

**ANC 3E Resolution on the
Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study Strategic Framework Plan**

BACKGROUND

Whereas, the District of Columbia's Office of Planning issued a draft report titled "Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study (UWACS) Strategic Framework Plan" in November 2003, and is receiving comments on the plan through February 20, 2004.

Whereas, the Office of Planning has announced its intention to submit a revised final draft of the UWACS Strategic Framework Plan as a small area plan, which means that unless it is rejected by the D.C. Council, the UWACS plan will serve as guidance for the Zoning Commission and other District agencies in carrying out the policies of the District's Comprehensive Plan (D.C. Code Section 1-301.64).

Whereas, the UWACS Draft Plan was undertaken to implement the planning priorities expressed by neighborhood residents as part of the Cluster 11 Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) in the summer of 2002, which were:

- Neighborhood Traffic Management and Enforcement
- Commercial and Retail Development
- Residential Development Controls, Historic Preservation, Small-town Character, and Comprehensive Planning (SNAP Plan, pp. 15, 19).

Whereas, the Office of Planning undertook the Corridor Study to mesh the local concerns with citywide priorities, namely, to meet the Office of Planning's perceived market for residential and commercial development, the interest of commercial property owners to develop their parcels on Wisconsin Avenue, and the Mayor's announced interest in growing the District population by 100,000 residents (UWACS, p.1).

Whereas, if approved as a small area plan, the UWACS Draft Plan would provide guidance to the Office of Planning, the Zoning Commission, and the Board of Zoning Adjustment on land use, zoning, and the public realm within the boundaries of ANC 3E and other ANCs along the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor.

Whereas, the existing zoning for the areas within ANC 3E is the result of an extensive process which anticipated current conditions and was established to protect the strength and stability of the Tenleytown, Friendship Heights, and American University Park neighborhoods; this zoning is designed to preserve residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor, and was based upon a level of development that the infrastructure of our neighborhoods could support.

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Whereas, there is no indication anywhere in the UWACS Draft Plan that existing zoning is an obstacle to any of the overall objectives laid out in the SNAP process, or even the objectives described in the Draft Plan itself.

Whereas, the UWACS Draft Plan states that it proposes no zoning recommendations, but seeks to establish a framework for maximum building heights along Wisconsin Avenue (UWACS, p.2), recommendations which, for most areas in the study area within ANC 3E, are significantly higher than what is allowed under existing zoning even with a Planned Unit Development (“PUD”)¹; in addition, contrary to what is noted within the Draft Plan (UWACS, pp.9,13), there are currently no 10-story buildings along the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor.

Whereas, although the UWACS Draft Plan includes no guidance on density, land use limitations, or lot occupancy, and includes no analysis to determine whether there is any reason to increase the allowed density for the area, the implementation of the Draft Plan’s increased height recommendations would make it difficult for neighborhood residents, ANCs, or community organizations to protest the height and density of proposed PUDs, and would very likely lead to Zoning Commission approvals for increased density and lot occupancy.

Whereas, the existence of several undeveloped or under-developed plots along the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor is cited in the Draft Plan as a reason for proposed development beyond that allowed under matter-of-right zoning with a PUD, without any demonstration that such properties could not be profitably developed or redeveloped without upzoning .

Whereas, the UWACS Draft Plan predicts that the theoretical build-out likely under the proposed Framework Plan will be less than what is allowed under current zoning (UWACS, p.2,21 – a finding that undermines the view that the existing zoning precludes profitable development), even though the Office of Planning in fact has proposed no down-zoning, and thus, nothing to prevent a property owner from constructing to current matter of right zoning in those parts of the Corridor where it has recommended smaller scale development.

Whereas, the UWACS has a stated goal of protecting neighborhoods, and states that it is in the best interest of the City to preserve and protect such valuable resources (UWACS, p.3);yet the UWACS Draft Plan recommends transitional bands of 4 to 6 story heights, up to 75 feet tall, immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods off the corridor (UWACS, p.24), which would negatively impact surrounding stable neighborhoods and dwarf the houses in these single family residential areas, which have a height limitation of 40’ and in many cases are actually significantly lower.

¹ See [attached chart titled “Height Comparison”](#).

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Whereas, the UWACS Draft Plan contains no analysis to determine whether the infrastructure can even support the amount of development that would be allowed under current zoning, and in particular is lacking relevant information on:

1. Existing limits of the public transportation services, and the ability of these systems to meet increased demand in our neighborhood;
2. Public safety needs, including the availability of fire and emergency medical services, and evacuation capabilities;
3. Impact on Janney Elementary School, which is already operating well beyond capacity; and the
4. Ability of the local roads, where crucial intersections are already documented as operating at undesirable levels, to absorb additional traffic.

Whereas, Mayor Anthony Williams has been quoted as saying “we’ll come up with a consensus that reflects what people want” (Northwest Current, January 28, 2004), and Office of Planning Director Andrew Altman has written that “the Office of Planning is committed to working with the residents and property owners of the affected neighborhoods to achieve the highest degree of consensus possible on the plan. . . .” (December 4, 2003 letter to Council Member Kathy Patterson).

Whereas, despite the statements within the Draft Plan of extensive community involvement leading up to the release of the draft, the Steering Committee made up of community and business leaders, which was established by the Office of Planning at the beginning of the UWACS planning process, did not meet for almost a year, did not have any role in the process after the initial meetings in early 2003, and was only reconvened by the Office of Planning in January 2004, after the Draft Plan had been released.

