

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: MRJ Matthew Jesick, Development Review Specialist

DATE: January 23, 2026

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

I. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATION

On March 27, 2025, the Commission approved case #24-23, a mandatory design review application by Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School to permit the construction of an entirely new school building on their property on Howard Road, SE. Since that time, the school has seen a decrease in the amount of potential funding that it expects to receive, and has been forced to reevaluate its approach to expansion of the school and enhancement of its academic offerings. The school, therefore, now proposes to keep its existing school building and construct an addition to the school. The proposed facility would not be as large as the approved building but would still achieve most of the school's programmatic objectives. This application is a modification of the previous approval and is evaluated 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 associated relief as detailed in this report.

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
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.		
Prior Approval	ZC #24-23 – Completely new school building on eastern side of the property; Height of 56 feet and 4 stories; Floor area of 77,329 sf.		
Proposal	Maintain existing school building and construct addition to the rear; Height of addition would be 42'6" and 3 stories; Total floor area of existing plus addition would be 62,541 sf; Largely maintain existing parking lot and vehicular entrances.		
Proposed Height	42' 6"	Proposed FAR	0.81 (62,541 sf)
Estimated Students	680	Estimated Staff	135
Zoning Relief Requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum residential FAR – Special Exception – K § 1001.3, pursuant to K § 1006 – 2.5 FAR required on each lot; no residential uses proposed; Rear yard – Special Exception – Subtitle K § 1001.9, pursuant to K § 1006 – 2.5 inches per foot of building height, but not less than 12 feet; Zero feet proposed; Ground floor clear height – Special Exception – K § 1004.3(a), pursuant to K § 1006 – Clear height of 14 feet required; 8'6" existing and to remain; Ground floor display windows – Special Exception – K § 1004.3(b), pursuant to K § 1006 – Ground floor must have 50% display windows or entrances, and the 		

	<p>view must remain open for 10 feet into the building; Existing façade to remain, which does not have display windows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle parking – Special Exception – C § 701, pursuant to C § 703.2 – 37 spaces existing and required to be maintained; 34 spaces proposed; • LEED Gold – Variance – K § 1008.1, pursuant to X § 1000 – LEED Gold required; LEED Silver proposed.
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III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes an addition to the existing school building, south of the existing school. 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, and library. Please see below for a table comparing the existing and expanded schools.

	Existing School	Expanded School
Authorized # of students by Public Charter School Board	600	TBD
Students	450	680
Grade Range	PK-3 to 2 nd	PK-3 to 5 th
Faculty and Staff	104	135
Number of Stories	3	3
Floor Area	36,000 sf	62,541 sf
Classrooms	25	32
Library?	No	Yes
Gym?	No	Yes
Cafeteria?	No	Yes

The new school wing would be constructed on the south side of the subject site, and the existing building would remain but be renovated. The existing parking lot and curb cuts would continue their present use, and the drive aisle would be used for drop-offs and pick-ups. The parking layout would be slightly modified to accommodate a delivery space. Bicycles would be accommodated with both short-term and long-term parking spaces. Pedestrian access will continue to be from Howard Road. The main entrance to the school would continue in its current location, with a second primary entrance to access directly into the new wing.

The architecture of the building is appropriate for the immediate neighborhood, which is being developed with a modern aesthetic. Architectural treatments such as colored panels, new signage, and an enlarged, colorful canopy will be added to the existing building to enhance its visual interest from the street and make the entrance a greater focal point. See Exhibit 3G6, Sheet A-029. The new addition would have a modern aesthetic. Features include vertically oriented windows in an alternating pattern between the first and second floors. A green framing element would outline the entire addition, and a three-story glass wall would give prominence to the entrance location on that portion of the building. Materials to be used would include “corrugated or perforated panels”,

“colored panels”, and cementitious or phenolic panels. See Exhibit 3G4, Sheet A-024. The provide materials palette does not provide much information about the actual nature of the materials, and the applicant should provide more information about them at or prior to the public hearing. The proposed color combinations, however, should add vibrancy to the streetscape. Sustainability features of the project design include bio-retention 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.

