GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

DATE: July 7, 2004

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: JLS for Andrew Altman, Director OP

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-02
East M Street Target Area of the Near Southeast Plan

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-02
EXHIBIT NO. 17

I. Background

On June 17, 2004, the Zoning Commission held a Public Hearing to review a proposal for zoning map and text amendments for the East M Street target area of the Near Southeast neighborhood. OP recommended CG/W-3 zoning, and the Zoning Commission advertised CG/W-2 zoning in the alternative for Squares 1025S, 1025E, and 1048S. OP also recommended that the Capitol Gateway Overlay District (CG Overlay) be applied to the area, with minor amendments as it would apply to the CG/W-3 zone in the East M Street area.

At the Public Hearing, the Office of Planning reiterated it position that CG/W-3 is appropriate for most of the land which is currently zoned high density industrial, but that CG/W-2 may be appropriate for lands currently zoned CM-1, which are in closer proximity to the Capitol Hill neighborhood to the north. The Zoning Commission requested that the Office of Planning provide 3 Dimensional representations showing the heights and massing of buildings under the various options.

II. 3 DIMENSIONAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE VARIOUS OPTIONS – Attachment I

OP has prepared views for four different zoning scenarios:

1. Zoning in existence prior to this zoning action – i.e. M, CM-1 and CM-2
2. CG/W-3 zoning as originally proposed by OP;
3. CG/W-3 with CG/W-2 on Squares 1025E, 1025S and 1048, as advertised in the alternative; and
4. CG/W-3 with CG/W-2 on CM-1 portions of the area, adjacent to Capitol Hill.

Heights and densities shown are for the maximum permitted under the base zoning (i.e., they do not show PUD potential, or limits imposed for different uses, such as the FAR limit of 2.0 for commercial development in the W-2 zone).

III. ANALYSIS OF 3 D REPRESENTATIONS

OP continues to believe that CG/W-3 is appropriate for portions of the area zoned M and CM-2. This is because CG/W-3 would:

1. be consistent with the densities and heights permitted under the existing zoning;
2. provide for the form and amount of development anticipated in the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and Near Southeast Plans;

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3. provide for the form and density of existing and proposed development in the area; i.e. CG/W-3 would not represent a significant "down-zoning" of development potential;
4. be consistent with zoning heights and densities along the remainder of the Southeast waterfront, including Buzzard Point, Southeast Federal Center, and Florida Rock sites;
5. recognize site topography, in that the land slopes down from the north end of the study area (adjacent to the freeway) to the south end (Water Street) by as much as 10 meters, or over 30 feet. The grade at Water Street is almost 20 feet lower than that of the only existing buildings in the area, on the Washington Gas site, which have heights of 60 – 73.5 feet. As such, buildings measured from the Water Street elevation will have roof heights consistent with those of existing buildings; and
6. be consistent with development on the Washington Navy Yard site[1], with includes large scale buildings to heights of greater than 60 feet (as permitted by W-2) set back an equivalent distance from the riverfront as future development in the East M Street area. In particular, newer development in the Navy Yard compound includes buildings of 70 – 100 feet in height, set back about 170 feet from the riverfront, as well as lower buildings of 30 to 50 feet in height set back less than 100 feet from the riverfront. In addition, the Navy Yard includes buildings of 70 to 90 feet in height along 11th Street SE, directly adjacent and to the west of the subject area.

OP does not believe that CG/W-2 is appropriate for lands along Water Street SE, as advertised in the alternative. This is because CG/W-2 would:

1. provide for significantly less development potential on these brown field sites. For example, the owner of the Washington Gas property has testified that the level of contamination would not permit residential development on the land. CG/W-2 permits a maximum FAR of 2.0 for non-residential development, whereas the existing zoning permits an FAR of 6.0 for non-residential development:

Zone	MAX. FAR			Height
	Residential FAR, max.	Commercial FAR, max.	Total FAR	
M (existing)	0.0	6.0	6.0	90
CG/W-2	4.0	2.0	4.0	60
CG/W-3	6.0	5.0	6.0	90

2. greatly restrict the ability of landowners to address AWI and Near Southeast Plan goals and objectives for the provision of vibrant development with attractive new access to the waterfront;
3. not permit the form and density of development anticipated and proposed by various land-owners in the area; i.e. CG/W-2 would represent a significant "down-zoning" of development potential from what exists at present, particularly since the residential FAR cannot be utilized;
4. not be consistent with zoning heights and densities along the remainder of the Southeast waterfront, including Buzzard Point, Southeast Federal Center, and Florida Rock sites;
5. not recognize site topography, in that, under CG-W-2, the rooftops of buildings along Water Street would be effectively 20 to 35 feet lower than those of the existing Washington Gas site office buildings; and

[1] All dimensions are approximate and are heights above grade at the base of the building.

6. appear to make one or both of the existing Washington Gas office buildings non-conforming structures.

However, CG/W-2 would be an appropriate zone for the portions of the area currently zoned CM-1, in the north-east portion of the East M Street area, mainly owned by the District and Consolidated Rail, and covered with freeway and rail line. Portions of this area are closer to both the Anacostia River to the south and to lower density residential lands in Capitol Hill to the north. CG/W-2 zoning over this area would provide for development potential more consistent with that of the existing zoning – CM-1 permits a maximum density of 3.0 FAR (non-residential), and a maximum height of 40 feet, while W-2 permits a density of 4.0 FAR (including residential), and a maximum height of 60 feet. This would also be more in keeping with that of the lower density and lower height Capitol Hill neighborhood to the north.

If the Zoning Commission has concerns that buildings facing Water Street could use the higher M Street as a measuring point for height, OP suggests an addition to the CG/W-3 text that clarifies where height would be measured from; i.e. that buildings with frontage along Water Street would have height measured from Water Street.

ZONING COMMISSION CASE #04-02, East M Street Area – VIEW #1

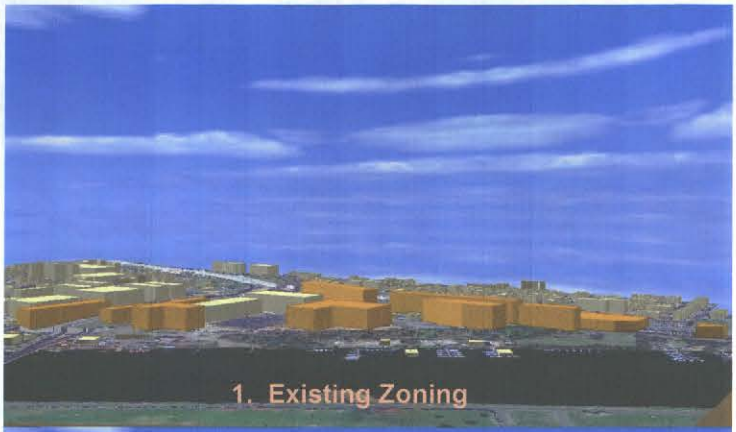








ZONING COMMISSION CASE #04-02, East M Street Area – VIEW #2









ZONING COMMISSION CASE #04-02, East M Street Area – VIEW #3









ZONING COMMISSION CASE #04-02, East M Street Area – VIEW #4







