

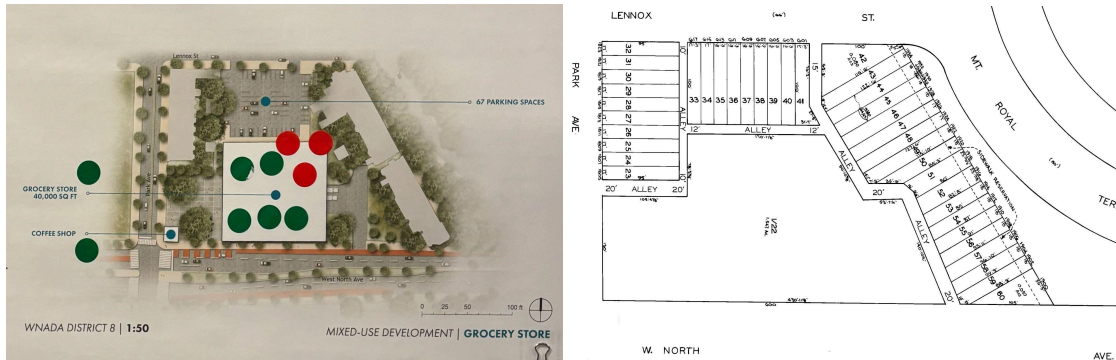
Lars Andrew Peterson
615 Lennox St
Baltimore, MD 21217

The Honorable Senator Antonio L. Hayes, Vice Chairperson, Finance Committee
RE: SB0004 Economic Development - West North Avenue Development Authority - Alterations

Dear Senator Hayes and members of the Finance Committee,

I am a resident and owner of 615 Lennox Street in Reservoir Hill, a home within the area of the West North Avenue Development Authority's (WNADA) project area. WNADA's original mandate was to engage with the community and produce a vision plan for future development along the West North Avenue corridor. SB0004 proposes to radically expand WNADA's power and scope, both economically and legally, to include the use of eminent domain and condemnation of private property, in order to effectively pursue its goals. It further exempts the authority from compliance with any historic preservation regulations.

What are its goals and plans? In October, WNADA presented a series of concepts to the public assembled at Unity Hall. One of these plans was the drawing reproduced here showing the 600 block of Lennox Street, which is my home:



Left: concept presented by WNADA in October 2024 Right: existing real property boundaries

This plan was presented without context to a public who were asked to “vote” for it in the affirmative, green dots indicating “*your favorite scheme / option*” and red dots indicating “*specific items within a scheme that you like.*” There was no option to “vote” against any of these concepts or to add clarification or questions. The results of this charette were recorded by WNADA quantitatively as a record of community engagement and support.

What this plan does not show is that **it is impossible without seizing and demolishing a row of nine owner-occupied homes built in the 1880's and protected by CHAP.**

I cannot support this bill granting WNADA the power to spend public money to use eminent domain and condemnation to seize real property, when the authority has demonstrated so reckless and cavalier an attitude towards mine and my neighbors' homes, and a disregard for our concerns. The responses we have received from WNADA thus far have not acknowledged that it has made any misstep. Our conversations with its representatives at the October event demonstrated that they were unaware that their proposed design erased occupied, beautiful homes, a fact that would have been revealed by even the most cursory investigation.

Sincerely,

Lars A. Peterson