

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director for Development Review & Historic Preservation

DATE: October 18, 2010

SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case 10-17- Public Hearing Report** - Proposed zoning map amendment request from the National Restaurant Association for the property located at 1200 17th Street NW

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends approval of the application by the National Restaurant Association (the "Applicant"), to rezone Lot 809 in Square 160 from residential (DC/SP-2) to commercial (DC/C-4) zoning. The property is located at 1200 17th Street NW.

II. BACKGROUND

The Zoning Commission set down this proposal for public hearing at its July 26, 2010 meeting. The subject property is improved with an eight-story building constructed in 1964, pursuant to BZA Order 7236. In this case, the BZA granted zoning relief to construct a non-profit office building, which was only allowed via special exception in the zone. The existing building is approximately 90 feet in height and 93,572 square feet in size, with a floor area ratio of 5.5. As a result, the building currently is non-conforming as to floor area ratio. The applicant seeks rezoning of the property to facilitate its redevelopment with a new office structure.

**III. AREA/SITE DESCRIPTION**

This site proposed for rezoning is located at 1200 17th Street NW within Square 160. Square 160 is triangular in shape and bounded by Rhode Island Avenue NW to the north and west, M Street NW to the south, and 17th Street NW to the east. The square is located within a half-mile of two Metro stations, Farragut North to the south and Dupont Circle to the north, and is served by several Metro bus routes along Connecticut Avenue, 16th Street, and 18th Street NW. The square is mainly comprised of multi-story office buildings with some ground floor retail. The square is bisected by an 11' wide north-south public alley, which also splits the square into two zones. Lots west of the alley are zoned DC/C-4 while the eastern portion of the square is in the DC/SP-2 zone. Lot 809, the subject property proposed for rezoning, is the only lot within the square in the DC/SP-2 zone.

Adjacent properties to the north and east are within the DC/SP-1 and DC/SP-2 zones while areas to the west and south are in higher density zones including DC/C-3-C and C-4. Two historic districts are located nearby, including the Dupont Circle Historic District located north of the square across Rhode Island and the Sixteenth Street Heights Historic District to the east of the site.

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The subject property is located at the northwest corner of 17th and M Streets NW. The property is 17,013 square feet in size and is improved with an eight-story office building. Rhode Island Avenue NW, the adjacent street to the north, is 130' wide. 17th Street NW is 110' wide and M Street NW to the south is 90' wide in this location. Adjacent properties in all directions are improved with high density buildings, ranging in height from 90' to 130'.

View looking west of the subject property



IV. ZONING

The subject property is currently located in the DC/SP-2 zone. The purpose of the Dupont Circle Overlay (DC) is to ensure that new development is generally compatible with the scale and character of existing historic buildings in the area. The DC Overlay also seeks to protect the integrity of historically contributing buildings, enhance the residential character of the area, and ensure compatibility of development with the Comprehensive Plan by controlling the scale, height, and bulk of structures. As a result, all new development is limited to the height and floor area ratio standards prescribed by the underlying zone, including planned unit developments.

Special Purpose (SP) zones are designed to provide a buffer between certain commercial and residential zones. SP districts are transitional areas, typically adjacent to commercial zones with a mix of uses, and often contain buildings of historical significance. The SP-2 zone permits medium to high density development with a variety of uses including apartment buildings, institutions, embassies, and conversions to offices. Other uses such as new office buildings, hotels, and universities are also permitted, subject to special exception approval by the BZA.

The applicant requests the property be rezoned to the DC/C-4 zone, which would extend this zone to the entire square. The C-4 Central Business District zone encompasses the downtown office and retail core for the District. The zone permits a variety of retail, commercial, and business uses including high-density, mixed-use development. The C-4 zone allows a maximum building height of 130' and floor area ratio of 10.0, for lots abutting a street at least 110' in width. The following table compares the development allowances for both zones.

