GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Office of the Director

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 20, 2004

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

THROUGH: Andrew Altman, Director OP
Ellen McCarthy, Deputy Director OP

FROM: David J. McGettigan, AICP

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-22
Capital Children's Museum Site
Abdo Development L.L.C.
Zoning Map Amendment/PUD @ Square 751 Lot 13

Summary

The applicant seeks approval of a zoning map amendment to change the zoning designation of Square 751 Lot 13 from a mixture of C-3-B and C-3-A to C-3-C in conjunction with a consolidated PUD in accordance with 11DCMR §24.

Lot 13 is currently improved with a complex of structures used by the National Children's Museum. The lot takes up the entire square. The applicant proposes to renovate the oldest structures on the site and construct two new structures for use as 435-445 residential condominium units. The total gross floor area is approximately 599,134 square feet (5.72 FAR) and the two new structures are proposed with a height of 110'. Approximately 500 parking spaces will be provided in an underground garage. Major amenities include affordable housing and rehabilitation and restoration of historically significant portions of the existing structure. OP believes that the development of the Capital Children's Museum site is a priority for achieving the goals of the H Street Plan and to support the mission and the future relocation of the Capital Children's Museum.

Recommended Action:
The Office of Planning recommends that this application be **set down** for a public hearing.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-22
EXHIBIT NO. 11

ZONING COMMISSION
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Background

The Development is located at the edge of Near Northeast in the Eckington Yards area of Washington. The site takes up the entirety of Square 751 and consists of approximately 104,756 square feet. It is bounded by Eye Street, NE on the north, H Street, NE to the south and 2nd and 3rd Streets, NE on the west and east. Across 2nd Street to the west, spanning the entire block is the Railway Express Building, which was converted into offices in the 1980's. Across Eye Street to the north, commercial offices occupy the entire block frontage. To the east across 3rd Street are five rowhouses and a large property that still contains the canopy and pump islands from a previous Amoco gas station. To the south across H Street is a vacant lot currently used as a commercial parking lot. The H Street frontage represents an exceptional constraint on the site as the Hop Scotch bridge over the rail yard begins to rise from 3rd Street to pass over 2nd Street.

The property is improved with several structures. The main building, a four story brick structure initially built as a convent in 1873, St. Joseph's Home for the Aged of the Little Sisters of the Poor, was modified with various expansions through the 1960s and most recently modified and used as a museum and private school by the National Capital Children's Museum. The sprawling institutional building (the "Museum Building") is located on the southeast corner of the site and takes up most of the H Street and 3rd Street frontages of the property. A centrally located two-story structure (the "Administration Building") provides office space for the museum. The northwestern portion of the square is open space. The entire campus is surrounded by a high brick wall with gates opening on 3rd Street for vehicles and 2nd Street for pedestrians.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to renovate the oldest portion of the existing structure, remove the 1960's additions and construct two new 110' high, 11-story multi-family dwellings. Approximately 55 units will be created in the Museum Building and 435-445 units will be created in the new structures. The proposed dwellings will be for sale units. The Administration Building will be renovated and used to provide recreation space for the development. Below grade parking of approximately 500 spaces will be provided under the new buildings. The vehicular entrance to the parking as well as the required loading facilities will be located off of Second Street. A drop off area will be provided by an internal drive looping around the Administration Building that will come out mid-block on Eye Street. Pedestrian connections to the Hop Scotch Bridge on H Street will be provided in two locations. Ground floor units with street frontage will open directly onto the street. The landscaped open central courtyard will be open to the neighborhood and serve as an amenity for the new residents as well as the neighborhood. The applicant will explore further opportunities for providing "green technologies" in the buildings.

