

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Matthew Jesick, Project Manager  
*JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development, Design, and Preservation

**DATE:** February 14, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing Report for Zoning Commission #24-23, Design Review in the Northern Howard Road (NHR) Zone – Cedar Tree Academy

### **I. RECOMMENDATION**

This application filed by Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School is for a new school building in a zone which establishes a mandatory design review by the Zoning Commission. Evaluation of the subject application is against the criteria contained in Subtitle K Chapter 10 – the Northern Howard Road Zone – and Subtitle X Chapter 6. The application successfully meets the relevant criteria, and the Office of Planning (OP) can therefore recommend **approval** of the design review application. OP also recommends **approval** of the relief from the minimum residential FAR requirement.

### **II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF**

Location	701 Howard Road, SE   Square 5861, Lot 89   Ward 8, ANC 8A		
Applicant	Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School		
Zoning	Northern Howard Road (NHR) (High density mixed use)		
Historic District or Resource	No historic district, but the Regulations require demonstration of coordination with the State Archaeologist, which the applicant has done.		
Site Area	77,530 sf		
Proposed Height	56 ft. 10 in.	Proposed FAR	0.99 (77,329 sq.ft.)
Estimated Students	680	Estimated Staff	135
Zoning Relief Requested	Minimum residential FAR – <i>special exception</i> – K § 1001.3 – 2.5 FAR required on each lot; no residential uses proposed		
Existing Development	Existing school building on west side of the lot; parking lot and open space on the east side; All access is from Howard Road.		

Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	Development of high-density mixed use buildings is underway on adjacent and nearby properties on Howard Road, pursuant to prior ZC approvals. It is anticipated that additional high density development will occur across Howard Road in the future. To the east is a low-density District of Columbia health facility, which is located outside of the NHR zone. The south side of the site is bordered by the I-295 to Suitland Pkwy. Offramp. The northern entrance to the Anacostia Metro is about 750 feet from the subject property. Please refer to the vicinity map below.
Proposal	New school building on the eastern side of the lot, with a new parking lot to the west.



### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a new school building on the same site as its existing school building. The existing building, built in 2002, is not large enough for the proposed expansion of the school, and does not have adequate classroom or ancillary facilities. The new building would allow for growth of the school to serve more grade levels, which would not only provide more schooling options for neighborhood families, but add to the long-term stability of Cedar Tree Academy. The new building would also provide important facilities such as a gym, cafeteria, library, and specialized classrooms. Please see below for a table comparing the existing and proposed schools.

	Existing School	Proposed School
Authorized # of students by Public Charter School Board	600	TBD
Actual # of students	399	680

	Existing School	Proposed School
Grade Range	PK-3 to 2 <sup>nd</sup>	PK-3 to 5 <sup>th</sup>
Full Time Faculty and Staff	89	135
Number of Stories	3	4
Floor Area	36,000 sf	77,329 sf
Classrooms	22	32
Library?	No	Yes
Gym?	No	Yes
Cafeteria?	No	Yes
Separate rooms for STEM, art and music?	No	Yes

The new school would be constructed on the eastern portion of the existing site. The existing parking lot will not be useable during construction, so the applicant will coordinate with WMATA to use parking in the metro garage across Howard Road. On-site drop-offs and pick-ups, however, will still be possible. Once the new building is complete, the old building will be demolished and a new parking lot installed in its place.

The new building will continue to have vehicular entrances on Howard Road, with traffic guided in a loop to the main entrance for drop-offs and pick-ups. Near the main entry, a separate deliveries entrance will be for daily deliveries of meals to the adjacent warming kitchen. The designated delivery space will be just across the drive aisle. A larger loading berth will be located south of the building. Bicycles will be accommodated with both short term and long term parking spaces. Pedestrian access will be enhanced with the widening of the sidewalk to nine feet eight inches, including space on the applicant's property.

The architecture of the building is appropriate for the immediate neighborhood, which is being developed with a modern aesthetic. The building will help to improve the street wall and activate the public space. Materials used include EIFS, metal panel, colored glass, and phenolic panels, a composite laminate material made of natural fibers bound with resins, then coated with acrylic to make it weather resistant. The color combinations should add vibrancy to the streetscape. Sustainability features of the project design include bio-retention, electric vehicle charging stations, and rooftop solar panels.

#### IV. ZONING SUMMARY

The subject site is zoned Northern Howard Road (NHR), which is intended to “Assure development of the area with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, and a suitable height, bulk, and design of buildings, as generally indicated in the Comprehensive Plan” (K § 1000.2(a)). Pursuant to Subtitle K § 1005, this zone includes a mandatory Zoning Commission review against specific criteria found in Subtitles K and X. The following table compares the proposal to the zoning. The application requests one area of special exception relief.

NHR	Requirement	Proposal	Relief or Flexibility
Lot Area	n/a	77,530 sq.ft.	Conforming

<b>NHR</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Relief or Flexibility</b>
<b>FAR</b> K § 1001.2 K § 1001.3	9.0 Total, max. 2.5 Residential, min.	0.99 Total No Residential	Total – Conforming <b>Res. – Requested (Spec. Ex.)</b>
<b>Floor Area</b>	n/a	77,329 sq.ft.	Conforming
<b>Height</b> K § 1001.4	130 ft. max.	56 ft.10 in.	Conforming
<b>Penthouse Height</b> K § 1001.5	20 ft.	12.5 ft.	Conforming
<b>Lot Occupancy</b> K § 1001.7	100%	25.3%	Conforming
<b>Side Yard</b> K § 1001.8	None required; If provided, 2 in. / ft. of height = 9.5 ft.	22 ft. – East 163 ft. – West	Conforming
<b>Rear Yard</b> K § 1001.9	12 ft. min.	40 ft.	Conforming
<b>GAR</b> K § 1001.12	0.2 min.	0.255	Conforming
<b>Vehicle Parking</b> K § 1007.2	(0.25 spaces / 1,000 sq.ft.) X 50% metro reduction = 10 spaces	33	Conforming
<b>Bicycle Parking</b> K § 1007.3	Long term – 10 Short term – 39	Long term – 10 Short term – 39	Conforming
<b>Loading</b> K § 1007.4	1 30 ft. berth 1 20 ft. space	1 Loading Berth 1 Service-Delivery Space	Conforming
<b>On-Site Energy Generation</b> K § 1008.2	Renewable energy system capable of generating 1% of bld. energy needs	Solar array on rooftop to comply with requirement	Conforming

## V. REVIEW CRITERIA

### Subtitle K Design Review Criteria

The zoning for this site provides specific criteria in Subtitle K § 1005 for Zoning Commission review of any proposed development. The following is OP’s analysis of the applicable standards to this application.

#### **1005 ZONING COMMISSION REVIEW OF BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND USES (NHR)**

**1005.1** *For all properties within the NHR zone, all proposed buildings and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in a substantial alteration of the exterior design, shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provisions.*

The applicant proposes a new school building, which would be subject to Zoning Commission design review.

*1005.2 In addition to proving that the proposed use, building, or structure meets the standards set forth in Subtitle X, Chapter 6, and the relevant provisions of this chapter, an applicant requesting approval under this section shall prove that the proposed building or structure, including the architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will:*

*(a) Help achieve the objectives of the NHR zone defined in Subtitle K § 1000.1;*

The purposes of the NHR zone include creating a mix of residential as well as commercial uses such as retail, service and entertainment. The NHR zone also provides for increased height and density while requiring a greater degree of affordable housing. It also seeks to encourage superior architecture, including active streets and a pedestrian and bicycle friendly design. The proposed educational use would complement the residential uses being constructed in the vicinity by offering a choice for elementary education. The building would also contribute to an active streetscape with interesting architecture, a visually engaging street wall, and minimal curb cuts.

*(b) Help achieve the desired use mix, with the identified preferred uses specifically being residential, office, entertainment, retail, or service uses;*

The applicant does not propose any of the uses specifically stated in this subsection, but rather a use that is existing on the site, and would continue to complement the other uses as necessary for a fully successful neighborhood. The designated street requirements of K § 1004.2(d) allow for educational uses to fulfill the frontage requirements for designated streets in the NHR zone.

*(c) Provide streetscape connections for future development on adjacent lots and parcels, and be in context with an urban street grid;*

Given the site's location adjacent to Suitland Parkway and I-295, it is not anticipated that the site plan for this property would need to accommodate street connections to other sites. The development of the property, however, would be in context with the streetscape of Howard Road, and contribute to the urban design intent of that street.