NHR	Requirement	Approved	Proposed	Relief or Flexibility
Lot Area	n/a	77,530 sf	77,530 sf	Conforming
FAR K § 1001.2 K § 1001.3	9.0 Total, max. 2.5 Residential, min.	0.99 Total No Residential	0.81 Total No Residential	Total – Conforming Res. – Requested (Sp. Ex.)
Floor Area	n/a	77,329 sf	Exist. – 35,194 sf Add. – 27,347 sf Total – 62,541 sf	Conforming
Height K § 1001.4	130 ft. max.	56’10”	42’6”	Conforming
Penthouse Height K § 1001.5	20 ft.	12.5’	12.5’	Conforming
Lot Occupancy K § 1001.7	100%	25.3%	27.0%	Conforming
Side Yard K § 1001.8	None required. If provided, 2 in. / ft. of height = 8.9’	22 ft. – East 163 ft. – West	East – 83’4” West – 14’10”	Conforming
Rear Yard K § 1001.9	12 ft. min.	40’	0’	Requested – Sp. Ex.
GAR K § 1001.12	0.2 min.	0.255	0.2	Conforming
Ground Floor Clear Height K § 1004.3(a)	14’ clear height minimum along Howard Road	Conforming	8’6” existing and to remain	Requested – Sp. Ex.
Ground Floor Display Windows K § 1004.3(b)	Howard Road façade must have 50% display windows	Conforming	Existing façade to remain	Requested – Sp. Ex.

NHR	Requirement	Approved	Proposed	Relief or Flexibility
Vehicle Parking K § 1007.2	Spaces must be maintained for use approved under '58 regs = 37 spaces	33	34	Requested – Sp. Ex.
Bicycle Parking K § 1007.3	(Addition Only) Long term – 4 Short term – 14	Long term – 10 Short term – 39	Long term – 4 Short term – 14	Conforming
Loading K § 1007.4	None required	1 Loading Berth 1 Service-Delivery Space	1 Service-Delivery Space	Conforming
LEED Gold K § 1008.1	LEED Gold	LEED Gold	LEED Silver	Requested – Var.
On-Site Energy Generation K § 1008.2	Renewable energy system capable of generating 1% of bld. energy needs	Solar array on rooftop to comply with requirement	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 an addition to an existing 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 through increased pedestrian activity.

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

The applicant proposes to continue the existing use, rather than introducing any of the specific uses listed in this subsection. This ongoing use will complement nearby uses, supporting a cohesive, fully successful neighborhood. Under § 1004.2(d) of the NHR zone regulations, designated street frontage requirements may be satisfied by educational uses. The current use qualifies under this provision, allowing it to fulfill the frontage requirement for the designated streets in the 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 maintain the existing curb cuts on the site. The amount of vehicle parking would be slightly reduced. OP defers to DDOT's analysis of multi-modal functionality, but the one-way-in and one-way-out use of the curb cuts simplifies the nature of pedestrian and vehicle interactions. The submitted plans indicate an enhanced landscaping buffer at the front of the property, but the applicant should ensure that the landscaping does not obstruct drivers' views of pedestrians.

(e) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation.

The proposal maintains the existing school building while introducing enhancements to improve its visual presence along Howard Road. Although the current façade lacks strong articulation, the renderings illustrate new architectural treatments that will add depth and interest to this elevation. The planned addition would add to the overall visual appeal of the building and the site, through

expansive glazing, a variety of materials, and interesting fenestration. These elements will create a modern, inviting appearance that complement the surrounding neighborhood.

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

As of this writing, the record does not appear to contain a LEED scorecard. The applicant, however, has met with the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) to discuss the design, and seeks to make the project as sustainable as possible. Solar panels are proposed for the roof, and they would meet the NHR zone requirement for renewable energy. The applicant has requested relief from the LEED requirement of the NHR zone, as their analysis indicates that the highest rating that they can commit to at this time is LEED Silver. That relief request is reviewed below in this report.

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

The proposed design maintains the existing school building while introducing enhancements to improve its visual presence along Howard Road. Although the current façade lacks strong articulation, the renderings illustrate new architectural treatments that will add depth and interest to this elevation. The planned addition would improve the building's overall aesthetic through the incorporation of expansive glazing, a diverse material palette, and interesting fenestration patterns.

The design would also include new and enhanced landscaping along the front property line, contributing to a more inviting streetscape. Two existing potential heritage trees at the street edge would be preserved. Beyond physical improvements, the school itself serves as an activating use within the neighborhood. Increased enrollment could generate additional activity along the streetscape, and the potential for school facilities to be utilized by neighborhood groups offers further opportunities for community engagement and activity.

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 3, p. 9, the applicant is working with organizations that “operate a DOES-approved paid apprenticeship and training program for local high school and college students in construction as well as operations...”. The application specifically states that 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 3, page 9.

- (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 3 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 prepared a Work Plan for the State Archaeologist's approval. The State Archaeologist later approved the Work Plan, which is applicable to the Revised Project. The Applicant expects to recognize local Anacostia history in an educational design feature for the Revised 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 is in regular communication with the subject ANC. Exhibit 3B states that the applicant served the ANC with a statement of intent to file the present application. Further details of the applicant's neighborhood outreach is contained in Exhibit 3C, beginning on page 13.

