



CLEVELAND PARK
SMART GROWTH

2022 ANC Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Rick Nash

SMD: 3C08

1) What are the main issues you hope to address as an ANC Commissioner?

I see my role, if I am elected to the ANC, as understanding what matters to the constituents in the Single Member District and representing their views to the ANC and to DC agencies. Here are several priorities on which I am focused:

A safe and walkable community, particularly for schoolchildren and seniors.

- Raised, visible crossings near our schools, playgrounds and recreation centers
- Traffic calming that emphasizes safety over speed on neighborhood streets
- Address traffic diversion and safety challenges on 34th Street and major corridors
- Reinvigorate DC's Safe Streets program

Better neighborhood services

- DC underinvests in planning for, building and maintaining schools and other major infrastructure, including in Ward 3.
- Playgrounds and recreation centers, including Guy Mason, Hearst Park and Macomb Playground, should be clean, safe, attractive, and well kept.
- Reliable, responsive public safety and EMS

Green and sustainable community

- Washington, DC continues to lose our tree canopy, increasing the impact of climate change and aggravating health conditions. (DC has the highest rate of childhood asthma in the Nation.) Careless cutting destabilizes street trees, actually increasing the risks of serious injury to people, damage to property, and power outages.

Thoughtful, balanced growth that mitigates impacts, and prioritizes school capacity and needed infrastructure, workforce housing, and sustainable design, and enhances the built environment.

2) The Cleveland Park and Woodley Park commercial areas on Connecticut Ave are now allowed to be zoned for greater residential density. What will be your priorities and approach to any rezoning requests for the area that come before the ANC?

There is an opportunity for additional density in the Connecticut Avenue commercial areas. Indeed, there are several infill projects already underway or ready to build on Connecticut Avenue, within the Cleveland Park Historic District.

A significant number of residents who recently provided comments to the DC Office of Planning survey on the Connecticut Avenue Design Study emphasized that new infill development should be compatible with the character of the particular historic district, including height and massing, and should incorporate setbacks and transitions, as well as high quality design and materials.

For example, the Cleveland Park Historic District on Connecticut Avenue has a significant variety of commercial and residential architecture, including historic apartment buildings. The National Register nomination for the Historic District states that this area includes an “aesthetically unified” and “unusually intact Art Deco commercial strip” which is “one of the best examples in the city,” and which “maintains its integrity especially with regard to scale” and is “remarkably unified in appearance.” The iconic Uptown Theater is the centerpiece of the Art Deco strip. The DC deputy preservation officer has stated that no other DC historic district has such a collection of low-scale commercial buildings like those that define Connecticut Avenue in Cleveland Park.

These historic blocks on Connecticut Avenue are characterized predominately by pedestrian-scale one- and two- story commercial buildings, with mixed retail and apartment buildings up to five stories on the corners which Council Member Cheh cites as illustrating the appropriate height limit for infill development. I think that with appropriate setbacks to emphasize and differentiate contributing structures and a transitional step down in height to lower density areas, it may be possible to have infill development up to Council Member Cheh’s height limit. Zoning changes that would permit building height exceeding the height of apartment buildings on the southern corners of the commercial strip – Future Land Use Map amendments could enable 90 feet plus a habitable penthouse floor, for example -- would not be compatible with and appropriate in the historic district.

It is worth noting that there are opportunities for greater height and density just east of the historic district but close to the Cleveland Park Metro on several vacant lots and large surface parking lots. These are in an area already designated for residential high density and yet not within the historic district.

3) How will you incorporate racial equity in your approach as an ANC Commissioner?

I believe that workforce housing should be prioritized in proposed new development, to increase economic and racial diversity. Currently DC has only a paltry 8-10 percent statutory Inclusionary Zoning standard. DC’s baseline IZ requirement is below that of some other major

cities and is not even truly affordable housing because IZ is pegged to 60-80 percent. It's also vital that the DC government make every effort to preserve the existing supply of rent controlled housing. Ward 3 contains the second highest total of rent-controlled housing units in the District, many of which are in the boundaries of ANC 3C. These provide an important source of workforce housing and affordable housing for seniors on fixed incomes. These rent-controlled units are being lost as older apartment buildings in the area are emptied of tenants and renovated into market rate housing or are demolished for new development. Even where new IZ units are added, the net effect is one step forward, one step (or more) backward. Not only has DC not made protection of existing rent-controlled housing a priority, but the DC Office of Planning is also reluctant to acknowledge the importance of rent-controlled units to affordable housing. This needs to change.

