

# NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

A Neighborhood Newsletter Published By The  
Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association  
And Neighbors for a Livable Community  
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## DDOT PROPOSES SHUTTING DOWN TWO LANES ON DALECARLIA PARKWAY

### CHEH PUSHES D.C. COUNCIL TO APPROVE INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMITS; WILL CONSIDER NEW FEES FOR DRIVING DOWNTOWN

If Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh gets her way, DC residents will pay more to park their cars on neighborhood streets and possibly even pay for the right to drive into downtown D.C. in the form of a “congestion” traffic tax.

At Cheh’s urging, the D.C. Council approved a budget recently that would increase the cost of residential parking permits (RPP) from \$35 to \$50 for the first car a household owns; \$75 for the second; and \$100 for the third.

Smart growth advocates, especially Greater Greater Washington, lobbied aggressively for the rate increase.

The DC Council also approved spending \$500,000 to study the costs and benefits of charging drivers a fee to  
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### *New Study Ignores Safety Issue At Fordham, Massachusetts, And 48<sup>th</sup>; Recommends New Bike Lanes In Spring Valley, But No Traffic Calming In Spring Valley Or Wesley Heights*

The D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT) held a public workshop this past Saturday, May 18 to outline a series of initial recommendations that are intended to enhance the transportation system in an area that includes Spring Valley and Wesley Heights. However, most of the proposals coming forward from DDOT as part of what is billed as the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study seem to focus on the addition of new bike lanes on Spring Valley neighborhood streets with no attention to the most serious traffic safety issues confronting both Spring Valley and Wesley Heights, especially cars speeding on neighborhood streets.

The study also ignores traffic issues on Massachusetts Avenue or the neighborhood streets in proximity to Massachusetts Avenue. DDOT’s consultants indicated that traffic issues related to Massachusetts Avenue would not be examined as part of the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study.

The most significant initial recommendation made by DDOT is to shut down two lanes of Dalecarlia Parkway and make the Parkway one lane in each direction. DDOT would then add bike lanes in each direction on Dalecarlia.

Most perplexing, however, is that the study’s initial recommendations completely ignores the safety issues where Fordham, Massachusetts Avenue, and the Spring Valley Shopping Center service road intersect at 48<sup>th</sup> Street. This intersection has the highest incidence of accidents in Spring

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# **DDOT PROPOSES SHUTTING DOWN TWO LANES ON DALECARLIA PARKWAY**

Valley and poses severe risks for pedestrians. Fordham Road between Massachusetts Avenue and 49<sup>th</sup> Streets is often impassable by two cars going in opposite directions. Recently, traffic safety problems on Fordham Road have been exacerbated by trucks parking illegally to unload for the Shopping Center restaurants. As conditions have worsened in the area, neighbors have sought help from Washington Real Estate Investment Trust (WREIT), which owns the shopping center, the Mayor's Office, and DDOT. They also have sought the assistance of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3D. Neighbors have appealed to ANC 3D for help at several meetings to advocate for safety improvements at the intersection and along Fordham Road NW.

Although DDOT indicated at the Saturday workshop that input from the ANCs was used to prioritize projects in the neighborhood, the Fordham Road and Massachusetts Avenue is not a priority for ANC 3D. In a letter to DDOT Director Jeffrey Marootian in February 2019, ANC 3D outlined its traffic-related priorities and no traffic safety issues affecting Spring Valley residents were included. However, residents continue diligently to push city officials to address the transportation safety issues at the intersection.

## **University Avenue Sidewalk Is DDOT Priority For Spring Valley**

Instead, it appears that one of the highest priorities for Spring Valley is the installation of a sidewalk along University Avenue between Massachusetts Avenue and Quebec Street, according to the DDOT study. DDOT staff and consultants at the workshop were surprised to learn that there already is a sidewalk on University Avenue from Rodman to Quebec. However, DDOT is recommending an ANC 3D Commissioner Troy Kravitz, whose district includes University Avenue, has posted on the list serv that he is advocating for a sidewalk on the eastern side of the street adjacent to property owned by the Wesley Theological Seminary and American University (AU).

Installing a sidewalk in that area would likely require the removal of many trees, including some large trees and a series of younger trees recently planted on public space at the Seminary.