Subtitle X Design Review Criteria

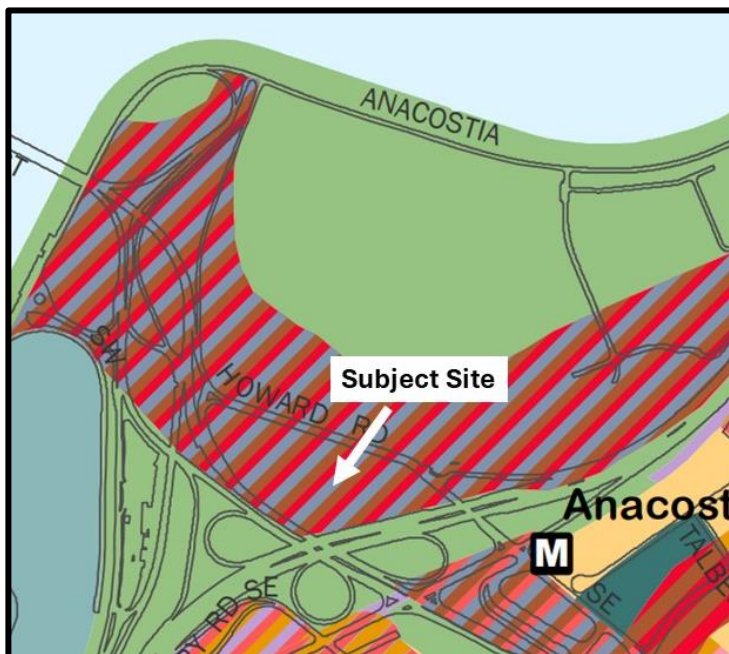
604 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

- 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 should increase the number of pedestrian and bicycle trips to and from the site, increasing the activity of the street. The Environmental Protection Element seeks to expand the use of clean, local energy and minimize a building's energy consumption. The proposed design should 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.

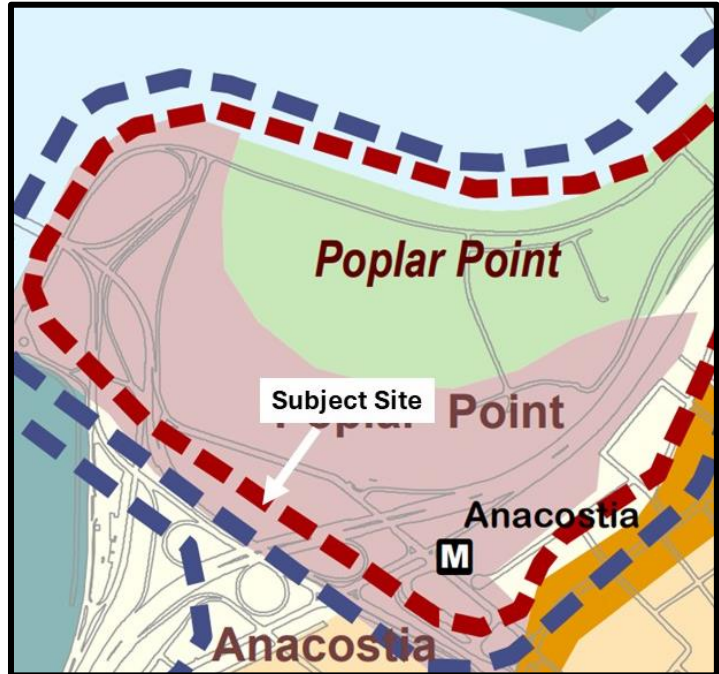


The **Future Land Use Map** designates the site as appropriate for High Density Residential, High Density Commercial, and Institutional mixed use. While the project itself is not high density, a public school, which currently exists on the site, is an essential ingredient in any urban mixed-use neighborhood. 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 meet 500-year floodplain requirements (Ex. 3, p. 5). 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 3C.

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 1.

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.

Environmental Protection: The project has been designed to incorporate sustainable features. It would further policies that call for heat island mitigation through improved landscaping and existing tree retention. 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 updates to the design of the existing building, as well as the proposed addition, would improve the visual quality of Howard Road, an important access point to the Anacostia River. The updated design and improved landscaping would enhance the pedestrian experience on the street. The design of the addition, and the variety of materials, would avoid monotony in the building’s appearance.

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 access the school. The new building, with renewable

energy generation, as well as excellent access to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure, 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 addressing 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 several 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 an addition to an existing school building, the following tables provide economic data and a population profile of the planning area. The following data compares the 2019-2023 American Community Survey data with data from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, available from [OP’s State Data Center](#). Each table below covers both 5-year periods for both the LAW/NSW planning area and District-wide.

