GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Office of the Director

03-01

MEMORANDUM

TO: D.C. Zoning Commission

FROM: Andrew Altman, Director

DATE: January 3, 2003

SUBJECT: **Set Down Report / Pre-Hearing Statement** to Rezone Lots 50, 823, 826, & 834 in Square 3187 between Chestnut Street, N.W. and Spring Place, N.W., located on the east side of Blair Road, N.W. and includes the north side of Spring Place, N.W. from C-M-1 to C-2-A.

APPLICATION

The Office of Planning proposes a map amendment to re-zone the above referenced lots bounded by Blair Road, N.W. (west); Chestnut Street, N.W. (north); and Spring Place, N.W. (south and east) from C-M-1 to C-2-A.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that the application be set down for public hearing.

BACKGROUND

The proposed re-zoning is the first step in the implementation of the Takoma Central District Plan (Takoma Plan). The Takoma Plan is the product of an eighteen month community-driven planning effort led by OP. The Takoma Plan was initiated in June 2000 after the announcement of the disposition of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority property at the Takoma Metro Station and growing development interest in the area.

The purpose of the Takoma Plan was to engage citizens and stakeholders in a community participation process to establish a vision for future development and preservation opportunities toward revitalization of the entire commercial district. The Takoma Plan study area boundaries are generally defined by Chestnut Street, N.W. to the north, Eastern Avenue and the DC/MD boundary to the east, 4th and 5th Streets to the west, and Aspen and Laurel Streets to the south. The process began with the formation of the Takoma Central District Plan Citizens' Working Group in August 2000. This citizen working group assisted OP with neighborhood assessments, goal setting, and outreach for public town hall meetings.

The Draft Final Report, released on September 27, 2001, was followed by a 30-day period for written comments. Citizen comments were also solicited at a public meeting held on October 29, 2001. The

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-01
Exhibit 1

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-01
EXHIBIT NO.1

Final Report was published in January 2002 and transmitted to the Council of the District of Columbia on March 20, 2002. On June 4, 2002, the Council approved by Resolution 14-460, Takoma Central District Plan Approval Resolution of 2002, pursuant to section 4(c)(4) of the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan Act of 1984 Land Use Element Amendment Act of 1984, effective March 16, 1985 (D.C. Law 5-187; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.64(c)(4).

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION
Square 3187: Lots 50, 823, 826, & 834.

The Takoma neighborhood is unique because it shares its history and name with its neighbor Takoma Park, Maryland. Takoma was founded in 1883 as an inter-jurisdictional commuter suburb and resort community centered on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station. It is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Ward Four and is the Ward's only neighborhood with an historic district.

The Takoma neighborhood is primarily residential and developed with low to moderate density Victorian, Queen Anne and Bungalow style homes. The existing commercial areas are along 4th and Carroll Streets, N.W. which extends beyond the DC border into Takoma Park, Maryland. It should be noted that neither Carroll Street or 4th Street have developed the critical mass of retail, commercial and housing that their neighbor Maryland enjoys, despite being anchored by the most heavily used pedestrian Metro transit station in the District of Columbia. The only industrial zoned area in this neighborhood is the area proposed for rezoning by this application.

The Subject Lots are bounded by Blair Road, NW to the west, Chestnut Street, NW to the north, and Spring Place, NW to the east and south. The site of the proposed rezoning is bordered by an R-1-B district to the north and west and C-2-A zones to the south, and east. On the west side of Blair Road, NW and the west side of Chestnut Street, NW are predominantly single-family detached homes. The properties under consideration are located within close proximity to the Takoma Park Metrorail station and just beyond the boundary of the Takoma Park historic district.

The affected lots, owners, and uses are as follows:

Lot #/Address	**Owner**	**Use**	**Lot Size**	**Building Area**
50 /7041 Blair Road, N.W.	B & B Industrial Catering	B&B Catering	33,659 sf.	30,902 sf.
826 / 7041 Blair Road, N.W.	B & B Industrial Catering	B&B Catering	3,421 sf.	3,284 sf.
823 / 7050 Spring Place, N.W.	P.M. Sharkey	American Air & Filter Service	6,450 sf.	4,495 sf.
834 / 7058 Spring Place, N.W.	Landis Construction	Office, warehouse, glass mfg.	8,833 sf.	5,806 sf.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED ZONING

A summary of development standards of the current and proposed zoning are provided in the following table:

	C-M-1	C-2-A
Floor Area Ratio	3.0	2.5 maximum of which no more than 1.5 may be permitted uses other than residential.
Lot Occupancy	None	60 %
Height	40 ft./3 stories	50 ft.
Minimum Lot Width	None	None
Side Yard	Only required if side lot line abuts residential district w/min 3 in./ft. & not less than 8 ft.	Only required for single or semi-detached dwelling and hotel.
Rear Yard	2½ in. per foot of vertical distance from mean finished grade at middle of rear structure to highest point but not less than 12 ft.	15 ft.
Parking	Mfg: 1 space per 1,000 sf. gross floor area. Retail/Service:1 space for each 300 ft gross floor area over 3,000 sf.	Dwellings:1 space per 2 units Retail/Service:1 space for each 300 ft gross floor area over 3,000 sf.