Whereas, Commissioners of ANC 3E have attended numerous meetings on the UWACS Draft Plan, have held three public forums specifically designed to solicit neighborhood feedback on the Draft Plan, and have had numerous written and spoken conversations with residents of our neighborhoods about the UWACS Draft Plan; the summary of comments and visions which were expressed at the three forums are included in the ANC 3E Report on the UWACS Draft Plan which will be presented to the Office of Planning.

Whereas, the UWACS Draft Plan states that “[t]here are those that welcome change, and those who would like things to remain the same” (UWACS, p.21); the Commissioners of ANC 3E are among what we believe to be the vast majority that welcome change to our neighborhood, and believe that the changes to the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor that would be in the best interest of our neighborhood and the District as a whole are those that can be accomplished with a reasonable amount of development consistent with the existing zoning.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT ANC 3E strongly urges that the Mayor direct the Office of Planning to withdraw this UWACS Draft Plan from consideration as a small area plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ANC 3E strongly urges Ward 3 Council Member Kathy Patterson to oppose this UWACS Draft Plan now and, should it be presented to the D.C. Council, ANC 3E strongly urges Council Member Patterson to seek the support of her fellow Council Members in opposing this Draft Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ANC 3E requests, should this UWACS Draft Plan not be withdrawn by the Mayor, that any revisions to this UWACS Draft Plan, including infrastructure studies, be submitted to the community and affected ANCs for review and comment for a period of at least sixty days before any action is taken to send a revised Draft Plan to the D.C. Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ANC 3E strongly urges that the creation of a new Strategic Framework Plan for the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor include and be consistent with:

1. Data resulting from detailed, objective, and independent analyses of the ability of our community's infrastructure to absorb the increased development proposed by a new Corridor Study; this infrastructure analysis should include assessments of neighborhood traffic issues, parking, public schools, public transportation capabilities, police, fire and emergency medical service capacities (specifically the Tenleytown Firehouse and possible discontinuation of the medical transport services that Bethesda Chevy-Chase Rescue Squad currently provides in Northwest Washington), as well as other public facilities and services in the area.
2. Modifications as outlined in the in the ANC 3E Report on the UWACS Draft Plan which will be presented to the Office of Planning at their February 17, 2004 Public Hearing.
3. Thorough consideration of how the objectives of the Cluster 11 SNAP, which precipitated the UWACS Draft Plan, can be achieved under the existing zoning.
4. The recommendations of a regularly consulted Steering Committee, whose membership shall be open to representatives from all Ward 3 ANCs, leaders from organized community and civic groups in the affected neighborhoods, and interested community residents.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ANC 3E designates the Chair, and/or her designee, to represent it at any meeting, hearing, or committee meeting concerning the UWACS Plan, and also designates the Chair, and/or her designee(s), to prepare an ANC 3E Report on the UWACS Draft Plan which is consistent with this Resolution, and to present specific written and spoken comments consistent with this Resolution on behalf of ANC 3E to the Office of Planning at their Public Hearing on February 17, 2004, and by their February 20, 2004 deadline for written comments.

Approved by a vote of _____ at a duly noticed public meeting of ANC 3E on February 12, 2004, at which a quorum was present (a quorum being three).

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Height Comparison of Current Matter of Right Zoning, Current Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning,
and the Office of Planning Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study (UWACS)
Draft Plan Recommendations for sites within ANC 3E

Location	Current Zoning Matter of Right	Current Zoning Planned Unit Develop. (PUD)	Office of Planning Recommendation in UWACS Draft Plan
Jenifer Street to Western Avenue			
Surface parking lot between Mazza and Lord & Taylor	65 Feet C-3-A	90 Feet	110 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Harrison Street to Jenifer Street			
Lord & Taylor Site	50 Feet C-2-A and R-5-B	65 Feet	110 Feet, stepping down to 75 Feet for a 26' portion on south <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Western portion of Lord & Taylor Site	40 Feet R-2, Single family semi-detached	40 Feet	110 Feet, stepping down to 75 Feet for a 26' portion on west <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
WMATA Site	50 Feet at South 65 Feet at North	90 Feet	110 Feet, stepping down to 75 Feet for a 26' portion on south <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Buick, Pepco, Bank	50 Feet R-5-B	60 Feet	90 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
East of Wisconsin, Harrison to Jenifer	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	75 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Garrison to Harrison			
Behind Rodman's	40 Feet R-2	40 Feet	50 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Wisconsin Avenue, Both sides	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	90 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Behind FOX	40 Feet R-2	40 Feet	50 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Fessenden to Harrison			
West of Corridor	40 Feet R-2	40 Feet	50 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Wisconsin Avenue	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	90 Feet for two sites, 75 Feet for other sites <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Ellicott to Fessenden			
Wisconsin Avenue, both sides	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	50 Feet <i>Equals MOR Maximum</i>
Davenport to Ellicott			
Wisconsin Avenue, both sides	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	75 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Chesapeake to Davenport			
Wisconsin Avenue, both sides	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	90 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Brandywine to Chesapeake			
Wisconsin Avenue, both sides	50 Feet C-2-A	65 Feet	90 Feet, east of Wisconsin 75 Feet, west of Wisconsin <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>
Albemarle to Brandywine			
East of Wisconsin	65 Feet C-3-A	90 Feet	90 feet and 110 Feet <i>Exceeds PUD Maximum</i>