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?”

Population by Race/Ethnicity

Table 1: Characteristics of the Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Planning Area

Race or Ethnicity	District 2012-2016	District % 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	District % 2019-2023	LAW/N SW 2012-2016	LAW/N SW% 2012-2016	LAW/N SW 2019-2023	LAW/N SW% 2019-2023
Total Population	659,009	100%	672,079	100%	17,254	100%	27,641	100%
White	266,035	40%	262,549	39%	8,934	52%	15,231	55%
Black	318,598	48%	290,772	43%	6,741	39%	8,680	31%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	2,174	0%	2,044	0%	119	0.7%	114	0%
Asian	24,036	4%	27,465	4%	804	4.7%	1,183	4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	271	0%	378	0%	22	0.0%	0	0%

Some other race	29,650	4%	32,338	5%	97	0.6%	384	1%
Two or more races	18,245	3%	56,533	8%	538	3.1%	2,049	7%
Hispanic	69,106	10%	77,760	12%	965	5.6%	2,138	8%

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

Table 1 provides general population trends for the District and for the LAW/NSW planning area. The planning area's population grew by over 10,000 over the study period, which was faster than the District as a whole. The table shows that the planning area has a higher percentage of residents who are White compared to the Districtwide percentage, and a lower percentage of residents who identify as Black or Hispanic. The number of residents who identify as Black or Hispanic in the planning area increased but remained below the Districtwide average.

Age & Vulnerable Population

Table 2. Vulnerable Population

Vulnerable Population	District 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	LAWNS 2012-2016	LAWNS 2019-2023
Persons 65 and Older	11.4%	12.7%	13.4%	9.3%
Persons Under 18	17.4%	18.7%	10.0%	9.4%
Percent Disabled	11.3%	11.0%	11.8%	8.9%

Table 2 shows that the percentage of persons 65 years or older in the planning area is decreasing, and is lower than the Districtwide percentage, which was not the case in the 2012-2016 period. The percentage of persons under 18 years in the planning area has remained lower than the Districtwide percentage and overall declined over this period, whereas the District average increased slightly. The disability rate in the planning area is also lower than the Districtwide rate and has also declined.

Income and Employment

Table 3. Median Household Income

	District Total 2012-2016	District Total 2019-2023	Percentage Change	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023	Percentage Change
Total households	\$72,935	\$106,287	37%	\$80,779	\$122,548	41%
White alone	\$119,564	\$166,774	33%	\$98,831	\$154,160	43.7%
Black or African American alone	\$40,560	\$60,446	39%	\$41,641	\$73,153	54.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	\$51,306	\$63,617	21%	\$148,020	N/A	N/A
Asian alone	\$91,453	\$121,619	28%	\$85,634	\$120,717	34%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Some Other Race alone	\$48,047	\$74,754	43.5%	\$103,796	N/A	N/A
Two or More Races	\$83,243	\$116,869	33.6%	\$79,722	\$126,830	45.6%
Hispanic or Latino	\$60,848	\$106,435	54.5%	\$85,067	\$138,062	47.5%

Table 3 above shows that the median household income in the planning area has increased and is higher than the Districtwide median household income, and this is the case for many races and groups except white and Asian residents. The medium income for all races and groups increased over the period and most groups experienced a higher percentage change compared to the District. Black residents have the lowest median income among all other ethnicities, although higher than the District median, and income increased over this period and at a rate higher than the District as a whole.

Table 4. Unemployment

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (Population 16 years and over)				
	District Total 2012-2016	District Total 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Total	8.7	6.5	6.3	4.2
White alone	3.1	2.6	3.4	2.7
Black or African American alone	16.8	12.8	14.0	9.5
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	9.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asian alone	2.3	2.4	0.0	4.5
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	4.8	5.1	0.0	N/A
Some Other Race alone	6.8	6.2	0.0	0.0
Two or More Races	6.7	4.4	9.6	0.9
Hispanic or Latino	6.2	4.5	1.2	2.0

Both the District and the planning area have seen a decline in the unemployment rate over the period with both experiencing roughly a 2% decrease. The Black unemployment rate in the planning area decreased by 4.5%, although remained higher than other racial groups.