DDOT staff and their consultants working on the study indicated they had not visited the site and could not determine if a sidewalk would be feasible. Several Spring Valley residents living on and adjacent to University Avenue, who attended the recent DDOT workshop, criticized the plan to add a sidewalk along University Avenue saying it was not needed. They also stressed that the meticulously landscaped grounds at the Seminary are used like a public park by residents, who often let their dogs run off-leash on the grounds. The grounds are also made available by the Seminary to the neighborhood in winter months for sledding.

“It is a beautiful green space to enjoy and to appreciate,” one neighbor said. “Given the small number of pedestrians – and with most of those being neighbors who use the grounds to exercise their dogs – you have to question why a sidewalk at this location is such a high priority. There are a lot of other areas in Spring Valley without sidewalks and where a sidewalk would be especially helpful to ensure public safety and much more needed by residents. Few pedestrians use University Avenue to access Massachusetts Avenue.”

Residents also complained that storm water flow has been a serious problem over the years at the Wesley Seminary campus and noted that the Seminary has taken steps to control the storm water flow to protect neighboring residential homes. Residents expressed concern that additional paving in the area could disrupt the efforts to control storm water and lead to water flowing onto their property, which is illegal under the laws of the District of Columbia.

### **DDOT Advances New Bike Lanes For Spring Valley**

ANC 3D Chairman Chuck Elkins, who represents Wesley Heights, and Kravitz indicated in recent postings on neighborhood list serves that DDOT's Rock Creek Far West Livability Study is focused solely on pedestrian and bicycle safety issues. DDOT indicated at the Saturday workshop that this was not accurate.

DDOT measures the effectiveness of its bicycle program by the number of miles of designated bike lanes and their connections to bike trails in the area. It does not measure program effectiveness on the basis of the use of bike lanes, whether existing infrastructure supports the installation of bike lanes, or the incidence of traffic accidents involving bicyclists. The agency is eager to expand the number of streets in the city with designated bike lanes, including neighborhood streets.

Kravitz indicated at the meeting that he is also encouraging DDOT to install new bike lanes on Rockwood Parkway and Glenbrook Road. DDOT has included these recommendations initially in the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study. 49<sup>th</sup> Street would be designated a "bike boulevard," according to the initial recommendations. It is unclear what this designation means other than the street would not be striped with specific bike lanes.

Currently, it is difficult for two cars going in opposite directions to pass one another safely on Glenbrook, Rockwood, and 49<sup>th</sup> Street when cars are parked on both sides of the roadways. Rockwood is often used as parking for special events held by AU and at the home of the Korean Ambassador. The block on Rockwood between Nebraska and Glenbrook is often congested when AU holds special events on campus. With munitions remediation work continuing at the AU property on Glenbrook Road, the section of Glenbrook between Rockwood and 49<sup>th</sup> is sometimes reduced to a single lane. Currently, there is no clear indication when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will complete this work.

DDOT did not indicate that it was considering new parking restrictions on the streets.

New bike lanes to be separated from traffic by stanchions or other means also are being planned for Nebraska Avenue and Loughboro Road. Additionally, Massachusetts Avenue from Westmoreland Circle to Dupont Circle would formally be declared a shared bike pathway.

If past practice is any indication, the designation of new bike lanes on neighborhood streets is not likely to result in an increase in the number of bicyclists using the streets. So, the impact is not likely to be significant except where driving lanes are narrowed on already narrow streets to accommodate the bike lanes. That is likely to be more of a problem for bicyclists than motorists and give bicyclists a false sense of safety, as has been demonstrated throughout the city by the significant increase in accidents involving bicyclists. However, drivers can be ticketed for driving in a bike lane or encroaching into a bike lane.

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**Other New Sidewalks Recommended**

In addition to a sidewalk on University Avenue, DDOT is proposing to add a new sidewalk on Loughboro Road along a stretch from MacArthur Boulevard in the Palisades to Nebraska Avenue in Wesley Heights. A sidewalk is also being proposed for Cathedral Avenue from the Glover Archbold Trail to the Cathedral West Condominiums.

At the recent workshop, DDOT also expressed interest in learning what other streets in Spring Valley did not have sidewalks – at least on one side of the street.

In recent years, ANC 3D has pushed for new sidewalks on all streets without sidewalks; but, the ANC has not taken into account the impacts that such additional paving may have on storm water run-off. Residents are required to keep the sidewalks free of snow and ice during winter months. Residents have been unsuccessful in persuading ANC 3D to seek use of permeable paving materials for sidewalks to minimize the impact of storm water flow on residential property.

