

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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Memorandum

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director *JS*
Development Review and Historic Preservation

DATE: May 2, 2008

SUBJECT: **Setdown Report** – Zoning Commission Case No. 08-++
Ward 8 - R-5-A Zoning Consistency Map Amendment

#08-12

I. RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia, the Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission setdown for public hearing this zoning consistency proposal to amend the zoning map to rezone portions of Ward 8 from R-5-A to R-2, R-3 or R-4 as shown on the maps in Attachments 1-3, and outlined in the chart below.

SQUARES OR PORTIONS OF SQUARES ZONED R-5-A	PROPOSED ZONES
5724, 5761, 5763, 5898, 5900, 5920, 5928, 5934, 5935, 5936, 5937, 5938, 5939, 5941, 5942, 5943, 5944, 5945, 5946, 5957, 6093, 6094, 6118, 6119, 6149, 6162, 6163, 6164, 6165, 6166, 6167, 6168, 6239, 6239S, and 6240.	R-2
5722, 5725, 5726, 5727, 5728, 5729, 5729W, 5730, 5734, 5740, 5755, 5777, 5778, 5824, 5842, 5844, 5892, 5895, 5901, 5920, 5921, 5922, 5923, 5981, 5982, 5983, 5984, 5985, 5994, 5995, 5996, 5997, 5998, 5999, 6000, 6001, 6116, 6117, 6125, 6126, 6128, 6128N, 6129, 6151, 6153, 6154, 6208, 6209, 6210, 6211, 6212, 6213, 6249, 6250, 6254, 6271 and 6277.	R-3
5786, 5787, 5788, 5790, 5812, 5817, 5905, 5924, 6123, 6157, 6158, 6159, and 6160.	R-4

II. BACKGROUND

This proposal includes portions of the R-5-A District throughout Ward 8. The areas are characterized by single-family detached and semi-detached dwellings and row houses. There are also many apartment

buildings in the affected areas, most of which appear to have been built in the mid to late 1940's. The wartime growth of Bolling Field and the Naval Research laboratory fueled demand for housing east of the river, which resulted in the construction of thousands of garden apartments. After the war, apartments continued to be constructed; which were mainly occupied by households displaced from urban renewal sites in the Southwest. While some of existing apartment buildings have recently been rehabilitated or converted into condominiums, new apartment buildings are being proposed and constructed, often on small infill lots through out the subject area.

Many Ward 8 residents, through the Comprehensive Plan process and other neighborhood planning and development forums, have indicated a desire to protect the lower density areas from further infill apartment development.

III. 2006 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In response to residents input noted above, the 2006 Comprehensive Plan provides clear direction for the proposed zoning map amendments to protect the single family character of established neighborhoods:

Ward 8 Comprehensive Plan Policies

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map designates the subject areas for low and moderate density residential uses. Single-family detached and semi-detached dwellings with front, back, and side yards are the predominant uses in low density areas. Row houses with some garden apartments are the predominant uses in moderate density areas, but these areas may also include detached and semi-detached dwellings. The proposed zoning amendments would allow development of single family homes and duplexes to match the existing neighborhood character, as well as row houses in any R-3 or R-4 District. New apartment buildings would not be permitted. Existing apartment buildings would be "grandfathered," meaning they could continue to operate but would not be able to expand.

The following policies and actions items in the Comprehensive Plan support the proposed rezoning:

Chapter 18 – Far Southeast / Southwest Area Element:

Housing Characteristics 1804

There were about 26,900 housing units in the Far Southeast/Southwest as of the 2000 Census. About 16 percent of these units were vacant—nearly double the citywide average. Compared to the rest of the city, the Planning Area has an abundance of small apartment buildings. In fact, 20 percent of the housing units were in 5-9 unit buildings, and almost 30 percent were in 10-19 unit buildings. Both of these percentages are more than double the citywide averages. Only about six percent of the housing units were single family detached homes, less than half the citywide figure. 1804.1

Planning and Development Priorities 1807

Three Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in the Far Southeast/Southwest during 2005 and 2006. Many residents, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, and civic association leaders provided input at these meetings, discussing local planning issues and priorities. There have also

been many meetings in the community not directly connected to the Comprehensive Plan, but focusing on other long-range planning issues...

