GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Andrew Altman

DATE: January 14, 2003

SUBJECT: BZA Case 16961 Special Exception Request

APPLICATION

The application by The Citywide Computer Center, pursuant to 11 DCMR 3104.1 seeks a special exception pursuant to Section 334 for a Community Service Center in the R-5-D District.

OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION-IN-BRIEF

The Office of Planning recommends **approval** of the subject application.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject premises (The Woodner Apartments) are in the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood of Ward One. Spring Road generally bounds the site to the north, Newton Street is to the south, 16th Street is to the east and 17th Street is to the west. The Woodner complex is in Square 2624, which is on the west side of 16th Street, between Spring Rood and Oak Street. The referenced structure is a high-rise, multifamily, residential apartment complex, which contains 1,089 one-bedroom and efficiency units. There is a mini-mall on the ground floor of the Woodner, which includes a grocery store, a restaurant, a video rental store, and several other retail and office uses.

The Citywide Computer Center (The Center) is located on the ground floor of the Woodner, in two units (#AG-32 & #BG-41) just beyond the area of the mini-mall. It has been located in the Woodner since 1995. The computer center occupies 1,100 square feet of space. Citywide's main office/classroom (BG-41) contains approximately 450 square feet of space and has fifteen (15) computer workstations, a kitchen and a bathroom. There is an auxiliary classroom in suite AG-32, which is located on a hallway of offices on the

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north wing of the complex. The auxiliary classroom contains approximately 650 square feet of space.

The program offers computer job training and access to employment opportunities to some residents of the Woodner, as well as low to moderate income residents in the District at-large. The space was previously two separate apartments, used by a day care center. It was combined prior to being leased by Citywide Computer Center. There are approximately thirty students enrolled in the program. The Center offers training to both youth and adult students. Students can take advantage of advanced computer equipment and an extensive library of instructional materials. The hours of operation are weekdays between 9AM to 8PM. Some students in the program reside at the Woodner, but most of the students come from other areas of the city. Some students attend classes for a minimum of 3 hours daily and others (mostly referred by the Department of Employment Services or the United Planning Organization) are required to attend classes for thirty hours a week.



16th Street entrance to the Woodner Apartments.



Lobby entrance to both training areas.



Retail services at the Woodner Apartment building.


The Woodner Apartments
3636 16th Street, N.W.
17th St NW
Oak St NW
Oak St NW
17th St NW
SQR2624
SQR2624
SQR2624
SQR2624
SQR2624
R-5-B
R-4
262
Feature Key
Zoning Boundaries
Square Index
Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. 16961
DC Office of Planning
November 25, 2002
Scale 1:1118
25 0 25 50 75 100 Feet
Attachment 1

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting special exception to permit the Citywide Computer Center as a Community Service Center, to continue to operate in the R-5-D District.

ZONING ANALYSIS

The subject premises are in the R-5-D District. The R-5 districts permit flexibility of design by permitting, all types of urban residential development if they conform to the height, density, and area requirements established for R-5 districts under Chapter 4. In the R-5-D districts, a relatively high height and density are permitted. Section 334 allows community service centers by special exception.

334 Community Service Centers

334.1 A community service center to accommodate organizations created for the purpose of improving the social or economic well being of the residents of the neighborhood in which the center is proposed to be located which may include but not be limited to centers for job training, family counseling, consumer cooperatives, and such other facilities as are similar in nature and purpose, shall be permitted in an R-4 District if approved by the Board of Zoning adjustment in accordance with the conditions specified in §3104 of this title, subject to the provisions of this section.

The mission of the Citywide Computer Center is to improve the social and economic well being of its students, by providing job-training skills for low-income residents of the building, neighborhood and the District. The success of the program has prompted the United Planning Organization and the Department of Employment Services to assign students for training to the Citywide Computer Center.

334.2 A community center shall be located so that it is not likely to be objectionable to neighboring properties because of noise or other objectionable conditions.

The Citywide Computer Center has been located in the Woodner Apartments since 1995. The main classroom area is located on the ground floor, at the western-end of an east-west corridor. There is auxiliary classroom space on the northern wing of the ground floor, an area dedicated to office uses and is away from the residences. According to management of the building, there have been no complaints regarding noise by



Instructor tutors student on Citywide Computer Center workstation.



Auxiliary classroom space on the northern wing of the ground floor.

students or the operators of the center, during its more than seven years in the Woodner Apartments.

334.3 No structural changes shall be made except those required by other municipal laws or regulations.

No structural changes will be made, unless other municipal laws or regulations require them. None are currently proposed.

334.4 The use shall be reasonable necessary or convenient to the neighborhood in which it is proposed to be located.

Many of the students who attend the program live in the Woodner complex or reside in the surrounding Mount Pleasant Neighborhood. Some of the students use public transportation to get to the center. 16th Street is a major Metro bus route and there is a bus stop in front of the Woodner complex. The applicant has arranged with management of the Woodner, to allow students who drive to classes to park in the garage.

334.5 A community service center shall not be for profit, and no part of its net income inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

The Citywide Computer Center is a 501(C) (3) organization.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE APPLICATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Section 207, Improving Labor Force Job Skills Levels And Employment Opportunities.

207.1 The improving labor force job skills levels and job opportunities objectives is to expand the occupational skills and job opportunities for District residents,

particularly the unemployed, the underemployed, the economically disadvantaged, and youth preparing to enter the labor force in coming years.

207.2 The policies established in support of improving labor force job skills levels and employment opportunities objectives are as follows:

(a) Attract labor-intensive industries which employ, in significant proportion, semi-skilled and unskilled workers;
(b) Seek maximum involvement of the private sector in setting policy and giving support to train and job placement programs; and
(d) Develop curricula at magnet schools and career development centers, which reflect the skill needs and attainment standards, set by the public and private sectors.

The Citywide Computer Center's mission is to improve the social and economic well being for low-income District residents, by providing job-training skills in the computer industry.

DOES THE APPLICATION MEET THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION TEST

Will the special exceptions be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map?

Yes. Community service centers are permitted in the R-5 district, if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment. The mission of the Citywide Computer Center is to improve the social and economic well being of low-income neighborhoods and District residents, by providing job-training skills in the computer industry. There is also support in the Comprehensive Plan for organizations that provide opportunities for improving labor force job skill levels and providing employment opportunities, especially for the economically disadvantaged, and youth preparing to enter the labor force in coming years. The Citywide Computer Center training program is consistent with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map.

Will the granting of the special exception tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map?

No. The granting of the special exception will not adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations. The Citywide Computer Center has operated in the Woodner Apartment complex since 1995. Woodner management considers the Center to be a good neighbor and some of the tenants in the building are students of the computer center.

The Citywide Computer Center has been assigned enough parking spaces in the underground parking facility at the Woodner complex to accommodate all of the students in the program, without causing conflict with other tenants.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Both the applicant and the Office of Planning has been unsuccessful on numerous attempts to reach Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 1E.

OP RECOMMENDATION

After having reviewed BZA application 16961 requesting a special exception to permit a Community Service Center in a R-5-D District, the Office of Planning recommends that the **Board approve** the application. The Office of Planning finds that the application has satisfactorily addressed the requirements of §334, and has met the burden of proof under §3104 of the Zoning Regulations. OP therefore concludes that approval of the application would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and would not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map.