**Pedestrian Crossings In Wesley Heights Enhanced**

In Wesley Heights, DDOT proposes to enhance pedestrian crossings along Foxhall Road at Lowell, Klingle, Garfield, Edmunds, and Foxhall Crescents. DDOT also proposes to enhance the pedestrian crossing on New Mexico Avenue at Sutton Place, possibly to include the removal of some parking spaces.

**DDOT Has Not Assessed Traffic Impact  
Resulting From Shutting Down Two Lanes On Dalecarlia**

DDOT and their consultants also indicated that none of the initial recommendations made in the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study were made on the basis of any data collection efforts to assess current conditions in the study area. City officials acknowledged they were not in a position to assess the traffic impact, including the possible increase in cut-through neighborhood traffic, resulting from shutting down two lanes on Dalecarlia.

Dalecarlia is a heavily travelled roadway, especially during rush hours and is popular with Maryland commuters. However, Dalecarlia also provides access to Sibley Hospital, including for emergency vehicles, and serves as a major truck route for construction vehicles into and out of the city. DDOT requires trucks working on most large new construction projects, including new construction at Georgetown University and American University, to use Dalecarlia rather than neighborhood streets for hauling dirt from the city or delivering materials to construction sites.

Reducing Dalecarlia to one lane in each direction will have a significant impact on traffic flow and could prompt even more commuters to cut through Spring Valley and Wesley Heights neighborhood streets during rush hours to avoid new traffic backs up on the Parkway and along Massachusetts Avenue.

The recommendations are not final and DDOT is still offering residents an opportunity to have input into the process. More information about the plan is available at <https://rockcreekfarwest.com> . Comments on the recommendations can be sent to the project manager and project team at [Theodore.vanhouten@dc.gov](mailto:Theodore.vanhouten@dc.gov) and/or [info@rockcreekfarwest.com](mailto:info@rockcreekfarwest.com) . You can also submit a comment through the website

<https://rockfreekfarwest.com/get-involved/> . ANC 3D will discuss the DDOT recommendations at its next meeting on June 12.

During the workshop, DDOT staff and the consultants working with DDOT on the plan were not always on the same page. For example, consultants noted that the draft recommendations had called for bike improvements in the Spring Valley neighborhood, but added that it had not yet been decided to recommend which streets would have designated bike lanes and which streets might be designated as roadways to be shared both by bikes and autos. However, in a short presentation of the draft recommendations, DDOT staff outlined more specific recommendations indicating that decisions had already been made on which streets were to be designated for new bike lanes and which streets would be shared roadways.

## **DC ZONING COMMISSION PASSES ON PLAN FOR DEVELOPING SUPERFRESH SITE FOR NOW**

***Valor Development Applies For New PUD At Site As Revisions To Zoning Regulations Are Considered To Ease Developer's Path To Approval Of Controversial Proposal***  
**By Tom Smith and Alma Gates**

More than three years after Valor Development first proposed to develop the SuperFresh site by building in excess of 200 new housing units and eliminating all existing retail at the site, including Spring Valley Catering operated by Wagshal's and DeCarlo's Restaurant, the D.C. Zoning Commission was expected to make a decision on March 11 on Valor's proposal. Despite multiple hearings in the case that stretched over two years, the Zoning Commission did not vote to support or oppose the project.

Had a vote been taken, it appeared the majority of the 5-member Commission would have voted to oppose the project. Three Zoning Commissioners expressed concern with the Valor proposal.

Zoning Commissioner Rob Miller reiterated a comment he made at the first hearing nearly two years ago – that the density of the new building being proposed by Valor belonged on Massachusetts Avenue instead of neighborhood streets (48<sup>th</sup> and Yuma Streets) as proposed by Valor.

Zoning Commissioner Michael Turnbull, who is one of two federal appointees on the Commission, questioned the legality of Valor's plans to purchase unused density from the Spring Valley (Park and Shoppes) Shopping Center. Valor entered into an agreement to purchase the unused density from Regency Shopping Centers in order to allow for increased density at the SuperFresh site.

Although he did not specify his objections to the proposal, Zoning Commission Chairman Anthony Hood said he had serious concerns about the proposal and would not be able to vote to support it.

Zoning Commissioners Peter Shapiro, who recently moved to Spring Valley, and Peter May, another federal appointee, indicated their support for the project.

Hood pressed May on whether he wanted a vote that night. May stressed that he did not want the Commission to vote up or down because he knew that the votes were not there to support Valor's proposal.

