

# NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE

A Neighborhood Newsletter Published Jointly By The  
Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association And  
Neighbors for a Livable Community

SUMMER 2019

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## *Special News Report:*

# DDOT TO CONVENE FINAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

### KEY DDOT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Close two southbound lanes on Dalecarlia Parkway and convert to exclusive bicycle and pedestrian use;
- Install “Bicycle Boulevards” on Glenbrook Road, Rockwood Parkway, and 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Spring Valley;
- Install a protected bike lane on the north side of Loughboro Road/Nebraska Avenue from MacArthur Boulevard to Ward Circle;
- Widen the sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue from Westmoreland Circle to Whitehaven Street to install a shared bicycle/pedestrian path;
- Create pedestrian crossings on Foxhall Road at Lowell, Klinge, Garfield, and Edmunds Streets, and Foxhall Crescent; and
- Install a sidewalk on the east side of University Avenue from Quebec Street to Massachusetts Avenue.

### *Transportation Planners Focus On Bicycle Infrastructure In Spring Valley, Including Converting Two Lanes On Dalecarlia Parkway For Exclusive Bicycle, Pedestrian Use*

The D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT) is expected to recommend converting two southbound traffic lanes on Dalecarlia Parkway into bicycle and pedestrian paths when the agency convenes its final public workshop on the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study on August 27 at Horace Mann Elementary School from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM. The Rock Creek Far West Livability Study is an examination of transportation issues impacting a study area that includes the neighborhoods of Spring Valley, Wesley Heights, and the Palisades.

DDOT released a new list of recommendations at a neighborhood “pop up” meeting in Spring Valley on July 27. Because the recommendations have focused primarily on enhancing bicycle infrastructure on neighborhood streets, some residents have questioned DDOT’s overall study priorities, especially given the poor quality of neighborhood streets and the need for traffic calming. (Continued On Page 4)

### **RESTORATION WORK AT SPRING VALLEY PARK CONTINUES**

**By Janet Conroy, Friends Of Spring Valley Park**

Although much of the heavy equipment has now been removed, work continues on the stream restoration project at Spring Valley Park. The project is being managed by the District Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE). (Continued On Page 2)

# **RESTORATION WORK AT SPRING VALLEY PARK CONTINUES**

(Continued From Page 1)

The Park's restoration has generated significant interest among residents. Following are some of the most frequently asked questions about the project.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ABOUT THE PARK RESTORATION WORK:**

**Spring Valley Resident:** "I've noticed that there are pools of standing water in the park. Won't this create a problem with mosquitos?"

**DOEE Representative:** The DOEE has been communicating with the Department of Health (DOH) about Spring Valley Park, which has been one of their mosquito monitoring locations since 2016. The DOH agreed to provide DOEE data on the quantity of mosquitos observed at the park and to work with DOEE if mosquito controls are required.

**As a precaution, mosquito "dunks" (a naturally-derived insecticide that targets mosquito larvae) were applied to the pools of water in the stream bed on August 7.**

From the DOEE's perspective, we are happy to see an influx in frogs and dragonflies since they will help control pest insects. As we continue to monitor the stream, DOEE can explore the feasibility of stocking the pools with mosquito fish as a biological control.

**FUN FACT: A single dragonfly can eat 30 to hundreds of mosquitoes per day.**

Additionally, the Friends of Spring Valley may wish to reach out to the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) about installing a few bat boxes in the park in an effort to biologically control mosquitos. Kathleen Rehwaldt from the Department of Public Works ([kathleen.rehwaldt@dc.gov](mailto:kathleen.rehwaldt@dc.gov)) is the point of contact who would give permission and help coordinate the installation. DOEE also has an experienced biologist on staff who can provide technical support and answer any questions about bats, boxes, etc.

**Spring Valley Resident:** "The Park is now very open and feels a bit like Disneyland. We loved having a woodland park. Will this change?"

**DOEE Representative:** Although the construction phase is completed and the big machinery has gone, **our work in the park is not done.** The Park and stream banks will soon be planted with shrubs and trees, and once the vegetation fills in, the restored stream will take on a more natural appearance. The soil and material under the water will continue to settle and take shape, and DOEE will continue regular inspections to ensure that the stream is responding as intended. The planting will occur in a few weeks when the weather cools a bit. That phase of the project should take about two weeks.