*(d) Minimize conflict between vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians;*

The proposed design would minimize the number of vehicular entrances to those necessary for typical school vehicular and loading activity. The entrance and exit driveways would be relatively narrow, one-lane entrances, separated by a wide pedestrian island. In order to enhance the pedestrian experience, the applicant proposes to widen the sidewalk along Howard Road to nine feet eight inches in width, including a significant amount of that dimension on private property.

- (e) *Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation;*

The design proposes transparent and articulated walls adjacent to public spaces, including a large entrance to the cafeteria from the adjacent sidewalk, and many windows into classrooms. The Howard Road façade would utilize an interesting frame around the perimeter, with two distinct recessed bays identified through the use of differing materials. See the rendering on Sheet A-031 of Exhibit 15A.

- (f) *Minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards; and*

The LEED scorecard, at Sheet A-040 of Exhibit 15A, indicates that the building would achieve enough points to qualify as LEED Gold under the LEED for Schools rating system. Sustainability features of the project design include bio-retention, electric vehicle charging stations, and rooftop solar panels.

- (g) *Promote safe and active streetscapes through building articulation, landscaping, and the provision of active ground level uses.*

The design proposes transparent and articulated walls adjacent to public spaces, including a large entrance to the cafeteria from the adjacent sidewalk, and many windows into classrooms. The Howard Road façade would utilize an interesting frame around the perimeter, with two distinct recessed bays identified through the use of differing materials. See the rendering on Sheet A-031 of Exhibit 15A.

The proposed design would minimize the number of vehicular entrances to those necessary for typical school vehicular and loading activity. The entrance and exit driveways would also be relatively narrow, one-lane entrances, separated by a wide pedestrian island. In order to enhance the pedestrian experience, the applicant proposes to widen the sidewalk along Howard Road to nine feet eight inches in width, including a significant amount of that dimension on private property.

Landscaping plans call for the preservation of two existing potential heritage trees at the street edge, with additional new street trees added in the planting strip. Flowering understory trees immediately adjacent to the building would also enhance the appearance of the public space.

1005.3 *Each application for review under this section shall provide a report on the following items as part of the initial submission:*

- (a) *Coordination by the applicant with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) regarding apprenticeship and training opportunities during construction and operation at the subject site, and the provision of any internship or training opportunities during construction and operation at*

*the subject site, either with the applicant or with contractors working on the project independent of DOES;*

According to Exhibit 15, p. 2, the applicant is working with organizations that “operate DOES-approved paid apprenticeship and training programs for local high school and college students in construction as well as operations...”. The application states that, specifically, individuals will be able to participate in an HVAC internship program.

- (b) *Efforts by the applicant to include local businesses, especially Wards 7 and 8 businesses, in contracts for the construction or operation of the proposed project;*

The applicant has conducted outreach to local CBE businesses and contractors, some of whom subsequently expressed interest to the project’s general contractor. The application states that the final contract is expected to include subcontracts with Ward 7 and 8 businesses. See Exhibit 15, page 3.

- (c) *Efforts by the applicant to provide retail or commercial leasing opportunities to small and local businesses, especially Ward 8 businesses, and efforts to otherwise encourage local entrepreneurship and innovation; and*

N/A

- (d) *Coordination by the applicant with the State Archaeologist and any plans to study potential archeological resources at the subject site, and otherwise recognize local Anacostia history.*

Exhibit 15 states:

*“The Applicant met with the State Archaeologist on November 21, 2024. At the direction of the State Archaeologist, the Applicant contracted with Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., which has prepared a Work Plan for the State Archaeologist's approval. Once the Work Plan has been approved, the Applicant will proceed with scheduling the Phase IB archaeological study in the field. [...] The Applicant expects to recognize local Anacostia history in an educational design feature for the Project.”*

1005.4      *The applicant shall also provide evidence that the information required by Subtitle K § 1005.3 has been served on any ANC on or adjacent to the NHR zone.*

OP is aware that the applicant has been in regular communication with the subject ANC. Exhibit 3D states that the applicant served the ANC with a statement of intent to file the present application. Further detail of the applicant’s neighborhood outreach is contained in Exhibit 3G, beginning on page 14.



### **Subtitle X Design Review Criteria**

#### **604 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS**

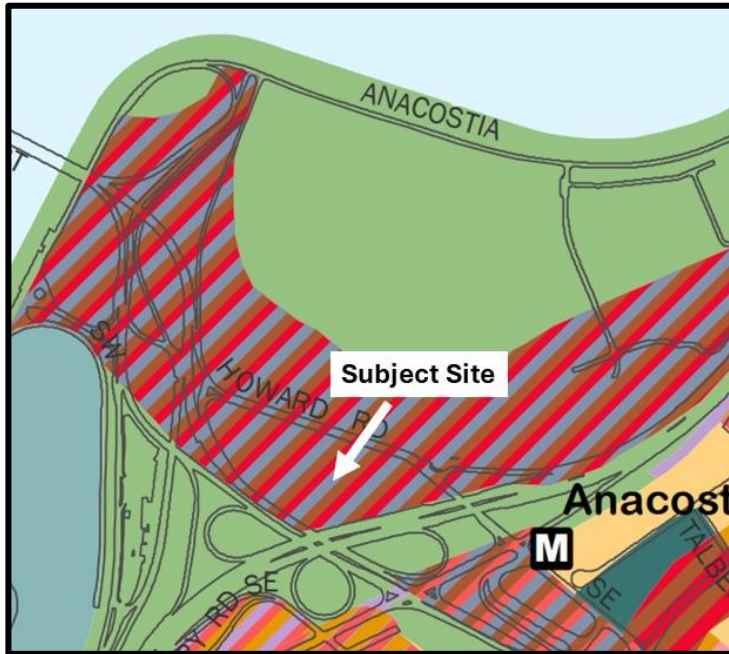
- 604.1 *The Zoning Commission will evaluate and approve or disapprove a design review application subject to this chapter according to the standards of this section and for Non-Voluntary Design Reviews subject to this chapter according to the standards stated in the provisions that require Zoning Commission review.*
- 604.2 *For Non-Voluntary Design Review, the application must also meet the requirements of the provisions that mandated Zoning Commission approval.*

The requirements of Subtitle K are reviewed above.

- 604.3 *The applicant shall have the burden of proof to justify the granting of the application according to these standards.*
- 604.4 *The applicant shall not be relieved of the responsibility of proving the case by a preponderance of the evidence, even if no evidence or arguments are presented in opposition to the case.*
- 604.5 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with other adopted public policies and active programs related to the subject site.*

In summary, the project would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including the Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Urban Design, and Educational Facilities Citywide Elements, and the Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Area Element. The Educational Facilities policies of the Plan emphasize that all District neighborhoods should be served by high quality schools, a goal restated in the Land Use Element. The project would help to create a walkable and bikeable environment, which are goals of the Plan. The Environmental Protection Element seeks to expand the use of clean, local energy and minimize a building's energy consumption. The proposed design would further those goals. The Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Area Element specifically seeks to create new waterfront neighborhoods and multimodal streets, and also sets forth the goal of improving connections to Poplar Point.



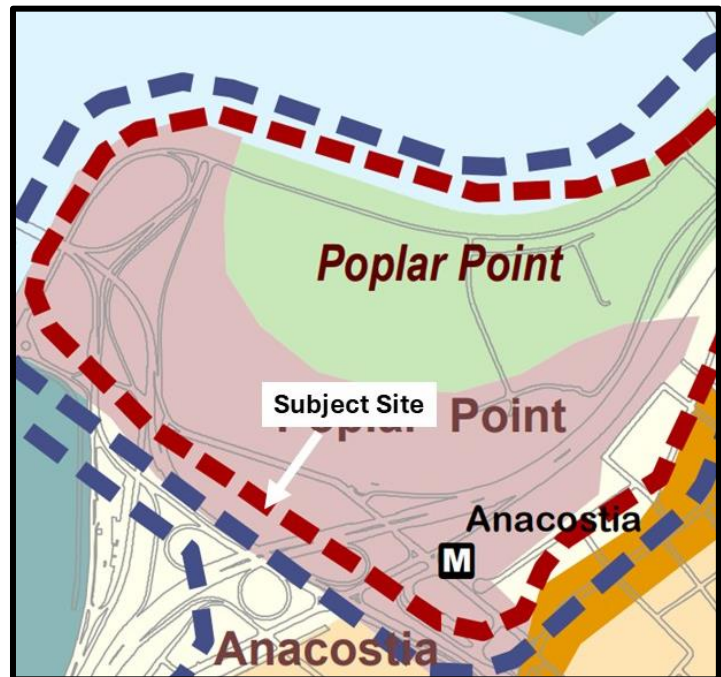


The **Future Land Use Map** designates the site as appropriate for High Density Residential, High Density Commercial, and Institutional mixed use. While the project itself is not high density, a public school, which currently exists on the site, is an essential ingredient in any urban mixed use neighborhood. The school also serves the larger Ward 8 community outside of the mixed use area shown on the FLUM.