Table 1 – Comparison of Existing and Requested Zones

District	Predominant Use	Floor Area Ratio		Height
		Allowable Residential/ Max FAR	Allowable Non-Residential	
DC/SP-2	Mixture of commercial and residential uses or high density residential use	6.0	3.5	90 feet
DC/C-4	Downtown office and retail core with high density commercial, residential, and mixed uses	8.5 or 10.0, if street is at least 110' wide	n/a	110' or 130', if street is at least 110' wide

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map recommends high density commercial uses for the property. This land use, used to define the central employment district of the city, is typically comprised of mixed-use office and retail buildings over eight stories in height. High density commercial areas also generally have commercial zoning designations ranging from C-2 to C-5. Therefore, the proposed DC/C-4 zoning **would not be inconsistent** with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the site is designated as being within the Central Employment Area on the Generalized Policy Map. This area comprises the business and retail core of the District and the proposed map amendment to the DC/C-4, which includes the District's central business district zone, would not be inconsistent with this designation.

The proposed rezoning is supported by following policies of the Land Use, Economic Development, and Central Washington elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

Policy LU-1.1.3: Central Employment Area

Continue the joint federal/District designation of a "Central Employment Area" (CEA) within the District of Columbia. The CEA shall include existing "core" federal facilities such as the US Capitol Building, the White House, and the Supreme Court, and most of the legislative, judicial, and executive administrative headquarters of the United States Government. Additionally, the CEA shall include the greatest concentration of the city's private office development, and higher density mixed land uses, including commercial/retail, hotel, residential, and entertainment uses. Given federally-imposed height limits, the scarcity of vacant land in the core of the city, and the importance of protecting historic resources, the CEA may include additional land necessary to support economic growth and federal expansion. The CEA may be used to guide the District's economic development initiatives, and may be incorporated in its planning and building standards (for example, parking requirements) to reinforce urban character. The CEA is also important because it is part of the "point system" used by the General Services Administration to establish federal leases. The boundaries of the CEA are shown in Figure 3.2. 304.8

Policy LU-2.4.1: Promotion of Commercial Centers

Promote the vitality of the District's commercial centers and provide for the continued growth of commercial land uses to meet the needs of District residents, expand employment

opportunities for District residents, and sustain the city's role as the center of the metropolitan area. Commercial centers should be inviting and attractive places, and should support social interaction and ease of access for nearby residents. 312.5

Policy ED-2.1.1: Office Growth

Plan for an office sector that will continue to accommodate growth in government, government contractors, legal services, international business, trade associations, and other service-sector office industries. The primary location for this growth should be in Central Washington and in the emerging office centers along South Capitol Street and the Anacostia Waterfront. 707.6

Policy CW-1.1.1: Promoting Mixed Use Development

Expand the mix of land uses in Central Washington to attract a broader variety of activities and sustain the area as the hub of the metropolitan area. Central Washington should be strengthened as a dynamic employment center, a high-quality regional retail center, an internationally-renowned cultural center, a world-class visitor and convention destination, a vibrant urban neighborhood, and the focus of the regional transportation network. New office and retail space, hotels, arts and entertainment uses, housing, and open space should be encouraged through strategic incentives so that the area remains attractive, exciting, and economically productive. 1608.2

Policy CW-1.1.2: Central Washington Office Growth

Retain Central Washington as the premier office location in the Greater Washington region. Office development should generally be guided eastward from its current area of concentration, filling in the gap between 3rd Street NW and North Capitol Street (south of Massachusetts Avenue), and capitalizing on the growing demand for office space along North and South Capitol Streets and in the vicinity of the New York Avenue Metro station. A range of office space should be planned to meet the needs of high end, mid-range, and low-end office space users. 1608.3

Policy CW-2.6.1: Golden Triangle/Franklin Square as a Prestige Employment Center

Sustain the Golden Triangle/Franklin Square area as a prestige employment center, strongly supporting reinvestment in its office buildings to meet market demand. Continue to develop programs to meet the transportation needs of the local workforce, manage congestion on area streets, address security needs, and improve access for transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists. 1616.7

The requested map amendment would extend the DC/C-4 zone to all lots within Square 160. The proposed zone, which is designed to accommodate the central business district and a mix of high-density uses, would be applied to a site located within the central employment area and designated for high density commercial uses within the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, the requested change would allow additional opportunities to strengthen the office and retail core of the District at a development density that is compatible with the scale and height of existing adjacent buildings.

