



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT	NCPC FILE NUMBER
Text Amendment to Subtitle K, Section 605.1, Front Setback	ZC 12-08E
Saint Elizabeths East, Parcel 18	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 00:00(06.00)46122
REFERRED BY	DETERMINATION
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia	Approval of report to the Zoning Commission
	REVIEW AUTHORITY
	Advisory per 40 U.S.C. § 8724(a) and DC Code § 2-1006(a)

The District of Columbia Zoning Commission has referred a proposed text amendment to Subtitle K, Section 605.1 of the Zoning Regulations for review and comment by NCPC. The proposed text amendment would preclude the required 10-foot front setback along 13th Street from applying to Parcel 18 (Square 58655, Lot 854) at Saint Elizabeths East. The St. Elizabeths East campus is controlled by the District of Columbia and is located east of the federally-owned West Campus which is the site of the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters. A new DC public library will be located on the southwest portion of Parcel 18, which fronts Alabama Avenue and 13th Street, SE and is adjacent to the Congress Heights Metrorail Station and transit parking lot (Square 58685, Lot 854 and zoned StE-18). The library will be built directly above the Metro Station. The portion of 13th Street that will connect to Alabama Avenue on the St. Elizabeths Campus has not been constructed at this time but has been designed and will be constructed in the near future to serve the new library.

The new library is fully funded, designed, and in the permitting stage. During review of the construction documents, it was discovered that the building did not consider the 10-foot setback from 13th Street, SE as required in the zoning. The placement of the building on the site is constrained by several conditions, including the need to accommodate a Metro vent shaft, a below grade Metro tunnel, and a Metro entrance and elevator. Providing the 10-foot setback would create additional friction points with Metro operations and facilities. In addition, District of Columbia Public Libraries (DCPL) has spent a significant amount of time working to develop a design that fits into this complex site context and aligns with other zoning and community goals. To meet the 10-foot setback requirement, the building would require a significant redesign, which would likely result in a smaller building footprint and inability to accommodate all the programs and services that are planned with significant input from the community. The proposed text amendment would eliminate the setback requirement to allow the permitting process to proceed and not affect the library's planned 2027 delivery date.

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) coordinated the proposed encroachment into the setback along 13th Street with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), who noted

support for the encroachment as the building has no active entrances into the library along the 13th Street façade and the proposed amendment would only be applicable to that portion of 13th Street which abuts Parcel 18.



Figure 1: Library Illustrative Site Plan depicting where the building encroaches into the 10-foot front setback

The proposed text amendment has limited application. Further, federal properties are not subject to local zoning and therefore would not be impacted by the proposed amendment. The closest federal property is Reservation 519, which is administered by the National Park Service as part of the Fort Circle Parks. This property is approximately one-third of a mile northeast of the site and would not be impacted by the proposed text amendment. The Department of Homeland Security Headquarters would also not be impacted. Further, the amendment does not appear to be inconsistent with the policies set forth in the federal elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* nor would it impact any other identified federal interest.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on March 6, 2025 and per 40 U.S.C. § 8724(a) and DC Code § 2-1006(a), I find the proposed Text Amendment to Text Amendment to Subtitle K, Section 605.1, Front Setback at Saint Elizabeths East, Parcel 18 would

not be inconsistent with the federal elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* nor would it adversely impact any other identified federal interests.



12/31/2025

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

Date