout the city.

This project would help to both commercially revitalize a core strip of 14th St NW and provide much-needed affordable housing in our community, which, like much of DC, has seen a boom of "luxury" builds out of the reach of many longtime residents and families. As such, I have been disappointed to see the negative response from a handful of neighbours. I believe in responsible density and development for our communities, and that to immediately dismiss a project like this out of hand based on arguments like parking shortages or "crime," is short-sighted and even irresponsible in a time of affordability crisis. Indeed, in terms of parking, the District should be striving for less reliance on gas-powered vehicles, not more, and a development like this, on a busy corridor with ample access to public transit and bike lanes, can serve as an example of a car-reduced community in the city.

Arguments of increased "crime" and other theoretical detriments that come along with affordable housing projects like this often have roots in unconscious and systemic racism and classism. Our neighbours may not

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.21-18  
EXHIBIT NO.209

be aware that these arguments have been historically used to keep people of colour out of desirable neighbourhoods for decades. By allowing increased density—and therefore affordable access to high-performing schools and other neighbourhood amenities for people of colour or people of low incomes—we can begin to right the wrongs of systemic injustices one (tiny) step at a time.

Not all development is good development, and no development is perfect. In this project, I am saddened at the initial loss of some of the small businesses, many of them Latino-owned and operated, and hope the developers continue to show social responsibility when renting out the new commercial spaces. I am also sympathetic to the neighbours whose properties directly abut the development for the inconveniences they will experience during construction and for the drastic changes in view from their yards when the project is completed. However, the benefits of a development focused on affordability, sustainability and the arts far outweigh the costs in this space, and changes in backyard views for a few home dwellers should not overshadow the benefits to one hundred potential resident families, 60% of them low-income.

I hope you will join me in supporting this project and others like it in DC.

Sharla Rivera  
1420 Webster St NW  
Washington, DC 20011