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This was the first case testing the Commission’s new zoning regulations on Design Review. The Commission created the new Design Review regulations to speed up decision making on projects that were not likely to be controversial. The Valor project, however, proved to have added complexities, including the density purchase and new affordable housing zoning requirements, that likely would have resulted in a court challenge no matter how the Commission may have decided the case.

Commissioners stressed at their March 11 meeting that the Design Review process might need to be changed or even scrapped. They agreed that the zoning regulations would need to be amended to allow approval of a project with the type of controversial density purchase that Valor included as part of its development proposal. Commissioners also questioned whether the proposal was consistent with the standards for Design Review and said that Valor should have applied for a Planned Urban Development (PUD) instead of Design Review. Under PUD rules, a developer is granted zoning flexibility in return for providing neighborhood amenities.

Consequently, on March 11, the Zoning Commission deferred final action in the case until a text amendment to the Zoning regulations could be considered and approved that would allow the type of density purchase proposed by Valor. The Commission also gave Valor the option of asking for a decision, withdrawing its case, or filing an application for a Planned Urban Development (PUD). (PUD applications are reviewed under a different set of zoning rules and standards.)

Initially, the DC Office of Planning (OP), which has the responsibility for drafting any text amendment to the regulations, advised the Commission it would take six months to draft the language. Instead, OP completed the task within days and a hearing on the proposed amendments is set for May 30.

Subsequently, Valor requested the Commission to hold its Design Review case in “abeyance until further notice.” The Zoning Commission granted the request.

Valor recently submitted an application for a PUD to construct a 214-unit mixed-use building and five townhouses at the SuperFresh site. The development would still include a small grocery store. The PUD application requests that at least 13,000 square feet of the site would be dedicated to a grocery store for ten years. Valor is proposing, however, to make approximately 16,000 square feet available for a grocery store. This is smaller than the former SuperFresh market. It is proposing another 1,614 square feet of retail space and 370 parking spaces.

Valor has indicated that Mom’s Organic Market would fill the grocery store space, but the developer has refused to answer whether it has a firm commitment from Mom’s for the space. Earlier in the process, Valor said it had a formal letter of intent from Balducci’s.

Valor is proposing to make 29 of the 219 residential units available to households earning up to 50 or 60 percent of median family income.

As an added amenity not proposed as part of the Design Review application, Valor would provide free shuttles to and from the Tenleytown Metro station for four hours per day for building residents for one year only. Valor also has offered to spend \$5,000 for improvements to the intersection at 49<sup>th</sup> and Massachusetts Avenue, but it is unclear what improvements are being proposed.

DDOT has not proposed any modifications of the intersection as part of its Rock Creek Far West Livability Study, which is in the process of being finalized.

Valor also proposes to fund the installation of a mid-block Hawk traffic signal on Massachusetts Avenue between 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Streets between the PNC Bank and the shopping center to allow for pedestrian crossing. They argue the light will make it safer for pedestrians using the improved alleyways to make their way from the new grocery store entrance on Yuma Street through the alleyways to Massachusetts Avenue and the restaurants and coffee shops at the Spring Valley Shopping Center (also known as Spring Valley Village). A similar Hawk light is in operation on Nebraska Avenue between New Mexico Avenue and Ward Circle.

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has indicated its support for the Hawk signal, but some neighbors have indicated their opposition saying it will give pedestrians a false sense of safety; it is too close to the 48<sup>th</sup> Street/Fordham Road and Massachusetts Avenue intersection; and that it will lead to added traffic congestion on Massachusetts Avenue. They point to existing pedestrian crossings at the corners of 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Streets that they argue are safer for pedestrians.

Ironically, Erwin Andres, Valor's traffic consultant/expert testified at the Zoning Commission that the alleyways adjacent were not intended for pedestrian use and that instead pedestrians would be expected to access the shops across Massachusetts Avenue by walking down 48<sup>th</sup> Street – suggesting there may be no need for the Hawk signal.

Valor has several options at this time. It is still not clear whether Valor is going forward with the PUD process even though an application has been formally filed with Office of Zoning or whether it will continue to seek approval through the Design Review process if the Commission takes favorable action on an amendment to the zoning regulations that would allow the density purchase and transfer from Regency Shopping Centers. Valor ensured that it could move forward with the Design Review process when it requested and got permission from the Commission to place its application in abeyance.

