GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: March 21, 2003

SUBJECT: Final Report – ZC 02-41 (Building Bridges Across the River, Inc)
Portion of US Reservation 501, Oxon Run Parkway

APPLICATION

Building Bridges Across the River, Inc (Applicant) has petitioned the Zoning Commission to zone a portion of US Reservation 501 to the SP-1 District.

OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION-IN-BRIEF

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission approve the proposed map amendment as it is not inconsistent with the recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan and will be of significant benefit to the community.

HISTORY

The subject property is owned by the United States Government with use and operational jurisdiction transferred to the District of Columbia (Department of Parks and Recreation) for recreational and related purposes. The District in turn has leased the property to the applicant for the uses that are regarded as "recreational" by the National Park Service (acting on behalf of the United States). The applicant, a non-profit organization, is leasing the property and proposes to construct a community center to be known as the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Center (THE ARC).

DESCRIPTION AND ZONING OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property is in the southeast quadrant of Washington DC and just outside of the Congress Heights neighborhood. The site is a portion of US Reservation 501 (Parcel 236, Lot 114) with street frontage along Mississippi Avenue and between Stanton Road and Southern Avenue, NE. The site is approximately 16.403 acres.

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Exhibit 26

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO.26

To the north of the property are the Villages of Parklands, which is a mixture of apartments and townhouses in the R-5-A District. To the immediate west are portions of Oxon Run Park that are not zoned. Further west is the Camp Simms property in the R-3, R-5-A, and C-2-B Districts. Directly to the south are portions of Oxon Run Park, not zoned, and the Oxon Run townhouses in the R-5-A District. Further south is Southern Avenue that forms the boundary between the District and Prince George's County, Maryland. Across Southern Avenue is the Southern Avenue Metro Station. Further to the southwest is the Southwest Tennis Center, also within the Oxon Run Parkway. To the east of the site are properties in Prince George's County.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes zoning the property to SP-1 (medium density), which would permit the various community serving uses proposed by the applicant. The proposed project for the site is to be constructed in two phases. Phase I construction is currently in progress and a zone designation was not obtained prior to construction because the applicant was misinformed that a zoning designation was not required. Since it has been determined that such an action is required, the application for a zone designation will apply to the entire site.

Phase I of the development will house Covenant House Washington, while Phase II construction will be a recreation center with a program that will include activities operated by the Levine School of Music, the Washington Ballet, and Children's Hospital along with a computer technology center, a gymnasium, a 350-seat theater, and other community oriented uses such as ball-fields and trails.

PROPOSED ZONING

The proposed SP-1 District is designed to stabilize high-density commercial uses and other areas that contain existing apartments, offices and institutions. Further, the major purpose of the SP District is to " *. . . act as a buffer between adjoining commercial and residential areas, and to ensure that new development is compatible in use, scale, and design with the transitional function of this zone district.*" (Section 500.2). The predominant zoning in the general vicinity of the site is R-5-A to the north of the site and federal property to the south. Further from the site are properties in the R-3, C-2-B, and R-2 Districts. The SP District permits as a matter-of-right a variety of uses many of which are proposed and geared towards serving the residents of the community. They include: private schools; community center buildings; park, playgrounds, swimming pool, or athletic field operated by a local community organization; child/elderly development center; and art galleries.

Section 5-413 of the Zoning Act sets out the criteria that the Zoning Commission must apply in adopting zoning regulations. The underlying purpose of the regulations is "to promote the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, or general welfare of the District of Columbia and its planning and orderly development as the national capital". It further requires that zoning should not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Designating the SP-1 District on the subject property would be compatible with both the surrounding zoning as well as with the existing land use. Although the surrounding zoning districts are not commercial zones, the uses that are permitted in the SP District are those that would provide services to residents of the adjoining community. The SP District on the property will allow the development to be

at a scale that does not negatively impact the existing residences and is consistent with the intensity of the adjacent neighborhood.