**Spring Valley Resident:** “I thought we would see a running stream and not large pools of standing water separated by stone dams. Was this the intention and will it always look like this?”

**DOEE Representative:** The rendering of the Spring Valley project that was used to help communicate how the stream would be restored can be accessed at:

[https://dcgovict-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/stephen\\_reiling\\_dc\\_gov/EWpkEUGnY5ILuasUqZ-7kjEBZB2JiZu53YjqXMJavCBkBW?e=V7zeQG](https://dcgovict-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/stephen_reiling_dc_gov/EWpkEUGnY5ILuasUqZ-7kjEBZB2JiZu53YjqXMJavCBkBW?e=V7zeQG).

So far, the stream is functioning as planned.

Because of the years of extreme rainstorm water runoff, the stream was carved into a deep ravine and, over time, the water table fell far below the grade of the surrounding land. Now that the topography has been re-graded and hopefully the storm water will be better managed, the water table will eventually rise and the stream will be fed from a higher water table and will potentially have a more consistent flow through the park.



**One duck and several owls have returned to Spring Valley Park now that the construction equipment has been removed. Shrubs and trees will be planted soon in the Park and along the stream banks.**

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**Spring Valley Resident:** “I’m worried about my young children playing in the pools of water. They seem like this would pose a drowning risk. Has this been addressed?”

**DOEE Representative:** In the long run, we believe an increase in plantings along the stream bank may serve as more of a deterrent to keep people out of the water compared to what you see now. And just to be clear, we do not encourage recreational activity in the stream, and DPR, as the property owner, would echo that sentiment. DPR could probably install signage warning people from entering the water, but it didn’t sound like that would be preferred by residents.

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**Special Report:**

**DC TRANSPORTATION PLANNERS FOCUS NEW LIVABILITY STUDY  
ON BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING  
CONVERTING TWO LANES ON DALECARLIA PARKWAY FOR  
EXCLUSIVE BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN USE**

(Continued From Page 1)

The study has generated significant feedback from residents – not all of whom live in the study area or the neighborhoods likely to be affected by the recommendations. Anybody can offer feedback on the study simply by “pinging” an interactive map on DDOT’s website.

DDOT staff recently indicated all the recommendations will “need more work before we can implement them, and some require more extensive work than others.” DDOT staff add that every recommendation will include a timeline for implementation and a cost estimate. According to DDOT staff, the agency does not now have funds to implement any of the recommendations from the study.

“Some will need to go through DDOT’s capital budget process, and some can be implemented using budgets that certain DDOT teams receive every year,” the agency representative said.

Spring Valley appears to have been targeted by DDOT for most of the bicycle infrastructure improvements being recommended by the study. Some recommendations have been revised since the last public workshop on May 18 when planners indicated they were unfamiliar with locations in Spring Valley that were the subject of the recommendations.

At its May 18 public workshop, DDOT recommended the installation of new bike lanes on Glenbrook Road and Rockwood Parkway in Spring Valley. Revised recommendations presented at the July 27 “pop-up” session in Spring Valley called instead for installation of a “bicycle boulevard” on Glenbrook Road, Rockwood Parkway, and 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Spring Valley.

According to the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), a bicycle boulevard is a street with low traffic volumes and speeds where bicycle traffic would have priority. The “bicycle boulevard” could include signs, pavement markings, or other measures intended to discourage its use by automobiles. In some instances, new additions to curbs can be added to narrow the roadway and

reduce the number of on-street parking spaces. DDOT consultants mentioned this as a possibility for 49<sup>th</sup> Street between Massachusetts Avenue and Glenbrook Road.

Previously, DDOT had indicated it planned to recommend that Massachusetts Avenue would be designated a shared bike road. However, at its July 27 meeting, DDOT indicated it plans instead to recommend widening sidewalks on Massachusetts Avenue from Westmoreland Circle to Whitehaven Street (near Observatory Circle) to add a bicycle path on the Massachusetts Avenue sidewalk. DDOT consultants also acknowledged several challenges in implementing the recommendation, including existing trees and objections from foreign embassies and chanceries located along Massachusetts Avenue.