Meanwhile, recently, DC Council member Mary Cheh has indicated to some constituents that Valor will move forward to seek a PUD.

Valor was expected to make a presentation on its PUD proposal at the ANC 3E (American University Park) meeting on May 9. However, Valor was a no-show at the meeting.

Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association, Neighbors for a Livable Community, and Spring Valley West Homeowners Association, and many individual Spring Valley residents have testified before the Zoning Commission previously in opposition to the Valor proposal. The Spring Valley Neighbors Association testified in support of the Valor application. No individual resident of Spring Valley has testified before the Zoning Commission in support of the Valor proposal although some residents have submitted form letters to the Commission in support of the project on the basis of it offering a full service grocery store.

Mom's Organic market is not classified as a full service grocery store.

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Opposition to the Valor proposal has been led by the Committee for Responsible Development (CRD), a large group of residents living in American University Park and Spring Valley. CRD has completed an extensive analysis of the project and outlined why it does not meet the zoning standards for Design Review. Bill Fuchs, the owner of Wagshal's, also has been an outspoken opponent of the project.

**May 30 Hearing Date Set For Zoning Changes Proposed  
To Benefit Valor SuperFresh Development Project**

The Zoning Commission has scheduled a hearing on May 30 to hear comments from residents across the city on an amendment to the DC Zoning Regulations that would allow a developer to aggregate density from other sites in the city as a way to increase the overall density of a Design Review project. The proposed amendment was triggered by issues related to a transfer of density in the SuperFresh development zoning case in which Valor Development has sought to build a large multi-use building at the site of the former SuperFresh with more than 200 new housing units.

When the Zoning Commission did not take action on the Valor Design Review application on March 11, ZC Chair Anthony Hood asked the Office of Planning to bring forward proposed text to clarify what is technically referred to as the aggregation of floor area ratio (FAR) as part of a Voluntary Design Review (VDR) application.

The proposed text amendment put forward by OP is meant to be applicable citywide and proposes to allow the aggregation of FAR as part of a Design Review application.

Proposing an increase in density through aggregation of FAR on a lot runs counter to the initial rationale for creating the Design Review process. During the Zoning Regulation Review (ZRR) that resulted in a major overhaul of the city's zoning regulations (ZR-16) in 2016, the Zoning Commission determined that Design Review would be a separate process from the PUD process. At their core, the new design review regulations did not permit an increase in density at the project site. Instead, the regulations offered dimensional flexibility in height, yards, or lot occupancy.

During the hearing process, Valor argued that the existing density of the SuperFresh site should be measured on the basis of the SuperFresh lot as well as the lot where the American University Spring Valley Building (the former AU Law School) now sits as well as additional density purchased from the adjacent shopping center housing CVS and Wagshal's. Valor argued that the Shopping Center could not use all of its density as a result of its designation as a historic site.

OP had testified earlier in the hearing process that the DC Office of Attorney General (OAG) concurred with Valor's interpretation, but the OAG did not publicly release any opinion to that effect and there was speculation that the Zoning Commission decision to defer action in the case was prompted by advice from the OAG's office.

Valor's interpretation stretched the intent of the regulations and a majority of the Zoning Commission questioned the legality of Valor's interpretation at the March 11 hearing.

The proposed text changes have been written specifically by OP to allow Valor to purchase density from elsewhere within the project boundary, including from the single story Spring Valley Shopping Center

(Park and Shoppes) adjacent to the site. Transfer of density is not currently allowed in the zoning regulations except in certain areas of the downtown area. It was limited to the downtown area, so as to limit the impact on established neighborhoods across the city. The new regulations, if approved, would extend the eligibility area to the whole city.

While OP was asked to notify ANC's and advertise the zoning case and the proposed amendment, OP took no special steps to ensure citywide notice of the proposed changes. ANC 3D has not considered or discussed the proposed text amendment at its public meetings and has not voted to take a formal position on the proposed amendment.

## **UPDATE ON SPRING VALLEY MUNITIONS CLEAN UP**

### **By Alma Gates**

#### **Site-Wide Munitions Cleanup**

The Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has begun what is hopefully the final phase of site-wide remedial action of residential properties within the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS). Ninety-two residential properties within the FUDS boundaries have been specifically identified for further investigation to mitigate potential unacceptable explosive hazards due to munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) that may remain within the Spring Valley FUDS. Thirteen Federal and city lots will also be investigated and remediated as part of this effort.

At this time, the properties included in the ongoing cleanup effort are in the process of having civil surveys, arborists surveys, geophysical walk-throughs and surveys completed. A few residential properties and four Federal and city lots have had initial anomaly removal conducted.

A community outreach package and brochure is being developed to inform the community about the past military use of the FUDS area. Moving forward, letters and brochures, intended to serve as a way to reduce risk in the unlikely event that members of the community encounter items in the future, will be sent to all residents and institutions within the FUDS boundary once a year. There is no way to be 100 percent certain that all buried munitions items from the WWI era are removed even though the Corps has gone back and reexamined all properties which contain an unidentified anomaly. The letters and brochures do not indicate that any new concerns have been identified, but represent the Army's ongoing commitment to reducing risks to the community.

#### **Groundwater Investigation**

Efforts continue to finalize an approach to groundwater in the Spring Valley FUDS in coordination with other regulatory Partners, including the EPA and DC Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE). Two well locations indicated levels of arsenic or perchlorate above EPA drinking water standards. The groundwater in Spring Valley is not used as a source for drinking water, and as such the Corps and the regulatory partners currently differ on a path forward. The Corps' preferred remedy would be some form of land use control with continued monitoring based on the lack of an existing way for the public to be exposed to the groundwater. However, existing DOEE and the EPA policy requires groundwater to meet drinking water standards regardless of current or expected future use. While coordination continues, a formal dispute resolution process between USACE and the regulatory partners was initiated and resulted in USACE

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agreeing to collect additional data from wells known to be contaminated with arsenic and perchlorate above drinking water standards. The USACE will also consider additional wells and different types of sample collection parameters – the Groundwater Proposed Plan -- to be developed by DOEE.

**American University Public Safety Building Cleanup**

American University (AU) removed the aged Public Safety Building a year ago to allow the Corps to safely remove any potential contamination associated from the former American University Experiment Station (AUES) that may remain under the foundation. Preliminary mobilization tasks, including permits, installation of security fencing and construction of an access road were completed in late December. Currently, shut-off of the gas line and tree removal are underway. Work on the actual foundation slab removal is expected to begin as soon as the gas line is abandoned and will take about 12 weeks to complete.

**4825 Glenbrook Road**

Cleanup efforts continue on the removal of soils primarily along the shared property line between 4825 and 4835 (AU President's House) Glenbrook Road plus a few other small areas at the 4825 Glenbrook Road site. The overall 4825 cleanup effort is expected to be completed by summer 2019 and carry a cost of over \$85M. This includes the cost of the USACE to rent the property from AU to complete the remediation.

Work continues on the site Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 5:00 pm. Heavy equipment operations do not begin until after 7:00 am. Work will only be done at a temperature of 75 degrees or below to reduce the ability for chemicals to travel in air in the event of a release.

*Anyone interested in learning more about any aspects of work being done in connection with the Spring Valley FUDS should contact the Spring Valley Community Outreach Team by calling 800-434-0988. The project website is [www.nab.usace.army.mil/home/SpringValley](http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/home/SpringValley)*

**TRUCK LOADING EXACERBATES EXISTING  
SAFETY ISSUES ON FORDHAM ROAD**

Fordham Road between Massachusetts and 49<sup>th</sup> Street is considered one of the most dangerous streets in the Spring Valley neighborhood. With parking on both sides of the narrow neighborhood street, traffic is often reduced to one lane. A traffic study conducted nearly two years ago for the Valor SuperFresh project identified the Fordham Road-Massachusetts Avenue intersection as the most dangerous intersection in the area. Increased traffic on the service road in front of the Spring Valley Shopping Center adds to the hazards of the intersection.

Despite parked cars on both sides of the street, cars also often speed through Fordham Road – often in search of a parking space.

The number of shopping center patrons parking on the nearby streets has increased significantly since the capacity of the shopping center parking lot has been reduced and new businesses have opened.

However, what has caught many pedestrians and motorists, alike, by surprise is the number of trucks that are now unloading on Fordham Road to service the restaurants in the Spring Valley Shopping Center.

When Washington Real Estate Investment Trust (WREIT) sought approval to build the new building now housing Pizzeria Paradiso and Compass Coffee, WREIT executives advised neighbors that space would be set aside in the parking lot for trucks to unload. In fact, the rear of the building was designed to serve as a loading dock. Moreover, the new building is still not yet fully occupied.

But, neither establishment is using the rear of the building as a loading dock and the parking lot does not have designated loading spaces.

Instead of using the parking lot to unload, the trucks delivering to the restaurants are parking and unloading on Fordham Road sometimes even blocking access to 48<sup>th</sup> Place or so close to the corner as to obscure drivers' line of sight creating a particularly hazardous issue for pedestrians walking from the neighborhood to the Shopping Center. The Metropolitan Police Department has committed to ticketing the trucks for illegal parking. But, the MPD can't be on site 24 hours a day.

Residents of the area have reached out to ANC 3D and Washington REIT for help. But, so far, neither ANC 3D nor Washington REIT have been responsive to the safety concerns in the area.

## **DC WATER UPGRADING WATER MAINS IN SPRING VALLEY**

DC Water is performing water main upgrades in Spring Valley. These upgrades are designed to improve water quality, system reliability, water pressure, and also ensure optimal flow in case of fire. This work has been ongoing in the neighborhood since June 2018 and is expected to be completed in July 2020.

The existing water mains were constructed after the American University Chemical Munitions Experiment Station was closed, so it is unlikely that any chemical warfare materiel would be encountered during the water main upgrades. However, DC Water is working closely on the project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, and the District Department of Environment and Energy (DOEE) to ensure safety for the community and DC Water workers. DC Water is also performing soil testing by coring through the pavement and collecting samples for analysis.

Areas to be upgraded include Rockwood Parkway; Woodway Lane; Hillbrook Lane; 49<sup>th</sup> Street, and Glenbrook Road.

## **MILLIE'S GETS OK FROM HPRB FOR WINTER PATIO COVER; BUT LIQUOR LICENSE PROHIBITIONS REMAIN IN EFFECT**

Millie's Spring Valley applied for and received permission from the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) for permission to enclose its front patio area during winter months for a four month period beginning in November. However, any cover of the patio area is still prohibited under the terms of Millie's liquor license meaning that the establishment could face liquor license penalties if it encloses the front patio area during Winter 2019-2020.

Under the terms of its liquor license, Millie's agreed to use the front patio area for seating. However, it is not allowed to tent or cover any portion of the front patio area. The license also requires that no person can be served in the patio area unless they are seated.

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Millie's has violated these prohibitions three times since December 2017. Millie's was fined by two city agencies in 2018 for covering the patio area and required to remove the covering. When Millie's reinstalled the covering again earlier this year, the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) required Millie's to remove the structure at which time Millie's applied to the HPRB for permission to enclose the front patio area. Millie's also erected a free-standing tent over the central patio area over Mother's Day weekend in violation of the terms of its liquor license and the HPRB ruling.

## **AL DENTE SET TO EXPAND**

For the many residents who mourned the loss of Sutton Place Gourmet and Balducci's in Wesley Heights, they will remember the controversy surrounding a decision by American University almost ten years ago to reduce the space for Balducci's market that contributed to the grocer's decision to abandon the site. AU said at the time that it needed the space for a mail room. Now, AU is about to return at least some of that space to the retail market.

According to representatives of Al Dente, located on New Mexico Avenue in Wesley Heights, the restaurant and AU have reached agreement on additional space that will allow the restaurant to expand. It is not clear yet how many additional diners could be served or when the expansion will happen, but Al Dente also expects to increase the size of its outdoor dining area.

Consequently, Al Dente has filed a petition to terminate their existing Settlement Agreement with ANC 3D and the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association. Like most Settlement Agreements governing the issuing of liquor licenses in the city, the Agreement specifies the number of patrons that can be served at the restaurant at any one time, a determination made by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA).

The Al Dente Agreement also requires the restaurant to provide free parking in the evenings and on weekends and to offer 50 percent discount parking on weekdays. The Agreement also prohibits any music in the outside seating (summer garden) area.

ANC 3D has voted to object and protest the decision of Al Dente to terminate its Settlement Agreement.

## **NORTHWEST CURRENT CEASES PUBLISHING**

After 52 years of reporting on news in the northwest section of Washington, D.C., the Northwest Current has stopped publishing. The Current filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January 2018. At that time, it reported owing nearly \$1.3 million and had assets of less than \$50,000. The Current reduced both its staff and its distribution. In late April, the Current changed its bankruptcy filing to a Chapter 7 making it less likely that the paper could continue business operations. The final decision to shut down was announced to staff on May 10.

## REMINDER ON CRIME PREVENTION

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) has indicated that crime in Spring Valley and Wesley Heights is less than a year ago, including the number of car break-ins, which has been dropping over the last several months. Nevertheless, MPD encouraged residents to remain vigilant.

Spring Valley and Wesley Heights residents are reminded to take sensible steps to guard against crime that is intended to victimize you and your neighbors. Most importantly, be aware of your surroundings in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, that does not mean that every unfamiliar person or car (Ubers, food delivery, etc.) is a threat to your property. But, **if you see anything or anybody suspicious, call 911 immediately.** The Metropolitan Police Department are best qualified to assess whether suspicious activity is a prelude to criminal behavior.

Keep your doors locked even when you are home. If you are doing home repairs, keep ladders out of sight of those who might use them to break into an unlocked upper story window. If strangers come to your door to sell magazines or other products, ask if they have a license or better yet, call 911 and let the police determine if they have the appropriate license. Few legitimate vendors go door-to-door anymore, especially at night.

**Most crime in our neighborhood occurs as a result of people not locking their car doors, leaving garage door openers in their unlocked cars, or leaving packages, briefcases, backpacks, gym bags, and other valuables – even just pocket change – in your car visible to anybody walking by. Lock your car doors when you park your car outside your homes or in your driveways. Do not leave anything of value in your car that would tempt somebody to break in – not even a gym bag or spare change. And if you have a security alarm, put it on when you leave the house.**

In short, whatever you do, don't make yourself a target for vandals or thieves.

## D.C. COUNCIL APPROVES INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMITS; WILL CONSIDER NEW FEES FOR DRIVING DOWNTOWN

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bring passenger or commercial vehicles into the downtown area. The new fee, also being advocated by Cheh, is known as congestion pricing. She said the purpose of the fee would be to discourage people from driving into downtown Washington, D.C. in order to cut down on traffic congestion. She did not speculate on what the congestion pricing fee would be, how it would be collected, and whether it would be a fixed price or varied based on the time of day.

It is also not clear whether the congestion pricing fee would apply only to D.C. residents or also to Maryland and Virginia commuters. If levied on Maryland and Virginia commuters, it is likely to be viewed as a commuter tax which could stir strong opposition from members of Congress, especially those representing constituents in Maryland and Virginia within the DC metropolitan area.

**SPRING VALLEY-WESLEY HEIGHTS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**  
**NEIGHBORS FOR A LIVABLE COMMUNITY**

New York City has approved a congestion tax for driving in Manhattan. City officials have not worked out the details, but it already has ignited a firestorm among commuters from the New Jersey suburbs who work in Manhattan.

Washington, D.C. earns nearly \$100 million annually in fees for parking permits, tickets, and other parking revenue, according to AAA. AAA says that D.C. is now one of the most expensive places in the country to own and operate a vehicle.

In a news report from WAMU, Cheh said the increase in residential parking rates was a “bargain.”

“This price represents a bargain for parking with most garages in the city charging \$200 a month or more,” Cheh told WAMU. “While other prices and costs in the District have increased significantly in the last eight years, RPP fees have remained unchanged with no adjustment even for inflation.”

The residential parking permit program started in Washington in the mid-1970s when citizens were concerned about the increasing number of out-of-state cars parked on residential streets. Residents could not park on their own block. In Spring Valley, the problem was particularly acute at the time because of the number of students who parked on residential streets to avoid parking fees charged by American University. Commuters also would routinely park in neighborhoods located along the bus lines.

The existence of the RPP program is often used by city officials to justify new high-rise development in low density residential neighborhoods when residents complain the new high-rise development will create parking pressures in the neighborhood. So, over the years, more streets in residential neighborhoods have been designated for RPP.

The D.C. Council must take a second vote next week to approve the budget before the increase in RPP can take effect.

*Neighborhood Update* is a newsletter established by **the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association (SVWHCA)** and **Neighbors for a Livable Community (NLC)** to report news and information on issues of importance to residents of Spring Valley and Wesley Heights. You may send information appropriate for publication to Tom Smith at [tmfsmith@rcn.com](mailto:tmfsmith@rcn.com) No portion of this newsletter may be duplicated without written permission from the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association. This newsletter is distributed electronically. If you want to be on the distribution list, send your email to [tmfsmith@rcn.com](mailto:tmfsmith@rcn.com) . Please share this with your own personal e-mail networks.

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