

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Michael Jurkovic, AICP, Development Review Specialist  
*JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation

**DATE:** July 21, 2025

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case 25-10 – Setdown Report for a Proposed Zoning Text Amendment to U § 514.3, prohibited used in the Reed-Cooke Mixed-Use Zoning, 1781 Florida Ave. NW.

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### **I. REQUEST**

On May 12, 2025, Alturas LLC submitted an petition to amend the use prohibitions of the Reed-Cooke Mixed-Use Zoning area, to provide the subject property 1781 Florida Ave. NW (Square 2557, Lot 800) with additional available use permissions by amending the following sections of the Zoning Regulation (11 DCMR ZR16):

- **Subtitle U § 514.3(r):** Amend the Off-premises Alcoholic beverages use prohibition to exclude Square 2557, Lot 800, for both primary and secondary use.
- **Subtitle U § 514.3(u):** Remove Square 2557, Lot 800, from the restaurant and food establishment use prohibition.
- **Subtitle U § 514.3(x):** Remove Square 2557, Lot 800, from the veterinary hospital use prohibition.

### **II. RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (“OP”) recommends that the Zoning Commission **set down** for public hearing text amendments to the following sections of the Zoning Regulations to amend Subtitle U § 514.3 as follows (text to be deleted is marked with ~~strikethrough~~ and new text is shown in **bold and underlined**):

514.3 In the MU-4/RC and MU-5A/RC zones, the following uses shall be prohibited:

...

- (r) Off-premises alcoholic beverage sales, except that the off-premises beer and wine sales accessory use in the grocery store located in Square 2572, Lot 36, may continue as a matter of right provided that it shall not occupy more than 2,078 square feet of the store’s gross floor area, **and that the off-premises beer and wine sales may be permitted as a matter of right primary or accessory use in Square 2557, Lot 800;**

...

- (u) Restaurant or fast food establishment, **except that a restaurant may be permitted as a matter of right in Square 2557, Lot 800;**

...

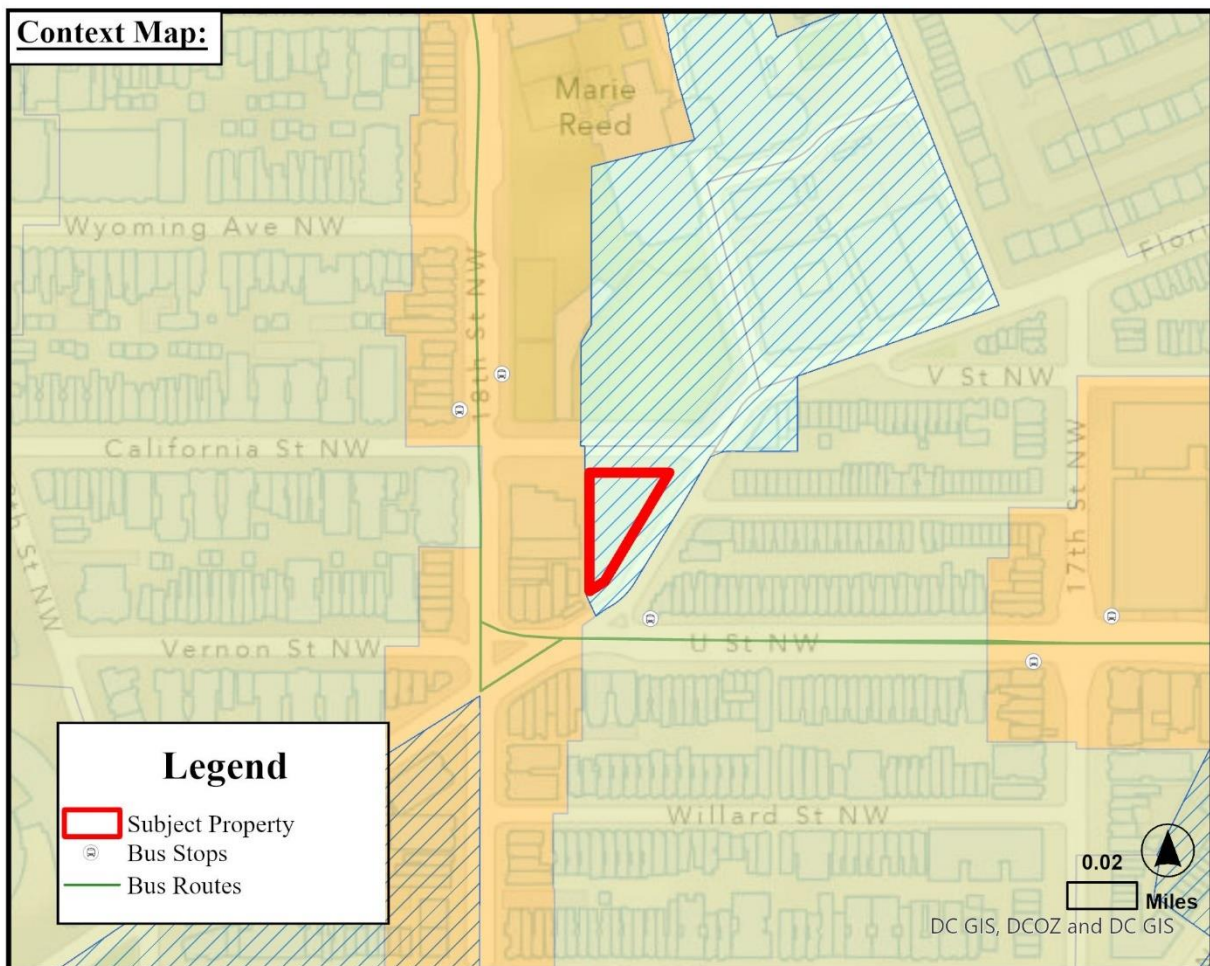
- (x) Veterinary hospital, **except that a veterinary hospital may be permitted as a matter of right in Square 2557, Lot 800;** and