VI. ANALYSIS

In response to questions from the Commission regarding the surrounding context, the applicant has provided additional information about the uses and heights of adjacent buildings. Retail, office, and institutional uses are currently located within the subject square in buildings that are up to 130' tall. In addition, structures on the adjacent blocks to the north, east, and south range in height from 90' - 130'. Nearby uses include commercial office buildings and St. Mark's Cathedral.

The applicant proposes to redevelop the site consistent with its high-density commercial designation and has determined that a new structure, as opposed to renovation/expansion of the existing structure, is the most economically viable option. The applicant has provided a conceptual landscape plan and several renderings of the site, which show a structure that could be built as a matter of right in the requested zone. The massing diagrams depict a 130' structure with an approximate FAR of 10.0, the maximum permitted in the DC/C-4 zone. Based on the models depicted in the applicant's submission, matter-of-right development in the DC/C-4 zone would appear to be consistent with the bulk and mass of surrounding structures, particularly those to the south and west.

The SP-2 zone is identified as a medium-high zone district and limits the non-residential density to 3.5, which would limit new office construction to a medium density. The Dupont Circle overlay prohibits additional density through a planned unit development; therefore in order to redevelop the site with a modern office structure, the applicant has requested rezoning the site to the adjacent and consistent DC/C-4 zone district. The proposed map amendment would allow development on the site that is consistent with the uses, building height, and overall character of structures found on neighboring properties.

VII. COMMUNITY AND AGENCY COMMENTS

ANC 2B voted unanimously to support the requested zoning changes at their July 14, 2010 meeting, subject to the applicant retaining the park in the southwest corner of the site. The applicant has committed to fulfilling this request, as evidenced in their conceptual landscape plan. No other written comments have been received to date.

