GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

★ ★ ★

Office of the Director

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-31
EXHIBIT NO. 1

RECEIVED
D C OFFICE OF ZONING
2004 OCT 29 PM 4:45

To: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

From: Andrew Altman, Director

Re: Setdown of Proposed Amendments to 11DCMR §199 Definitions of Clear Height, Floor to Ceiling, and of Clear or Low-Emissivity Glass

Date: October 29, 2004

RECOMMENDATION
The Office of Planning (OP) recommends the proposed map amendment to 11DCMR §199 to provide definitions for 1) *Clear floor to ceiling height, clear* and 2) *low-emissivity glass.*

OFFICE OF PLANNING PROPOSAL
The Zoning Regulations currently or prospectively contain multiple overlays specifying that ground floors of buildings must have *fourteen foot-clear heights,* or *fifteen foot clear heights,* or use *clear or low emissivity glass.* These specifications reflect new industry standards for quality retail space and other space not intended for living-units. The clear height is intended to be flexible enough to change with interior and market needs over time, and to stimulate pedestrian activity.

The Office of Planning (OP) believes it would simplify the Zoning Regulations to define these terms once, rather than defining them repeatedly within individual overlay or sub-district regulations. To this end, OP recommends that the Zoning Commission schedule a public hearing on the following additions to 11DCMR §199, along with appropriate supportive amendments to other sections that include the terms *clear floor to ceiling height, clear or low-emissivity glass,* or variations on these terms as maybe fine-tuned with the Office of Attorney General. .

OP proposes the following definitions.

1. **CLEAR HEIGHT, FLOOR TO CEILING**
   Floor to ceiling height is a vertical distance measured from the finished floor to the finished ceiling that is unobstructed by any of the following:

   a) Elements of the building structure other than columns and walls;
   b) Components of mechanical or plumbing systems; or
   c) Components of electrical systems, except lighting fixtures.

   If the ceiling is not finished, the distance shall be measured to the lowest point of any of the structural elements or systems referenced in a), b), or c) above.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-31
EXHIBIT NO.1

Discussion

This term has been included in several overlays over the last few years, including the Takoma, Southeast Federal Center and the Mount Vernon overlay The proposed language reflects the consensus that has emerged from the conversations among OP, the Zoning Commission, builders, architects, retailers and other interested parties. It was adopted by the Commission as part of the Takoma Overlay, and is being recommended by OP as an amendment to the Capital Gateway Overlay. The Zoning Commission set-down similar language for consideration as part of the Mount Vernon Triangle sub-area of the DD.

2. **GLASS, CLEAR AND/OR LOW-EMISSIVITY**
   Clear or Low-Emissivity Glass has a visible light transmission rating of at least seventy percent (70%) and an outdoor visible light reflectance rating of no greater than seventeen percent (17%).

Discussion

The measurable definitions are intended to ensure that clear or low-emissivity glass at the ground level is actually clear enough to allow pedestrians to easily see into the preferred use spaces of various overlays. Some of the clear glass in the Uptown Arts overlay is transparent, but so heavily tinted that it is difficult to see through it from the sidewalk. Defining "clear" and "low emissivity" helps ensure that the objectives of the various overlays are met, and ensures predictability for developers.

The definition is based on glazing industry standards It is the same language that was set-down by the Zoning Commission for consideration as part of the Mount Vernon Triangle sub-area of the DD.

CONCLUSION
The Office of Planning recommends the Zoning Commission set the definitions down for public hearing.

Aa/slc