

Final Report
Square 2986 Large Tract Review Subcommittee
Submitted to ANC4B
Richard Layman, Committee Co-Chair
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Summary Recommendations

Site Plan and Development recommendations

1. Foulger-Pratt should be strongly encouraged to create a phased development program for the site, allowing for the addition of upper-story housing at a later date, as both economic circumstances and demand warrants.
2. This will necessitate some redesign of the building (and the truss style roof designed to retain the feel of the streetcar barn likely couldn't be retained) including the possibility of some increase in parking beyond that required by the proposed retail use to service the addition of upper story housing at some point in the future.* (* An alternative scenario limiting the need for additional parking to support housing is discussed on page 16.)
3. Building the capacity for mixed use development in the future likely would necessitate some DC Government financing to encourage this preferred course of development on the site.*
4. If Foulger-Pratt is not willing to agree to a phased mixed use development, the committee asserts that a 75 year lease for this project is not in the public interest, and recommends that the Office of Planning and the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development discuss with the developers the fact that a shorter lease term is more appropriate, commensurate with typical time frames for redeveloping similar properties.
5. Economic impact to the city of a single use vs. a mixed use project further justifies a preference for a mixed use project at this site, further supporting a shorter lease term, and the raising of this issue with the developer.

Building Design Recommendations

6. Walmart should reorganize the design and operation of the store so that separate departments of the store, such as the grocery department, prepared food counters (e.g., most Walmarts have a quick service food counter, with tables and chairs), are placed with entrances on Georgia Avenue, thereby punctuating the façade, providing more openings, and more reasons to walk along the entire block of the Georgia Avenue frontage, and better connecting this extremely large scale building to the otherwise relatively small scale and punctuated streetscape that currently defines Georgia Avenue.
7. The Missouri Avenue elevation especially, but the Peabody Street elevation as well, should be redesigned to better engage with the street in keeping with urban design principles focused on creating great storefront and street experiences on the first floors of buildings in urban commercial districts.

Transportation Demand Management recommendations

8. Walmart should provide a shuttle service between their store and the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metro Station.
9. Walmart should offer delivery services for all transactions totaling at least \$50.
10. Walmart should make home delivery services a routine and standard part of their service offering in urban/center city store locations, not just at the Georgia Avenue location, but in all the stores in DC, and in other urban markets across the United States.
11. Walmart should agree to explore with the DC Department of Transportation setting up a shared parking situation with the on-site customer parking spaces, perhaps through the creation of a “transportation management district” to manage this and other transportation demand management initiatives in both this and the Walter Reed commercial nodes on Georgia Avenue.
12. Walmart should commit to the provision of transit and other transportation benefits to employees, to limit the number of trips employees made to the store by car.
13. Walmart should commit to shifting deliveries to overnight hours for all of the deliveries from Walmart distribution centers, and for at least 50% of the deliveries made directly by vendors.
14. Walmart should agree to not receive deliveries during morning (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.) and evening (3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) rush hour traffic periods.

Traffic circulation recommendations

15. The committee supports the developer proposal to add 6 feet to the width of the street on the south side of the 900 block of Peabody Street, along the entire length of Lot 35.
16. Eliminate parking on the portion of the 900 block of Peabody Street (from Georgia Avenue to the easternmost lot line of Lot 35, to simplify entry into and out of the Walmart store.
17. Forbid parking on the sideyard of the police station alongside Peabody Street.
18. Install a traffic diverter midway in the 900 block of Peabody Street, between the “Curtis” section and the residential section of Square 2986 to ease customer traffic into and out of the Walmart development without imposing on the residential portion of the block and to eliminate cut through traffic on Peabody Street.
19. Consider adding special parking by permit only to the west side of the 6000 block of 9th Street through the creation of special perpendicular parking area, the cost of which should be borne by the developer.
20. Put restrictions on through-traffic between Blair Road and Georgia Avenue, at least for Peabody (if a diverter is not installed) and Quackenbos Streets, and maybe Rittenhouse Street, with recurring enforcement efforts, to limit the impact of the Walmart store in terms of generating cut through traffic on residents.

Transportation planning and engineering recommendations

21. Consider reconstructing the Georgia Avenue-Missouri Avenue intersection to improve its geometry and capacity and to reduce congestion. This will be a major undertaking that could delay the Walmart project, but it is an important investment in the revitalization of Georgia Avenue and Upper Northwest DC, and would be a signature investment with multi-decade impact.
22. Prioritize and commence planning, design, and engineering for streetcar service on Georgia Avenue, in order to reduce negative traffic impact that would otherwise occur, as a result of limited transit service in the corridor (bus only), north of New Hampshire Avenue until Downtown Silver Spring.

23. Make sure that current road construction projects along Georgia Avenue incorporate streetcar tracks to support development of the streetcar service and to reduce the need for later and more costly reconstruction.
24. Consider reviving previous plans to provide streetcar service through to Silver Spring in Montgomery County in order to reduce through motor vehicle traffic traveling on Georgia Avenue.
25. Allocate funds and commence planning for the creation of the Kennedy Street to Walter Reed section of the Georgia Avenue Great Streets Master Plan.

Safety recommendation

26. Walmart should be required to submit a safety and security management plan before a certificate of occupancy is issued for the operation of the store. Special considerations should be provided concerning special sales events.

Neighborhood economic impact recommendations

27. Based on this preliminary review, it is recommended that the Office of Planning conduct a more detailed and complete analysis of the neighborhood economic impact of a Walmart general merchandise/supermarket combination store in Ward 4, as a legitimate (but novel) interpretation of the provisions of the Large Tract Review process concerning minimization of adverse neighborhood impacts. If potentially negative impacts cannot be expected to be reasonably mitigated, denial of the application in whole or in part could potentially be justified.
28. A mitigation program, funded by the developer and/or Walmart, should be created for Ward 4 businesses (a separate program could be created for Ward 1, but such a recommendation is not within the purview of this committee) to limit potentially negative impacts on extant retailers, as well as to leverage to as great an extent as possible, in a proactive manner through various commercial district revitalization activities, the entry of Walmart into the Georgia Avenue corridor generally, and into the Missouri Avenue-Piney Branch commercial district node specifically.
29. Funds should be made available for technical assistance to merchants, façade improvement projects, marketing, and other initiatives, in advance of (and after) the opening of the Walmart store, to better prepare retailers to face and address competition. (The Main Street commercial district revitalization program, such as the program in Old Takoma, serving both DC and Maryland, is one such model for this type of program.)
30. A revitalization coordinator should be hired, paid for by Walmart/Foulger-Pratt, for at least a three year period, to develop and manage this program, in association with merchants, residents, and other stakeholders. This person could be assigned to work as part of the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development, the Office of Planning, or in the Ward 4 Councilmember's Office.
31. A master database of all commercial properties should be created, with data on lease terms, property size, building condition, revenue potential/s.f. and other items, for use in the execution of this program.
32. A recruitment and development program to attract new businesses and new development should be executed simultaneously with development and implementation of the technical assistance and support program for extant businesses and properties.
33. Note that while the Washington DC Economic Partnership is tasked with the development of marketing materials for various DC commercial districts, they have not created promotional

materials for the Missouri Avenue to Piney Branch Road commercial node on Georgia Avenue. They should be directed to create such materials forthwith.

Recommendations for rectifying gaps in Planning and Zoning regulations

34. The Large Tract Review process does not adequately address potentially negative economic impact of projects generally. The LTR process is also deficiently because it is essentially advisory, without the ability to directly mandate action or deny approval. These defects in the Large Tract Review process should be addressed and the process made more robust.
35. DC should create a new mandatory review process (“Large Retail Impact Review”) to address the various economic and other impacts of large scale retail projects in excess of 75,000 square feet.
36. Arguably, the Georgia Avenue site on Square 2986 does not have the capacity to meet the demands of uses generating great numbers of automobile trips, and therefore high traffic generating uses should not be able to be located there. Land use and building use approval processes should include provisions for linking use approvals to sites with the capacity to satisfy transportation demand to a great extent through the use of already extant transportation infrastructure. The “ABC” planning process employed in the Netherlands is a model for how this could be done in practice¹.
37. DC does not impose impact fees on new developments. Suburban jurisdictions, including Montgomery County², do impose such fees. Collection of such monies would provide another method to address mitigation of project impacts, including the cost of rectifying the impact of new projects on “downline” infrastructure.

¹ <http://www.eaue.de/winuwd/131.htm>

² <http://permittingservices.montgomerycountymd.gov/permitting/pdf/DevelopmentImpactTax.pdf>