VIII. CONCLUSION

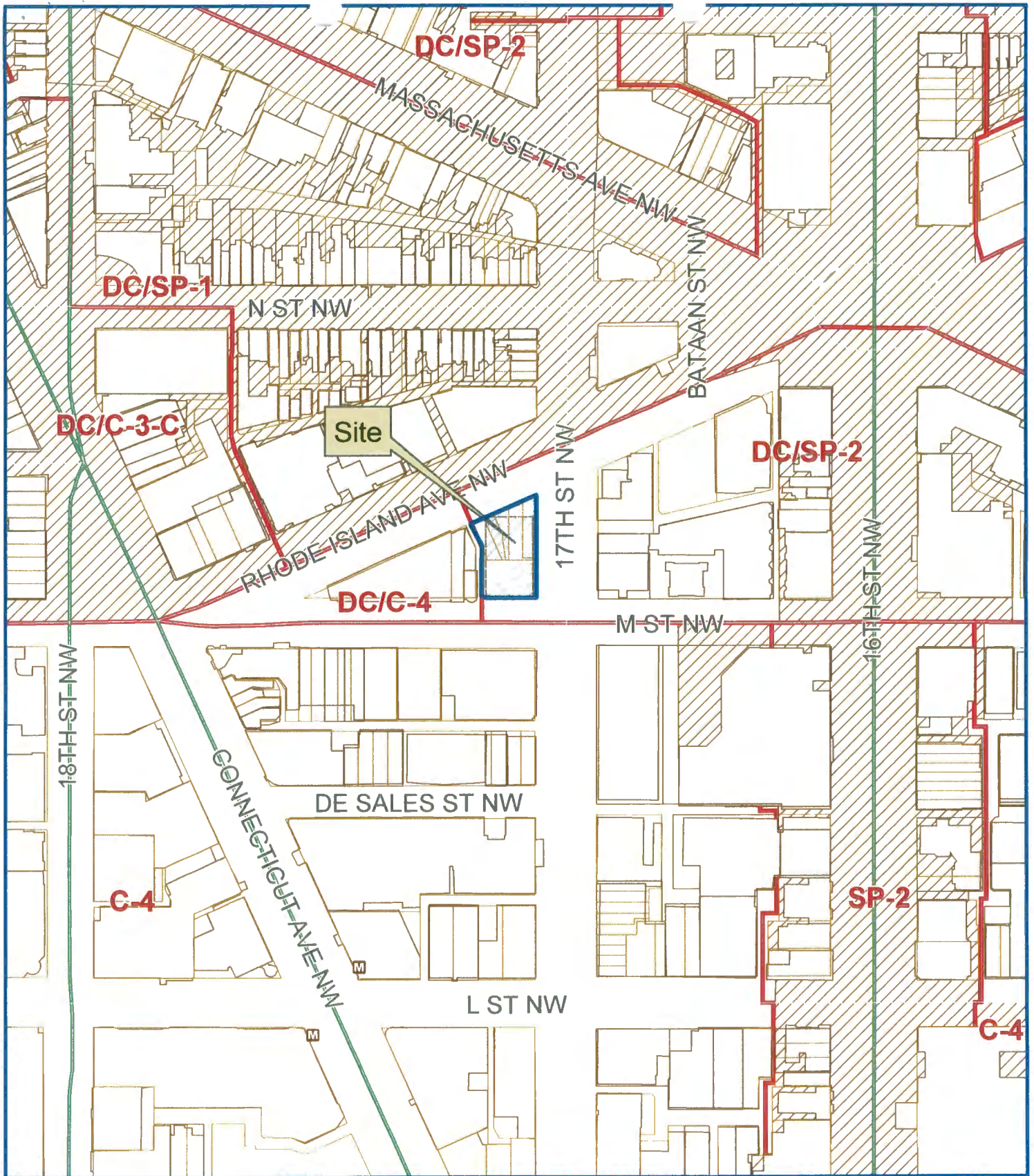
The Office of Planning **recommends** that the **proposed amendment** to the Zoning Map **be adopted** by the Zoning Commission. The request is **not inconsistent** with the city's Comprehensive Plan or with the character and zoning of the surrounding area. OP supports the DC/C-4 zone as being consistent with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use designation of high density commercial uses.

JS/ayj

Arlova Jackson, Project Manager

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Context Map
- Exhibit 2 – Aerial Photograph (2009)
- Exhibit 3 – 2006 Comprehensive Plan – Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit 4 – 2006 Comprehensive Plan – Generalized Policy Map



ZC 10-17 - 1200 17th Street NW Map Amendment **Exhibit 1 - Context Map**

Legend

	Zoning Districts		Designated Historic Districts
	Tax Lots		Metro Station Entrances
	Record Lots		Metro Bus Routes
	Buildings		

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ZC 10-17 - 1200 17th Street NW Map Amendment **Exhibit 2 - Aerial Photograph (2009)**