The **Generalized Policy Map** shows the subject site as part of a Land Use Change Area, and places the site on the edge of both a Future Planning Analysis Area, and a Resilience Focus Area.

Future Planning Analysis Area areas are “large tracts or corridors where future analysis is anticipated to ensure adequate planning for equitable development...” (§ 2503.2). It is intended that the planning analysis “shall precede any zoning changes in the area.” For this development, the applicant is not requesting a rezoning for the site, and this project would be in conformance with already-adopted Comprehensive Plan policies and maps.

The Land Use Element defines Resilience Focus Areas as land within the 100- and 500-year floodplain, where “future planning efforts are intended to guide resilience to flooding for new and existing development and infrastructure projects, including public capital projects. (304.8). Exhibit 3 states that the school will be built on a concrete podium to “prevent future flood risk” (Ex. 3, p. 3). The applicant should confirm that the design will meet the relevant DOEE floodplain regulations.



### **Comprehensive Plan Analysis through a Racial Equity Lens and the Zoning Commission’s Racial Equity Tool**

The Commission created a Racial Equity Tool to assist in its evaluation of zoning actions through a racial equity lens. Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the tool ask OP to provide analysis of the relevant policies from the Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents, provide data that describe the racial and economic characteristics of the subject planning area, and provide analysis of factors related

to equity. The requested information is provided below. The applicant also provided a Racial Equity Analysis at Exhibit 3G.

### **Racial Equity Tool Part 1 – Comprehensive Plan Guidance**

The Comprehensive Plan requires the Zoning Commission and staff to examine city policies through a racial equity lens. Racial equity is a broad and encompassing goal of the entire District government. As explained in the Framework Element of the Plan,

*[t]he District seeks to create and support an equitable and inclusive city. Like resilience, equity is both an outcome and a process. Equity exists where all people share equal rights, access, choice, opportunities, and outcomes, regardless of characteristics such as race, class, or gender. Equity is achieved by targeted actions and investments to meet residents where they are, to create equitable opportunities. Equity is not the same as equality. Framework Element, § 213.6*

Section 2501.8 of the Implementation Element calls for “the Zoning Commission to evaluate all actions through a racial equity lens as part of its Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis.” The direction to consider equity “as part of [the Zoning Commission’s] Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis” indicates that the equity analysis is intended to be based on the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and whether a proposed zoning action is “not inconsistent” with the Comp Plan. Whenever the Commission considers Comprehensive Plan consistency, the scope of the review and Comprehensive Plan policies that apply will depend on the nature of the proposed zoning action. In this case, the applicant does not propose a rezoning or other zoning action, but rather to expand and improve the existing educational use that is on this site and within the existing zoning.

In the present application, the proposed design review would not be inconsistent with policies from the Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Urban Design, Educational Facilities, and Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest elements of the Comprehensive Plan. For a complete list of the relevant Plan policies, please refer to Attachment 2.

**Land Use:** The project would further a range of Land Use policies, from supporting metro station areas for development to beautifying the Howard Road neighborhood. The proposed expansion of the existing school would continue to better support residential growth in the vicinity, and would also meet Plan guidance that identifies quality, modernized educational uses as one of the keys to a successful neighborhood.

**Transportation:** The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of improving the transportation options for residents and employees. This project would further that goal by retaining a school in a transit-accessible, walkable, and bikeable location. This provides several transportation options for teachers, staff and students. The Transportation Element also seeks to improve the public realm, which this project would achieve with a wider sidewalk, the planting of new street trees and other landscaping, minimal curb cuts, and an interesting building façade.

***Environmental Protection:*** The project has been designed to be highly sustainable. It would further policies that call for heat island mitigation through improved tree canopy, and the use of sustainable, native landscaping. The project would also be consistent with policies supporting renewable, on-site energy generation, as well as those that seek to minimize stormwater runoff.

***Urban Design:*** A number of Urban Design policies would be advanced by the project. The proposed building would help to frame the street, but do so in a way that provides interesting architecture that engages the public realm. The public space itself would also be improved in conformance with Plan policies that call for enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, and improved access to nearby amenities such as the waterfront.

***Educational Facilities:*** The proposal would particularly further a number of policies from the Educational Facilities Element of the Plan, including those directly related to equity, as it calls for equitable access to quality schools for all District neighborhoods. It also states that new school buildings should have a high quality of design, while providing for student safety. School policies also call for highly sustainable design for new construction and rehabilitation, and encourages the use of multiple modes of transportation to reach school. The new building, with renewable energy generation, a LEED Gold score, improved pedestrian infrastructure, and bicycle facilities, would implement these goals.

***Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Planning Area Element:*** The project would help fulfill the Area Element policies that call for the creation of new mixed-use neighborhoods. The development also furthers policies calling for the utilization of land near the Anacostia metro station, while improving access to waterfront amenities such as Anacostia Park and the Douglass Bridge.

In summary, when evaluated through a racial equity lens, the proposed project would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and would further a number of policies of the above-referenced Plan elements.

### **Racial Equity Tool Part 3 – Planning Area Data**

Part 3 of the Racial Equity Tool asks for disaggregated data to assist the Commission in its evaluation of zoning actions through a racial equity lens. Although this is a design review application, not involving any change to the zoning or land use permissions, but rather for a new school building for the use currently on the site, the following tables provide economic data and a population profile of the planning area. The data source is the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, available via the OP State Data Center (<https://opdatahub.dc.gov/search?tags=racial%2520equity>). Part 3 also asks if the planning area is on track to meet affordable housing goals, and whether the data shows any “intersectionality of factors such as race, ethnicity, age, income, gender, or sexual orientation within the area of the zoning action and how might the zoning action impact the intersection of those factors?”

*Economic Data*

	Population	Median Income (\$)	Unemployment Rate	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Housing Cost Burdened	Below Poverty Line
DISTRICT TOTAL	670,587	101,722	7.1%	41.4%	58.6%	36.1%	15.1%
PLANNING AREA TOTAL	25,994	123,667	4.0%	24.4%	75.6%	33.6%	11.23%
Asian Alone	1,123	138,331	5.0%	38.1%	61.9%	-	4.67%
Black or African American	7,594	69,751	7.2%	24.3%	75.8%	-	28.34%
Hispanic or Latino*	1,942	135,813	6.6%	18.1%	81.9%	-	0.81%
Indian and Alaska Native	58	-	0.0%	-	-	-	0%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Some Other Race	380	122,732	5.1%	20.7%	79.3%	-	3.74%
Two or More Race	1,603	106,306	0.7%	28.5%	71.5%	-	5.95%
White Alone	15,236	152,688	3.2%	23.1%	76.9%	-	4.04%

\*Hispanic or Latino can be of any race, and the data for this ethnicity is included in the disaggregated racial data above.

*Population Profile*

	Population	Median Age (years)	65 Years and Over	Under 18 Years	Disability Status	Education – Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	Education – High School Graduate
DISTRICT TOTAL	670,587	35.5	84,451	124,056	10.98%	62.6%	15.0%
PLANNING AREA TOTAL	25,994	35.3	2,324	2,371	8.92%	78.1%	6.9%
Asian Alone	1,123	38.8	19	98	6.59%	88.2%	1.2%
Black or African American	7,594	35.8	1,256	1,153	18.34%	48.0%	17.5%
Hispanic or Latino*	1,942	33.5	35	134	4.22%	75.1%	16.3%

	Population	Median Age (years)	65 Years and Over	Under 18 Years	Disability Status	Education – Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	Education – High School Graduate
Indian and Alaska Native	58	-	0	0	0%	41.9%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0	-	0	0	-	-	-
Some Other Race	380	31.2	0	68	4.07%	67.5%	1.1%
Two or More Race	1,603	32.2	39	361	11.95%	77.5%	6.2%
White Alone	15,236	35.3	1,010	690	4.11%	90.5%	3.0%

\*Hispanic or Latino can be of any race, and the data for this ethnicity is included in the disaggregated racial data above.

## Data Trends Over Time

Analysis of data over time can yield other insights into trends in the planning area. The following data compares the 2018-2022 American Community Survey data with data from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, again available from [OP’s State Data Center](#). Each table below covers both 5-year periods and compares the data for the Lower Anacostia Waterfront and Near Southwest (LAWNS) planning area with District-wide data.

