



**RA-1 TEXT
AMENDMENT
Zoning Commission**

Public Hearing January 5, 2026

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DC Office of Planning

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Office of Planning
CASE NO. 25-08
EXHIBIT NO. 18



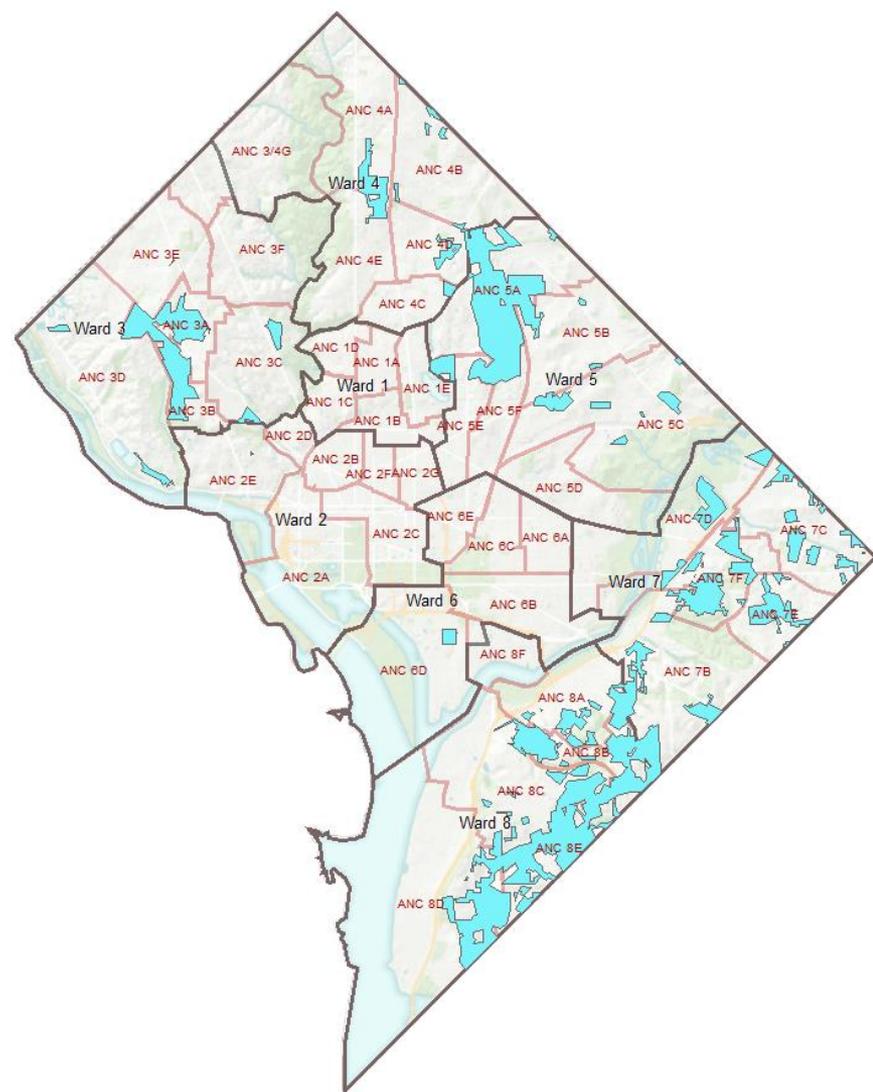
Background

RA-1 - Residential Apartment zone intended to permit flexibility by allowing low- to moderate-density residential development, including detached houses, row houses, and low-rise apartments.

A new one-family detached and semi-detached dwelling is allowed by-right.

A new rowhouse, flat (a building with two principal units) or multi-family building requires special exception review, subject to conditions by the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA).

Additions to existing multi-family buildings also require review by the BZA.



RA-1 Text Amendment

- Analysis of RA-1 purpose and intent
- Identify ANC and community concerns
- Refinement of development standards
- Add clarity and certainty to reviews
- Allow rowhouses and flats by-right
- Promote flexibility for new, diverse development
- Allow limited expansions of apartment buildings by-right
- Remove special exception review for IZ
- No rezoning of property



Comprehensive Plan

- Would further policies from:
 - Framework Element
 - Land Use Element
 - Housing Element
 - Economic Development Element
 - Implementation Element



Comprehensive Plan, including Racial Equity

	Will the Zoning Action Result In:	Potential Impact:
Direct Displacement	Displacement of tenants or residents?	None anticipated
Indirect Displacement	Indirect displacement?	None anticipated
Housing	Changes to Housing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Market Rate / Affordable ▪ Replacement 	Intended to remove barriers to the provision of new matter-of-right housing and IZ opportunities.
Physical	Changes to the physical environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Space Improvements ▪ Urban Design Improvements 	Clarifications to the requirements for the discretionary review process should also foster better application, and more contextual new construction that addresses potential impacts.
Access to Opportunity	Access to Opportunity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Training/Creation ▪ Healthcare ▪ Retail / Access to New Services 	None anticipated