...

### III. BACKGROUND

The applicant has submitted this petition to amend the use prohibitions of the Reed-Cooke Mixed-Use Zoning to grant additional use flexibility to the subject property, 1781 Florida Ave. NW (Square 2557, Lot 800). The Property is located at the southern end of the MU/RC zoned area and is bound by an alley to the west, and street frontage on three sides: California Street NW to the north, U Street NW to the south, and Florida Avenue NW to east.

The applicant has owned the property since 2000 and proceeded with a complete renovation, reopening the building in 2006. Since then, the property has been home to a fitness studio on the second floor. After years of tenant turnover, the majority of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor space was reconfigured to accommodate a CVS Pharmacy in 2022. However, that tenant has since vacated the property and it is largely vacant.



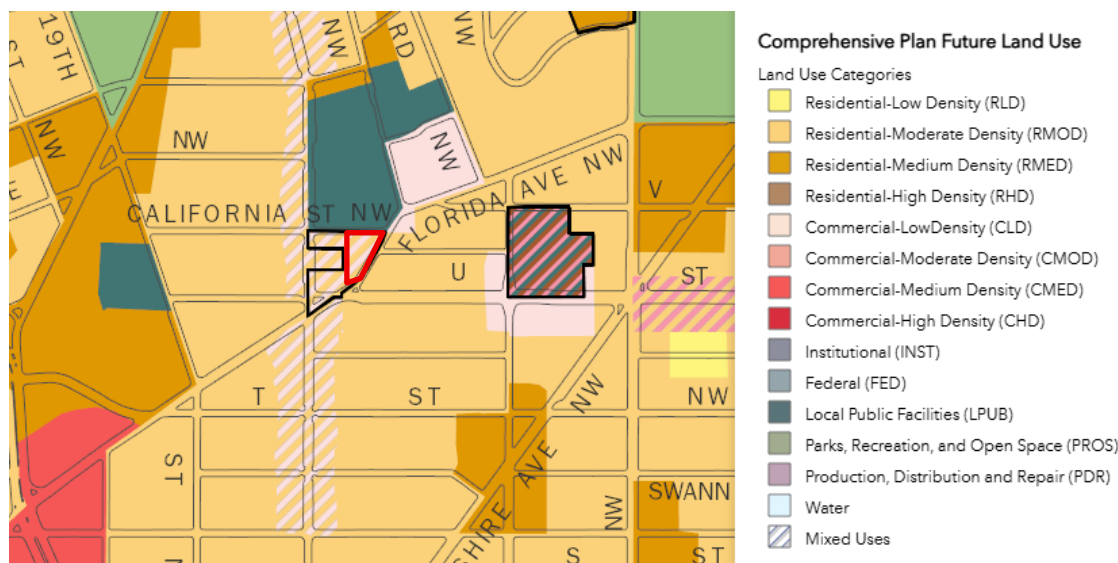
## IV. PLANNING CONTEXT

### A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

As described in the Chapter 2 Framework Element Section 226 Guidelines for Using the Generalized Policy Map and the Future Land Use Map, the maps are intended to provide generalized guidelines for development decisions. They are to be interpreted broadly and are not parcel-specific like zoning maps; i.e. the maps, in and of themselves, do not establish detailed requirements or permissions for a development's physical characteristics including building massing or density; uses; or support systems such as parking and loading. They are to be interpreted in conjunction with relevant written goals, policies and action items in the Comprehensive Plan text, and further balanced against policies or objectives contained in relevant Small Area Plans and other citywide or area plans.