### Population by Race/Ethnicity

The LAWNS planning area has a majority White population in both the 2012 to 2016 and the 2018 to 2022 periods. That percentage increased from 51.8% to 58.6% between the data periods. The Black population decreased as a percentage of the total by about 10 percentage points over the same timeframe.

Race or Ethnicity	District 2012-2016	District% 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	District% 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS% 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022	LAWNS% 2018-2022
Total Population	659,009	100%	670,587	100%	17,254	100%	25,994	100%
Asian Alone	24,036	4%	27,067	4%	804	4.7%	1,123	4.3%
Black or African American	318,598	48%	297,101	44%	6,741	39.1%	7,594	29.2%
Hispanic or Latino*	69,106	10%	77,168	12%	965	5.6%	1,942	7.5%

Race or Ethnicity	District 2012-2016	District% 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	District% 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS% 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022	LAWNS% 2018-2022
Indian and Alaska Native	2,174	0%	2,209	0%	119	0.7%	58	0.0%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	271	0%	420	0%	22	0.0%	0	0.0%
Some Other Race	29,650	4%	30,879	5%	97	0.6%	380	1.5%
Two or More Race	18,245	3%	47,278	7%	538	3.1%	1,603	6.2%
White Alone	266,035	40%	265,633	40%	8,934	51.8%	15,236	58.6%

### Age & Vulnerable Population

The LAWNS planning area's median age was very similar to the Districtwide median during both 5-year periods. Unlike some other planning areas, the Black population in this community has a median age similar to other racial groups.

The LAWNS planning area had a higher percentage of persons 65 and older during the earlier data period than the District as a whole. But that percentage dropped to be noticeably lower than the District in the most recent data. The percentage of people under 18 dropped slightly, as did the percentage of residents who identified as disabled.

Vulnerable Population	District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Persons 65 and Older	11.4%	12.6%	13.4%	8.9%
Persons Under 18	17.4%	18.5%	10.0%	9.1%
Percent Disable	11.3%	11.0%	11.8%	8.9%

Median Age	District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Total	32.3	35.5	32.6	35.3
Asian Alone	33.3	35.6	32.6	38.8
Black or African American	40.3	38.1	37.0	35.8
Hispanic or Latino	31.3	32.2	31.3	33.5
Indian and Alaska Native	31.4	41.1	29.4	-
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
Some Other Race	29.6	28.8	32.7	31.2
Two or More Race	28.3	30.8	31.7	32.2
White Alone	33.1	35.3	32.6	35.3

### Median Household Income

The LAWNS planning area has a median income higher than the District as a whole, as evidenced

by data from both the 2012-2016 and 2018-2022 survey periods. The planning area median income tracked with the citywide trend and increased significantly over the 10-year period. All racial groups seemed to show large increases in median income, although Whites had the largest increase. In absolute terms, the income of the Black population was still well below that of other groups.

Median Household Income	District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Total Median	\$72,935	\$101,722	\$82,118	\$123,667
Asian Alone	\$91,453	\$123,660	\$87,540	\$138,331
Black or African American	\$40,560	\$57,076	\$41,562	\$69,751
Hispanic or Latino	\$60,848	\$94,203	\$87,873	\$135,813
Indian and Alaska Native	\$51,306	\$60,390	-	-
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
Some Other Race	\$41,927	\$61,851	-	\$122,732
Two or More Race	\$83,243	\$108,455	\$80,922	\$106,306
White Alone	\$119,564	\$160,745	\$99,187	\$152,688

### Homeownership

Fewer residents in the LAWNS planning area own their home than in the District as a whole – 24.4% compared to 41.4%. The homeownership rate in the planning area dropped notably over the two survey periods, which is likely a result of the growth in rental housing stock in the portion of the planning area near the ballpark. The homeownership rate among Black households in the planning area stayed relatively steady, which seems to be in line with the District as a whole, while most other racial groups showed a decline in the planning area. This is, again, most likely reflective of the increases in the number of renters in the community.

The planning area's percentage of households that are housing-cost-burdened is slightly lower than the citywide rate, and decreased slightly between the study periods.

Owners/ Renters		District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Total	Owner Households	40.7%	41.4%	35.0%	24.4%
	Renter Households	59.3%	58.6%	65.0%	75.6%
Asian Alone	Owner Households	39.4%	42.4%	48.6%	38.1%
	Renter Households	60.6%	57.6%	51.4%	61.9%
Black or African American	Owner Households	35.9%	35.9%	25.7%	24.3%
	Renter Households	64.1%	64.1%	74.3%	75.8%

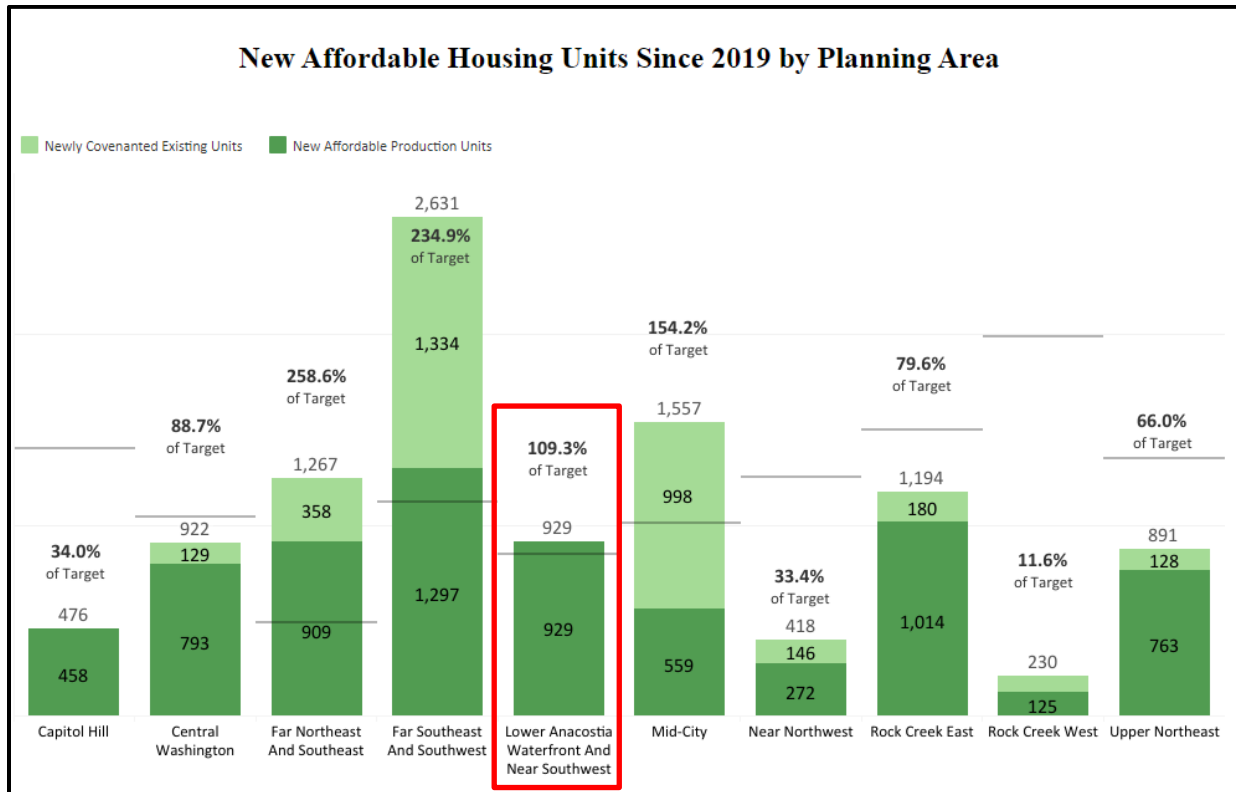


Owners/ Renters		District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Hispanic or Latino	Owner Households	30.9%	35.3%	25.5%	18.1%
	Renter Households	69.1%	64.7%	74.5%	81.9%
Indian and Alaska Native	Owner Households	32.9%	25.8%	28.8%	-
	Renter Households	67.2%	74.2%	71.2%	-
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	Owner Households	9.1%	64.2%	0.0%	-
	Renter Households	90.9%	35.8%	100.0%	-
Some Other Race	Owner Households	17.5%	26.6%	33.0%	20.7%
	Renter Households	82.5%	73.4%	67.0%	79.3%
Two or More Races	Owner Households	32.7%	43.9%	27.8%	28.5%
	Renter Households	67.3%	56.2%	72.3%	71.5%
White Alone	Owner Households	47.8%	47.4%	40.7%	23.1%
	Renter Households	52.2%	52.6%	59.3%	76.9%

Cost Burdened Households	District 2012-2016	District 2018-2022	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2018-2022
Percent of Households spending 30% of their income on their housing	38.6%	36.1%	35.6%	33.6%

- *Is the area on track to meet the Mayor's 2025 affordable housing goal?*

The chart below, excerpted from the DMPED 36,000 by 2025 Dashboard (<https://open.dc.gov/36000by2025/>), indicates that the Lower Anacostia Waterfront & Near Southeast planning area has exceeded its affordable housing goal.