### **DDOT Proposes Closing Two Lanes On Dalecarlia So Bicyclists Can Connect To Capital Crescent Trail**

But, the most controversial recommendation is the conversion of two southbound lanes on Dalecarlia for exclusive bicycle and pedestrian pathways. This would limit Dalecarlia to one lane traffic in each direction. DDOT indicated traffic volume on Dalecarlia is low – about 14,000 vehicles daily – equal approximately to the amount of traffic on Foxhall Road. The goal in converting two lanes along Dalecarlia for bicycle/pedestrian use is to provide a way for bicyclists to connect to the Capital Crescent Trail, according to DDOT.

Some Spring Valley residents commenting on a recent list serv post said the changes would make Dalecarlia more dangerous and affect access to Sibley Hospital for patients and emergency vehicles. They also said that it could force many residents to cut through other neighborhood streets to access Sibley Hospital.

The Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association (SVWHCA) expressed concern about the Dalecarlia recommendation in a June 4 letter to DDOT Director Jeffrey Marootian.

“We are concerned that converting Dalecarlia to two traffic lanes to accommodate two bicycle lanes will result in more vehicular cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets,” the SVWHCA said.

In a June 14, 2019 response to SVWHCA, Marootian said that DDOT had already completed a capacity analysis for Dalecarlia, but pledged to further study the recommendation once the Livability Study has been completed.

“DDOT and our consultants have completed a capacity analysis on Dalecarlia Parkway, which has informed our draft recommendation to reduce it from four lanes to two,” Marootian wrote. “This would be studied further after the livability study is complete, and would include more detailed data collection, and more community outreach. DDOT could also pilot a temporary closure of the two lanes to test it in real time. This would give DDOT, residents, and nearby stakeholders, such as Sibley Hospital, an opportunity to experience the effects of the proposed recommendation before it is fully implemented.”

Some residents also have expressed concern even about a temporary closure of the two lanes saying it would make an already dangerous roadway even more dangerous, especially for Spring Valley residents seeking to access Dalecarlia from Rockwood Parkway.

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Residents in the area are circulating a petition in opposition to the proposed change on Dalecarlia.

This is not the first time that DDOT has recommended shutting down lanes on Dalecarlia Parkway to install dedicated bicycle paths. However, those recommendations also triggered neighborhood opposition and were never implemented.

DDOT is proposing other bicycle infrastructure improvements, including a protected bike lane on Loughboro/Nebraska from MacArthur Boulevard to Ward Circle. DDOT is also proposing a shared use path to connect Arizona Avenue to the Capital Crescent Trail.

**DDOT Study Fails To Address Need For Traffic Calming**

In the June 4 letter to Marootian, the SVWHCA also emphasized that the study fails to address the need for traffic calming on neighborhood streets, which the Association said was the most significant traffic issue confronting Spring Valley.

“We are troubled that none of the initial recommendations address the need for traffic calming both in Spring Valley and Wesley Heights,” SVWHCA said. “Speeding cars on residential neighborhood streets is one of the most serious safety issues we face in these neighborhoods. Our primary concern with the initial recommendations made for the Rock Creek Far West Livability Study is that they do not reflect the highest priorities for creating a safe and sustainable transportation system in our neighborhoods. We need more than bike lanes and a low priority sidewalk.”

SVWHCA also raised concern that the study does not address the traffic and pedestrian safety issues at the Massachusetts Avenue, Fordham Road, and 48<sup>th</sup> Street intersection and along Fordham Road from Massachusetts to 49<sup>th</sup> Street. At its July 27 pop-up meeting, DDOT consultants said they were considering additional recommendations for Fordham Road, but could not share them with the public until they communicated the recommendations to Council member Mary Cheh. The consultants, however, added consideration was being given to recommending a “raised” pedestrian crosswalk at Massachusetts Avenue and Fordham Road.

Recently, DDOT agreed to remove one metered parking space on Fordham Road along the curve nearest to the shopping center service road – a woefully inadequate response by the agency to the safety issues along Fordham Road.