The predominant zoning for the surrounding area is C-2-A and R-1-B. C-M-1 districts provide sites for heavy commercial and light manufacturing activities employing large numbers of people and requiring some heavy machinery, heavy truck traffic, and loading and unloading operations. 11 DCMR § 800.1.

The C-2-A zone is designed to provide facilities for shopping and business needs, housing, and mixed uses outside of the central core. 11 DCMR § 720. C-2-A districts are located in low and medium density residential areas with access to main highways and shall include offices, shopping centers and medium-bulk mixed use centers. 11 DCMR §§ 720.2, 720.3.

PLANNING AND POLICY ISSUES

OP offers the following comments for the consideration of the Zoning Commission relative to this case:

Comprehensive Plan and the Generalized Land Use Map:
The Generalized Land Use Map identifies the area under consideration for mixed use: moderate-density commercial and moderate density residential use. The proposed C-2-A district permits low density uses that are generally low in scale, character and activity. The surrounding area is predominately zoned C-2-A.

Chapter 15, Ward 4 Plan, of the Comprehensive Plan identifies the area for expanded residential and commercial activity with particular emphasis on the Takoma Metrorail Station area.

1505 WARD 4 OBJECTIVES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1505.1 The objectives for economic development are as follows:

(a) Create and expand retail activity focused primarily on designated nodes and on Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street and the Georgia Avenue/Petworth, ***Takoma*** and Fort Totten ***Metrorail Station areas***.

1506 WARD 4 ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1506.1 The policies in support of economic development are as follows:

(a) Develop an action plan for vacant commercial properties at designated commercial nodes along Georgia Avenue and Kennedy Street, along the 14th Street corridor, and at the Takoma commercial and retail area and at North Capitol Street and Riggs Road:

(1) Commercial properties that are underused do not contribute to the economic activity in the ward or District. They afford an opportunity to upgrade existing neighborhood commercial centers and to eliminate blighted sites from the ward; and

(2) Recommended Actions

(C) ***Identify additional areas with underused properties that have the potential for new and expanded residential and commercial development***;

(D) ***Develop detailed plans for the above areas. Recommend to the Zoning Commission zoning changes to advance the improvement and stability of the specialized areas***.

1508 WARD 4 OBJECTIVES FOR HOUSING

1508.1 The objectives for housing are as follows:

(a) Provide for the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households, improve the District's low-rent housing programs, encourage home ownership and reduce the overall cost of housing among low- and moderate-income households in the ward;

(c) ***Encourage the private sector to provide new housing to meet the needs of present and future District residents at locations consistent with District land use policies and objectives***.

The proposed map amendment is also consistent with the Land Use objectives relative to moderate density commercial and residential:

1529 WARD 4 OBJECTIVES FOR LAND USE/ZONING

1529.1 The objectives for land use/zoning are as follows:

(a) Protect and enhance existing residential neighborhoods;

(b) Protect the ward's residential areas from incompatible land uses and from

activities generating excessive traffic, parking, noise, litter and other damaging environmental impacts;
(d) Encourage development of adequate neighborhood shopping and support services;
(e) Promote the vitality of the ward's commercial areas and to increase employment and economic growth;
(f) ***Encourage the appropriate and compatible development of land adjacent to the Fort Totten and Takoma Metrorail stations;*** and
(j) ***Coordinate land use decisions applicable to Ward 4 with Comprehensive Plan provisions, to revise land use regulations to incorporate appropriate changes in the ward and to establish procedures for monitoring public and private land use actions for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element and accompanying Plan Maps.***

1530 WARD 4 ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF LAND USE/ZONING

1530.1 The policies in support of land use/zoning are as follows:
(c) ***Complete a Takoma Metrorail Station Area Study to determine the appropriate mix, scale, intensity and design of development***:

(1) The area near the intersection of Blair Road and Cedar Street, N.W., has been the subject of a number of land use proposals. Any development in this area may adversely impact existing nearby residential development and the Takoma historic district; and

(2) Recommended actions:
(A) Update the existing study and prepare an action plan to determine the appropriate mix of uses, scale and intensity of development at the Takoma Metrorail Station area to ensure compatibility with existing development;
(B) ***Provide land use and zoning actions that encourage new and accommodate existing town houses and garden apartment development and that discourage more industrial use;***
(C) Coordinate new commercial development activities around the Takoma Metrorail Station area through the Joint Development Review Process;
(D) Develop design criteria to include buffer zones that will protect and preserve the historic character of the area.