Several important messages came across in these meetings, including:

- c. The Far Southeast/Southwest needs more housing suitable for families and young homeowners. The concentration of poverty in the community has resulted in part from the concentration of poorly maintained rental apartments and public housing, and few opportunities for home ownership. The established single family, row house, and duplex neighborhoods should be protected and enhanced. Additional low to moderate density housing should be encouraged as sites like St. Elizabeths (east campus) and Sheridan Terrace are redeveloped. In some areas, rezoning may be needed to promote the desired housing types—currently, much of the area is zoned “R-5-A” which perpetuates the garden apartment pattern.*
- d. The community recognizes that there are opportunities for increased density within the Planning Area—especially around the Metro stations at Anacostia and Congress Heights, at St. Elizabeths, and in neighborhood centers along Martin Luther King Junior Avenue and South Capitol Street. Transit-oriented development in these areas can provide opportunities for seniors, households without cars, young renters, and others. Residents would like an array of housing choices, but believe that higher-density housing should be limited to the areas listed above. Beyond these areas, many residents have expressed the opinion that deteriorating apartment complexes should be replaced with less dense housing over time. In fact, this is what has happened at Frederick Douglass, Stanton Dwellings, and Valley Green, with public housing replaced by mixed income townhomes and detached units. Many residents asked that the remaining vacant sites in the community be planned and zoned for single family homes rather than more garden apartments.*

Policies and Actions

Policy FSS-1.1.2: Conservation of Lower Density Neighborhoods

Protect existing single family housing within the Far Southeast/Southwest by appropriately designating such areas as “Low Density Residential” on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, and by zoning such areas for single family, rather than multi-family housing.

IV. ANALYSIS

The recently approved Comprehensive Plan calls for the examination of the R-5-A zone areas in Wards 7 and 8 to determine if the zoning is consistent with the existing character of the residential neighborhoods. In response to this, the Office of Planning initiated this examination by conducting a street by street windshield surveys over the past summer. OP also completed an analysis of predominant lot size and building character, and existing zoning. The study conducted by OP in 2007 revealed that there were many areas in both Wards 7 and 8 where the existing R-5-A zoning allows building forms which are not consistent with the existing housing types.

Based on the result of the study, OP is proposing map amendments for specified R-5-A properties throughout portions of Wards 7 and 8. Not all R-5-A zoned areas are included in this application. Areas which are included are:

1. predominantly low/moderate density in character; and
2. not part of a small area or other government plan for more intensive forms of development.

The current application is for appropriate R5A properties in Ward 8; similar recommendations for Ward 7 will be forwarded to the Zoning Commission in a separate application. Much of the recent development in Ward 8 neighborhoods has consisted of apartment buildings on vacant or abandon parcels located in low/moderate density areas. There are many such parcels still available for future development and under current zoning regulations, more apartment structures are likely to be proposed and constructed. The proposed zoning map amendments would allow development of single-family homes, duplexes and, in areas proposed to be zoned R-3, row houses consistent with existing neighborhoods character, but would restrict new apartment buildings. Most areas which are already predominantly apartments have been excluded from this proposal.