**New University Avenue Sidewalk**  
**Raises Concerns About Stormwater Runoff**

DDOT is also recommending constructing a series of new sidewalks. These include installing a sidewalk on University Avenue from Quebec Street to Massachusetts Avenue. Residents have questioned the recommendation saying that other neighborhood streets should be higher priorities for a sidewalk since there is so little pedestrian traffic on University Avenue. Currently, there already is a sidewalk on University Avenue from Quebec to Rodman Streets. DDOT staff and consultants were unaware of the existing sidewalk when the initial recommendation was made in May raising questions about why the sidewalk was included in DDOT’s recommendations as well as whether the DDOT recommendations were fueled by any data collection or reliable information on how neighborhood streets are used.

Nevertheless, DDOT has shown no flexibility on the issue and is continuing to stress the need for a sidewalk at this location despite many neighbors' vocal opposition.

DDOT is also recommending a sidewalk on University Terrace from Loughboro Road to Garfield Street. Residents on University Terrace have long opposed a sidewalk at this location and recently brought their concerns to a meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3D. The ANC dismissed neighbors' objections and indicated support for a sidewalk at this location. ANC 3D is generally in support of sidewalks where no sidewalks exist, but does not encourage the use of permeable pavers as a way to address stormwater runoff.

DDOT also proposed to fill in sidewalk gaps on Loughboro Road from MacArthur to Nebraska and on Cathedral Avenue at the Cathedral West Condominiums.

The Livability Study fails to address the impacts of new impervious sidewalks on storm water management. Many urban communities with stormwater management problems impose limits on impervious surfaces to control the amount of stormwater runoff. Spring Valley and Wesley Heights long have experienced stormwater management problems.

Recently, the DC Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) spent more than \$1 million to repair badly eroded walking trails at Spring Valley Park caused by severe stormwater runoff. However, DDOT installed an impervious sidewalk at the site despite neighborhood requests for installation of permeable pavers instead. DC Water also is working now to repair a sewer bulkhead wall at Glover Archbold National Park because of stormwater problems. Work also is getting underway to address stormwater runoff issues at the Palisades Recreation Center. As one ANC Commissioner noted recently, all the water flows downhill from Ward Circle.

Homes in Spring Valley living downhill from American University (AU) and Wesley Seminary also have experienced stormwater problems. Wesley Seminary has installed stormwater management controls on its campus to address stormwater runoff.

Some residents have expressed concern that the proposed sidewalk on University Avenue on the grounds of Wesley Seminary – where stormwater runoff already is a problem – could make stormwater issues worse.

### **Wesley Heights Recommendations** **Focus On Pedestrian Crossings**

The focus of recommendations for Wesley Heights are on pedestrian crossing improvements – mostly along Foxhall Road at Lowell, Klinge, Garfield, and Edmunds Streets, and Foxhall Crescent. Other improvements are slated for New Mexico and Cathedral Avenues and at New Mexico and Sutton Place. The improvements at Sutton Place may require the removal of several parking spaces on New Mexico Avenue, according to DDOT's recommendations.

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**NEW ZONING CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF  
SUPERFRESH SITE SET TO BEGIN OCTOBER 7**

More than three years after Valor Development first proposed to develop the SuperFresh site and after nearly two years of hearings before the DC Zoning Commission, Valor Development has withdrawn its application after the Zoning Commission failed to take action. Valor had sought approval of the application under new Design Review standards. Now, Valor has filed a new application recently for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) at the site.

Valor had indicated nearly four years ago when it was in the early planning stages that it would file an application for a PUD at the site, but instead chose to seek review based on the new Design Review standards, which are supposed to allow for speedy review by the Zoning Commission. However, the project, as proposed, was so complex as to raise questions among the majority of the Commission whether it complied with the standards for approval under the Design Review rules.

The new application filed by Valor proposes nearly the same plan for developing the site, including building a 219-unit rental apartment building and five townhomes. The plan would eliminate all existing retail at the site, including Spring Valley Catering operated by Wagshal's, Wagshal's barbecue take out, DeCarlo's Restaurant, and the space that once housed Jean Paul Beauty Salon. The development would still include about 16,000 square feet of retail space for a full service grocery store. Valor has indicated that Mom's Organic Market would fill the grocery store space. Mom's Organic market is not classified as a full service grocery store.

