

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



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J.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Travis Parker, Zoning Review Project Manager *TP*

DATE: June 1, 2009

SUBJECT: Supplemental Report for ZC #08-06-8
Proposed Amendments to Zoning Regulations – Low/Moderate Density Residential

At its April 9, 2009 hearing, the Zoning Commission requested OP to respond to any further public filings received after the hearing. Two filings were received after the hearing date, one on April 20 from ANC 6B and one on May 21 from the Citizens Association of Georgetown.

Both documents focus on the potential for unintended consequences resulting from the proposed change to the structure of residential zones and specifically the proposed new measurement of various bulk control standards. Both make the argument that the flexibility proposed under the new system might be “difficult to access” or take a long time to implement. However, these are arguments that can be made with even greater accuracy about the existing overlay system. OP has shown that achieving localized zoning standards under the proposed system will be faster and more straight-forward than under the current overlay regime while maintaining the same use and neighborhood characteristics sought by the overlays.

The underlying problem seen by these two bodies should not be assumed, therefore, to be with the structural change itself, but with the goals and measurement of individual building standards. OP has proposed different ways to measure side yards, rear yards, and lot occupancy that are designed to better replicate the existing building patterns of Washington D.C. There is concern expressed in these two filings that changes will result in altered neighborhood character. We have made a case that if the goal of these standards, as the Comprehensive Plan would lead us to believe, is to provide for compatible infill development, the proposed standards do so in a way that accounts for variations in lot size or existing building patterns, while maintaining the existing character and reducing the need for variances. Conversely, the existing standards result in buildings that vary with the size of the lot rather than the character of the neighborhood and result in a significant number of relief requests to build the type of conforming infill that the Comprehensive Plan encourages.

OP continues to recommend approval of the recommendations as written and will be available on June 8 to respond to questions from the Commission.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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EXHIBIT NO. 29

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