- *What do available data sources show about the intersectionality of factors such as race, ethnicity, age, income, gender, or sexual orientation within the area of the zoning action and how might the zoning action impact the intersection of those factors?*

The available data shows that a number of factors can be distinguished by race. For example, while all groups saw a large increase in median income, Whites seemed to see a much larger increase than other groups. And in absolute terms, the median income for the Black population is still well below that of other racial groups. This is also reflected in the poverty rate, which is much higher for Blacks than for other races. The unemployment rate for Blacks is also higher than for other groups. In terms of housing tenure, all races seem to have a high percentage of renters, especially in the most recent survey period.

While the proposed school project would not alleviate all of these discrepancies, it would be an important component of the community by providing quality public education to residents of the area. According to the footnote on page 1 of Exhibit 3, 83% of Cedar Tree Academy's students are "at risk" students from Ward 8. The zoning action would provide greater stability for those families by providing a continuous educational environment from PK-3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, rather than through only 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Families seek out educational options that can provide that continuous track, rather than switch schools after a few years. The new and upgraded facilities will also provide children with an improved learning environment and greater resources.

#### **Racial Equity Tool Part 4 – Zoning Commission Evaluation Factors**

According to the Racial Equity Tool, the Commission will use the following criteria, themes and questions, along with the above data, in its evaluation of a zoning action’s consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, as viewed through a racial equity lens.

- *What Comprehensive Plan policies related to racial equity will potentially be advanced by approval of the zoning action?*

Please refer to OP’s analysis above, under Part 1 of the Racial Equity Tool discussion.

- *What Comprehensive Plan policies related to racial equity will potentially not be advanced by approval of the zoning action?*

OP analysis did not indicate that any Plan policies related to equity would not be advanced by approval of the zoning action.

- *When considering the following themes/questions based on Comprehensive Plan policies related to racial equity, what are the anticipated positive and negative impacts and/or outcomes of the zoning action? Note: Additional themes may also apply.*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>OP Response</b>
<b>Direct Displacement</b>	Will the zoning action result in displacement of tenants or residents?	There would be no residential displacement, as there are no residences on the site now or anticipated. There would also be no displacement of businesses - the applicant, a public charter school, has occupied the property for a number of years and the new building would serve to expand this use.
<b>Indirect Displacement</b>	What examples of indirect displacement might result from the zoning action?	OP does not anticipate indirect displacement as a result of this zoning action. On the contrary, the presence of good public charter schools can help to provide stability to neighborhoods and families.
<b>Housing</b>	Will the action result in changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Market Rate Housing</li> <li>▪ Affordable Housing</li> <li>▪ Replacement Housing</li> </ul>	OP does not anticipate any impacts to housing.
<b>Physical</b>	Will the action result in changes to the physical environment such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Space Improvements</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure Improvements</li> <li>▪ Arts and Culture</li> <li>▪ Environmental Changes</li> <li>▪ Streetscape Improvements</li> </ul>	The project would result in enhancements to the public space and streetscape. A wider sidewalk would aid and encourage pedestrian mobility, and the new landscaping and preserved street trees would create a pleasant experience at the street’s edge. The building itself would help to frame the street and reinforce the urban design of the Howard Road corridor. The project would also tend to support a healthy environment through achieving a LEED Gold rating, and through the

Factor	Question	OP Response
		use of renewable onsite energy generation. The applicant will also contribute to knowledge of the history of the community by conducting an appropriate archaeological study of the site.
<b>Access to Opportunity</b>	Is there a change in access to opportunity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Job Training/Creation</li> <li>▪ Healthcare</li> <li>▪ Addition of Retail/Access to New Services</li> </ul>	Approval of the proposed new school building would result in an increase in the amount and quality of service that Cedar Tree Academy can provide to its students and the community. The range of students would be expanded, in a modern facility in which to learn, and dedicated ancillary spaces to enhance the education experience, such as a library, gym and cafeteria.
<b>Community</b>	How did community outreach and engagement inform/change the zoning action? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (e.g., did the architectural plans change, or were other substantive changes made to the zoning action in response to community input/priorities etc.?)</li> </ul>	According to Exhibit 3G, p. 16, “The community has not identified any specific changes or mitigation measures that are needed for the Project.” The applicant states, however, that they will continue their outreach to the neighborhood.

604.6 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property and meets the general special exception criteria of Subtitle X, Chapter 9.*

The proposed development should not affect neighboring properties adversely. The building should not have an undue impact on any adjacent properties. It would be well below the anticipated and permitted height and FAR, and the use, a public charter school, already exists on the site and has for many years. While the new school would be larger and house more students than the present facility, it is anticipated that its impacts would still be much less than a mixed use building on the site. Because of the scale of the building, and because it would meet or exceed all yard requirements, it should have no substantial impacts to light and air on adjacent properties. The proposed design review would not impair the intent of the Regulations, but rather would further the goals of the Regulations generally and the NHR zone specifically.

604.7 *The Zoning Commission shall review the urban design of the site and the building for the following criteria:*

- (a) *Street frontages are designed to be safe, comfortable, and encourage pedestrian activity, including:*
  - (1) *Multiple pedestrian entrances for large developments;*
  - (2) *Direct driveway or garage access to the street is discouraged;*
  - (3) *Commercial ground floors contain active uses with clear, inviting windows;*
  - (4) *Blank facades are prevented or minimized; and*
  - (5) *Wide sidewalks are provided;*

The design proposes transparent and articulated walls adjacent to public spaces, including a large entrance to the cafeteria from the adjacent sidewalk, and many windows into classrooms. The Howard Road façade would utilize an interesting frame around the perimeter, with two distinct recessed bays identified through the use of differing materials. See the rendering on Sheet A-031 of Exhibit 15A.

The proposed design would minimize the number of vehicular entrances to those necessary for typical school vehicular and loading activity. The entrance and exit driveways would also be relatively narrow, one-lane entrances, separated by a wide pedestrian island. In order to enhance the pedestrian experience, the applicant proposes to widen the sidewalk along Howard Road to nine feet eight inches in width, including a significant amount of that dimension on private property.

Landscaping plans call for the preservation of two existing potential heritage trees at the street edge, with additional new street trees added in the planting strip. Flowering understory trees immediately adjacent to the building would also enhance the appearance of the public space.

- (b) *Public gathering spaces and open spaces are encouraged, especially in the following situations:*
  - (1) *Where neighborhood open space is lacking;*
  - (2) *Near transit stations or hubs; and*
  - (3) *When they can enhance existing parks and the waterfront;*

Given the existing and intended use of the property for a school, general public access is not expected. The school grounds and building will be secured during school hours. The applicant has offered, however, to make the building's first floor available for community events after school hours.

- (c) *New development respects the historic character of Washington's neighborhoods, including:*
  - (1) *Developments near the District's major boulevards and public spaces should reinforce the existing urban form;*
  - (2) *Infill development should respect, though need not imitate, the continuity of neighborhood architectural character; and*
  - (3) *Development should respect and protect key landscape vistas and axial views of landmarks and important places;*

The project would reinforce the developing streetscape along Howard Road. The building mass would help to frame the street, while the modern architecture would be in keeping with previously-approved projects on adjacent lots. There would be no impact on views toward landmarks or important places.

- (d) *Buildings strive for attractive and inspired façade design, including:*
  - (1) *Reinforce the pedestrian realm with elevated detailing and design of first (1st) and second (2nd) stories; and*
  - (2) *Incorporate contextual and quality building materials and fenestration;*

The design proposes transparent and articulated walls adjacent to public spaces, including a large entrance to the cafeteria from the adjacent sidewalk, and many windows into classrooms. The

Howard Road façade would utilize an interesting frame around the perimeter, with two distinct recessed bays identified through the use of differing materials. See the rendering on Sheet A-031 of Exhibit 15A. Other façades would continue these motifs and materials, with appropriate moves to designate significant locations, such as the main entrance or the double-height gym.

*(e) Sites are designed with sustainable landscaping; and*

The application materials propose what appear to be all-native species for landscaping, in areas such as the public space and landscape buffer along Howard Road, the parking lot trees, and the back of the building along the eastern property line. In addition, the bioretention area would have a wide variety of native plantings compatible with a frequently-damp environment.