Comprehensive Plan, including Racial Equity

Outreach

Virtual ANC Meetings

- January 21, 2025 5:30 PM
- January 23, 2025 12:00 PM
- January 29, 2025 5:30 PM
- October 25, 2025 12:00 PM
- October 25, 2025 5:30 PM

(Presentations and recordings posted to webpage)

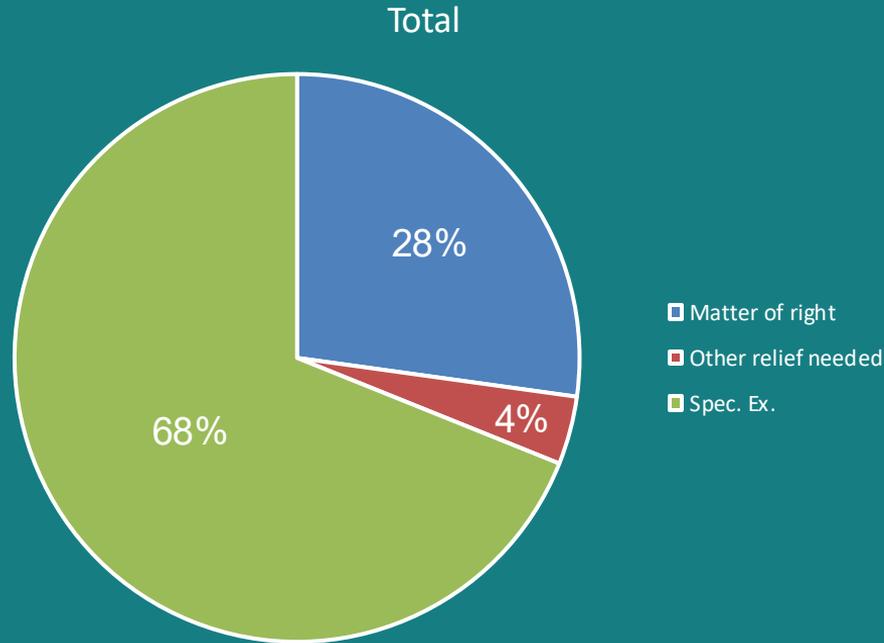
Dedicated RA-1 webpage: <https://planning.dc.gov/RA-1zoning>

Project email: ra1textamendment@dc.gov

Office of Planning social media platforms

Commision Comments from Setdown

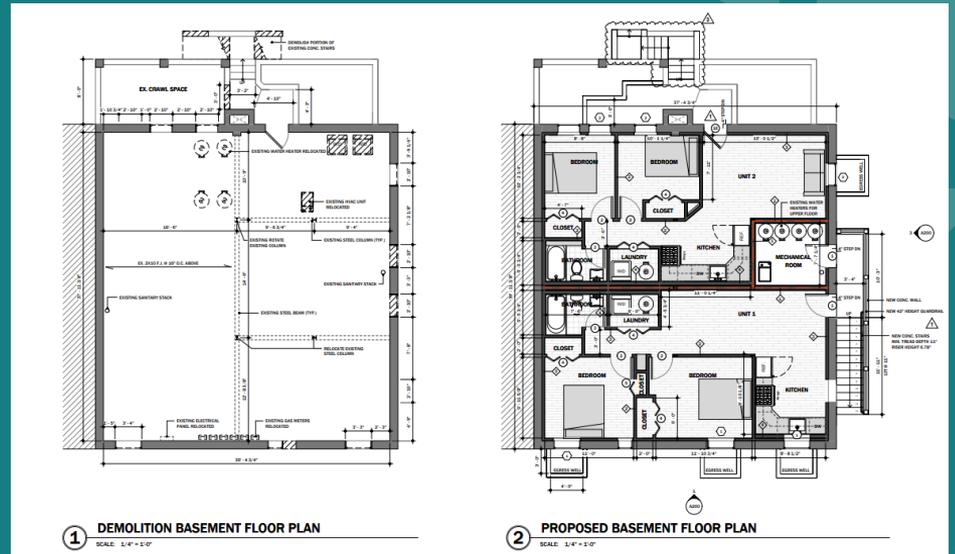
Review of Recent BZA Cases (since 2020) which would not need a U § 421 Special Exception if reviewed under the proposed 25-08 amendments.



Review of Recent BZA Cases – Example 1

Case # 21302, Approved 4-0-1

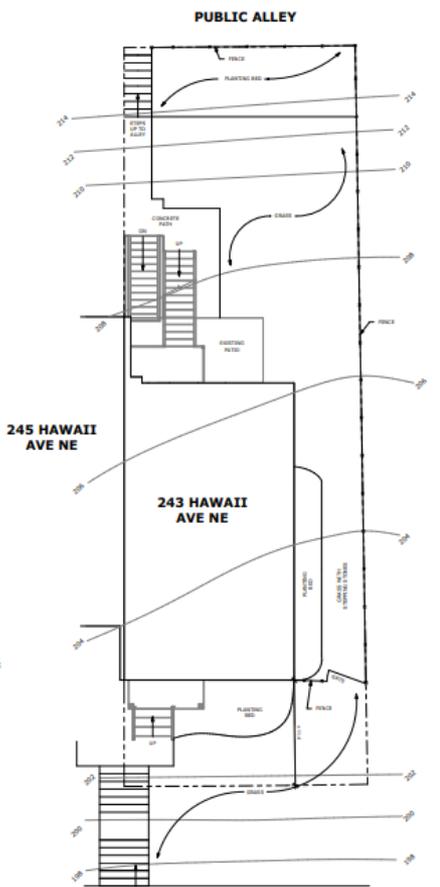
Summary: To construct two additional dwelling units on the basement level of an existing semi-detached, two-story, four-unit apartment building in the RA-1 zone.



