

July 25, 2022

Anthony Hood and Commission Members,
Washington, DC

Written Testimony: Impacted Residents of Zoning Amendment at 1207 H NE CASE NO. 22-03

Executive Summary: ANC Zoning Commission should reject this amendment which would allow the property to be rezoned to a NC-15 which would permit new construction of a mixed-use building of a height of 70 feet. This rezoning and subsequent construction poses a threat to the health and safety of the current occupants of Linden Pl. NE and surrounding streets and would create additional vacancy along the H Street Corridor.

Dear Anthony Hood and Commission Members,

Based on the experiences of other neighborhoods in Washington, DC which have faced similar rezoning as well as on robust research evidence, we wholly recommend that this council reject the proposed amendment. We wish to bring to your attention the hazards to resident health and safety. We also wish to alert the Council to the harms to local property owners and H Street Corridor businesses.

First, there is a preponderance of evidence demonstrating the negative impacts of large buildings being built mere feet from 100-year plus historical homes. In brief, tall buildings create a lack of privacy and cast shadows upon shorter buildings around them. Residents and homeowners living along the current alleyway will no longer have privacy in their homes as a 70-foot building looms above outdoor spaces and windows. The green spaces and microclimates that residents cultivate will no longer receive the direct sun needed to thrive.¹ Without natural light and long shadows cast by a 70-foot building Linden Place residents could suffer from a decline in basic biological processes, from circadian rhythms to sleep and mood. Linden Place residents affected by SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) will no longer benefit from the much needed sun on the back half of their homes and effectively making half of their properties unusable during the winter months.

Second, a large multi-use building would exacerbate pollution, current parking and congestion challenges along the H Street Corridor and Linden Place NE. Residents of Linden Place NE and surrounding streets are already more so negatively affected by pollution given their proximity to H Street NE as the WHO has found², additional vehicles and traffic that a large building would bring would cause more air and noise pollution thus making residents more susceptible to

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<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/9122-shade-shadow-impact-of-tall-buildings-public-health-report-november-2018.pdf>

²https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/193108/REVIHAAP-Final-technical-report-final-version.pdf/

long-term health effects including heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases. Noise pollution is another issue and as the EPA has cited is directly tied to stress related illnesses, high blood pressure, speech interference, hearing loss, sleep disruption, and lost productivity.³

In addition, parking and congestion is already a significant challenge for permit-holding residents due to the business activity on H Street and lack of available parking. Adding additional businesses and residences would only serve to make this problem much worse. And while the developer plans to have underground parking, surely this will be a high fee that many residents and patrons will not want to pay. The future lack of parking will disproportionately affect older folks, those with children or physical limitations as they will be forced to park further and further from their homes.

Lastly and perhaps most significantly, there are countless VACANT commercial properties along the H Street Corridor. Councilmembers, developers and investors who are interested in the H Street Corridor ought to put their resources behind restoration, small business loans, and programs that seek to maintain the historical, cultural legacy, and heritage of the area. A new mixed-use development would only further gentrify and foster discriminatory behavior⁴.

We strongly recommend that the Commision reject this amendment. Thank you for consideration, and we will be available to answer your questions as needed.

Regards,

Abby Nydam and Carlos Urmeneta - 1224 Linden Place NE

Victor McKoy-714 13th St. NE

Rhys A. Young - 1233 Linden Place NE

Llewelyn Engel- 1236 Linden Place NE

Alaina van Horn - 1222 Linden Place NE

Kim Tomadjoglou - 1244 Linden Place NE

Charles P. Wood - 1248 Linden Place NE

Frank Nickerson - G Street NE

Valeri Byrd - 1245 G St NE

Mary Beth Goodman - 1243 G St NE

Patricia Peterson- 1240 G St NE

Elaine Block- 1238 G St NE

Brian Stettin - 1238 G St NE

³<https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/clean-air-act-title-iv-noise-pollution#:~:text=Health%20Effects,sleep%20disruption%2C%20and%20lost%20productivity>.

⁴<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-journal/blog/examining-the-negative-impacts-of-gentrification/>