*(f) Sites are developed to promote connectivity both internally and with surrounding neighborhoods, including:*

- (1) Pedestrian pathways through developments increase mobility and link neighborhoods to transit;*
- (2) The development incorporates transit and bicycle facilities and amenities;*
- (3) Streets, easements, and open spaces are designed to be safe and pedestrian friendly;*
- (4) Large sites are integrated into the surrounding community through street and pedestrian connections; and*
- (5) Waterfront development contains high quality trail and shoreline design as well as ensuring access and view corridors to the waterfront.*

Given the site's location adjacent to Suitland Parkway and I-295, it is not anticipated that the site plan for this property would need to accommodate street connections to other sites. The development of the property, however, would be in context with the streetscape of Howard Road, and contribute to the urban design intent of that street. In addition, the applicant plans to widen the sidewalk along Howard Road to aid in pedestrian mobility.

*604.8 The Zoning Commission shall find that the criteria of Subtitle X § 604.7 are met in a way that is superior to any matter-of-right development possible on the site.*

The proposed building and site design meet the criteria in a way that would be superior to a building not subject to design review. The design review process resulted in a building that is more sustainable, more engaged with the street, and more pedestrian-friendly than might be expected if it were a matter of right project.

## **VI. SPECIAL EXCEPTION RELIEF**

The applicant requests special exception relief from the minimum residential FAR requirement. The Commission may grant this relief pursuant to X § 900 and K § 1006, which requires a finding that “the special exception relief would result in a design that still complies with the purposes of this chapter.”

The NHR zone requires that each lot provide a minimum of 2.5 FAR of residential uses (K § 1001.3). This provision was intended to ensure that the Howard Road neighborhood was not developed exclusively with office space. The Commission has approved projects containing

several hundred residential units on lots adjacent to and across the street from the subject site. It is anticipated that future development along Howard Road could also consist of residential mixed use. The applicant in this case is proposing a school and no residential uses on their lot, and therefore requires special exception relief.

Granting the special exception would not unduly impact adjacent properties or impair the intent of the Regulations. The relief would also not impair the purposes of the NHR zone. Public schools are an essential ingredient of any successful neighborhood, and both the Regulations generally and the NHR zone specifically seek to create successful, active, family-friendly neighborhoods. The lack of residential uses on this specific lot should not diminish the overall goal of creating a vibrant neighborhood. In fact, the continued and expanded presence of the school would enhance the long-term viability of the community.

OP, therefore, recommends approval of the special exception relief.

## **VII. AGENCY COMMENTS**

OP received written comments from the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE). DOEE supports the overall sustainable design of the project, including LEED Gold certification and rooftop solar. They encourage, however, the applicant to examine ways to further increase the school's sustainability, using methods such as a green roof to reduce runoff, commitment to a fully-electric facility, pursuit of a net-zero design, and the salvage and reuse of materials from the existing building. The applicant is also encouraged to meet the upcoming floodplain regulations for buildings within the 500 year floodplain, which could go into effect in 2025. Please refer to full comments at Attachment 1.

OP also received an email response from MPD indicating no concerns with the project.

As of this writing no other government agency comments are in the record.

## **VIII. ANC COMMENTS**

As of this writing there is no report in the record from the ANC.

## **IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Exhibits 5 through 9 are letters in support of the application.

## **X. ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – DOEE Comments

Attachment 2 – Comprehensive Plan Policies



## **Attachment 1 DOEE Comments**

# **DOEE Development Review Comments**

## **ZC 24-23: Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School – Design Review in the NHR Zone District**

DOEE applauds the applicant's commitment to achieving LEED Gold certification and installing rooftop solar arrays. DOEE encourages the applicant to evaluate electrification and net-zero energy opportunities ahead of code requirements. The following recommendations are actions that the applicant can consider to enhance the building's sustainability and comfort. Please contact [doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov](mailto:doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov) with questions.

### **Energy Performance and Electrification**

In line with the District's goal of carbon neutrality and the objectives of the [Sustainable DC 2.0](#) and [Clean Energy DC](#) plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, DOEE encourages the applicant to design the project to be fully electric (i.e., eliminate the on-site combustion of fossil fuels) or commit to not installing any new fossil fuel systems. This is a low-effort, high-impact opportunity to improve public health and reduce carbon emissions in the District.

DOEE and DOB are evaluating options to include building electrification requirements in future code updates. Building electrification involves powering all building appliances and systems (e.g., domestic hot water, heating equipment, cooking equipment) with electricity rather than fossil fuels (e.g., fossil gas or fuel oil). Efficient electric systems reduce indoor air pollution caused by combustion equipment and can save on operating costs, especially when coupled with solar energy. All-electric buildings can also save on construction costs by avoiding the need to install gas piping. It's easier and more cost-effective for new construction to be designed with electric systems than it is to retrofit buildings later, so DOEE strongly encourages projects to evaluate electric options as part of their initial energy modeling exercises. For more information about building electrification in the District, visit [this resource page](#) created by the Building Innovation Hub.

Clean Energy DC also calls for net-zero energy (NZE) building codes by 2026. DOEE encourages the project to explore net-zero energy construction and certification ahead of this planned code requirement. An NZE building is a highly energy-efficient building that generates enough on-site or procures acceptable offsite renewable energy to meet or exceed the annual energy consumption of its operations. NZE buildings can benefit both owners and tenants through significantly lower operating costs, improved occupant comfort and improved indoor air quality. Under the [2017 District of Columbia Energy Conservation Code](#), projects can use Appendix Z as an alternative compliance pathway, which provides a working definition and guidance for NZE. Please contact [doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov](mailto:doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov) for questions or more information.

## **Floodplain**

As indicated in the applicant's materials, the site is located within the 500-year floodplain, which means it is at higher flood risk than areas outside the 100-year or 500-year floodplain. DOEE has proposed regulations, which if approved, would require DOEE's floodplain review of this project before a building permit could be issued. The proposed regulations require that any development in the 100-year or 500-year floodplain be elevated or floodproofed to the 500-year elevation or 100-year elevation plus 2 feet, whichever is higher. Additionally, the proposed regulations define schools as critical facilities, which have additional requirements to address the fact that its occupants will require extra attention during an evacuation. The proposed changes may go into effect as early as Summer 2025, so DOEE recommends the design team reference the proposed regulations as the design is finalized. DOEE is happy to provide more information or answer questions. Please contact [flood.risk@dc.gov](mailto:flood.risk@dc.gov) to discuss further.

## **Green Area Ratio and Stormwater Management**

DOEE acknowledges that the applicant is exceeding the minimum GAR (0.2) for the NHR zone but encourages the applicant to exceed the minimum GAR and stormwater requirements. This project is located within the District's municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), which means that stormwater runoff is untreated and discharged into local water bodies. Stormwater from this project site is discharged into the Anacostia River.

DOEE encourages the applicant to consider adding a green roof to the project. If this is of interest, the applicant can integrate solar photovoltaic arrays into green roofs. Integrating these systems enables the project team to maximize the benefits of solar energy while also maximizing the Green Area Ratio and stormwater retention volume. DOEE has issued guidance on how to successfully incorporate solar into green roofs on pages 41 & 42 of the 2020 Stormwater Management Guidebook.

Additional on-site stormwater retention can earn the project Stormwater Retention Credits (SRCs) that can be sold through DOEE's Credit Trading Program. SRCs can be sold directly to DOEE through the SRC Price Lock Program (for projects located in the MS4 Sewer System only) or sold on the open market. For more information, please visit [doee.dc.gov/src](https://doee.dc.gov/src) or email Regan Wilhelm at [src.trading@dc.gov](mailto:src.trading@dc.gov).

## **Climate Resilience**

In order to prepare for the impacts of climate change, including increased flooding and extreme heat, DOEE encourages the team to assess how climate change will affect the project and to incorporate resilient design strategies. DOEE encourages this project to consider additional shading and heat prevention measures given the project's location in an area with a high Heat Sensitivity Exposure Index. As part of the Climate Ready DC Plan, DOEE released Resilient Design Guidelines to assist project teams considering climate resilient design. Additional DOEE Climate Adaptation and Preparedness resources are available at [doee.dc.gov/climateready](https://doee.dc.gov/climateready).