#### **Generalized Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) indicates that the site is appropriate for a mix of Moderate Density Residential and Low Density Commercial.



**Mixed Use Categories:** The Future Land Use Map indicates areas where the mixing of two or more land uses is encouraged. The particular combination of uses desired in a given area is depicted in striped patterns, with stripe colors corresponding to the categories defined on the previous pages. The Mixed Use category generally applies in the following three circumstances:

- Established, pedestrian-oriented commercial areas which also include substantial amounts of housing, typically on the upper stories of buildings with ground floor retail or office uses;
- Commercial corridors or districts which may not contain substantial amounts of housing today, but where more housing is desired in the future. The pattern envisioned for such areas is typically one of pedestrian-oriented streets, with ground floor retail or office uses and upper story housing; and
- Large sites (generally greater than 10 acres in size), where opportunities for multiple uses exist but a plan dictating the precise location of these uses has yet to be prepared. 225.18

The general density and intensity of development within a given Mixed Use area is determined by the specific mix of uses shown. If the desired outcome is to emphasize one use over the other (for example,

ground floor retail with three stories of housing above), the Future Land Use Map may note the dominant use by showing it at a slightly higher density than the other use in the mix ... 225.19

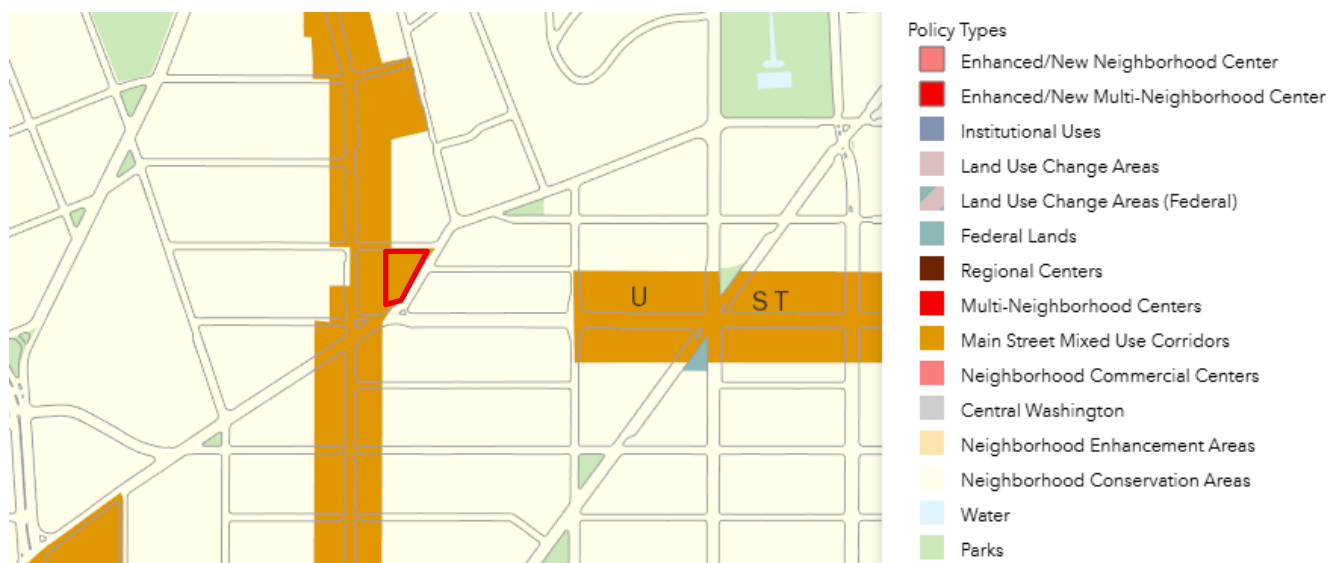
A variety of zoning designations are used in Mixed Use areas, depending on the combination of uses, densities, and intensities. ... 225.21