Homeownership

Table 5. Housing Tenure

Owners/Renters		District 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Total	Owner Households	40.7%	41.4%	34.8%	23.3%
	Renter Households	59.3%	58.9%	65.2%	76.7%
White	Owner Households	47.8%	48%	40.4%	25.4%
	Renter Households	52.2%	52%	59.6%	74.6%
Black	Owner Households	46.6%	34.9%	25.7%	19%
	Renter Households	53.4%	65.1%	74.3%	81%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	Owner Households	32.8%	19.6%	28.3%	0
	Renter Households	67.2%	80.3%	71.7%	100%
Asian	Owner Households	43.1%	41.4%	48.5%	34.6%
	Renter Households	56.9%	58.6%	51.5%	65.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Owner Households	9.1%	31.8%	0.0%	N/A
	Renter Households	90.9%	68.2%	100%	N/A
Some Other Race	Owner Households	17.5%	28.7%	31.9%	21.8%
	Renter Households	82.5%	71.3%	68.1%	78.2%
Two or More Races	Owner Households	32.7%	41.3%	27.8%	20.3%
	Renter Households	67.3%	58.7%	72.2%	79.7%
Hispanic or Latino	Owner Households	30.9%	36.4%	25.2%	18.4%
	Renter Households	69.1%	63.6%	74.8%	81.6%

Table 5 shows that the percentage of renter households in the planning area is higher than that of owner households in the planning area. The planning area also has a greater percentage of renters than the District as a whole. The percentage of renters has increased over the study period. Much of the housing stock in the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning Area is contained in multi-family buildings, and many of these are rental buildings.

Table 6. Cost Burdened Households

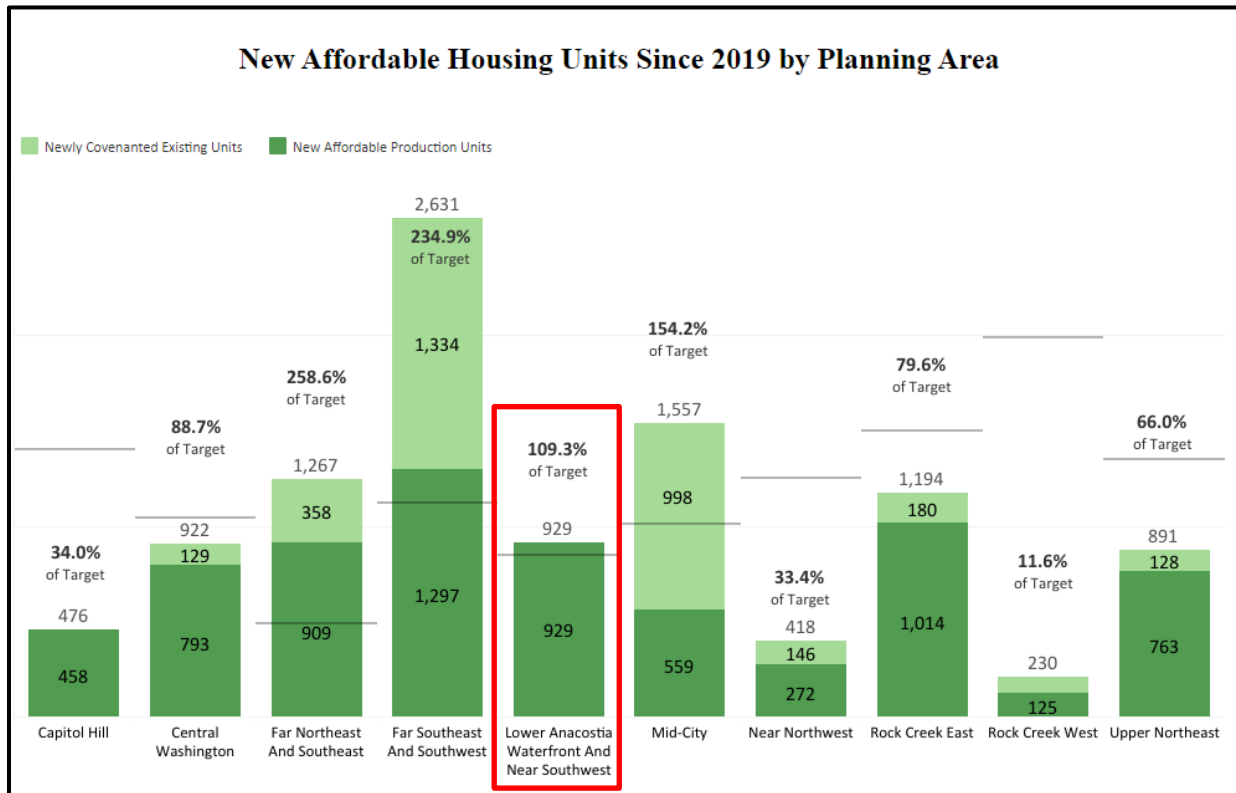
Cost Burdened Households	District 2012-2016*	District 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016*	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Percent of Households spending 30% or more of their income on housing	38.6%	34.0%	35.8%	32.6%
Asian alone	-	33.6%	-	45.4%
Black and/or African American alone	-	44.3%	-	44.3%
Hispanic or Latino	-	35.1%	-	23.9%
Indian and Alaska Native alone	-	42.6%	-	100.0%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone	-	76.2%	-	-
Some other races	-	42.8%	-	8.5%
Two or more races	-	33.3%	-	36.9%
White alone	-	24.1%	-	25.0%

*Housing cost burden by race was not available prior to the 2023 ACS.