## **Deconstruction, Reuse, and Embodied Carbon Reduction**

Given that the applicant will demolish the existing building, DOEE encourages the applicant to explore options for deconstruction and reuse or salvage of materials from the existing above-grade structures. The reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings can reduce waste and embodied carbon. When reuse is not possible, deconstruction or pre-demolition salvage can divert waste from landfill and incineration and allow for reuse of building materials. Deconstruction is the process of carefully and intentionally dismantling a building rather than demolishing it. While this process is more time consuming than demolition, reusing salvaged materials can reduce construction costs, and the sale of salvaged or recyclable materials can generate additional revenue. Organizations like Community Forklift collect donations of unwanted and salvaged building materials throughout the DC region. DOEE is also working to develop a Donation and Reuse program and may have additional resources and information available at the time of project construction. The applicant is encouraged to reach out to [doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov](mailto:doeegreenbuilding@dc.gov) if they are interested in sustainable deconstruction of existing structures or donation and reuse of building materials.

## **Attachment 2 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

### **Chapter 3 Land Use Element**

#### **LU 1.1 – Supporting Growth**

As the Land Use Element guides the direction of future growth, it also affects future access to housing, education, jobs, services, amenities, and transportation and impacts the health and safety of residents. Growth can and must occur in a way that expands access to affordable housing, education, transportation, employment, and services for communities of color, low-income households, and vulnerable populations. Achieving equitable development requires attention to both the context and needs of different planning areas and to District-wide equity issues, described throughout the Comprehensive Plan. (10-A DCMR 304.4.)

#### **Policy LU-1.2.1: Sustaining a Strong District Center**

Provide for the continued vitality of Central Washington as a thriving business, government, retail, financial, hospitality, cultural, and residential center. Promote continued reinvestment in central District buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces; continued preservation and restoration of historic resources; and continued efforts to create safe, attractive, and pedestrian-friendly environments, while minimizing displacement of residents and community-focused businesses. 305.6

#### **Policy LU-1.4.1: Station Areas as Neighborhood Centers**

Encourage the development of Metro stations as anchors for residential, economic, and civic development and to accommodate population growth with new nodes of residential development, especially affordable housing, in all areas of the District in order to create great new walkable places and enhance access and opportunities for all District residents. The establishment and growth of mixed-use centers at Metrorail stations should be supported as a way to provide access to housing opportunities at all income levels and emphasizing affordable housing, improve air quality, increase jobs, provide a range of retail goods and services, reduce reliance on the automobile, enhance neighborhood stability, create a stronger sense of place, provide civic gathering places, and capitalize on the development and public transportation opportunities that the stations provide. Station area development should have population and employment densities guided, but not dictated, by desired levels of transit service. This policy should be balanced with other land use policies, which include conserving neighborhoods. The Future Land Use Map expresses the desired intensity and mix of uses around each station, and the Area Elements (and in some cases Small Area Plans) provide more detailed direction for each station area. 307.9

#### **Policy LU-1.4.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations**

In developments above and around Metrorail stations emphasize land uses and building forms that minimize the need for automobile use and maximize transit ridership while reflecting the design capacity of each station and respecting the character and needs of the surrounding areas. 307.10

#### **Policy LU-1.4.5: Design to Encourage Transit Use**

Require architectural and site-planning improvements around Metrorail stations that support pedestrian and bicycle access to the stations and enhance the safety, comfort, and convenience of passengers walking to the station or transferring to and from local buses. These improvements should include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, lighting, signage, landscaping, and security measures. Discourage the development of station areas with conventional suburban building forms, such as shopping centers surrounded by surface parking lots or low-density housing. 307.13

#### **Policy LU-1.4.9: Public Facilities**

Encourage the siting (or retention and modernization) of public facilities, such as schools, libraries, and government offices, near transit stations and along transit corridors. Such facilities should be a focus for community activities and enhance neighborhood identity. 307.17

#### **LU-2.1 A District of Neighborhoods 310**

...For Washington, DC's residents, the neighborhoods are the essence of the District's social and physical environment. Strong neighborhoods are key to continued livability in a growing and changing District. Land use policies must seek to ensure that all neighborhoods have adequate access to commercial services, parks, educational and cultural facilities, economic mobility, and sufficient and accessible housing opportunities while protecting their rich historic and cultural legacies. In addition, land use policies and actions must be viewed through a racial equity lens to provide equitable development that provides adequate access to these services and opportunities within neighborhoods of color and low-income communities. 310.1

#### **What Makes a Great Neighborhood? 310.8**

An inclusive neighborhood should create a sense of belonging, civic pride, and a collective sense of stewardship and responsibility for the community's future among all residents. Indeed, a neighborhood's vibrancy has to be measured by more than the income of its residents or the size of its homes. The 2004 A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City identified essential physical qualities that all neighborhoods should share. These included the following:

[...]

Quality public services, including police and fire protection, high-quality, safe, and modernized schools, health services, as well as libraries and recreation centers that can be conveniently accessed; [...]

#### **Policy LU-2.2.4: Neighborhood Beautification**

Encourage projects which improve the visual quality of the District's neighborhoods, including landscaping and tree planting, façade improvement, anti-litter campaigns, graffiti removal, improvement or removal of abandoned buildings, street and sidewalk repair, and park improvements.

### **Chapter 4      Transportation Element**

#### **Policy T-1.1.3: Context-Sensitive Transportation**

Design transportation infrastructure to support current land uses as well as land use goals for mixed-use, accessible neighborhoods. Make the design and scale of transportation facilities compatible with planned land uses. Facilities should comply with the District's Complete Streets policy, adopted in October 2010, with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle-friendly design. 403.9

#### **Policy T-1.1.4: Transit-Oriented Development**

Support transit-oriented development by investing in pedestrian-oriented transportation improvements at or around transit stations, major bus corridors, and transfer points. Encourage development projects to build or upgrade the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure leading to the nearest transit stop to create last-mile connections. Pedestrian movements and safety should be prioritized around transit stations. 403.10

#### **Policy T-1.2.1: Major Thoroughfare Improvements**

Beautify and stabilize gateways and major thoroughfares by implementing coordinated multimodal transportation, economic development, and urban design improvements. 404.4

**Policy T-1.3.1: Transit-Accessible Employment**

Support more efficient use of the region's transit infrastructure with land use strategies that encourage employment locations near underused transit stations. Work closely with the federal government and suburban jurisdictions to support transit-oriented and transit-accessible employment throughout the region. This would expand the use of major transit investments such as Metrorail. Encourage approaches that improve transit access to jobs for low-income residents. 405.7

**Policy T-1.4.1: Street Design for Placemaking**

Design streets, sidewalks, and transportation infrastructure—such as bike racks and other public places in the right-of-way—to support public life, in addition to their transportation functions. This includes incorporating seating, plantings, and the design of spaces for gathering, lingering, and engaging in commerce and social or cultural activities. 406.2

**Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network**

Develop, maintain, and improve pedestrian facilities. Improve the city's sidewalk system to form a network that links residents across the city. 410.5

**Chapter 6 Environmental Protection Element**

**Policy E-1.1.2: Urban Heat Island Mitigation**

Wherever possible, reduce the urban heat island effect with cool and green roofs, expanded green space, cool pavement, tree planting, and tree protection efforts, prioritizing hotspots and those areas with the greatest number of heat-vulnerable residents. Incorporate heat island mitigation into planning for GI, tree canopy, parks, and public space initiatives. (10-A DCMR § 603.6)

**Policy E-2.1.3: Sustainable Landscaping Practices**

Encourage the use of sustainable landscaping practices to beautify the District, enhance streets and public spaces, reduce stormwater runoff, and create a stronger sense of character and identity. District government, private developers, and community institutions should coordinate to significantly increase the use of these practices, including planting and maintaining mostly native trees and other plants on District-owned land outside the rights-of-way in schools, parks, and housing authority lands. (10-A DCMR § 605.7)

**Policy E-3.2.3: Renewable Energy**

Promote the efficient use of energy, additional use of renewable energy, and a reduction of unnecessary energy expenses. The overarching objective should be to achieve reductions in per capita energy consumption. 612.5

**Policy E-3.2.6: Alternative Sustainable and Innovative Energy Sources**

Support the development and application of renewable energy technologies, such as active, passive, and photovoltaic solar energy; fuel cells; and other sustainable sources such as shared solar facilities in neighborhoods and low- or zero-carbon thermal sources, such as geothermal energy or wastewater heat exchange. Such technology should be used to reduce GHGs and imported energy, provide opportunities for economic and community development, and benefit environmental quality. A key goal is the continued availability and access to unobstructed, direct sunlight for distributed energy generators and passive solar homes relying on the sun as a primary energy source. (10-A DCMR § 612.8)

**Policy E-3.2.8: Locally Generated Electricity**

Support locally generated electricity from renewable sources, including both commercial and residential renewable energy projects. Policies could support the option to share a solar project among several

neighbors (i.e., community solar), financial incentives, research and education, and maximizing existing programs to help install solar panels and solar thermal systems throughout the District. 612.10