The proposed uses are complementary to residential and are located on the edge of the residential community. Locating these uses on the proposed site allows them to be readily accessible and in close proximity to residents, but does not disrupt the residential character and nature of the adjoining community. Further, the proposed centralized mix of uses will enhance and strengthen the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed zoning designation will further the health, safety, and welfare of the District as it will permit facilities that are currently not provided in this community and in particular this portion of the District. The surrounding community is undergoing major redevelopment with many new housing developments, some of which do not include social, cultural, and recreational services for their residents. The proposed development will help to fill this gap.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE APPLICATION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Generalized Land Use Map recommends "parks, recreation, and open space" for the subject site, and specifically "District Government parks, and recreation centers, cemeteries and the National Capital Open Space System . . ." The SP-1 District is not inconsistent with the Generalized Land Use Map as because it allows as a matter-of -right schools, park, playgrounds, and child development centers. The proposed zoning to the SP-1 District therefore is not inconsistent with this classification.

The proposed zoning and development is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan Element that addresses land use. Further, the Ward 8 Plan that looks at a smaller geographic area outlines more specific recommendations for the area around the subject site.

The Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan, Section 1115, outlines Policies in Support of the Public and Institutional Land Use Objectives.

> *"(h) Facilitate the joint public and private development, where feasible, of surplus government property, particularly in the vicinity of Metro stations, to supply needed community services and facilities which support local employment opportunities and neighborhood improvements and stability.*

The proposal will facilitate the collaboration of public and non-profit organizations to provide much needed recreational and social services to the community. The site location is ideal, as the proposed facilities will be in close proximity to the residents they will serve. The SP-1 District is a transitional zone and allows many of the proposed uses which are not permitted in residential zones. However, it will allow these uses that are necessary to support the residential neighborhoods to be proximate.

> *(i) Identify unneeded public buildings and lands that could be uses to supply additional housing, commercial services, and to accommodate private community service organizations and other physical and social needs, utilizing alternative implementation techniques including negotiated sales, long-term leasing, District and community cooperative development, land use writedowns, community equity participation, and similar arrangements."*

The property to accommodate the proposed development was given to the District of Columbia Government who in turn leased the property to the applicant who is a private non-profit organization.

The Ward 8 Plans outlines Objectives for Public Facilities, Section 1917.1, as follows:

> *"(a) Ensure that adequate and high quality neighborhood-based public services and facilities are available and accessible to the Ward 8 community at a minimal cost;"*

The proposed zoning on the site will accommodate a variety of facilities that are not provided east of the river and therefore will serve not only the residents of the immediate neighborhood but the wider community. Many of the proposed facilities and services will be provided at no or minimal cost to its users.

The Ward 8 Plan has a policy objective specifically supporting this use:

> *"1918.1(b) Establish a multi-service recreational center that will address both recreational and community cultural needs in Ward 8:*
>
> *(1) Ward 8 contains no recreational facility capable of supporting positive non-sport related activities for the ward's youth and other residents. Community leaders have stated that the development of a facility that would address recreational as well as cultural needs in one of the ways to expose the ward's youth to attractive lifestyle alternatives to involvement in illegal drug trafficking . . . ."*

As demonstrated, the elements of the Comprehensive Plan encourages the creation of a multipurpose recreational center that also serve the cultural and social needs of the neighborhood and the greater Ward 8 community, a very under-served portion of the District's population. The SP-1 District on the subject site is appropriate as it will be an action towards fulfilling the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the development will provide services that will further the revitalization in this community. Therefore, the proposed designation is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The proposed development of this site is widely known and supported by the ANC-8B and the community.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission setdown this application for a public hearing. Based on preliminary review, the proposal is in conformance with the recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan for recreational facilities to serve the residents and will make a significant contribution to the continued revitalization in the surrounding community.

ATT: 1. Aerial Photograph with Zoning
2. Comprehensive Plan
3.