Jean Paul Beauty Salon recently closed because of the uncertainty over the future of its lease at the site.

Spring Valley has lost a significant amount of retail dating back to when AU purchased the 4801 Massachusetts Avenue Building nearly 25 years ago. Upon purchase of the building, AU emptied all first floor retail, which included two restaurants, a wine shop, Talbots, and an optical store. Prior to construction of 4801 Massachusetts Avenue NW, the site included a movie theatre, a Safeway, a drug store, a dress shop, and the Christian Science Reading Room.

Although housing has increased in Spring Valley and AU Park over the years, retail has diminished. The Valor project would continue this trend of reduced retail despite making space for a new organic grocery store.

The Zoning Commission initially scheduled a hearing to begin the new PUD case in mid-September, but Valor already has requested and received a delay.

As part of a PUD, Valor is required under the zoning regulations to offer a package of meaningful public benefits.

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 its 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, presumably to alter the curb cut entrance/exit of the Exxon station on 49<sup>th</sup> Street NW and install a “pork chop” curb at this location. The “pork chop” would be designed to prevent cars from using 49<sup>th</sup> Street to enter the gas station. Cars exiting the gas station and shopping center at 49<sup>th</sup> Street would be forced to turn right onto 49<sup>th</sup> Street into AU Park.

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. A similar Hawk light is in operation on Nebraska Avenue between New Mexico Avenue and Ward Circle.

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) previously 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 previously in the Design Review case that the alleyways adjacent to the new project would not be 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.

The entrances to the parking lot and the loading dock for the retail space and apartment building will be accessed from the alleyway.

Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association (SVWHCA), Neighbors for a Livable Community (NLC), and Spring Valley West Homes Corporation have testified before the Zoning Commission previously in opposition to the Valor project, as proposed. The groups have expressed concern that the project, as planned, will create public safety risks, particularly with the proposed new design of the alleyways to accommodate added automobile and truck traffic.

Opposition to the Valor proposal has been led by Citizens 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 a PUD. CRD already has been designated a formal party in the new PUD case by the DC Zoning Commission.

CRD has argued that the scale of the project is too large and will have a detrimental impact on the neighborhood. The group also says the increased density of the site will significantly and adversely affect traffic, pedestrian safety, and parking on local streets. The group notes that most of the project-related traffic will enter and leave the site through local streets.

Bill Fuchs, the owner of Wagshal’s, also has been an outspoken opponent of the project.

## **WESLEY SEMINARY SEEKS CAMPUS PLAN DELAY**

Wesley Theological Seminary was scheduled to submit a new 10-year Campus Plan for review by the DC Zoning Commission this December. However, the Seminary recently filed a request to amend its

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existing Campus Plan to allow for a one-year delay. The Seminary is considering several changes to its campus, including demolishing some existing dormitories and building a new larger dormitory that could be shared by Wesley students and other graduate and undergraduate students attending colleges and universities in the area. Wesley Seminary is currently allowed to rent its unused dormitory space to graduate students of other colleges and universities. Wesley noted in its application for amending its current Campus Plan that it needs more time to develop its next 10-year plan. Wesley also has indicated it plans to demolish the former Wesley President's house on University Avenue and replace it with another similar facility that would be used for offices. The house has not been used to house the Wesley President for many years and has been used primarily for storage.

**ANC 3D AND SVWHCA REACH SEPARATE  
LIQUOR LICENSE AGREEMENTS WITH AL DENTE  
TO ALLOW FOR RESTAURANT EXPANSION**

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 (AU) 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. Al Dente is likely to close for several months to begin renovations.

Al Dente plans to more than double its restaurant space from 116 seats to 253 seats. Additionally, the restaurant plans to expand its outside "summer garden" from 30 seats to 50 seats. The new space also will include private rooms that will allow Al Dente to host special events and functions, including receptions. Al Dente also plans to use its outdoor "summer garden" to host tented events.