Public Benefits and Project Amenities

The applicant proposes the following public benefits and project amenities:

1. Housing and Affordable Housing Units
2. Historic Preservation of Private Structures
3. Urban Design and Architecture
4. Site Planning and Efficient and Economical Land Utilization
5. Effective and Safe Vehicular and Pedestrian Access
6. Revenue for the District
7. First Source Employment Program
8. Local Business Opportunity Program

Planning And Zoning Issues

Comprehensive Plan

In evaluating the Children's Museum development for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Commission should consider compliance with major themes of the Comprehensive Plan, compliance with the objectives and policies of the major elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and consistency with the Generalized Land Use Map. Major themes within the Comprehensive Plan relevant to this development are:

1) Stabilizing and improving the District's neighborhoods, and;
2) Preserving and Promoting Cultural and Natural Amenities
3) Respecting and improving the physical character of the district;
4) Preserving and ensuring community input
5) Increasing the Quantity and Quality of Employment Opportunities in the District

Therefore, issues to consider in evaluating this project include the impact on the stability and physical character of the community and community input. Additionally, a newly adopted (by Council) Strategic Plan for the revitalization of the H Street corridor provides additional guidance for evaluating this development.

Specific goals within some of the major elements of the Comprehensive Plan further support these themes.

- The Housing Element sets a goal to support homeownership among moderate-income households. The project proposes to provide affordable housing and the creation of new housing.
- The Urban Design Element encourages rehabilitation, rather that demolition and redevelopment of architecturally significant and structurally sound structures in deteriorating areas. The renovation and adaptive reuse of the original historic buildings on the site is consistent with this goal. Preservation of key structures like the Little Sister's of the Poor complex are important to creating a sense of place for the H Street corridor and contributing to revitalization of the corridor.

- The Environmental Protection Element would support developments that improve the overall quality of the environment through preservation and protection of natural features, establishment of water quality control practices, and planting of new vegetation. The project proposes to plant additional landscaping, provide storm water management, and will consider incorporating green technologies in the building.
- The Transportation Element supports land use arrangements that simplify and economize transportation services, including mixed-use zones that permit the co-development of residential and nonresidential uses to promote higher density residential development at strategic locations, particularly near appropriate Metrorail stations. The proposed development is within close proximity to Union Station and on the edge of the central employment area and will increase the residential component in the area's mix of uses.
- The Land Use Element designates the Northeast No. 1/Ekington Yards No. 1 area as a "Development Opportunity Area" and as a "Special Treatment Area". The area is targeted for redevelopment with new commercial and mixed-use developments. Development opportunity areas offer opportunities for new growth and development and are generally located in underutilized areas of the District with proximity to transit and where development can be used to improve neighborhood quality and stability. Special treatment areas identify areas where well coordinated, revitalization planning is needed. The subject property is part of District revitalization effort in the H Street, NE Corridor.

The proposed development will provide a gateway to H Street NE and support the objectives of the H Street NE Strategic Development Plan to develop this portion of the corridor as an "Urban Living" area with denser residential development. The project will further the goals of the plan to create a signature project on this site and to help create a critical mass of residents in the area that will patronize the restaurants, shops and services in the revitalized H Street Commercial Corridor. The plan also recommends restoration and reuse of the existing buildings as potential historic resources to the corridor. The Children's Museum is identified in the plan as one of these resources.

Another critical component of the H Street Plan is connections to the street. The proposed development will provide two pedestrian connections to H Street and provide substantial upgrades to the streetscape. This, along with the significant addition of new housing, can be a catalyst in the re-emergence of H Street as a thriving corridor. The proposed project contributes to each of the elements of the vision for H Street developed in the plan:

1) Quality design and development – by providing a quality site plan and quality architecture.
2) Respect for diversity, heritage and diversity – by preserving and adaptively reusing the museum.
3) A rich mix of uses – by providing new residents where the plan calls for them.
4) Leveraging transit investments – by efficiently utilizing land in proximity to

transit.

5) Streets for people – by providing pedestrian accessibility to H Street and properly located and well designed vehicular access.
6) Quality public realm – by contributing substantially to the redevelopment of the streetscape.

The development of this site with residential uses will fit into the character of the community, be consistent with the strategic plan and will be in conformance with the Generalized Land Use Map. On the Generalized Land Use Map the subject property is designated institutional (see Attachment 2).

