GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

02-45

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director
Office of Planning

DATE: November 8, 2002

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report for the New St. Elizabeth Hospital Building
Department of Mental Health
Portion of Parcel 234, Lot 38

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District of Columbia
Case 02-45
Exhibit 12

APPLICATION

The District of Columbia Department of Mental Health (Applicant) has petitioned the Zoning Commission to zone a portion of the St. Elizabeth's Hospital campus to the SP-1 District and the approval of a first stage Planned Unit Development (PUD).

OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission setdown the proposed map amendment and first stage PUD.

BACKGROUND

The proposed site for the new St. Elizabeth's Hospital will on the eastern portion of the east campus (Parcel 234, Lot 38). The St. Elizabeth's Hospital Campus is a 336-acre National Historic Landmark established as the Government Hospital for the Insane in 1855. In 1916 the name was changed to Saint Elizabeth's. The hospital at its peak period housed approximately 7,000 patients and 4,000 employees in the 1960's. Since then, the population has been greatly diminished. In 1987 the federal government deeded the east campus to the District of Columbia government.

The St. Elizabeth's property was originally a federal facility and therefore unzoned; 11DCMR, Section 106.4 stipulates "*Properties owned by the government of the United States and used for or intended to be used for a federal public building or use ... shall not be included in any zone district.*" Ownership of the property transferred to the city in 1987 and the property has remained unzoned. 11DCMR, Section 106.5 sets out the applicability of zoning to district owned properties and Section 106.5 (b) triggers the zoning requirement for this project. It reads in part "*. . . any change or expansion in the use of land or*

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building, or any new construction or additions to buildings shall be subject to zoning;" The property has been used for hospital purposes since the early 20th century.

The Office of Planning is currently in the process of creating a framework plan for the reuse of the overall St. Elizabeth's campus. Establishment of zoning for the entire property will be done in conjunction with this plan. The zoning of this portion of the property preempts the zoning of the entire campus because of the need by DMH to meet their court ordered requirements that involve the building of a new hospital. In fact, the construction of the new hospital was planned before the concept for the redevelopment of the entire campus. The proposed location of the new hospital is on secluded portion of the campus and therefore its impact on the framework plan should be minimal. To this end, the Office of Planning has recommended that the property be developed as a PUD to allow for additional review of compatibility to the overall framework plan.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property is an irregularly shaped lot on the eastern portion of St. Elizabeth's east campus and is approximately 49.4 acres. The site can be accessed from Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Alabama Avenue, SE. The majority of the property is currently vacant except for the John Howard Forensic Pavilion and an adjacent parking lot. A ravine that separates the site from the remainder of the campus delineates this portion of the east campus. The steeply sloping, heavily wooded ravine area is included in the lot area. The remainder of the site can be described as gently rolling, grassed, with several large, mature trees and shrubs scattered throughout.

The area immediately surrounding the subject property includes the remainder of the hospital campus. The east campus has approximately 50 buildings most of which are not occupied. On the northern portion of the east campus a 10-acre site along MLK has been approved for construction of the OCTO's Unified Communication Center and is in the C-2-B District. Off-site uses in the vicinity of the subject site are predominantly residential uses comprised of single-family attached and apartments in the Hillsdale, Douglas and Congress Heights neighborhoods in the R-5-A and R-5-B Districts. Metro's Green line runs under the east campus and just south and outside of the subject property is the Congress Heights Metro station along Alabama Avenue.

PROPOSAL

The Department of Mental Health operates the hospital and is consolidating its operations on the east campus in a new hospital building that will replace the existing John Howard Pavilion. The existing building will be demolished after the occupancy of the new building. However, the recreational "yard " will remain and be used along with the new building. The new hospital will serve both non-secure and secure mental health patients. The proposed St. Elizabeth's Hospital Building will be a state-of-the-art, mental health facility to serve the District's mental health needs and will incorporate the newest ideas and innovations in institutional design for mental health care that will most effectively serve the patients, caregivers, and employees. The building will have portions that are one-story and portions that are 2-stories designed to serve the different needs of their non-secure and secure populations. The hospital will have a total of 290-beds, 16 of which will be reserved for patients who are been transitioned into the community.

PROPOSED ZONING

The Office of Planning has preliminarily reviewed the proposed map amendment and concluded that the SP-1 District is an appropriate designation for consideration and public hearing. The uses proposed on the property are consistent with the SP-1 District. The table below identifies the development standard permitted as a matter-of-right, through the PUD process, and as proposed by this applicant.

	SP-1	**SP-1 PUD**	**HOSPITAL**
Minimum Area	N/A	15,000 sf	2,151,864 sf
FAR Non-residential Uses	2.5	2.0	To be determined
FAR Residential Uses	4.0	2.5	0.00
Total FAR	3.5	4.5	To be determined
Height	65 ft	75 ft	65 ft
Principal Permitted Uses	private schools; community center; park and recreational facilities, child/elderly development center; art galleries, chanceries, parking lots, office, schools, hotels and inns, CBRF's, universities, antennas, hospital		hospital

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 are "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" and zoning should not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed SP-1 District is designed to "stabilize those areas adjacent to C-3-C and C-4 districts and other appropriate areas that contain existing apartments, offices and institutions; and mixed use buildings"(Section 500.1). 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 on the northeast and southeast of the site is R-5-A. The remainder of the campus to the west of the site is currently unzoned but it is envisioned the redevelopment will include a variety of uses.

