

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ZC Case No. 21-18. Dance Loft Project

Dear Commissioners,

I live in Ward 3, am a member of Temple Sinai, and co-chair, along with Jamie Butler of Adas Israel Congregation, the WIN (Washington Interfaith Network) Congregations Affordable Housing Work Group. I am writing to urge the Zoning Commission to **approve the Dance Loft project**.

Members of our Work Group have followed community discussions around the project with great interest. As you know, we face an affordable housing crisis that continues to be an almost insurmountable obstacle to our work seeking to remedy gross racial and economic inequalities. This crisis is, as others have said, a humanitarian one, and presents severe obstacles to equitable growth and economic development. This is especially true in Wards 3 and 4, where a history of exclusionary zoning (racially motivated and otherwise) has compounded challenges we face.

The Office of Planning set-down report exhaustively addressed the project's consistency with the Comp Plan and its recent amendments. The report shows that the project conservatively fits within the zoning parameters of the Future Land Use Map, the Small Area Plan, and Comp Plan amendments.

I and my fellow activists in WIN Ward 3 Congregations disagree with Ward 4 neighbors' assertions that the project is out of place or too large. A modest 5-story building (plus setback penthouse level) along a major commercial corridor that scales back to a 4-story structure at the rear is **not** out of place in our urban neighborhoods. A 6-story building has just gone up in the alley behind my house in Van Ness. The buildings surrounding the Dance Loft project are almost as high as the proposed structure. The exaggerated narrative circulated by a small group of people should not stand in the way of appropriately scaled development that will provide homes for more people.

I'm writing to you about this Ward 4 project because we see this kind of opposition in Ward 3 as well. We must stop letting small, vocal groups hijack these essential projects. Providing affordable housing, not to mention achieving retail and commercial vitality and preserving the arts in our city, **requires increased density**. This is especially true along commercial and transportation corridors, in neighborhoods with a history of exclusion, and where the zoning documents *themselves* call for increased density.

We need projects like this in all Wards. I hope the Commission will support this project.

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