PUD Area Requirements and Development Standards

The objectives of a PUD are to permit flexibility of development in return for the provision of superior public benefits, provided the PUD process is not used to circumvent the intent and purposes of the Zoning Regulations, or results in an action inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. In a C-3-C zone, a PUD has a 15,000 minimum lot area requirement; this project meets that standard.

The following table summarizes the zoning flexibility requested in the application:

	C-3-A	C-3-B	C-3-C w/PUD	Proposed
PUD Area (sq.ft.)	52,378	52,378	15,000 min. req.	104,756
FAR (res./non-res./total)	4.0/2.5/4.0 209,512 GFA	5.0/4.0/5.0 261,890 GFA	8.0/8.0/8.0 838,048 GFA	5.7/0.0/5.7 594,027 GFA
Height	65'	70'	130'*	110'
Lot Occupancy	75%	100%	100%	65%
Res. Rec. Space	15%	10%	10%	10%
Rear Yard	2½"/ft min.12 ft.	2½"/ft min.12 ft.	2½"/ft min.12 ft.	23 ft.
Parking	1/2 DU	1/4 DU	1/4 DU	500 spaces/475 DU (approx.)
Loading Spaces	1@20', 1@55'	1@20', 1@55'	1@20', 1@55'	2@20', 1@30', 1@50'

*Subject to the restrictions of the Height Act of 1910.