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 in the C-3-C and C-4 Districts, placing the SP-1 zone adjacent to the R-5-A is appropriate because the community is developed with mainly moderate density residential including apartments, semi-detached

units and row-houses. 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 Office of Planning recommended that a PUD accompany the proposed map amendment because the map amendment is intended to facilitate a site-specific project. The PUD will provide assurance of the site's development and use in the absence of a completed redevelopment plan for the entire campus.

PURPOSE OF A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

The purpose and standards for Planned Unit Developments are outlined in 11 DCMR, Chapter 24. A PUD is "designed to encourage high quality developments that provide public benefits." This new hospital will be a state-of-the-art hospital that will represent a major advance in the care, treatment, and accommodations for DC's mental health patients. This is a major District of Columbia and federal government policy initiative that will substantially alleviate and overcome problems in mental health service delivery that led to a period of years in which the city's mental health services were under Court supervision. The new hospital is functionally designed to meet the special needs of secure patients as well as non-secure patients, and to provide an excellent environment for caregivers and visitors. The physical and social environment will be more conducive to patient recovery and for many, a return to a normal lifestyle in the community. The Department of Mental Health is committed to achieving a superior level of service that is consistent with the distinguished history of St. Elizabeth's as the nation's first, and for many years foremost, mental health treatment facility. The funding has been secured to make this high-priority project a reality.

STANDARDS FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

As demonstrated in the table above, the application meets the minimum 15,000 square foot area requirements of Sec. 2401.1 (c). Pursuant to Section 2402.3, the applicant has elected to file a two stage PUD and this is the first stage.

The PUD standards state that the "impact of the project on the surrounding area and upon the operations of city services and facilities shall not be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project."

Based on the information provided and the improvements in care that will result from the project, OP believes that the project will be favorable and an improvement to city's mental health operations and services. The proposed PUD site is relatively under-developed and it is anticipated that the impacts from the new hospital will be acceptable within the campus context. The applicant has elected to pursue the planned unit development approach, which provides beneficial site planning and design flexibility that this project requires to meet the special needs of the people it serves while allowing the Zoning Commission, the Office of Planning, and community interests to review the plans.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND PUBLIC POLICIES

The Generalized Land Use Map recommends the subject site for local public facilities. Additionally, the Generalized Land Use Policies Map designated the overall St. Elizabeth's Hospital as a Special Treatment Area. The proposed zoning to the SP-1 District is consistent with these recommendations.

Section 2403.4 of the Zoning Regulations requires that the application is "not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with other adopted public policies and active programs related to the subject site." The PUD is also consistent with other sections of the Comprehensive Plan including the following Major Themes of the Comprehensive:

- Section 102 - Stabilizing and Improving District Neighborhoods,
- Section 106 - Respecting and Improving the Physical Character of the District,
- Section 110 - Promoting Enhanced Public Safety,
- Section 111 - Providing Diversity and Overall Social Responsibilities

Specifically, the application is consistent with Chapter 6, Public Facilities, of the Comprehensive Plan including:

- Section 601, Public Facilities Goal, which is to "provide adequate and energy-efficient public facilities in good condition to support the cost-effective delivery of municipal programs and services, and to support economic development and neighborhood improvement objectives."
- Section 604, Increased Cost-Effectiveness In Public Facilities, which "is to improve the cost-effectiveness of public facility construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation."
- Section 606, Location Of Public Facilities, which states that the "objective is to locate public facilities to provide optimum service and to support the land use, transportation, economic and social development, and neighborhood improvement objectives."

Specifically, the application is consistent with the Ward 8 plan.:

- Section 1930.1(e), Ward 8 Plan, specifically calls for the assurance that the "new development in the Saint Elizabeth's Hospital Special Treatment Area is compatible in terms of its use, design, scale, circulation and landscaping with mental health treatment activities housed at the hospital while contributing to the economic revitalization of Ward 8."

Historic Preservation Efforts

The entire St. Elizabeth's Hospital is a designated federal historic landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. The property, however, is not a local landmark. Therefore, only the federal Section 106 preservation review is required. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) performs the Section 106 review.

Public Benefits and Amenities

Section 2403.5 through 2403.13 discusses the definition and evaluation of public benefits and amenities. Proposed amenities provided by this project include a significant monetary contribution for the

framework plan for the remainder of the east campus which will address "restoration, infill development and revitalization of the campus. The new hospital will be an attractive facility with new landscaping and be a more pleasant and rehabilitative environments for its users. The nature of the topography on the site will be preserved and careful attention will be given to storm-water run-off, slope stability and the preservation of the existing tree cover." The hospital will be compatible with the historic buildings on the remainder of the campus. The site's close proximity to the Congress Heights metro station will encourage employees and visitors to use mass transit. Consolidation of the hospital on this site will reduce automobile trips between buildings that currently are necessary to provide mental health services and access to this portion of the site will be improved.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning believes that the proposed PUD is consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Regulations and elements of the Comprehensive Plan. OP recommends that the application for map amendment and first stage PUD be set down for public hearing.

AA/mbr AICP



Board of Zoning Adjustment
Application No. #

Scale 1:7150

Feature Key

- Zoning Boundaries
- Square Index

DC Office of Planning
November 5, 2002

Attachment 1