Table 6 shows that, overall, the percentage of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing has declined slightly, both District-wide and in the planning area, but remains high. In the planning area, the percentage of Black households that are housing-cost-burdened mirrors the District-wide rate but is significantly higher than the White percentage. The percentage of Asian households with a housing cost burden is slightly higher than for Blacks, but the percentage of Hispanic or Latino households identified in this category is much lower, and lower than the District-wide percentage.

- *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 as a percentage, Whites seemed to see a larger increase than other groups in absolute terms. Also, the median income for the Black population is still well below that of other racial groups, and the Black unemployment rate is higher. 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 record of case #24-23, 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 5th grade, rather than through only 2nd grade. Families seek out educational options that can provide that continuous track, rather than switch schools after a few years. The 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.*

Factor	Question	OP Response
Direct Displacement	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 addition would serve to expand this use.
Indirect Displacement	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 schools can help to provide stability to neighborhoods and families.
Housing	Will the action result in changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Market Rate Housing ▪ Affordable Housing ▪ Replacement Housing 	OP does not anticipate any impacts to housing.
Physical	Will the action result in changes to the physical environment such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Space Improvements ▪ Infrastructure Improvements ▪ Arts and Culture ▪ Environmental Changes ▪ Streetscape Improvements 	The project should have little impact on the physical environment of the public space. Architectural treatments of the Howard Road façade, and the general presence of the rear addition should improve the visual character of the site. The new landscaping and preserved street trees would create a pleasant experience at the street’s edge. The project would also tend to support a healthy environment by renewable

Factor	Question	OP Response
		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.
Access to Opportunity	Is there a change in access to opportunity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Training/Creation ▪ Healthcare ▪ Addition of Retail/Access to New Services 	Approval of the proposed school addition 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.
Community	How did community outreach and engagement inform/change the zoning action? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (e.g., did the architectural plans change, or were other substantive changes made to the zoning action in response to community input/priorities etc.?) 	According to Exhibit 3C, p. 15, the applicant states that no changes were made to the proposal, based on the limited potential impacts identified by the community.

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 adversely affect neighboring properties. 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 proposed 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 for yards facing adjacent buildings, 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 to enhance the façade of the existing school building to improve its visual interest and engagement with public space. The new addition, though set back from the street, would also present an interesting and engaging façade toward Howard Road. The design would not increase the number of curb cuts above what exists today, and the two-lane, in and out configuration is typical for a school and necessary for regular drop-off and pick-up activity. The vehicular entrance and exit are also separated by a portion of the sidewalk acting as a pedestrian refuge. Landscaping plans call for the preservation of two existing potential heritage trees at the street edge, with additional new landscaping along the street.

- (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 existing building mass helps 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 enhancements to the existing school building façade to improve visual interest and strengthen its engagement with the public realm. While the new addition is set back from Howard Road, it will present an attractive and engaging façade toward Howard Road. The use of varied materials and an attractive fenestration pattern would add visual interest to the new façade.

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 prior approval included the use of native plants in the landscaped areas. The current application materials do not appear to include a detailed landscaping plan, but the applicant is encouraged to use only native species in those areas slated for new plantings.

(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.

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 applicable criteria in a manner that exceeds what would typically be expected from a matter-of-right project. The design review process resulted in a building that is more sustainable, more engaged with the street, and more visually interesting than might be expected if it were a matter of right project. These enhancements result in a superior design that contributes positively to the character and vitality of the neighborhood.

VI. SPECIAL EXCEPTION AND VARIANCE RELIEF

The applicant requests special exception relief from four requirements of the NHR zone, all of which are pursuant to the zone's general special exception found in K § 1006, as well as X § 900. Parking special exception relief is also requested, pursuant to C § 703.2. And finally, a variance from the LEED requirements of the NHR zone is requested, pursuant to X § 1000. The areas of relief are reviewed below.

Minimum residential FAR – special exception – K § 1001.3, pursuant to K § 1006 – 2.5 FAR required on each lot; no residential uses proposed

In the original case, #24-23, the Commission granted this relief. OP continues to recommend approval of the special exception. As required by K § 1006, “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 uses. The applicant in this case is proposing an addition to a school with no residential uses on their lot and therefore requires special exception relief.