The flexibility requested is to allow the additional height and the additional FAR to provide an additional 122,625 square feet over a matter-of-right development.

Agency Referrals

This application is being referred to the following District government agencies for review and comment:

1. Department of Transportation;
2. Metropolitan Police Department;
3. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department;

4. Environmental Health Administration
5. D.C. Board of Education
6. Department of Housing and Community Development; and
7. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA).

Community Outreach and Involvement

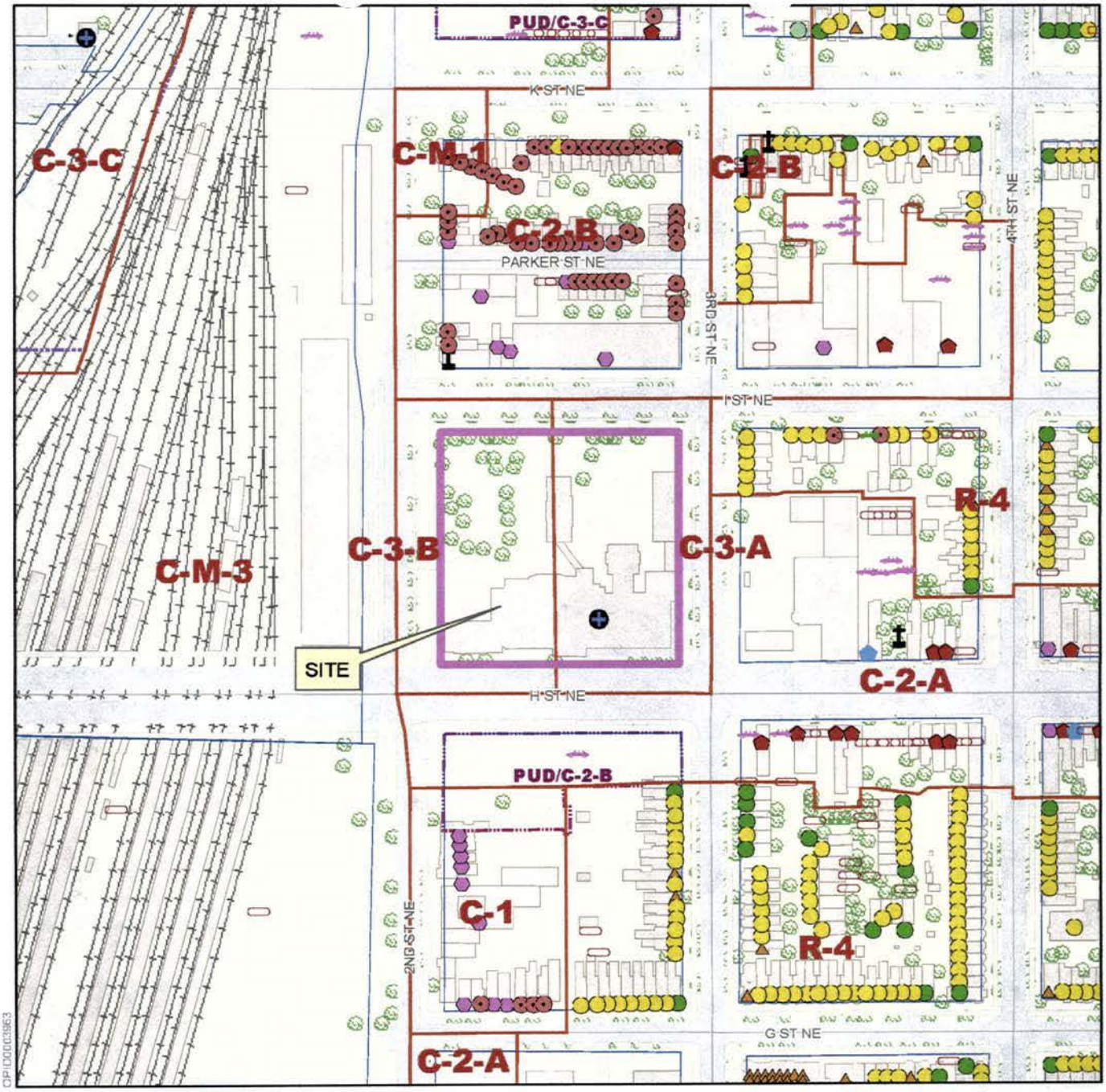
The applicant presented the plans and answered questions at a well-attended meeting at the Children's Museum sponsored by Council Member Ambrose. The plans were well received by the community at this meeting. The applicant will continue to work with ANC 6C and the surrounding neighborhood. The H Street Northeast Strategic Development Plan was created with substantial community input and the proposed development is consistent with this plan.

