



## **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E**

**TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS**  
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[www.anc3e.org](http://www.anc3e.org)

May 19, 2009

BY FIRST CLASS MAIL AND E-MAIL

Hon. Michelle Rhee  
Chancellor  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
825 North Capitol Street, NE, 9th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002

### **Resolution Concerning Growth Assumption in Planning for the Modernization of Janney Elementary School**

Dear Chancellor Rhee:

We write to convey respectfully ANC 3E's concern that the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) may rely on an inappropriate assumption in planning for the modernization of Janney Elementary School (Janney) which, as you know, is slated for expansion and modernization soon. At a May 5, 2009 meeting of Janney's School Improvement Team (SIT), a representative from DC's Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM) stated that DCPS expects *no* growth in Janney's in-bound enrollment in the coming years.<sup>1</sup> We believe this assumption blinks other parts of DC government's own projections of population growth in the Janney area and reasonable inferences therefrom.

Most of the upper Wisconsin Avenue corridor is within Janney's boundaries. Numerous sites along and near Wisconsin Avenue above Yuma Street could be subject to residential redevelopment. We note here just a few such sites:

- the block diagonally across the street from Janney currently occupied by one and two story retail establishment;
- the WMATA bus garage occupying most of the block of 44<sup>th</sup> Street between Harrison and Jennifer;
- the former Buick dealership lot adjacent to the WMATA bus station;
- the bank parking lot occupying the NW Corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Harrison Street;

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<sup>1</sup> The OPEFM representative made clear that DCPS ultimately determines the projected enrollment for schools. It was unclear whether the no growth assumption originated with OPEFM or DCPS, however.

A study prepared for the District Department of Transportation in 2005 (DDOT Study) evaluated likely development in and around the Janney area under several growth scenarios.<sup>2</sup> Adding the projected additional units in the Janney area under different scenarios<sup>3</sup> reveals that 800 to 1000 units could easily be added to the area.

We acknowledge that one and two bedroom condominiums might predominate such development, and many families with school age children prefer larger housing. Nonetheless, some parents who value walkable urban living can be expected to stay in such housing stock at least while their children are in elementary school. Likewise, some such parents or prospective parents can be expected to purchase and combine adjoining condominiums to accommodate a larger family.

Were 1000 housing units added to the Janney area, Janney would need to accommodate 100 additional students if even one Janney student was associated with every ten units.

To be sure, little commercial development is occurring in the current economic climate. We believe DCPS' enrollment time horizon for Janney's redevelopment should extend at least 20 to 30 years, however, and it is reasonable to expect that housing and credit markets will recover in that period.

Other anticipated changes also suggest growth in enrollment. We understand that Ward 3 has one of the highest proportions of senior citizens in the District. Our ANC is working to make it easier for neighborhood seniors to stay in their homes longer, but, nonetheless, over the next 10 or 20 years we can expect considerable turnover, with more families likely moving in. Moreover, as all our local schools -- Wilson, Deal, and Janney -- improve, we likely will see a higher percentage of parents choose to send their children to DC public schools.

We recognize that the actual value of sub-assumptions such as housing unit growth, Janney students per new housing unit, and increased future interest in public schools, is uncertain and subject to debate. Even taking this into account, the case for "no growth" appears weak. Given the importance of the enrollment projection to planning for Janney's modernization, we ask that you reconsider whether DCPS should rely on a "no growth" assumption, and that you explain in detail the basis for whatever growth assumption DCPS intends to rely upon.

Finally, we note that ANC 3E takes no position here regarding the appropriate target size of the school population at Janney or DCPS' ultimate response to anticipated enrollment growth. We ask, rather, that DCPS revisit its assumption regarding projected growth and, most importantly, assuming that DCPS concludes that in fact there will be growth in the Janney area, that it detail its intended response to

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<sup>2</sup> See "Wisconsin Avenue Transportation Study Final Report" (2005), at 61-71 [available at [http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/wisconsin\\_ave/final/Final\\_Report\\_10\\_26\\_05\\_%28web%29.pdf](http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/wisconsin_ave/final/Final_Report_10_26_05_%28web%29.pdf)].

<sup>3</sup> See *id.* at "Appendix M: Estimate of Development Square Footage by Scenario" [available at [http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/wisconsin\\_ave/final/Appendix\\_M.pdf](http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/wisconsin_ave/final/Appendix_M.pdf)].

such growth, whether through expanding Janney to accommodate all anticipated growth, redistricting, or some combination of the foregoing and/or other approaches.

ANC 3E adopted this letter resolution by a vote of 5-0 at a properly-noticed public meeting held on May 14, 2009.

ANC 3E

By: 

Jonathan Bender  
Chairperson

cc Allen Y. Lew (by e-mail only)