Granting the requested special exception would not unduly impact adjacent properties or impair the intent of the Zoning Regulations. The relief sought is consistent with the purposes of the NHR zone, which aims to foster successful, active, and family-friendly neighborhoods. Public schools are a critical component of such neighborhoods, and both the Regulations generally and the NHR zone specifically recognize their importance.

While this lot does not include residential uses, that absence does not diminish the overall goal of creating a vibrant community. On the contrary, the continued and expanded presence of the school will strengthen the neighborhood’s long-term viability by providing essential educational services and generating activity that supports a lively streetscape.

Rear yard – special exception – Subtitle K § 1001.9, pursuant to K § 1006 – 2.5 inches per foot of building height, but not less than 12 feet; Zero feet proposed

The proposed addition would directly abut the south property line, which forms the boundary with the Suitland Parkway right-of-way. The design, therefore, provides zero rear yard where a minimum of 12 feet is required. The relief is requested because the rear of the property is the only logical location for the addition. Locating the addition on the existing parking lot would require significant land disturbance, additional costs to relocate parking, and likely the removal or relocation of existing recreational amenities on the eastern side of the lot. A smaller rear addition that complied with the rear yard requirement would not provide adequate classroom space or accommodate a gym and cafeteria.

The Commission may grant the requested relief, subject to a finding that “the special exception relief would result in a design that still complies with the purposes of this chapter” (K § 1006). The NHR zone intends to create a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with superior architecture, engaging ground floors, multi-modal access, and increased heights and densities, with Howard Road as the focal point of these efforts. A reduced rear yard would not impair the intent of the zone. Conversely, allowing the addition as proposed would allow for increased enrollment and a more robust academic environment, supporting a vibrant, amenity-rich neighborhood for families. Furthermore, the request complies with the general special exception criteria of Subtitle X § 900. The relief should not impair the overall intent of the regulations nor have undue impacts on

adjacent properties. Because the only yard relief requested is for the yard abutting Suitland Parkway, and because the design exceeds side yard requirements, there should be no undue impacts on light or air available to nearby lots. OP, therefore, recommends approval of the requested rear yard relief.

Ground floor clear height – special exception – K § 1004.3(a), pursuant to K § 1006 – Clear height of 14 feet required; 8’6” existing and to remain

and

Ground floor display windows – special exception – K § 1004.3(b), pursuant to K § 1006 – Ground floor must have 50% display windows or entrances, and the view must remain open for 10 feet into the building; Existing façade to remain, which does not have display windows

The NHR zone includes requirements intended to create an engaging streetscape and provide active ground floor uses. In this case, the design proposes to retain the existing school building, which was constructed prior to the creation of the NHR zone and does not meet current ground floor requirements, including minimum clear height and display windows facing Howard Road. The Commission may grant relief from these provisions as a special exception, provided the design continues to comply with the overall purposes of the zone.

OP finds that the use of the property for a school furthers the purposes of the NHR zone, and the proposed design, including the existing school building, does not impair those purposes. The enhanced school use will contribute to making the Northern Howard Road neighborhood a complete community by providing an upgraded option for elementary education. Also, while the proposed design does not meet the exact ground floor requirements, increased enrollment will add activity to the streetscape, and the potential for school facilities to be used by neighborhood groups offers additional opportunities for community engagement.

Furthermore, the proposed addition, although set back from the street, meets the intent of the regulations through significant use of glass to provide visual connections to the interior, including a three-story glass expression at the main entrance. These elements create transparency and visual interest consistent with the zone’s goals. OP, therefore, recommends approval of the requested ground floor design relief.

Vehicle parking – special exception – C § 701, pursuant to C § 703.2 – 37 spaces existing and required to be maintained; 34 spaces proposed

Subtitle C § 703.2 allows special exception relief for the amount of required parking if the project meets at least one of the ten listed criteria. In this case, the use is required to maintain the existing 37 parking spaces on the site. However, due to site constraints, the applicant is proposing to reduce the number of parking spaces to 34. This is greater than the 33 parking spaces approved with the original design review application, and significantly more than the eight spaces that would be required if the entire project were built from scratch.

OP finds that the application meets two of the criteria:

- The physical constraints of the property prevent provision of the required number of parking spaces. The applicant intends to use the existing parking lot to provide vehicular parking. However, existing parking spots would be removed with the provision of a service / delivery space, a crosswalk to the recreation area, and a larger turning radius for trucks accessing the delivery space. Additional parking area is not available, however, because it would use green space otherwise used for student recreation, or use space otherwise used for the proposed addition.
- The subject site has very good access to transit. The north entrance to the Anacostia metro station is just across Howard Road and down the street. The bus bay at the Anacostia station, a heavily used bus facility, is further south on Howard Road, about a quarter of a mile away.