**Policy E-4.1.2: Using Landscaping and Green Roofs to Reduce Runoff**

Promote an increase in tree planting and vegetated spaces to reduce stormwater runoff and mitigate the urban heat island, including the expanded use of green roofs in new construction and adaptive reuse, and the application of tree and landscaping standards for parking lots and other large paved surfaces. 615.4

**Policy E-4.2.1: Support for Green Building**

Broaden the requirements for the use of green building methods in new construction and rehabilitation projects to include all building typologies, and develop green building standards for minimum performance or continued improvement of energy use through improved operation and maintenance activities. 616.3

**Chapter 9      Urban Design**

**Policy UD-1.3.6: Waterfront Access and Connectivity**

Improve the physical connections between neighborhoods and nearby waterfronts. Where feasible, extend the existing urban grid into large waterfront sites to better connect nearby developed areas to the shoreline. Greater access to the waterfront should also be achieved by reconfiguring roadways and other infrastructure along the waterfront to reduce access impediments for neighborhoods with limited access, and for pedestrians and bicyclists. Provide a consistent design treatment for waterfront trails (see Figure 9.11). 905.11

**Policy UD-1.3.7: Anacostia River Gateways**

Improve visual design qualities and pedestrian access of the gateways to and from Wards 7 and 8 neighborhoods from the Anacostia River crossings, with landscape and transportation improvements along Howard Road, Martin Luther King, Jr Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Randle Circle (Minnesota and Massachusetts SE), Benning Road, East Capitol Street, and Kenilworth Avenue. 905.13

**Policy UD-2.1.1: Streetscapes That Prioritize the Human Experience**

Commercial streetscapes should be designed to be comfortable, safe, and interesting to pedestrians. At a minimum, commercial corridor sidewalks should be designed with clear, direct, accessible walking paths that accommodate a range of pedestrian users and facilitate a sense of connection to adjacent uses. Where width allows, corridors should have a generous presence of shade trees and café seating areas, as well as bicycle facilities. In areas with large pedestrian volumes, streetscapes should provide seating, drinking fountains, publicly accessible restrooms, and other infrastructure that supports increased frequency and duration of walking. 908.3

**Policy UD-2.1.2: Neighborhood Streetscapes**

Neighborhood streetscapes should be designed to visually reflect the character and level of intensity of the adjacent land uses. For instance, narrow sidewalks may be appropriate for narrow streets with low scale buildings, while sidewalks with more trees and vegetation may be appropriate for large-scale development. Pedestrian-oriented lighting should be designed to enhance walkability for all users, as well as visually reflect the character of neighborhood. 908.4

**Policy UD-3.2.5: Safe and Active Public Spaces and Streets**

The design of the built environment should encourage public activity throughout the day and help minimize the potential for criminal activity. Design measures include active building frontages (such as windows, balconies, and frequently spaced entrances) adequate lighting that avoids glare and shadow, maintaining



clear lines of sight and visual access, and avoiding dead-end streets. Where feasible consider closing streets to vehicular traffic to enhance pedestrian and cycling uses of streets. 914.7

**Policy UD-4.2.1: Scale and Massing of Large Buildings**

Design the scale, height, volume, and massing of large buildings to avoid monotony and enhance the human scale. Varied roof heights, facade widths, and more expressive massing can provide variety and visual interest. Massing should be articulated with a special emphasis placed on corners, especially along important view corridors or intersections. Patterns of architectural elements, expressive structure, or other design tactics can provide variety and visual interest. 918.3

**Policy UD-4.2.4: Creating Engaging Facades**

Design new buildings to respond to the surrounding neighborhood fabric by modulating façade rhythms and using complementary materials, textures, and color, as well as well-designed lighting. Varying design tactics may be used to engage a building with its surroundings. In contexts with smaller lot sizes and multiple closely spaced building entrances, breaking up a building façade in the vertical direction is encouraged, along with strongly defined and differentiated bases, centers, and tops of buildings. In areas lacking a strong building-form pattern, the use of complementary or reinterpreted materials and colors could strengthen architectural identity see Figure 9.19 for recommended façade design strategies). 918.6

## **Chapter 12 Educational Facilities**

**Policy EDU-1.3.1: Planning for Public Charter Schools**

Incorporate the needs of public charter schools in public school facility planning, including in MFP efforts, to account for the community's desire for a District-wide system of neighborhood public schools supplemented by school choice that is equitably invested in and provides predictable and fair access to high-quality schools in all of Washington, DC's communities. 1205.8

**Policy EDU-1.5.1: Promoting High-Quality Design**

New construction, renovation or reconstruction of public, private, and public charter school facilities should use high architectural and landscape design standards that are sensitive to community context, as well as academic and student safety needs. 1207.3

**Policy EDU-1.5.2: Safety First: Designing For Multiple Uses**

Strongly encourage design of K-12 public, private, and public charter schools to include appropriate measures that keep students healthy, secure, and safe, especially where multiple activities are accommodated in a single structure. 1207.4

**Policy EDU-1.5.3: Eco-Friendly Design**

Strongly support the use of green building, energy efficiency, and green infrastructure development methods in school construction and rehabilitation of K-12 public, private, and public charter school design. 1207.5

**Policy EDU-1.5.4: Multimodal Access to Schools**

Continue to coordinate among District Department of Transportation (DDOT), DCPS, DC PCSB, and K-12 private school stakeholders to improve the safety of students walking or biking to and from school through design and transportation improvements in coordination with the safe routes to school program. In addition, new K-12 public, private, and public charter school buildings should be designed to foster safe and attractive pedestrian access. Encourage transit connections to high schools to provide easy access for students and teachers, thereby minimizing the need for driving to school. 1207.6

**Policy EDU-2.1.3: Community Use**

Keep school space accessible and available for neighborhood meetings, community gatherings, and other events that promote resident engagement and public service, while maintaining the school's primary mission of educating the District's children. 1209.6

**Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Planning Area Element**

**Policy AW-1.1.2: New Waterfront Neighborhoods**

Create new mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods on vacant or underused waterfront lands, particularly on large contiguous publicly owned waterfront sites. Within the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning Area, new neighborhoods should continue to be developed at the Southwest Waterfront, Buzzard Point, Poplar Point, and Navy Yard/Capitol Riverfront. These neighborhoods should be linked to new neighborhoods upriver at Reservation 13, and Kenilworth-Parkside via trails, additional water recreation opportunities, and improved park access points along the Anacostia shoreline. A substantial amount of new housing and commercial space should be developed in these areas, reaching households of all incomes, types, sizes, and needs. Opportunities for grid interconnected neighborhood-scale energy utilities systems as part of the development of these areas should be evaluated, using renewable energy sources to provide greater environmental benefits for the community. The new waterfront neighborhoods should integrate new parks and amenities, enhance public access to the waterfront, and incorporate resilient design to mitigate flooding. 1907.3

**Policy AW-1.1.5: Flood-Resilient and Climate-Adaptive Development**

Provide guidelines and promote the planning, design, construction, and management of resilient buildings in flood hazard areas within the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning Area. Design and construct developments to be adaptive to future flood hazard conditions due to storm surge and sea level rise. 1907.6

**Policy AW-2.4.3: Poplar Point Mixed Use Neighborhood**

Create a new transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood oriented around the Poplar Point Park and linked to the Anacostia and Congress Heights Metro stations. The neighborhood should include a significant component of affordable housing, as well as retail and civic uses that benefit the adjacent communities east of I-295. To minimize the loss of useable open space, development should use the land recovered after the realignment and reconstruction of the Frederick Douglass Bridge. 1913.9

**Policy AW-2.4.5: Scale of Development at Poplar Point** Provide a scale and pattern of development at Poplar Point that recognizes the area's proximity to a Metro station and other major surface arterials. The area is physically separated from surrounding neighborhoods and, therefore, may accommodate buildings and site plans that are unlike but compatible with the fine-grained pattern found in nearby Historic Anacostia. Development should be pedestrian-oriented and include active ground floor uses. The massing, height, and bulk of buildings and related features, such as parking, also should respect adjacent park uses and environmentally sensitive areas. 1913.11

**Policy AW-2.4.8: Access Improvements to Poplar Point** Improve access to Poplar Point by redesigning the road system on the site's perimeter; rebuilding the Frederick Douglass (South Capitol) Bridge; converting the Anacostia Metro station to a multimodal terminal; adding provisions for pedestrians and bicycles along Howard Road SE, W Street SE, and Good Hope Road SE; and providing water taxi service on the Anacostia River. 1913.14