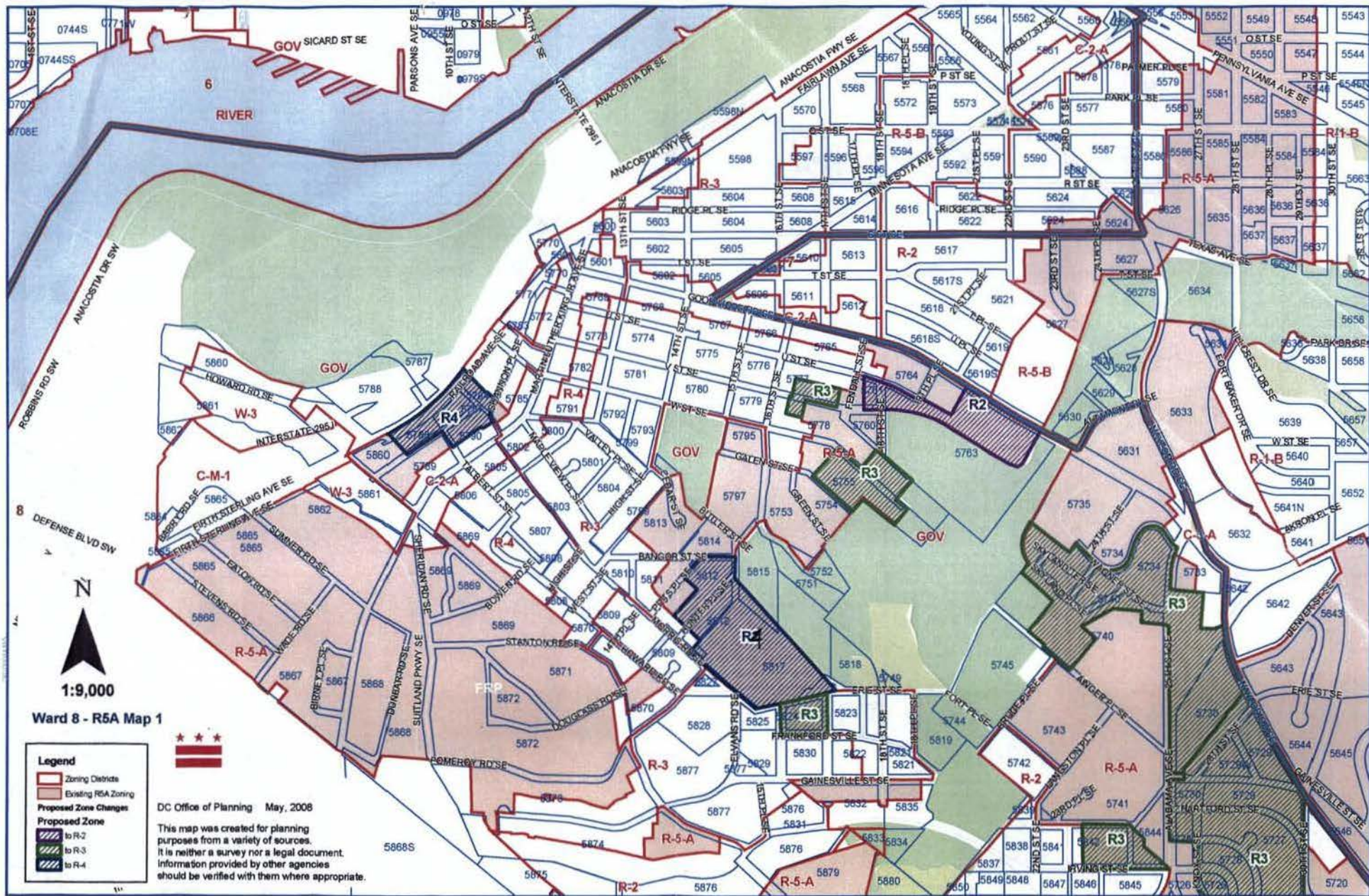
V. RECOMMENDATION

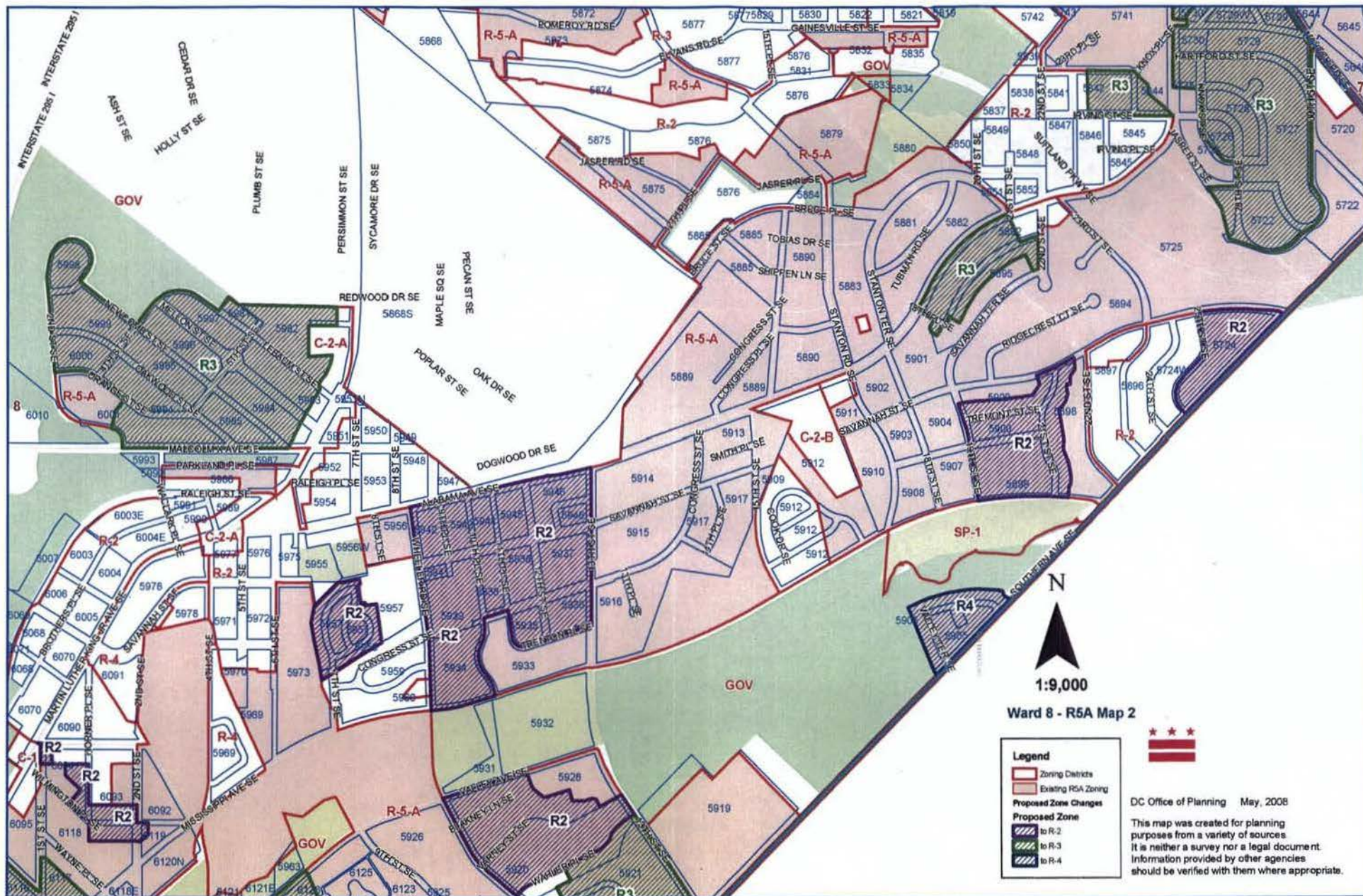
The proposed map amendment would change the zoning for specific sites within Ward 8. Although apartment development potential would remain in this Ward (in remaining R5A zoned areas and in other zones which permit that use), this proposal would further the Comprehensive Plan objective to ensure that the zoning in the predominantly lower density areas is consistent with neighborhood character. OP recommends that the Zoning Commission setdown the proposed amendment to the Zoning Map to change the zoning from the R-5-A district to the R-2, R-3 or R-4 district for the following lots and squares:

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5786, 5787, 5788, 5790, 5812, 5817, 5905, 5924, 6123, 6157, 6158, 6159, and 6160.	R-4

JLS/jm

Attachments: Maps 1-3 showing subject squares





DC Office of Planning May, 2008

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.