However, Al Dente's expansion required the restaurant to amend its existing joint liquor license Settlement Agreement with ANC 3D and the Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association (SVWHCA). Although ANC 3D and SVWHCA had entered into a joint agreement in 2014 for the Al Dente liquor license, ANC 3D chose to negotiate an agreement with Al Dente separate from the SVWHCA. In order to initiate the discussions, both ANC 3D and the SVWHCA filed separate formal protests of Al Dente's application to renew its liquor license.

Consequently, Al Dente entered into two separate Settlement Agreements that have been approved by the DC Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board. However, the Al Dente-SVWHCA will supersede the ANC 3D agreement because it is more expansive.

Unlike the ANC Settlement Agreement, the SVWHCA agreement includes an overall limit on the number of patrons in Al Dente and imposes a limit on covering or enclosing the outside seating area known as the summer garden.

The agreement with SVWHCA places a 395-person limit on Al Dente's occupancy to include both seated and standing patrons.

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.

## **TRUCK UNLOADING 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 now adds to the hazards of the intersection.

Despite parked cars on both sides of Fordham Road, cars routinely 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 have been unloading on Fordham Road to service Pizzeria Paradiso 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. The new building is still not yet fully occupied.

But, Pizzeria Paradiso is not requiring its delivery trucks to use the rear of the building to unload and the parking lot does not have designated loading spaces.

***“Solving the truck loading and public safety issues on Fordham Road is in the interest of all Spring Valley residents – not just a few homes adjacent to the shopping center. Truck unloading is exacerbating a public safety problem on Fordham Road and the neighbors stepped up to the plate to try to solve a problem that is just waiting for a tragedy to happen. That’s what being a good neighbor is all about.”***

***-- Tom Smith, Former ANC 3D Commissioner (Spring Valley)***

Instead of using the parking lot to unload, many trucks delivering to Pizzeria Paradiso 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 situation for pedestrians walking from the neighborhood to the Shopping Center as well as motorists and bicyclists.

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Residents of the area reached out to ANC 3D and Washington REIT for help on the issue without success. Consequently, a group of residents filed a protest of Pizzeria Paradiso's liquor license this Spring when it came up for renewal. The residents sought to reach an agreement with the restaurant that would remove the truck unloading from Fordham Road.

Precisely as a result of filing the protest, neighborhood representatives and the restaurant owner met to discuss a possible agreement that would settle the dispute and remove the trucks from Fordham Road. However, the restaurant owner, instead, appealed to ANC 3D to amend its existing formal liquor license Settlement Agreement reached with ANC 3D in 2017 and short circuit the discussions between the restaurant owner and the neighbors.

**ANC 3D approved a change in the Settlement Agreement that would encourage the restaurant to take steps to find more loading space on neighborhood streets, but required no meaningful action on the part of Pizzeria Paradiso to stop unloading on Fordham Road.**

Although the agreement with ANC 3D did not solve the problem, as even more truck unloading took place on Fordham Road following the ANC action, the ANC action forced an end to the direct discussions between the restaurant owner and the neighboring residents.

A recent list serv posting was highly critical of the action taken by the neighbors to protest the license. But, the failure of ANC 3D, Washington REIT, and Pizzeria Paradiso to address the issue when first raised in correspondence and at public meetings left residents with few tools to seek a solution to a serious problem affecting all neighbors' safety – not just those who live in the area, but also those who drive, walk, or bike in the area.

Under the liquor license rules of the District of Columbia, establishments serving liquor are not entitled to a liquor license if they create conditions that put public safety in jeopardy or disrupt adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The neighborhood group seeking an agreement with Pizzeria Paradiso was represented by Spring Valley resident Tom Smith, who previously represented Spring Valley on ANC 3D for ten years and negotiated several Settlement Agreements with restaurants, including Millie's, that protected neighbors' interests while not compromising the ability of restaurants to operate successfully.

“In this case,” Smith said, “solving the truck loading and public safety issues on Fordham Road is in the interest of all Spring Valley residents – not just a few homes adjacent to the shopping center – and even in the interest of those outside the neighborhood who drive, walk, or bike on Spring Valley streets. Truck unloading is exacerbating a public safety problem on Fordham Road and the neighbors stepped up to the plate to try to solve a problem that is just waiting for a tragedy to happen.