Legend

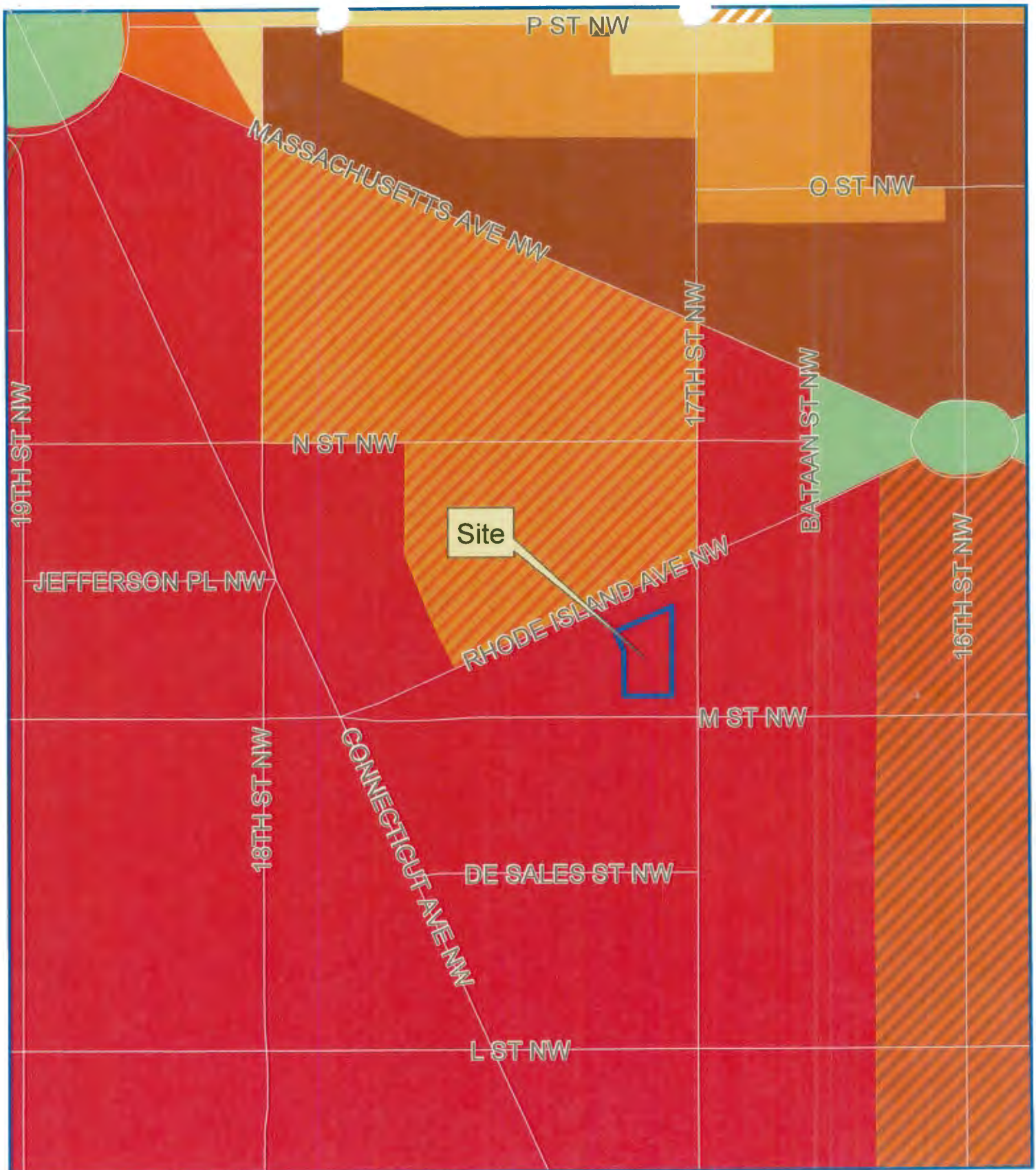
Zoning Districts

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ZC 10-17 - 1200 17th Street NW Map Amendment
Exhibit 3 - 2006 Comprehensive Plan
Future Land Use Map