**Moderate Density Residential:** This designation is used to define neighborhoods generally, but not exclusively, suited for row houses as well as low-rise garden apartment complexes. The designation also applies to areas characterized by a mix of single-family homes, two- to four-unit buildings, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings. In some neighborhoods with this designation, there may also be existing multi-story apartments, many built decades ago when the areas were zoned for more dense uses (or were not zoned at all). Density in Moderate Density Residential areas is typically calculated either as the number of dwelling units per minimum lot area, or as a FAR up to 1.8, although greater density may be possible when complying with Inclusionary Zoning or when approved through a Planned Unit Development. The R-3, RF, and RA-2 Zone Districts are consistent with the Moderate Density Residential category, and other zones may also apply.

**Low Density Commercial:** This designation is used to define shopping and service areas that are generally lower in scale and intensity. Retail, office, and service businesses are the predominant uses. Areas with this designation range from small business districts that draw primarily from the surrounding neighborhoods to larger business districts that draw from a broader market area. Their common feature is that they are comprised primarily of commercial and mixed-use buildings that range in density generally up to a FAR of 2.5, with greater density possible when complying with Inclusionary Zoning or when approved through a Planned Unit Development. The MU-3 and MU-4 Zone Districts are consistent with the Low Density category, and other zones may also apply.

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment would not be inconsistent with the Mixed Use Category FLUM land use recommendation for the site which includes Moderate Density Residential and Low Density Commercial.

### Generalized Policy Map



The Generalized Policy Map (GPM) places the site within a Main Street Mixed-Use Corridor area.

**Main Street Mixed Use Corridors:** *These are traditional commercial business corridors with a concentration of older storefronts along the street. The area served can vary from one neighborhood (e.g., 14th Street Heights or Barracks Row) to multiple neighborhoods (e.g., Dupont Circle, H Street, or Adams Morgan). Their common feature is that they have a pedestrian oriented environment with traditional storefronts. Many have upper-story residential or office uses. Some corridors are underutilized, with capacity for redevelopment. Conservation and enhancement of these corridors is desired to foster economic and housing opportunities and serve neighborhood needs. Any development or redevelopment that occurs should support transit use and enhance the pedestrian environment.*

The proposed PUD and map amendment would be not inconsistent with the Generalized Policy Map recommendation for the site. The proposal would further the goals and objectives of the Main Street Mixed Use Corridor, in that it would introduce new use type options along to facilitate finding a long-term use for a property which has struggled with finding a long-term tenant.

## **B. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICES THROUGH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS**

The Comprehensive Plan requires an examination of zoning actions through a racial equity lens. The direction to consider equity “as part of its Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis” indicates that the equity analysis is intended to be based on the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and part of the Commission’s consideration of whether a proposed zoning action is “not inconsistent” with the Comprehensive Plan.

For this, the Zoning Commission has developed a four part Racial Equity Toolkit for Applicants and OP to utilize in evaluation of actions brought before the Commission:

### **Part 1 – Guidance Regarding the Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Citywide Elements**

The proposal is, on balance, not inconsistent with the Citywide and Area Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. For the full text of each policy statement referenced, please refer to Appendix I.

#### **Land Use Element**

##### ***Policy LU-2.3.1: Managing Non-Residential Uses in Residential Areas***

*Maintain zoning regulations and development review procedures that prevent the encroachment of inappropriate commercial uses in residential areas. Limit the scale and extent of non-residential uses that are generally compatible with residential uses but present the potential for conflicts when they are excessively concentrated or out of scale with the neighborhood.*

##### ***Policy LU-2.4.1: Promotion of Commercial Centers***

*Promote the vitality of commercial centers and provide for the continued growth of commercial land uses to meet the needs of residents, expand employment opportunities, accommodate population growth, and sustain Washington, DC’s role as the center of the metropolitan area. Commercial centers should be inviting, accessible, and attractive places, support social interaction, and provide amenities for nearby residents. Support commercial development in underserved areas to provide equitable access and options to meet the needs of nearby communities.*



The proposed text amendment would be consistent with the policies listed above. The primary goal of this text amendment is to aid in facilitating the occupancy of a large vacant commercial space at the intersection of the Adams Morgan and U Street commercial corridors. These uses are typically permitted in a Main Street Mixed Use Corridor, but not within the specific zone for this site. Keeping the property occupied would contribute to making the commercial area successful and inviting place for nearby residents.