Review of Recent BZA Cases – Example 2

Case # 21070, Approved 4-0-1

Summary: To convert a single-family, semi-detached dwelling into two units in the RA-1 zone.



Commision Comments from Setdown

Existing RA-1 zoning requirements (FAR & Lot Occupancy) compared to other Residential zones. Subtitle F 201-2

Zones	Min. Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Max. Lot Occupancy	Max. Stories	FAR	Principal Units
R-3	2,000	60%	3	N/A	1 / building
RF-1	1,800	60%	3	N/A	2 (flat)
RF-4	1,800	60%	3	1.8	3
RF-5	1,800	60%	4	1.8	4
RA-1	1,800	40%	3	0.9	1, multi-family by spec. ex.
RA-1 (IZ)	1,500	40%	3	1.08	1, multi-family by spec. ex.
RA-2	N/A	60%	N/A	1.8	Not limited
RA-2 (IZ)	N/A	60%	N/A	2.16	Not limited

Changes Since Setdown

- **Subtitle F § 202.2, changed to include Mandatory IZ developments in the reduced minimum lot area and width permissions.**
- **Subtitle C, Chapter 10, changed to reflect concurrent Omnibus proposal. (This amendment was originally scheduled to be heard before the Omnibus.)**
- **Various technical edits requested by DoB for clarification and effective administration.**

RA-1 – Voluntary IZ by-right

C § 1001 – *Inclusionary Zoning Applicability* & F § 201 Development Standards RA Zones

Currently:

Voluntary IZ Developments require Special Exception Approval

Proposed Change:

Allow developments which Mandatory IZ (creation of 10 dwellings units) to Opt-in to Voluntray IZ by-right, allowing acces to IZ FAR and proposed Lot Dimensions.

RA-1 – Lot Dimensions

F § 202 Lot Dimensions

Currently:

No prescribed lot dimension requirements except for single household row buildings, 1800 sq. feet, with flexibility allowed through U § 421 Special exception.

Proposed Change:

Introduce Minimum lot requirements to only RA-1 at 1800 sq. ft. and 1500 sq. ft. for IZ developments. Flexibility for larger developments still allowed through Special Exception.

RA-1 – Side Yards

F § 208 Side Yards

Currently:

Minimum 8 ft. Side Yards with larger side yards based on building height required when a single floor has three or more units.

Proposed Change:

Minimum of 8 ft. still required, buildings with non-conforming side yards required to maintain 5 ft. side yards for any additions/exentions. Two side yards (8 ft.) required for any building with 5 or more units.

RA-1 Use Permissions

Matter-of right uses U § 401 – *New Residential Developments*

Currently:

- Detached and semi-detached dwellings are permitted by-right.
- New row dwellings and new, or expansion of existing, apartment houses require approval by the BZA.

Proposed Change:

- Detached, semi detached and row dwellings would be permitted by-right.
- Multiple Dwelling buildings of **4 units or less** would be permitted by-right.
- New Apartment buildings of more than 4 units would require BZA approval.

RA-1 Use Permissions

Matter-of right uses U § 401 – *Renovations & Limited Expansions*

Currently:

Renovation of an existing apartment building that increases the number of dwelling units requires approval by the BZA.

Proposed Change:

Multiple Dwelling developments may:

- Be repaired and renovated;
- Expand structurally only to add or expand habitable rooms to existing units; and
- Increase the number of units in existing space previous not used for habitable rooms.

RA-1 New Residential Development BZA Review U § 421

Current Special Exception Filing Requirements:	Proposed Special Exception Filing Requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicants submit their proposals for new Row or Apartment houses to the BZA for review. ANCs, neighbors, OP and other district agencies provide comments and feedback.• Site plan and set of typical floor plans and elevations;• Grading plan (existing and final);• Landscaping plan; and• Plans for all new rights-of-way and easements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing and proposed site plans;• Architectural plans including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floor plans of each level and roof;• Elevations;• Sectional drawings• Streetscape/alleyway photos;• Sun/shadow study; and• Plans or illustrations showing the proposal in relation to adjacent properties. <p>For developments on property 20,000 SF or greater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing and final grading plans;• Plans for all new rights-of-way and easements; and• A statement of justification which examines the proposed development in relation to the surrounding neighborhood context.

Conclusion

The proposal would reduce the number of RA-1 BZA applications for new development, alleviate the additional fees and filings for applicants to construct or expand residential buildings, allow moderately sized residential development by-right, and provide clarity on development and review standards for RA-1 development.

OP recommends that the Zoning Commission approve the proposed text amendment.