

Citizens for Responsible Development  
4704 Windom Pl., NW  
Washington DC 20016  
July 19, 2018

Chairman Anthony Hood  
DC Zoning Commission  
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S  
Washington DC 20001

Re: Case No. 18-06 (Office of Planning - Text Amendment to Subtitle G Creating a New MU-4A Zone) Statement in Support

Chairman Hood:

Citizens for Responsible Development is a neighborhood organization committed to fostering responsible development. The text amendment to ZR-16 being proposed by the Office of Planning provides the Zoning Commission with the opportunity to improve ZR-16 to encourage responsible development and avoid protracted litigation. Evolutionary improvement should be encouraged.

The text amendment is entirely consistent with the District's Comprehensive Plan, which among other things, states that the overarching goal for urban design is to "enhance the beauty and livability of the city by protecting its historic design legacy, reinforcing the identity of the neighborhoods, and harmoniously integrating new construction with existing buildings."<sup>1</sup> The Urban Design Element further states that "overpowering contrasts in scale, height and density should be avoided as infill development occurs."<sup>2</sup>

The potential clash between an otherwise desired development and an adjacent threatened residential neighborhood is presented by the Zoning Commission case which has served as the genesis of this text amendment - Case Number 17-11. The zoning solution - creation of a new MU-4A zone - constitutes the work of the developer and its attorneys and the neighbors in fashioning a compromise that avoids extensive litigation and allows the desired development to proceed.

Citizens for Responsible Development commends the Office of Planning for proposing this solution. We also agree with the Office of Planning that there may be other areas of the city where the new zone may be appropriately applied. We specifically endorse the comment by Vice-Chair Miller, who stated at the April 30, 2018 meeting that he wanted to thank the Office of Planning for their report and the "petitioners for working with the community, the O Street Neighbors and Friends to work out a somewhat creative

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<sup>1</sup> District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan, Urban Design Element, p. 9-2.

<sup>2</sup> Id., UD-2.2.

mapping solution which I think does make sense beyond this particular area.”<sup>3</sup> Citizens for Responsible Development agrees that city-wide application should be considered and suggests that areas outside the central core without easy access to rapid transit should qualify. The new zone will help ensure that new development will not overpower adjacent residential neighborhoods. By providing for lower densities and greater setbacks than would otherwise be permitted currently under the MU-4 zone, this proposed transitional zone will help protect the District’s cherished neighborhoods.

Citizens for Responsible Development does suggest that the Zoning Commission consider revising the text amendment by clarifying that the new zone may be appropriate in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods zoned R-1-A and R-1-B. Thus, lots separated from such residential neighborhoods by an alley or local street should be eligible for the proposed MU-4A zone.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

Citizens for Responsible Development



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<sup>3</sup> Zoning Commission Meeting on April 30, 2018, pp. 20-21.