“That's what being a good neighbor is all about.”

Trucks servicing the retail in the shopping center have always used the parking lot to load and unload, including Crate and Barrel and the former patio furniture/ski shop. Truck unloading has only become a problem since the opening of Pizzeria Paradiso.

## UPDATE ON WORK TO CLEAN UP SPRING VALLEY WORLD WAR I CHEMICAL MUNITIONS

By Alma Gates

It's been 102 years since World War I and more than 26 years after buried World War I chemical munitions were uncovered in Spring Valley. For residents new to the neighborhood, American University (AU) was used as a chemical weapons experimental station during the World War I era. When the station was closed, many of those munitions were buried in the neighborhood.

So, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, has been working in Spring Valley for over 26 years to intrusively remove potential buried munitions and chemical contamination resulting from military experimentation at the Spring Valley WWI Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS). During that time, numerous investigations have been performed along with extensive remedial actions to remove all known remaining munitions and chemical contamination. Investigation of ground water flowing from the site toward the Potomac River has also been sampled to help locate potential chemical burial sites.

### Spring Valley FUDS Site-Wide Remedial Action

- Ongoing intrusive investigations of 91 properties and 12 government-owned lots identified where historical evidence indicates a higher potential of munitions hazards remaining have begun, and will take about three years to complete. All property owners have been notified and clean-up efforts to mitigate potential unacceptable explosive hazards due to munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) that may remain within the Formerly Used Defense Site are underway. At this time there are no known munitions hazards on any property.
- In connection with this recently begun remedial action, the Corps produced a flyer, *3Rs Safety Guide*, which addresses education and awareness of actions residents should take in the event a munitions item is found -- Recognize, Retreat, Report. All homeowners within the Spring Valley FUDS received a copy of the flyer and accompanying letter which details the history of recovery efforts over the past 26+ years.
- The team continued work at AU's Public Safety Building on removal of the basement slab and soil underneath the slab to determine whether further remedial work on removal of contaminants is necessary. This work is anticipated to begin this month (August).

### 4825 Glenbrook Road

Work continues at 4825 Glenbrook Road, the only site within the FUDS requiring removal of a home. The property is owned by AU, and once completely remediated will be returned to the university as a buildable lot. Some remaining arsenic grids and other metals-contaminated soil are being removed. On [July 22nd](#), the crew encountered a small amount of potential WWI related glassware while digging. An intact glass bottle was recovered and soil samples were taken from the area around the bottle near the shared property line with 4835 Glenbrook Road, home of the AU President. The sample analysis results indicate the glass container was clear for agent and agent breakdown products. The USACE is still awaiting soil sample data for recent samples taken at other small areas with potential low levels of arsenic or other metals contamination.

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**Groundwater**

A new round of groundwater monitoring well samples to obtain more current information on the low levels of arsenic and perchlorate concentrations is set to begin also this month (August.) Four years have passed since the last sampling rounds were collected. The project team also will continue to sample the Glenbrook Road area sampling wells in August and possibly into September. This is separate from the 4825 Glenbrook Road project. Some wells are located in the street and sidewalk areas in the 4800 block of Glenbrook Road. For safety purposes, consider this schedule when driving to and from your home.

**Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)**

The Spring Valley RAB meets the second Tuesday of each odd-numbered month at 7:00 PM in the "Undercroft" of St. David's Episcopal Church, 5150 Macomb Street, NW. The next RAB meeting will be held on September 10.

*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)*

**SVWHCA, NLC OPPOSE AMENDMENT TO DESIGN REVIEW ZONING  
REGULATIONS TO ALLOW FOR DENSITY TO BE TRANSFERRED  
AMONG MULTIPLE PROPERTIES**

In the wake of the failed Valor Design Review application, the DC Office of Planning (OP) proposed a revision in the zoning regulations for Design Review intended to enable a project, like the Valor Project, to move forward. Specifically, the new regulations would allow a developer to purchase unused density from another property to allow it to exceed the density of what otherwise would be allowed at a proposed site for development.

As an example: the new regulations, if approved, would allow Valor to purchase unused density at the commercial buildings in the Spring Valley Village Shopping Center – where Crate and Barrel is located across Massachusetts Avenue – to enlarge its development at the SuperFresh site beyond what otherwise would be allowed to be built at the SuperFresh site.