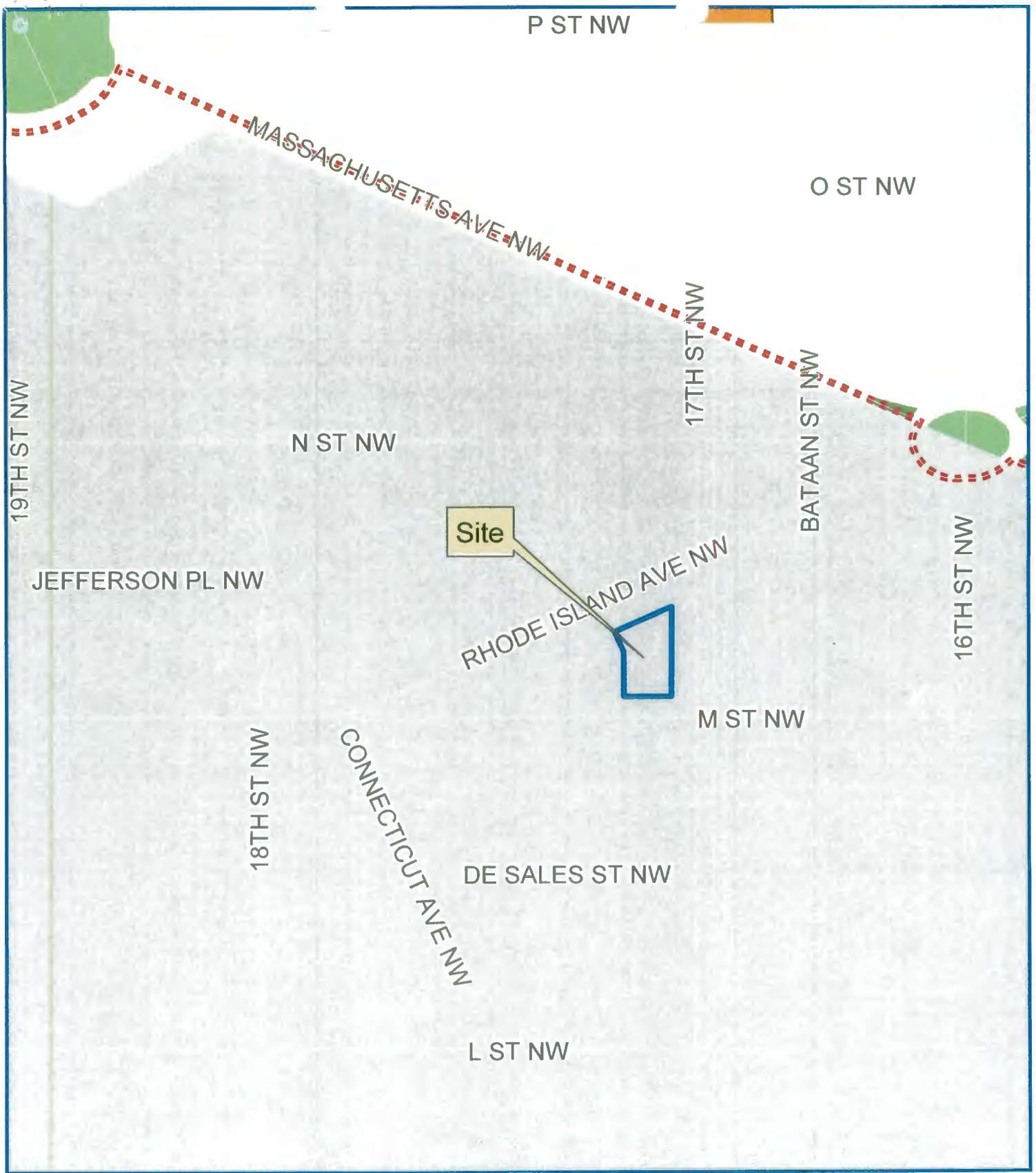
Legend

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Residential-Moderate Density | Parks, Recreation, and Open Space |
| Residential-Medium Density | Commercial/Residential-Medium Density |
| Residential-High Density | Commercial-Medium Density/Residential-High Density |
| Commercial-Medium Density | Commercial/Residential-Moderate Density |
| Commercial-High Density | |



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ZC 10-17 - 1200 17th Street NW Map Amendment
Exhibit 4 - 2006 Comprehensive Plan
Generalized Policy Map

- Legend**
- Central Employment Area
 - Central Washington
 - Neighborhood Conservation Areas
 - Parks