

Cathy Wiss
Commissioner, ANC 3F06
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Washington, D.C. 20016-1838

October 23, 2002

Mr. Andrew Altman, Director
D.C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Re: Zoning Case No. 02-19, Forest Hills Tree and Slope Protection Overlay

Dear Mr. Altman:

I read with interest the October 7, 2002, second addendum report from the Office of Planning (OP) in the above-referenced case. This report provides different figures for population density and area of Washington and three other East Coast cities, which the OP report attributes to the applicant. I am the one who prepared that research, not the applicant. Although the applicant and I agree that the minimum lot size in Forest Hills should be increased to 12,000 square feet for the R-1A zoned areas, I am neither affiliated with the applicant, nor did I confer with the applicant in conducting my research.

I would like to explain what I believe to be the reasons for the differences between the OP figures and my own. For two of the cities, Washington and Richmond, the OP report uses the total area of the city, including water and land areas, to determine population density. I chose instead to use only the cities' **land areas** in my calculations, as the more logical and precise measure of where people live. Furthermore, the Census Bureau uses only the land area to compute population density, and only the land area is subject to zoning. Both the OP report and my analysis use only the land area of Baltimore, so we arrive at similar numbers. As for New York, I too saw the figure of 321 square miles for the area of that city on its official web site. This number may be more accurate, but because it was without explanation, I chose to stay with the figures the Census Bureau had been using, even though I realize the Census Bureau is not infallible.

The Census Bureau has now posted on its web site, www.census.gov, the following figures for area and population density for the four cities from the 2000 census:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Washington</u>	<u>Baltimore</u>	<u>Richmond</u>	<u>New York</u>
Population	572,059	651,154	197,790	8,008,278
Total Area (sq. mi.)	68.34	92.08	62.55	468.87
Water Area	6.94	11.27	2.48	165.56
Land Area	61.40	80.80	60.07	303.31
Density/sq. mile Of Land Area	9,316.4	8,058.4	3,292.6	26,402.9

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The OP report also provides population data for the respective metropolitan areas, but does not relate it to land area or population density. If such figures are available for the 2000 census, I could not download them on my home computer. Nevertheless, the Census Bureau web site does give this information for the 1997 estimated population based on figures for land area from the 1990 census. This report shows that New York's Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) was the fifth largest in the nation with 10,165.7 square miles of land area. Washington and Baltimore have been treated as part of the same CMSA. The total land area for this CMSA -- stretching from Berkeley County, West Virginia, to Queen Anne's County, Maryland, and from Carroll County, Maryland, to Spotsylvania County, Virginia -- was 9,578.3 square miles, the sixth largest in the nation.

Despite their similarity in size, New York's metropolitan area averaged 1,955.3 residents per square mile in 1997, by far the greatest in the country, while the Washington-Baltimore CMSA averaged only 752.4 persons per square mile. Like the ratio between the densities of their respective cities, the density of the New York metropolitan area is between 2.5 and 3 times the density of the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area.

I believe these figures continue to support my main points:

- Despite the high density of its city and metropolitan area, New York has seen fit to increase minimum lot size for environmental protection. This figure is larger than what has been requested for the Forest Hills Tree and Slope Protection Overlay.
- Washington and Baltimore are similar cities, in fact viewed as part of the same Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area. It would not be unreasonable for Washington to follow Baltimore in having a minimum lot size larger than 7,500 square feet. The 12,000 square feet requested is considerably less than the standard minimum lot sizes Baltimore has established for several of its low density zones.
- Increasing the minimum lot size for the R-1A zoned areas in Forest Hills, a total of 0.4 square miles, would have an insignificant effect on the future population of Washington and on the population of its vast metropolitan area as a whole, but it would help preserve natural resources that benefit our city.

Sincerely,



Cathy Wiss

Cc:

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Stephen Mordfin, OP
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