Recommendation

The Office of Planning finds the project to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the H Street Northeast Strategic Development Plan. OP recommends ZC 04-22 be **set down for public hearing**. OP will continue to work with the applicant to refine the environmental benefits, project amenities and architecture to minimize the impact of the proposed height of the new structures on the surrounding low scale residential neighborhood. OP believes that the development of the Capital Children's Museum site is a priority for achieving the goals of the H Street Plan and to support the mission and the future relocation of the Capital Children's Museum. Successful revitalization of the H Street NE commercial corridor is critical to the District and this project represents a key element in the plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Comprehensive Plan Map
2. Zoning and Land Use Map
3. Aerial Photo
4. Oblique Aerial Photos



Zoning and Land Use Map
Capital Children's Museum Site
ZC Case No. 04-22



Feet
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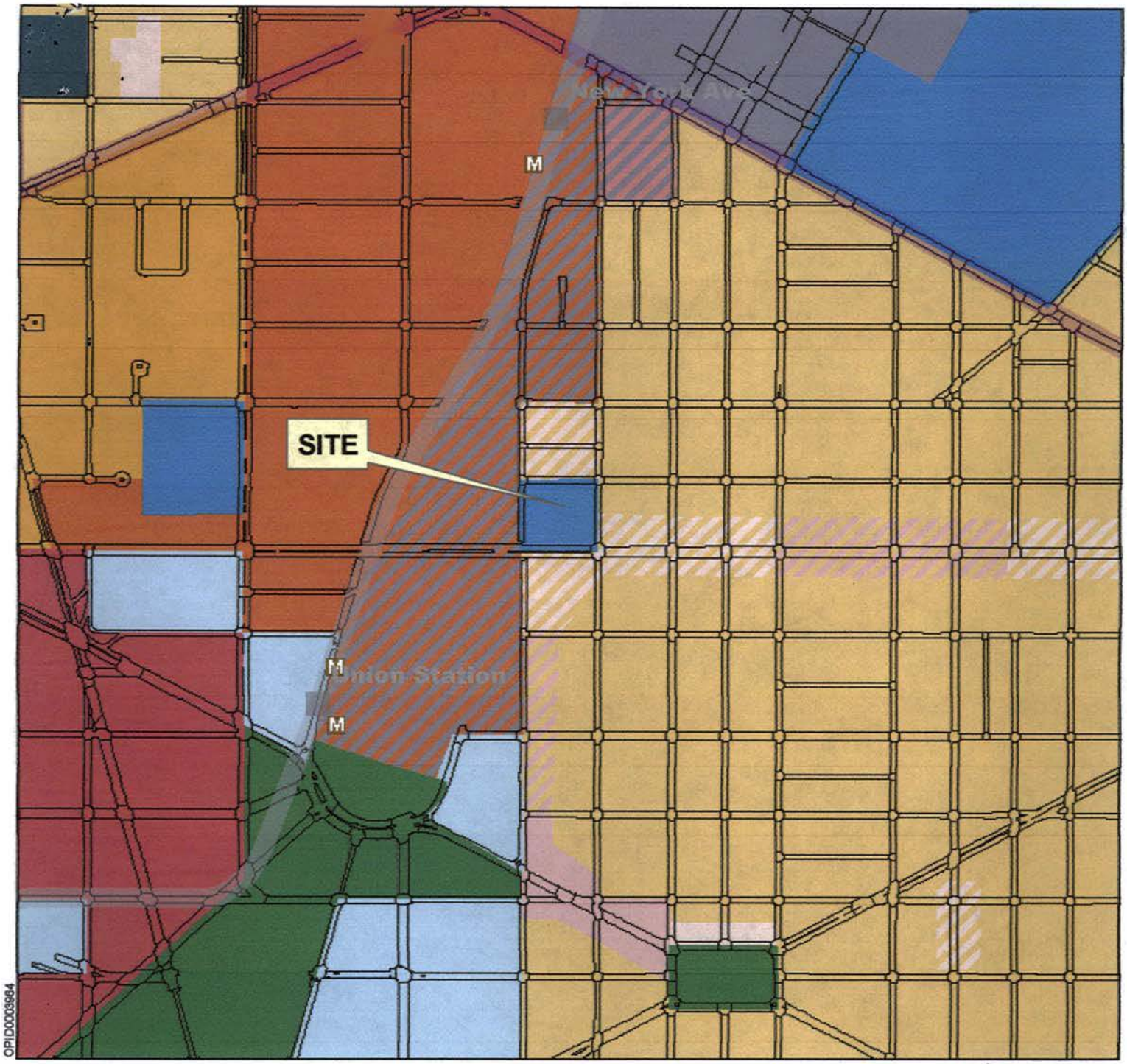
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District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ September 16, 2004

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

Legend

- Non-conforming SF Use
- Rowhouse
- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Semi-Detached
- Resid. Garage
- Multi-family
- Store
- Barber/Beauty Shop
- Office
- Parking - Special Purpose
- Religious
- Educational
- Embassy/Chancery
- Special Purpose
- Vacant



Comprehensive Plan Map
Capital Children's Museum Site
ZC Case No. 04-22

N

Feet

0 500 1,000

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Generalized Land Use Key

- Residential Low Density
- Residential Moderate Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Water
- Commercial Low Density
- Commercial Moderate Density
- Commercial Medium Density
- Commercial Med.-high Density
- Commercial High Density
- Federal
- Institutional
- Local Public
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Production and Technical Employment

Attachment 2



Aerial Photo
Capital Children's Museum
ZC 04-22

N

Feet

0 100 200

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Office of Planning ~ September 20, 2004

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Attachment 3







Aerial Oblique Photos
Captial Children's Museum
ZC Case No. 04-22

Government of the
District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Office of Planning ~ June 2, 2004

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Attachment 4