AA/mbr AICP



Feature Key

Zoning Boundaries
Square Index

Zoning Commission
Buildiing Bridges Across the River

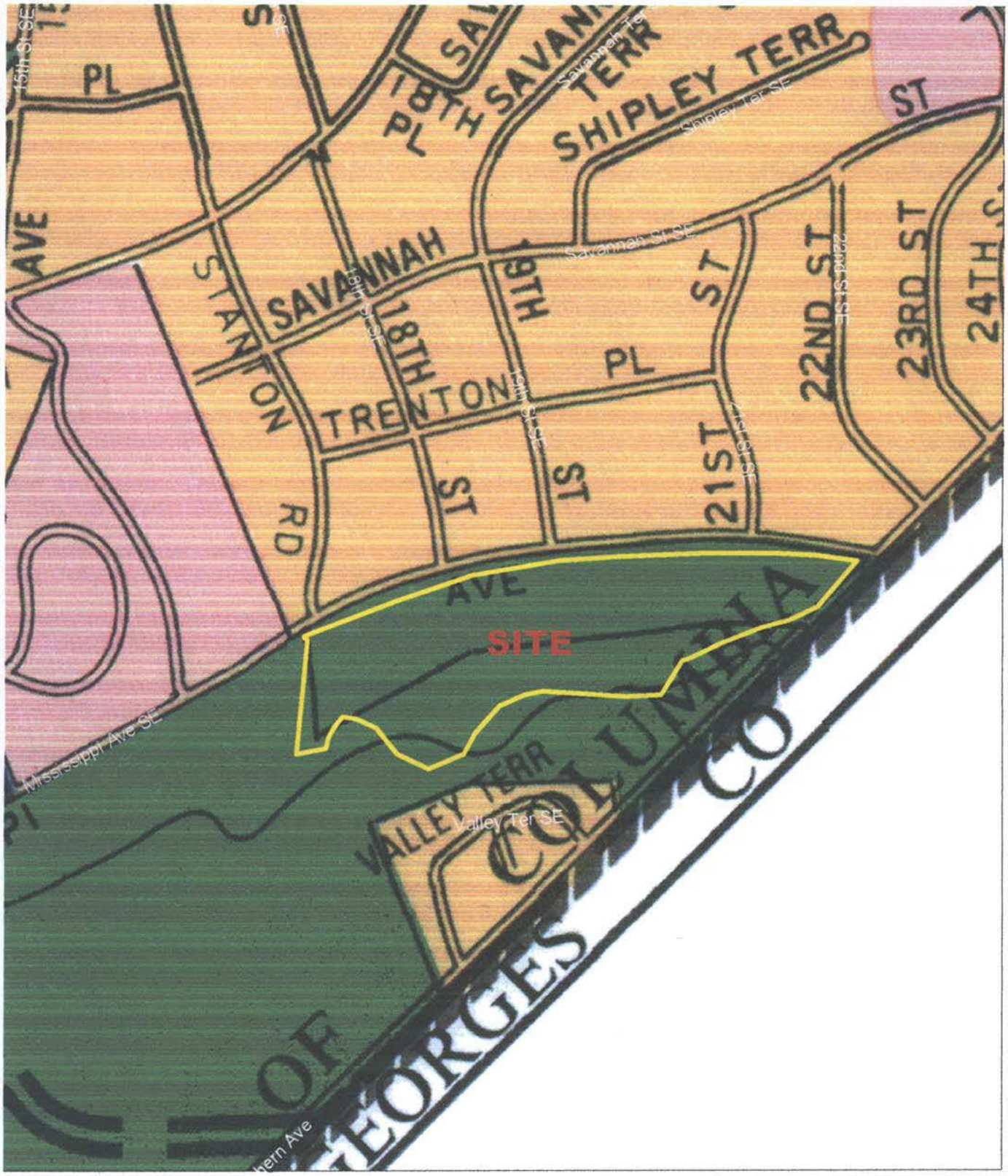
Case No. #02-41

DC Office of Planning
March 20, 2003

Scale 1:6715

2500 0 2500 5000 Feet

Attachment 1



Feature Key

Zoning Boundaries
Square Index

Zoning Commission
Building Bridges Across the River

Case No. #02-41

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Scale 1:5372

2502505 Feet

Attachment 2