Valor proposed to use unused density from the shopping center where Wagshal's is located to expand the size of its proposed development at the SuperFresh site. The Zoning Commission did not approve the plan on the basis that the zoning regulations do not specifically allow such a density transfer.

However, the Zoning Commission approved an amendment that allowed it to seek public comment on the proposed change to the zoning regulations. The Spring Valley-Wesley Heights Citizens Association (SVWHCA) and Neighbors for a Livable Community (NLC) submitted separate comments opposing the zoning regulation amendment. The groups were in good company as the Committee of 100, the Kalorama Citizens Association, and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B (which includes Glover Park and was the only ANC in the city to file comments in the case) also were among those who opposed the amendment.

SVWHCA commented that the proposed amendment highlighted fundamental problems with the Design Review process that were not fully addressed in the text of the amendment. SVWHCA called on the Zoning Commission to convene a hearing to assess the need for additional changes rather than taking a “patchwork approach.” The Association also noted that the proposed amendment completely restructures the regulations and imposes few limits on aggregation of density.

“For example, it would allow a developer to aggregate density by crossing over major streets,” SVWHCA said. “It allows for the aggregation of density without regard to ownership. And it allows for aggregation of density without regard to any special status, such as historic designation, that has been granted to a property.”

SVWHCA called for revising the amendment to require that lots involved in a density transfer should be “truly contiguous” with no separations other than an alleyway; all lots to be aggregated should have a single and identical owner; sites currently designated historic should not be eligible for density transfer; and all agreements for aggregation of density should be a matter of public record and reviewed by the Zoning Commission.

NLC commented that the changes to the Design Review regulations “are so extensive that the process is hardly recognizable and no longer accomplishes its intended purpose.” The organization also said that the amendment has been created specifically to “fit the needs” of Valor in its efforts to develop the SuperFresh site, but the new regulations would be applied citywide.

“Design Review was not meant to include multiple lots extending across streets or alleys to allow the accumulation or aggregation of additional density,” NLC said. “Rather, Design Review was meant for a project of superior design in need of some dimensional relief. Its outcome was intended to be predictable and to complement the scale and character of its surroundings.”

NLC also pointed to another Design Review case that was approved recently by the Zoning Commission to demonstrate that the regulations, as now written, can work as intended.

NLC added that the amendment also set a bad precedent because it “invites and encourages the Office of Planning to amend the zoning regulations whenever it sees an opportunity to provide needed flexibility in a particular instance or in the zoning regulations.”

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION APPLICATION FILED FOR NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

The National Presbyterian Church has filed an application with the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) to designate the National Presbyterian Church and its surrounding buildings as an historic site. The site is located at 4101 and 4125 Nebraska Avenue NW. A public hearing on the application has been scheduled for September 26, 2019. The Church was built in 1966-1969 and the surrounding buildings were constructed in 1926-1927 for the Hillcrest Children’s Center.

The revival cottages that comprised the Hillcrest Children’s Center are historically important for their association with the Washington City Orphan Asylum, according to the Church’s application. Founded in 1815 by a group of socially prominent women, including Dolley Madison, the Asylum was one of the oldest

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charitable institutions in Washington, D.C. The facility was intended to care for children orphaned as a result of the War of 1812 and the diseases that ran rampant in the city at the time. Orphaned children were usually housed in the city poorhouse and workhouse at the time and the Asylum provided an alternative.

## **DC BOATHOUSE EXCEEDS OCCUPANCY**

Although located in the Palisades, the DC Boathouse is popular among many Spring Valley and Wesley Heights residents. Recently, however, the restaurant was cited by the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) for exceeding its occupancy allowance. The restaurant has a certificate of occupancy for 48 seats but has been operating with 76 seats. ANC 3D recently voted to call on DCRA to refrain from enforcing the existing occupancy limits.

## **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 encourages residents to remain vigilant.

**Recently, there were several car break-ins in the Palisades. In the past, Palisades car break-ins have been a precursor to incidents in Spring Valley and Wesley Heights.**

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.

*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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