### **Economic Development Element**

#### ***Policy ED-3.1.1: Neighborhood Commercial Vitality***

*Promote the vitality and diversity of Washington, DC's neighborhood commercial areas by retaining existing businesses, attracting new businesses, supporting a strong customer base through residential density, and improving the mix of goods and services available to residents.*

#### ***Policy ED-3.1.8: Neighborhood Retail District Identity and Promotion***

*Brand the distinct character of retail districts through signature promotional events, signage, streetscape, and district gateways. Additionally, encourage unique retail clusters where appropriate.*

The proposal should not be inconsistent with the policies listed above. The proposed text amendment should assist a location at an important retail intersection that has struggled with vacancies to find a tenant by increasing the potential uses for the site.

### **Urban Design Element**

#### ***Policy UD-2.2.3: Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers***

*Undertake strategic and coordinated efforts to create neighborhood mixed-use centers that reinforce community identity and form compact, walkable environments with a broad mix of housing types, employment opportunities, neighborhood shops and services, and civic uses and public spaces. New buildings and projects should support the compact development of neighborhood centers and increase the diversity of uses and creation of public spaces where needed.*

The proposed amendments include the expansion of permitted uses at the subject property which would further the above Urban Design policy in that this effort should increase the potential mix of uses in the established commercial corridor.

### **Planning Area Elements - Mid-City Area Element**

#### ***Policy MC-1.1.4: Local Services and Small Businesses***

*Support the small businesses and essential local services that serve Mid-City. Encourage the establishment of new businesses that provide these services in areas where they are lacking, especially on the east side of the Planning Area. Support local services, small businesses, and their surrounding corridors using Main Streets, business improvement districts (BIDs), and Department of Small and Local Business (DSLBD) clean teams.*

#### ***Policy MC-1.1.6: Mixed-Use Districts***

*Encourage preservation of the housing located within Mid-City's commercially zoned areas. Within mixed-use areas, such as Mount Pleasant Street NW and Columbia Road NW, encourage commercial uses that do not adversely impact the established residential uses.*

***Policy MC-2.4.2: Preference for Local-Serving Businesses***

*Enhance the local-serving, multicultural character of the 18th Street NW/Columbia Road NW business district. Encourage small businesses that meet the needs of local residents, as well as an appropriate mix of establishments that both neighbors and visitors to the area can enjoy. Develop and implement strategies for support and retention of minority-owned businesses.*

***Policy MC-2.4.5: Reed-Cooke Area***

*Support existing housing within the Reed-Cooke neighborhood, maintain heights and densities at appropriate levels, and encourage small-scale business development that does not adversely affect the residential community.*

The applicant's requested text amendment would further these policies of the Mid-City Area Element. The property is uniquely situated so that it is well buffered from residential properties in the Reed-Cook area, and the requested use provisions may introduce new uses that that would serve local residents but are otherwise missing from the neighborhood, and at a location that is less likely to cause conflict the nearby residences.

**Part 2 – Applicant/Petitioner Community Outreach and Engagement**

The applicant has provided details of their ongoing outreach efforts at Exhibit #2D, pgs. 8-10. The filing notes that community outreach continues, although they indicate that they have yet to receive negative feedback. The applicant is encouraged to continue these discussions and to provide an update as part of any additional filings prior to a hearing for this case.

**Part 3 – Disaggregated Data for the Upper Northeast Planning Area**

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 for the planning area.

In this case, the proposed text amendment, to allow specific additional uses on this one site, should have limited if any impact on neighborhood demographics. The proposed uses would be ones that could serve local residents, adding to the retail and service mix, and thereby adding desirability to the neighborhood. It could also add some employment opportunities for residents of the neighborhood, although the unemployment rate for the Mid-City Planning area is well below that of the District as a whole. The median income of the Mid-City Planning Area is also higher than that of the District in both the 2012-2016 and 2019-2023 time periods.