(e) Revitalize the ward's commercial areas and maintain the multi-use character of major commercial strips and nodes, while preserving the essential qualities of the ward's many stable residential neighborhoods that are in close proximity to commercial areas:
(1) Commercial uses in Ward 4 are encroaching on residential areas, particularly residential neighborhoods that abut Georgia Avenue and Kennedy Street and the Riggs Road commercial area; along 14th Street and Colorado Avenue; and in the Takoma neighborhood. The revitalization of the ward's commercial areas without infringement on nearby residential areas is crucial; and

(2) Recommended actions:
(B) ***Maintain and encourage the multi-use character and vitality of residential and commercial uses on Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street, 14th Street and in Takoma***; and discourage the extension of commercial activity into the abutting residential neighborhoods;
(emphasis added)

(g) ***To eliminate and mitigate negative impacts that existing industrial development has on nearby residential areas, primarily in the Takoma***, Petworth, Lamond-Riggs and Fort Totten neighborhoods:
(emphasis added)

(1) ***Residential neighborhoods must be protected from nearby industrial and commercial uses and activities that generate excessive traffic, noise, litter, encroachment and other damaging environmental impacts.*** The uses are near the Takoma, Petworth, and Lamond-Riggs neighborhoods. ***In the Takoma neighborhood, for example, these situations exist: a gas station along Blair Road, N.W., at the intersection of Cedar Street; a commercial garage performing inside and outside auto hauler at the intersection of Sandy Spring Road on Van Buren Street; various industrial uses (catering, glass, commercial auto repair shop, and car storage and repair shop) on Spring Street and Blair Road, which is adjacent to Chestnut, Dahlia and Fifth streets residential homes***; a bus/van storage and maintenance yard with temporary trailers along Sandy Spring Road between Laurel and Van Buren streets N.W. and a car storage area bounded by Blair Road and Fourth Street N.W. adjacent to residential homes on Fourth and Aspen Streets N.W.;
(emphasis added)

(2) Recommended actions:
(A) Initiate studies of industrial areas in the Takoma and Lamond-Riggs neighborhoods and complete the study of the Upshur/Taylor Street industrial area. The studies should deal with an appropriate level of industrial and commercial development while ensuring compatibility with and buffering of surrounding residential uses; and
(B) ***Direct major new industrial development, as well as existing uses that adversely affect residential neighborhoods, to the city's industrial parks and areas that are designated for industrial uses, such as the New York Avenue corridor.***
(emphasis added)

(h) Evaluate and recommend appropriate changes to the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations and Map to make them consistent with the Comprehensive Plan:
(1) Revise and update the D.C. Zoning Regulations and Map to conform them with the densities and uses indicated in the Comprehensive Plan;

(2) Recommended actions:
(A) Conduct a further survey and analysis of land uses and zoning in Ward 4 to identify locations where zoning and land uses are not consistent and submit findings and recommendations to the Zoning Commission for action;
(B) Prepare reports to the Zoning Commission recommending appropriate rezoning actions to make ward zoning not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Non-conforming Uses and Structures:
Chapter 20, 11 DCMR, regulates non-conformities in the following categories:

- Non-conforming use of land;
- Non-conforming structures devoted to conforming use; and
- Non-conforming use with a structure ,whether the structure is conforming or non-conforming

Non-conformities may not be expanded. If a non-conforming structure is damaged to an extent of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost of reconstructing the entire structure, it must be brought into conformance with current code conditions.

It appears from early analysis that one non-conforming use may be created if the Subject lots are changed from C-M-1 to C-2-A. Currently, the lots are occupied by a catering establishment, miscellaneous office and warehouse uses, a stain glass manufacturer, and a vacant lot used to store autos. Manufacturing is not a permitted use in a C-2-A district. The glass manufacturer is an existing tenant at 7058 Blair Road, Lot 834. The non-conformity may not be an issue because the owner of the property, Landis Construction, is considering new construction on the site in conformity with the proposed zone.

Traffic and Parking:
The area of the proposed rezoning is located within several blocks of Takoma Metrorail station, is adequately served by public transportation and has pedestrian access.

AGENCY REFERRALS AND COMMENTS

If the case is set down for public hearing, it will be referred to the following government agencies for review and comment:

1. Department of Public Works (alley use, transportation parking and street cuts);
2. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department;
3. Metropolitan Police Department;
4. Department of Housing and Community Development
5. National Capitol Planning Commission

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The site is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 4B. There are several additional community groups and organizations who have been involved in the development of the small area plan: Historic Takoma; the Gateway Coalition; Plan Takoma; and Takoma United. OP has made presentations to the affected ANC and community organizations. Based

upon community reaction at these meetings, there appears to be minimal opposition to the proposed map amendment.

Attachments
Aerial Map

AA/vr