Because the property meets at least one of the criteria of C § 703.2, OP can recommend approval of the requested relief.

LEED Gold – variance – K § 1008.1, pursuant to X § 1000 – LEED Gold required; less than LEED Gold proposed

The NHR zone requires that an applicant achieve LEED Gold for their building. The applicant in this case indicated to OP that they can commit to achieving LEED Silver. They therefore seek variance relief is requested from K § 1008.1. The Commission may grant variance relief subject to the 3-part variance test of X § 1000.

OP finds that the property exhibits an exceptional condition because it contains an existing school building which is to remain on the site and will become part of the new, expanded school. Page 19 of Exhibit 3 explains that:

“to achieve LEED Gold certification for new construction, the Revised Project must meet certain conditions in a variety of disciplines, including location/transportation, water efficiency, energy usage, materials, and indoor environmental quality. However, several of the disciplines are reliant on conditions within the Existing Building, including water use reduction, energy performance and indoor air quality.”

OP and DOEE acknowledge the circumstances affecting the subject property, and feel that these factors, a direct outgrowth of the exceptional condition, rise to the level of practical difficulty for the applicant.

Granting the requested relief would not impair the intent of the Regulations nor have an undue impact on the public good. The project would meet the other specific sustainability requirement of the NHR zone – the requirement to provide renewable energy on site. The site plan also provides new stormwater management on-site. Also, while the original building may not be built to modern sustainability standards, the addition would use up-to-date materials, construction methods and building systems to reach a high level of sustainability in itself. Finally, preservation

and re-use of the original building is a sustainable exercise, through the extended life of an existing building and utilization of its embodied carbon footprint, rather than demolition followed by construction using all new materials. OP recommends approval of the requested variance.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS

DDOT submitted comments to the record at Exhibit 15. DDOT has no objection to the application, on the condition that the applicant implement their proposed TDM plan. As of this writing no other comments from government agencies have been entered into the record.

DOEE provided comments to OP, which are included at Attachment 2. DOEE supports the sustainability efforts of the applicant, including re-use of the existing building. They are also supportive of the applicant's variance request from the NHR LEED Gold requirement, and agree with their commitment to certify the project at the LEED Silver level. DOEE encourages the applicant to go beyond minimum standards for renewable energy and GAR, and also advises them to be mindful of the new floodplain regulations as the final design progresses.

VIII. ANC COMMENTS

As of this writing the record does not contain a letter from the full ANC. Exhibit 10 is a letter in support from a member of the ANC.

IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Exhibit 4 is a letter in support from the Ward 8 Councilmember. Exhibits 5, 8 and 9 are also letters in support.

X. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Comprehensive Plan Policies
Attachment 2 – DOEE Comments

Attachment 1 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-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

Attachment 2 DOEE Comments

DOEE Development Review Comments

ZC 24-23A: Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School

DOEE applauds the applicant's use of the existing school building. Both the demolition of existing buildings and construction of new buildings is very carbon intensive. The pivot away from full new construction to an addition will reduce the project's overall embodied carbon emissions.

Requested Relief from LEED Certification Requirement

DOEE engaged with the applicant regarding the requested relief of the Northern Howard Road zone's LEED certification requirement. DOEE understands the applicant's justification for the requested relief. Given the applicant's challenges and the emissions savings of reusing the existing building, DOEE agrees with the applicant's proposal to certify the addition at the LEED Silver level.

Renewable Energy

DOEE acknowledges that the applicant is committed to meeting the on-site renewable energy requirement for the Northern Howard Road zone (i.e., installing renewable energy systems that generate at least 1% of the total energy estimated to be needed to operate the building), but encourages the applicant to maximize on-site renewable energy to the extent possible as the design is finalized. DOEE advises the applicant to consider the shade implications of future development on adjacent sites when planning for rooftop solar photovoltaics.

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's new [regulations](#) require DOEE's floodplain review of this project before a building permit could be issued.

Additionally, the new regulations define schools as critical facilities, which have additional requirements to address the fact that its occupants will require extra attention during an evacuation. DOEE recommends the design team reference the new regulations as the design is finalized. DOEE is happy to provide more information or answer questions. Please contact flood.risk@dc.gov to discuss further.

Green Area Ratio (GAR) and Stormwater Management

DOEE acknowledges that the applicant is committed to meeting the required GAR of 0.2. However, DOEE encourages the applicant to exceed this requirement if possible. Stormwater runoff from this site, which is in the municipal storm sewer system (MS4), is discharged untreated into local water bodies. Stormwater management strategies on sites in the MS4 are more beneficial than projects located in the combined sewer system.