4) ANC 3C includes the Woodley Park Historic District, most of the Cleveland Park Historic District and several historic landmarks. How will you approach Historic Preservation applications in your SMD (if applicable) and in ANC 3C generally?

If projects in one of the historic districts come before the ANC for review, I will follow DC law which provides that alterations, additions and new construction shall be "compatible with the character of the historic district."

5) Are you committed to supporting the Connecticut Ave reconfiguration approach known as Concept C? (Yes or No), and what will be your priorities when it comes to the reconfiguration of Connecticut Ave?

I have supported some aspects of the Connecticut Avenue redesign, including the removal of the rush hour reversible lane for safety reasons. DC has never managed the reversible lane, unlike the reversible Rock Creek Parkway, which is managed by the US Park Police. I also generally support the construction of bike lanes. For example, I strongly supported the Klinge Valley Trail for walkers and bikers, which serves Woodley Park, Cleveland Park and connects Rock Creek Park with the Cathedral area.

However, I do not support DDOT's Option C, as drafted, because it would create significant impacts along Connecticut Avenue and on other neighborhood streets, which have not been fully assessed and mitigated. Constraining rush hour capacity on Connecticut Avenue by reducing it from 4 lanes to 2 lanes is likely to lead to significant diversion of vehicle traffic to other north-south routes like 34th Street and east-west side streets. 34th Street already carries more traffic per lane mile than Connecticut Avenue and cannot handle significant additional traffic without worsening safety conditions for residents, particularly pedestrians. Diversion of vehicle traffic onto narrow side streets in the neighborhood will create other safety challenges. Reducing Connecticut Avenue Street parking by 50 percent and eliminating several loading zones will exacerbate challenges for our local businesses (which already identified customer parking as their number one business issue). DDOT has also failed to address how Option C would affect bus, taxi, and Uber drop off at the National Zoo entrance in Woodley Park. I believe that the interests of various stakeholders would

be best served if DDOT does a more rigorous traffic diversion study, undertakes a pilot of certain aspects of Option C to assess and address actual impacts, and implements changes incrementally.

6) What else do you want neighbors to know about you and why you are running to represent them?

I have been deeply engaged in our community since moving here in 2000. My family and I treasure the neighborhood's playgrounds and greenspaces, schools, institutions, local businesses and commercial areas, and the "village in the city" atmosphere. I have served as a director of the Rosedale Conservancy since its founding and past president of the Cleveland Park Historical Society, as well as on various task forces on traffic calming, pedestrian safety, business revitalization, and the environment. Our children attended public, charter, and independent schools in the neighborhood. I am a former John Eaton parent and recently was engaged in the design process for the school's renovation and served as a member of its public art committee. I view my understanding of neighborhood issues and commitment to improving our community as an advantage.

I appreciate our community's walkability and human scale, and you may have seen me on frequent walks around the neighborhood. Safe streets for school kids, walkers, runners, and bicyclists are important to me, as are better neighborhood spaces and services.

This questionnaire focuses largely on Cleveland Park and Woodley Park. However, SMD 3C08 encompasses Massachusetts Avenue Heights, Observatory Circle and the western portions of Cleveland Park and Woodley Park. The district includes four public elementary school zones, several independent schools, parks, playgrounds and greenspaces, the National Cathedral, and other institutions. Regardless of where we live, I believe that most residents value a safe, walkable community; better neighborhood services; a green and sustainable community; and thoughtful, balanced growth. I will listen, learn and, if elected, represent your views and work to make our community better as it grows and evolves. I favor a collaborative, constructive, and pragmatic approach to get things done for the neighborhood and advocate your concerns to DC agencies

About Cleveland Park Smart Growth

CP Smart Growth is a community of over 500 Cleveland Park-area residents who share an interest in promoting and discussing urbanist issues. Our mission is to advance smart growth policies in Cleveland Park to ensure an economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive neighborhood. We do this through education, organizing, and advocacy.

Learn more at cpsmartgrowth.com