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OFFICE OF PLANNING

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TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: *JL* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director
Development Review and Historic Preservation
DATE: July 18, 2008
SUBJECT: Final Report – Zoning Commission Case No. 08-12
Ward 8 - R5A Zoning Consistency Map Amendment

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 08-12
EXHIBIT NO. 5

I. RECOMMENDATION

OP recommends that the Zoning Commission approve the proposed amendments to the Zoning Map, to change the zoning of squares and portions of squares in Ward 8 from R5A to R2, R3, or R4, as listed in the table below and shown on the attached maps:

SQUARES OR PORTIONS OF SQUARES ZONED R-5- AND INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENT	PROPOSED ZONES
5724, 5761, 5763, 5898, 5899, 5900, 5920, 5928, 5935, 5936, 5937, 5938, 5939, 5941, 5942, 5943, 5944, 5945, 5946, 5957, 5973, 6093, 6094, 6118, 6119, 6149, 6162, 6163, 6164, 6165, 6166, 6167, 6168, 6239, 6239S, and 6240.	R-2
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, 5905, 5924, 6123, 6157, 6158, 6159, and 6160.	R-4

II. BACKGROUND

At its May12, 2008 public meeting, the Zoning Commission set this case down for a public hearing. This zoning map consistency case is in response to specific language in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the zoning in Wards 7 and 8 is more consistent with the low to moderate density character of individual neighborhoods.

In 2007, OP conducted a detailed study of the Ward 7 and 8 R5A zoned areas, including a street-by-street windshield survey and an examination of prevailing lots sizes and building forms in individual neighborhoods. This study confirmed that there are many areas in both wards 7 and 8 where the existing R5A zoning is not consistent with the existing housing types. While OP strongly supports the development of infill lots; this case is intended to ensure that new development is more consistent with prevailing neighborhood character,

Although this case addresses Ward 8 specifically, two companion cases address Ward 7 – ZC Case 07-30 for Ward 7E, Marshall Heights, which received final action approval on July 14, 2008, and ZC Case 08-22 for Wards 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D which the ZC, at its July 14, 2008 public meeting, set down for a public hearing, tentatively scheduled for September 15, 2008.

III. AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject area includes squares and portions of squares in all of the Ward 8 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC's 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, and 8E). The areas are characterized by single-family detached and semi-detached dwellings and row houses. Most of the housing stock was built prior to the adoption of the current zoning regulations in 1958. There are also some scattered apartment buildings, most of which were built in the mid to late 1940's, the result of wartime growth of Bolling Field and the Naval Research laboratory fueling demand for housing east of the river. After the war and into the 1960's, apartments continued to be constructed; only now the arriving residents included many households displaced from proposed urban renewal sites in Southwest. Some of existing apartment buildings have recently been rehabilitated or converted into condominiums. New apartment buildings are also being proposed and constructed, often on infill lots scattered throughout the subject area.

Many Ward 8 area residents, through the Comprehensive Plan process and other neighborhood planning and development forums, have strongly indicated a desire to discourage additional infill apartment development to protect the existing character of the lower density neighborhoods.

IV. 2006 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In response to residents input noted above, the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital provides clear direction for the proposed zoning map amendments.

Comprehensive Plan Policies for the Far Southeast / Southwest Area

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map designates the subject areas as low to moderate density residential. 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 R3 or R4 District, but not allow new apartment buildings. Existing apartment buildings would be "grandfathered," meaning they could continue to operate and could be renovated, but would not be able to expand.

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

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

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. 1807*

This transition has happened at Frederick Douglass, Stanton Dwellings, and Valley Green, with public housing replaced by mixed income town homes 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.

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.

V. ANALYSIS

Based on the OP study results, OP is proposing map amendments for specified R-5-A properties throughout portions of Wards 7 and 8. Much of the recent development in Ward 8 neighborhoods has consisted of apartment buildings on vacant or abandon parcels, often located in low/moderate density areas. There are many R5A zoned parcels still available for future development and under current zoning regulations, more apartment structures are likely to be proposed and constructed (although they would require Board of Zoning Adjustment approval).

The proposed zoning map amendments would allow development of single-family homes, duplexes and, in areas proposed to be zoned R3 or R4, row houses consistent with existing neighborhoods character and prevailing lot sizes, but would restrict new apartment buildings.

This rezoning initiative is “targeted” to include only those areas which currently are predominantly low/moderate density in character; are not part of a current plan which may call for more intensive forms of development; and tend to not be along major corridors or adjacent to metro stations. Most areas which are already predominantly apartments have been excluded from this proposal. Additional apartment development would be possible, on lots which retain R5A zoning, or on lots which have other zones that allow apartment development.

VI CONCLUSION

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the proposed map amendment to rezone specified properties in Ward 8 area from **R5A to the R2, R-3, or R4 Zone**. The proposed map amendment would allow for the zoning to be consistent with prevailing neighborhood character, and with the Comprehensive Plan as amended and enacted by the Council of the District of Columbia in the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2006”.

JS/
Project Manager John Moore

Attachments: Attachment 1-3 Maps of Subject Squares