***Median Income Districtwide and in the Mid-City Planning Area (2012-2016 and 2019-2023)***

Median Income	Districtwide (2012-2016)	MC (2012-2016)	Districtwide (2019-2023)	MC (2019-2023)
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$72,935	\$87,510	\$106,287	\$131,704
<b>White alone</b>	\$119,564	\$112,717	\$166,774	\$169,741
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	\$ 40,560	\$44,178	\$60,446	\$63,175
<b>American Indian and Alaskan Native alone</b>	\$ 51,306	NA	\$63,617	\$37,782
<b>Asian alone</b>	\$ 91,453	\$100,938	\$121,619	\$120,032
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA

Median Income	Districtwide (2012-2016)	MC (2012-2016)	Districtwide (2019-2023)	MC (2019-2023)
<b>Some other races</b>	\$ 41, 927	\$42,529	\$74,754	\$63,396
<b>Two or more races</b>	\$ 83,243	\$91,857	\$116,869	\$143,213
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	\$ 60,848	\$48,661	\$106,435	\$95,249

### General Economic Characteristics

The unemployment rate and the poverty rate improved both in the District and in the Mid-City Planning Area over this ten-year period. Additionally, the Area has held a lower unemployment and poverty rate when compared to the District as a whole.

#### *General Economic Characteristics of the Planning Area and District*

Characteristic	Districtwide (2012-2016)	MC (2012-2016)	Districtwide (2019-2023)	MC (2019-2023)
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.7%	6%	6.5%	3.6%
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	17.9%	13.5%	14.5%	11.2%

### Racial Equity benefits of the project

The Mid-City Planning Area is predominantly white but has a growing number of residents from other race/ethnic groups. With the exception of the Hispanic/Latino group, the minority populations in this planning area have maintained their higher household incomes than for their same cohorts in the District as a whole.

The proposal's primary goal is to provide additional matter-of-right uses for a particular property in the Reed-Cooke area. The applicant notes that the property is otherwise in good condition having experienced a series of improvements and most recently a conversion of most of the building for occupancy by a single tenant which has since left. Although, limited in scope to the addition of just three uses which are permitted in typical mixed use zones, the applicant's request should expedite the occupancy of the site and return employment opportunities to the area.

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

Please refer to OP's analysis above under Part 1 of the Racial Equity Tool discussion for policies potentially advanced by the proposed text amendment. The proposal is not inconsistent with the Citywide Elements of the Comprehensive Plan and would further the policies of the Land Use, Economic Development, and Urban Design Elements.

Factor	Question	OP Response
<b>Direct Displacement</b>	Will the zoning action result in displacement of tenants or residents?	OP does not anticipate these text amendments would result in direct displacement of tenants or residents as the majority of the property is currently vacant. There is currently no residential use on this site, and none is proposed.
<b>Indirect Displacement</b>	What examples of indirect displacement might result from the zoning action?	OP does not anticipate significant indirect displacement to occur from this text amendment. The proposed amendment would provide for more options to find a tenant for a vacant commercial space.



Factor	Question	OP Response
<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>	The text amendment should not have any impact on housing, although amending the provision but keeping the subject property in the Reed-Cooke area preserves the enhanced affordability requirements should the property be redeveloped.
<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 proposed text amendment is focused on the permissible uses of the zone. Physical impacts past what may be required for the next tenant's build out are not anticipated. However, activation of currently vacant space would have a positive impact on the character of the streetscape at this important location.
<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>	Given the limited scope of the amendment, OP does not anticipate the text amendment would have a significant impact on access to jobs, healthcare or retail uses. However, a new tenant for a vacant commercial space would have some direct impact on local employment opportunities.
<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>	The Applicant outlines their community outreach and coordination at Exhibit #2D, pgs. 8-10, which includes meeting with ANC 2D.

## C. OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

### Adam's Morgan Vision Framework

In 2016, OP published the Adams Morgan Vision Framework a strategic planning document for the Adams Morgan neighborhood. The Property is within the study area that is subject to the Vision Framework.

This Petition would be consistent with the goals of the Vision Framework as it will allow additional opportunities to reduce its vacancy rate by increasing the number of potential tenants. (Visions Framework pg. 12) The uses proposed should fit into the overall character of the neighborhood relating to the subject property. Therefore, the proposal to expand on the limited new uses permitted is consistent with and aligns with the types of businesses that the Framework imagines at intersection of 18th Street NW, Florida Avenue NW, and U Street NW.

## D. SUMMARY OF PLANNING CONTEXT ANALYSIS

On balance, the proposed text amendment is not inconsistent with the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, and it should further some recommendations in the Plan's Elements. It would allow the introduction of

the following uses as a matter-of-right at Square 2557, Lot 800: Off premise Beer and wine Sales, Restaurant or fast-food establishment, or a veterinary hospital.

## **V. ATTACHMENTS**

*Zoning Map: Reed-Cooke Overlay*

## ATTACHMENT 1:

