

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Shepard Beamon, Project Manager  
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director, Development Review

**DATE:** December 1, 2025

**SUBJECT:** ZC #25-17 Public hearing report for a mandatory design review in the SEFC-4 zone on Parcel P3 at The Yards.

## **I. RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends the Commission **approve** this design review application pursuant to Subtitle X Chapter 6, and approve the following requested flexibility, pursuant to X § 603:

- **Height (SEFC-4)** K § 231 – Permitted: 40 ft. max.; Proposed: 47 ft. proposed (40 ft. effective height as measured from finished grade);

The applicant has requested flexibility from the methodology for calculating building height. OP does not support relief from the methodology for measuring a zoning requirement, as there is no means to amend the method of measurement – the provision cited by the applicant (X § 603.1) provides for flexibility from height, not rules of measurement for height. Rather, the required flexibility would be from the maximum 40-foot building height permission, to allow an overall building height of 47 feet. OP has analyzed the relief accordingly.

- **Lot Occupancy (SEFC-4)** K § 232 – Required: 25% max.; Proposed: 65% (P3);
- **Side Yard (SEFC-4)** K § 233 – Required: 12 ft. min.; Proposed: 0 ft.;
- **Closed Court Width (SEFC-4)** K § 234 – Required: 2.5 in/ft. of height; 12 ft. min.; Proposed: 8 ft.; and
- **Waterfront Setback (SEFC-4)** K § 235 – Required: 100 ft.; Proposed: 56-65 ft ;
- **Use Permissions (SEFC-4)** K § 239.4 – Floor to Ceiling Height (Ground Floor) – Required: 14 ft. min.; Proposed: 10 ft.

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X § 900 and C § 1102.5:

- **Waterfront General Rules** C § 1102.4(e) – Education use in the 100-year floodplain, pursuant to X § 901 and C § 1102.5; and

## **II. BACKGROUND**

This application, filed by Living Classrooms, is to allow the construction of a new building for educational purposes, workplace and culinary training, and an eating and dining establishment to be located in the SEFC-4 zone on Parcel P3 (The Yards). Per K § 239.5, a mandatory review by the Zoning

Commission is required for proposed structures in the SEFC-4 zone. Evaluation of the subject application is against the criteria contained in Subtitle K § 241 and Subtitle X § 603. In April 2025, the Commission approved zoning text amendments to the SEFC-4 zone ([24-18](#)) to permit educational and institutional uses on Parcel P3.

### III. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Address	Parcel P3 (The Yards)
<b>Zoning</b>	SEFC-4
<b>Historic District</b>	Washington Navy Yard
<b>Applicant</b>	Goulston & Storrs on behalf of Living Classrooms
<b>Ward and ANC</b>	Ward 8, ANC8F
<b>Planning Area</b>	Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest (LAW/NSW)
<b>Legal Description</b>	Square 0771, 0816 Parcel P3 (Tax Record)
<b>Land Area of Site</b>	9,196 square feet

#### Proposed Uses

The project proposes to locate a Living Classrooms facility on Parcel P3. The proposed three-story building would be located partially within the required waterfront setback and within the 100-year floodplain, which the applicant has requested relief from; however, the applicant has stated the facility would elevated out of both the 100- and 500-year floodplain. The facility would offer the following services that primarily target, but are not limited to, residents of Wards 6, 7 and 8:

- Maritime education classrooms that work in tandem with in-water programming along the Anacostia River and in the marina;
- Educational programs including music and robotics classes;
- Space devoted to workforce training and job readiness, including a hospitality, hospital services, and a ground floor culinary training program;

The facility would also offer the following programs for the general public:

- Ground-floor restaurant with outdoor dining in affiliation with the culinary training program; and
- Support facilities for the Marina such as restrooms, showers, and lockers, which are located on the ground-floor and accessed from the rear of the building.

#### IV. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is an undeveloped parcel located in the southeastern portion of The Yards, along the Anacostia River waterfront and trail. The site is situated next to the Yards Marina Public Dock to the south and The Yards Park to the west. The surrounding area includes property owned and operated by the U.S. Department of the Navy, which includes a power plant, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Headquarters and open space. There is currently no street frontage or access to the site; however, the Southeast Federal Center Master Plan includes a proposed 60-foot right-of-way (River Road) around Parcel Q, which is currently a paved parking lot located northwest of the site. The proposed right-of-way would provide street access to the subject property should development occur on Parcel Q in the future. The property has 12 feet of District-owned land that separates the property from federally owned property to the north and east.

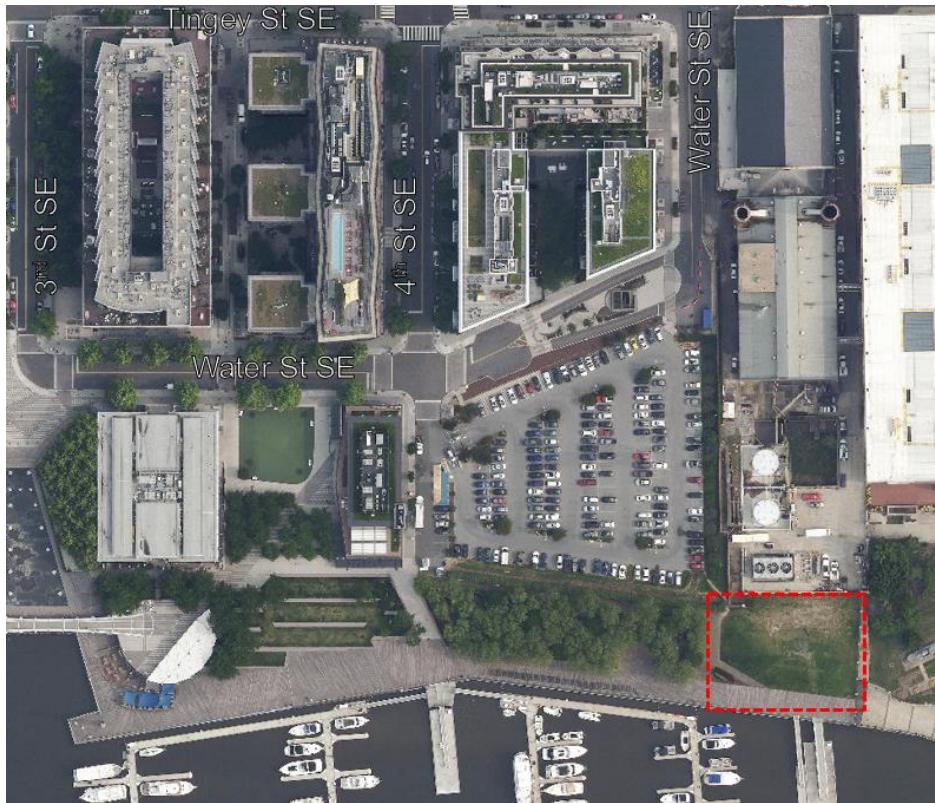


Figure 1: Site Aerial View

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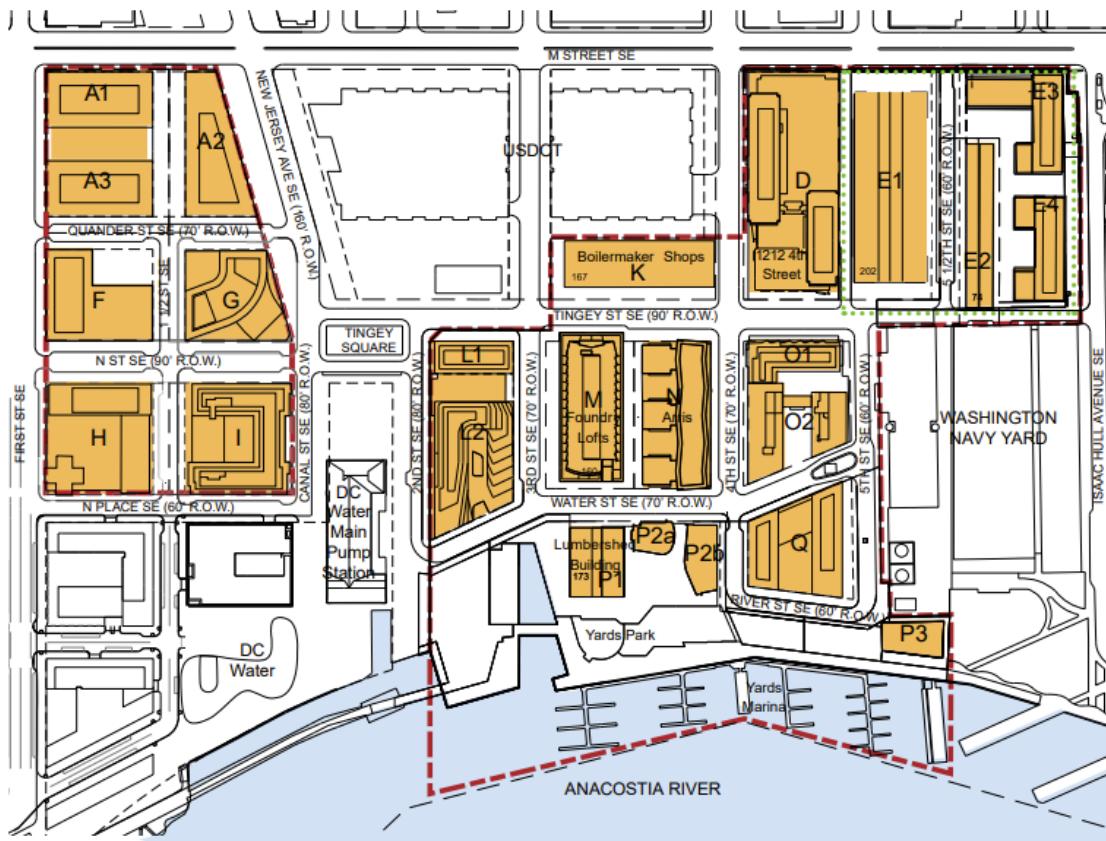


Figure 2: SEFC Master Plan

## V. ZONING ANALYSIS

The subject site is zoned SEFC-4, which is intended to encourage open space, promote a lively and interactive waterfront environment, discourage parking, provide a development area for retail and cultural uses, provide an open space area, and allow for a continuous, publicly accessible pedestrian and bicycle trail. Pursuant to Subtitle K § 239.5, this zone includes a mandatory Zoning Commission review in accordance with the standards set forth in Subtitle K § 241, procedures set forth in Subtitle K § 242, and the design review standards set forth in Subtitle X § 604.

SEFC-4	Regulation
K § 230 Density (FAR)	0.5 maximum in the zone (0.75 on a lot for recreational use, marina, yacht club, or boathouse buildings and structures)
K § 231 Height	40 ft. maximum 12 ft. habitable / 15 feet mechanical penthouse
K § 232 Lot Occupancy	25% (50% recreational use, marina, yacht club, or boathouse buildings and structures)
K § 233 Side Yard	12 ft. minimum

SEFC-4	Regulation
K § 234 Court (Non-residential and Lodging)	Min. Width Open Court - 2.5 in./ft. of height of court; 6 ft. minimum.
	Min. Width Closed Court - 2.5 in./ft. of height of court; 12 ft. minimum.
	Min. Area Closed Court - Twice the square of the required width of court dimension; 250 sq. ft. minimum.
K § 235 Waterfront Setback	100 ft. minimum, measured inland from the bulkhead or the mean high water level, whichever result in the larger waterfront setback
K § 239.3 Permitted Uses	Within the SEFC-4 development area, uses in MU-Use Group B (Subtitle U §§ 505 and 506), which include various park and waterfront-related uses by-right, and retail, arts, and entertainment uses by special exception.

## VI. ZONING COMMISSION REVIEW STANDARDS (SEFC)

The zoning for this site provides specific criteria for the Zoning Commission review of proposed developments in Subtitle K § 241. The following is OP's analysis of the applicable standards to this application.

*241.1 In addition to proving that the proposed uses, buildings, or structures meet the standards set forth in Subtitle X, the applicant for Zoning Commission approval of a use or structure within a SEFC zone shall further demonstrate conformance to the following standards:*

*(a) The use, building, or structure will help achieve the goals and objectives of the SEFC zone as set forth in Subtitle K §§ 200.2 through 200.7, as applicable;*

The proposed use and building have been designed to be sensitive to the adjacent Navy Yard and the historically significant buildings. The SEFC-4 zone is intended to discourage parking and promote a lively, interactive waterfront environment, which this proposal would achieve.

*(b) The proposed building or structure shall be designed with a height, bulk, and siting that provide for openness of view and vistas to and from the waterfront and, where feasible, shall maintain views of federal monumental buildings, particularly along the New Jersey Avenue, S.E. corridor; and*

The building is designed to include views of the waterfront and park on all three floors of the building through terracing and a plaza. The height and bulk should not result in obstruction of views of the waterfront for surrounding properties.

*(c) On or above-grade parking adjacent to, or visible from, the street shall be limited. Where parking cannot be placed underground, other uses such as retail or residential shall separate parking areas from the street, or where this is not possible, green landscaping or architectural treatment of façade shall adequately screen parking from the street and adjacent development.*

The proposal does not include on-site parking.

*241.2 In evaluating the application, the Zoning Commission also may consider:*

*(a) Compatibility with buildings in the surrounding area through overall massing, siting, details, and landscaping;*

Although the building would exceed the maximum building height for the SEFC-4 zone, it would not block views for other buildings. Since the site has a relatively isolated location in the Southeast Federal Center Master Plan, there should be minimal impact on surrounding buildings.

(b) *Use of high standards of environmental design that promote the achievement of sustainable development goals;*

The project is designed to be elevated above the established grade in order to locate the building out of the 500-year floodplain. According to the applicant, the landscape plan includes various features to promote sustainability

(c) *Façade articulation that minimizes or eliminates the visibility of unarticulated blank walls from public spaces;*

The building will include materials and fenestrations that establish engaging and attractive public-facing facades.

(d) *Landscaping which complements the building;*

The proposed landscape plan includes features that provide transitions from the building to the waterfront trail, including terraces, a plaza and lawn steps.

(e) *For buildings that include preferred uses in accordance with Subtitle K §§ 237 or 238, the Zoning Commission may consider the balance and location of preferred uses;*

Not applicable.

(f) *In connection with its review pursuant to Subtitle K § 238.3, the Zoning Commission may consider the effect of the proposed use on the predominantly residential character of the SEFC-2 and/or SEFC-3 zones;*

Not applicable.

(g) *For development within or adjacent to the SEFC-4 zone, the Zoning Commission may consider whether the project is consistent with the following goals:*

(1) *Providing a wide variety of active and passive recreational uses;*

The programming of the building would include educational opportunities in connection with the marina and other maritime activities. It would serve to activate this portion of the waterfront area without impeding overall park activities in Yards Park.

(2) *Encouraging uses that open to, overlook, and benefit the waterfront park; and*

The building would be designed to include a plaza on the ground floor in association with the eating and drinking establishment that overlooks the waterfront. The second and third floors would include terraces from classrooms that overlook both the park to the west and the waterfront to the south.

(3) *Utilizing siting and design of buildings and uses to improve the natural ecology, to illustrate the importance of natural systems, and/or to interpret the historically important maritime context of the site; and*

As this site is located directly adjacent to the Anacostia River, the site lends itself to being an ideal location for maritime education, which is a component of the programming for the building.

(h) *For development on Parcel E, the Zoning Commission may consider the impact of the proposed development on the Navy Yard, including the report and recommendations of the United States Navy made pursuant to Subtitle K § 242.3.*

## VII. DESIGN REVIEW CRITERIA

The zoning for this site, provides specific criteria for the Zoning Commission review of proposed developments in Subtitle X §§ 603 and 604. The following is OP's analysis of the applicable standards to this application.

603.1 *As part of the Design Review process, the Zoning Commission may grant relief from the development standards for height, setbacks, yards, lot occupancy, courts, and building transitions; as well as any specific design standards of a specific zone. Except as allowed pursuant to Subtitle X § 603.2, the Design Review process shall not be used to vary other building development standards including FAR, Inclusionary Zoning, or Green Area Ratio.*

Granting the requested flexibility would help the project achieve the standards of X § 604.

**Height:** The applicant requests flexibility related to maximum building height of 40 feet in the SEFC-4 zone. As noted above, OP would not support relief from the method of measuring height as requested, but supports relief, in this instance, from the maximum permitted height for this building. Typically, building height is established from the building height measuring point (BHMP) at the level of the curb; however, the site does not have street or right-of-way frontage. In this case, the BHMP is established at the adjacent natural or finished grade, whichever is the lower in elevation, at the middle of the front of the building, which would be the south boundary of the property adjacent to the Anacostia Riverwalk. Although the building would not exceed the maximum building height of 40 feet when measured at grade around the building, when measured from the lower natural grade, the building height would measure 47 feet due to the site and building being elevated out of the floodplain. In addition, the building height proposed is needed to accommodate the service functions proposed for this site by Living Classrooms.

**Lot Occupancy:** The applicant requests flexibility from the maximum 25% lot occupancy in the SEFC-4 zone. Flexibility for lot occupancy would allow for a reasonable amount of space for the proposed building. The maximum 25% lot occupancy was intended to encompass the entire SEFC-4 zone; however, with the construction of the proposed building, a separate tax lot will be established on Parcel P3 since the lot cannot be recorded without right-of-way frontage. This means the tax lot would have a maximum lot occupancy of 25% and the building would occupy 65%. Although the proposed building would occupy 65% of Parcel P3, the building would only occupy 2.4% of the overall SEFC-4 zone, bringing the total lot occupancy for the zone to 17%, not exceeding the maximum 25%.

**Side Yard:** The applicant requests flexibility from the minimum 12-foot side yard in the SEFC-4 zone. The proposed building would have portions built to the eastern boundary of the parcel; however, there are also 12 feet separating the parcel boundaries from The Yards easternmost boundaries. Although there would be no eastern side yard, there would still be adequate

separation from the neighboring U.S. Department of the Navy property that would be used for a walkway to access the rear of the building.

**Closed Court Width:** The applicant requests flexibility from the minimum closed court width in the SEFC-4 zone. A closed court is defined as a court surrounded on all sides by the exterior walls of a building, or by exterior walls of a building and side or rear lot lines. The SEFC-4 zone requires courts to have a minimum width of 2.5 inches per foot of the height of the court, with a width of no less than 12 feet for closed courts and six feet for open courts. As stated by the applicant, the ramp and walkway that provide access to the north side (rear) of the building technically create a framed, closed court condition. The proposed court measures six to eight feet in width and would be enclosed by the rear wall of the building and fencing along the rear parcel boundary. If this space is determined to be a court, closed or open, OP does not object to the requested flexibility.

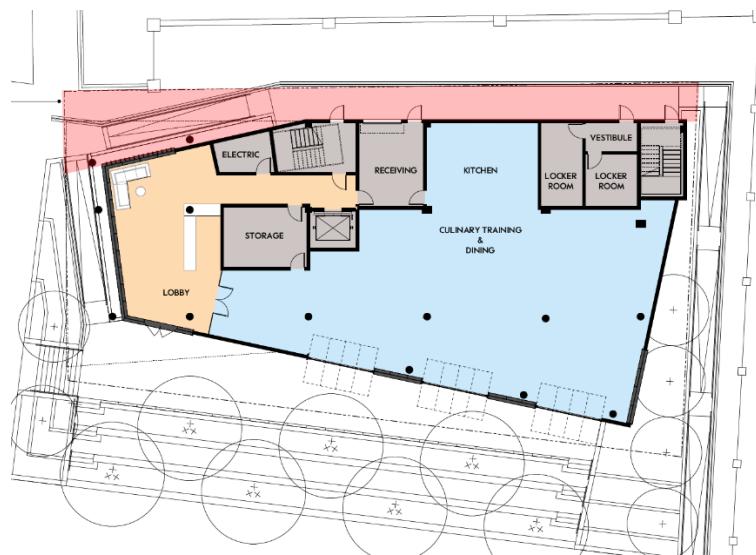


Figure 3: Proposed Court (red)

**Waterfront Setback:** The applicant requests flexibility from the minimum 100-foot waterfront setback in the SEFC-4 zone. The proposed building would be set back 56-65 feet from the waterfront bulkhead. The waterfront regulations are intended to provide physical and visual public accessibility to and along the waterfront; protection of natural resources along the waterfront; open space along the waterfront; and use restrictions in the 100-year flood plain. The proposal would not obstruct public accessibility to the existing Anacostia Riverwalk Trail or views of the river. Further, the proposal would not significantly reduce the open space dedicated to Yards Park, and would provide uses that would further activate the waterfront and park.

**Use Permissions:** The applicant requests flexibility to allow less than the required minimum 14-foot floor-to-ceiling height on the ground floor in the SEFC-4. The proposed ground floor would have a 10-foot floor-to-ceiling height. The minimum height aims to establish clearly visible commercial ground-floor spaces when viewed from the street or sidewalk to draw in residents and visitors and allow for a variety of businesses and commercial tenants to occupy those spaces. The applicant states the proposed ground-floor height is to accommodate taller floor heights on the second and third levels to align with outdoor terraces and to provide space for mechanical systems between floors. The reduced ground floor height should not impair visibility when

viewed from public spaces and should not compromise the anticipated uses of the ground floor, as the space has an intended use specific to the building and Living Classrooms; therefore, there are no plans for other commercial uses.

603.4 *An application for a special exception or variance that would otherwise require the approval of the Board of Zoning Adjustment may be heard simultaneously with a Design Review application, and shall be subject to all applicable special exception criteria and variance standards and the payment of all applicable fees.*

The applicant requests special exception relief from the waterfront use permissions to allow educational uses in the 100-floodplain. The OP special exception analysis is detailed below.

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 Mandatory Design Reviews subject to this chapter according to the standards stated in the provisions that require Zoning Commission review.*

604.2 *For Mandatory Design Review, the application must also meet the requirements of the provisions that mandated Zoning Commission approval.*

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.*

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.*

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;*

Although this is not a large development, the site is pedestrian accessible from multiple access points along the Anacostia Waterfront Trail. The proposed building has a primary entrance on the south façade, with roll-up or folding windows that allow pedestrians to pass through when opened. There are secondary entrances on the north façade.

(2) *Direct driveway or garage access to the street is discouraged;*

As designed, the site does not have vehicular access or parking.

(3) *Commercial ground floors contain active uses with clear, inviting windows;*

The applicant proposes an eating and drinking establishment on the ground floor with views to the waterfront and associated outdoor dining. As mentioned, the ground floor includes operable windows that open to a patio.

(4) *Blank facades are prevented or minimized; and*

The applicant proposes using a mix of Adobo wood panels, tinted aluminum panels, and glass.

(5) *Wide sidewalks are provided;*

The applicant does not propose modifications to adjacent walkways and sidewalks. The current width of the waterfront trail is 50 feet.

(b) *Public gathering spaces and open spaces are encouraged, especially in the following situations:*

(1) *Where neighborhood open space is lacking;*

The site is adjacent to The Yards Park, which provides a significant amount of public open space. The proposed use should not diminish or detract from that park space.

(2) *Near transit stations or hubs; and*

The nearest Metrorail station is the Navy Yard station, which is approximately 0.5 miles from the site. The Yards Park is located between the station and the subject site.

(3) *When they can enhance existing parks and the waterfront;*

The applicant proposes to include an outdoor plaza and dining area, and outdoor terraces on the upper floors. The plaza has direct connections to the trail, while the terraces have views of the park and waterfront. The eating establishment and associated outdoor dining area enhance activity and liveliness to both the park and the waterfront.

(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;*

The building and landscaping are designed with consideration for connections to the adjacent Yards Park, the waterfront and pedestrian walkways.

(2) *Infill development should respect, though need not imitate, the continuity of neighborhood architectural character; and*

The Yards contains a mix of buildings with various architectural styles and uses. The subject site and proposed building are offset from other buildings in The Yards; however, the proposed development should not conflict with the surrounding area and historic context.

(3) *Development should respect and protect key landscape vistas and axial views of landmarks and important places;*  
The proposed building should not have an impact on views from other buildings. The landscaping is designed to transition efficiently into the existing surrounding context.

(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*  
The modern design of the building offers engaging views both into the building and out to the park, trail and river.

(2) *Incorporate contextual and quality building materials and fenestration;*  
The proposed building includes alternating materials, including wood, metal and glass.

(e) *Sites are designed with sustainable landscaping; and*  
The applicant has indicated that the site's landscaping plans will incorporate sustainable design, as will the building's roof.

(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;*  
The proposed development would not interfere with or impede connections and pathways to and from the waterfront and other sections of The Yards.

(2) *The development incorporates transit and bicycle facilities and amenities;*  
The applicant has indicated that the site will include cycling infrastructure. The property is also less than a mile from a Metrorail station.

(3) *Streets, easements, and open spaces are designed to be safe and pedestrian friendly;*  
The site does not include access to streets or easements. The proposed open space on the site will be designed to be accessible be ADA accessible to ensure access for.

(4) *Large sites are integrated into the surrounding community through street and pedestrian connections; and*  
This is not a large site; however, the proposed development will be integrated into the surrounding community through pedestrian connections.

(5) *Waterfront development contains high quality trail and shoreline design as well as ensuring access and view corridors to the waterfront.*

As previously stated, the proposed development should not impact the existing trail and pedestrian connections. The proposed landscaping should enhance the natural aesthetic of the park, and views of the shoreline should not be obstructed.

*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.*

## **VIII. SPECIAL EXCEPTION FOR WATERFRONT USE STANDARDS**

The applicant requests special exception relief to allow educational use in the 100-year floodplain, pursuant to Subtitle C § 1102 and Subtitle X, Chapter 9. Per Subtitle X § 603, Design Review Flexibility allows a special exception to be heard simultaneously with a Design Review application, subject to applicable special exception criteria.

### *Subtitle C Chapter 11 Waterfront General Rules*

*1102.1 A waterfront setback to any building or structure shall be provided in accordance with the following provisions:*

- (f) The Board of Zoning Adjustment may approve as a special exception a waterfront setback of less than amount required in Subtitle C § 1101.1(a), pursuant to the general special exception criteria of Subtitle X and the criteria of Subtitle C § 1102.1(g); and*
- (g) The following criteria shall be considered by the Board of Zoning Adjustment when evaluating an application for a waterfront setback less than otherwise required and when evaluating a special exception use in the MU-11 zone:*

- (1) The buildings, structures, and uses will enhance the visual and public recreational opportunities offered along the waterfront;*

The proposed use should enhance the public recreational opportunities by providing coursework directly in conjunction with the adjacent marina. The proposed building is designed to enhance the waterfront development and complement the surrounding development in The Yards.

- (2) Buildings, structures, and uses on land will be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on the river and riverbank areas;*

The proposed building and building site would be elevated approximately seven feet above the riverwalk trail and set back as far back as feasible onto the site. Compliance with the 100-foot setback would result in a building envelope that would be difficult to accommodate a reasonable use, including the proposed one.

- (3) Buildings, structures, and uses on, under, or over water will be located and designed to minimize adverse impacts on the river and riverbank areas;*

There are no buildings proposed on, under, or over water. The proposed building is set well back from the river edge.

(4) *All structures and buildings will be located so as to not likely become objectionable to surrounding and nearby property because of noise, traffic, or parking, and so as not to limit public access along or to the waterfront, other than directly in front of the principal building or structure of a boathouse, marina, yacht club, or other water-dependent use;*

The proposal would not limit or eliminate public access to the waterfront. All current access would remain. It is unlikely the proposed uses would generate excessive noise or traffic.

(5) *Impervious surfaces will be minimized, and buildings and all other impervious surfaces will be designed and sited to prevent surface storm water run-off directly into the river;*

The applicant has indicated that all stormwater management requirements will be met.

(6) *Accessory or non-accessory parking spaces, including the location of entrances and exits and any screening or fences, will be designed to minimize visual or physical impacts on adjacent parkland and the waterfront; and*

There is no proposed vehicle parking for this proposal.

(7) *Emergency access will be provided to any buildings, structures, or other space devoted to active public use.*

The applicant has indicated that emergency access requirements will be met.

*1102.4 The following uses shall be permitted as a special exception within a one hundred (100)-year floodplain, if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment under Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and subject to the conditions in Subtitle C § 1102.5:*

(e) *Education;*

*1102.5 The following conditions shall apply to any application for a special exception use under Subtitle C § 1102.4:*

(a) *The application shall include an analysis that provides the following:*

(1) *A site plan showing the one hundred (100)-year floodplain boundaries and base flood elevations for the property that is certified by a registered professional engineer, architect, landscape architect, or other qualified person;*

(2) *A description of how the project has been designed to meet applicable flood resistant design and construction standards that is certified by a registered professional engineer, architect, landscape architect, or other qualified person;*

- (3) *An evacuation plan that describes the manner in which the property would be safely evacuated before or during the course of a one hundred (100)-year flood event; and*
- (4) *A description of how the proposed use would not result in any adverse impacts to the health or safety for the project's occupants or users due to the proposed use's location in the floodplain; and*

(b) *The Office of Zoning shall refer the application to the following agencies for their review and recommendation if filed to the case record within the forty (40)-day period established by Subtitle A § 211:*

- (1) *District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE);*
- (2) *District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Service Department (FEMS);*
- (3) *Metropolitan Police Department (MPD); and*
- (4) *The District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA).*

*Subtitle X Chapter 9 Special Exceptions General Procedures*

901.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the special exceptions:*

(a) *Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;*

The requested relief from the minimum Waterfront 100-foot setback should, in this case, not be unduly inconsistent with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations. The SEFC-4 zone is intended to promote a lively, interactive waterfront environment; allow limited uses directly waterfront dependent; and allow a continuous publicly-accessible pedestrian and bike trail along the waterfront. The 100 foot setback is intended to facilitate this. In this case, the proposed facility with the proposed setback would not impede the existing trail and would provide outdoor space for outdoor dining, which assists in livening the waterfront.

The requested special exception for educational use in the floodplain would not conflict with the zoning regulations. The Zoning Commission approved a text amendment to allow educational and institutional use in the SEFC-4 zone in ZC 24-18, so this would facilitate that approval. This particular educational facility is waterfront dependent and will raise awareness of waterfront issues and opportunities.

(b) *Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and*

It is unlikely the proposal would adversely affect the adjacent properties. The site abuts open space to the west and the waterfront to the south, and the parcel is setback 12 feet from the US Navy property to the north and east. Therefore, there should be no direct impacts on residents or businesses in the area.

(c) *Will meet such special conditions as may be specified in this title.*

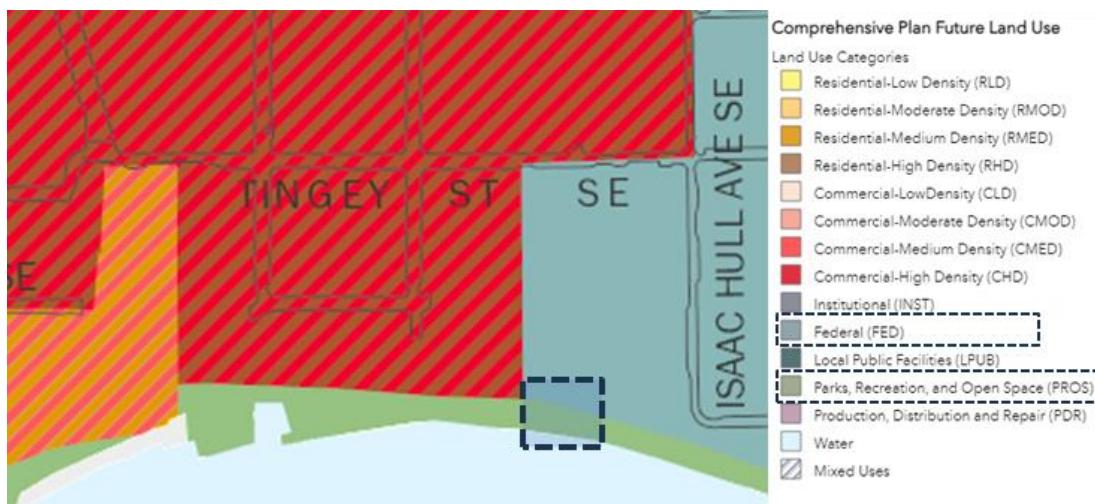
OP does not recommend special conditions.

## IX. PLANNING CONTEXT AND RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS

### A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

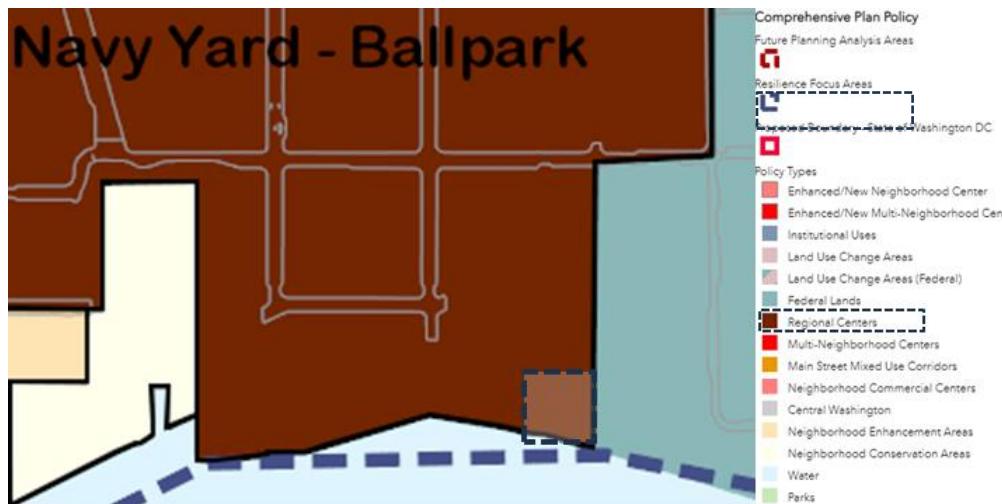
On balance, the proposed design review would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan maps and policy objectives, particularly with respect to policies within the Land Use, Economic Development, Parks and Open Space, and the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest (LAW/NSW) Elements. The proposal would also not be inconsistent when viewed through a Racial Equity Lens.

#### The Future Land Use Map (FLUM)



The FLUM designates the site as Federal (FED) (north portion) and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) (south portion). The FED category includes land and facilities occupied by DC government or other agencies; however, other non-government facilities may also be located on these sites. The PROS category can include facilities dedicated to classes and services relating to health and wellness, culture, arts and crafts, or education. The proposed Living Classrooms currently operates the marina at The Yards and provides hands-on education and job training, using urban, natural, and maritime resources. Locating a permanent facility at this site with classrooms and spaces for job training is not inconsistent with the FLUM designations.

#### The Generalized Policy Map (GPM)



The GPM designates the site as Regional Center as well as within a Resilience Focus Area (RFA). Infill development in Regional Centers could include large office, new retail, entertainment, service uses, additional housing, and employment opportunities. Resilience Focus Areas anticipate future planning efforts to ensure resilience to flooding for new development. Site-specific solutions, design guidelines and policies for a climate-adaptive and resilient city are encouraged and expected, to which the applicant is committed.

The Navy Yard RFA has significant riverine (100- and 500-year) and tidal inundation flooding due to its location along the Anacostia River. There are several areas throughout the RFA that are low-lying and also have significant interior flood risk. (Source: *Resilience Focus Area Strategy (2023); Page 20*) Because this site is within an RFA, the applicant proposes to construct the building at a higher elevation, approximately six feet above the waterfront trail, which removes the building from the 500-year floodplain. OP recommends that the applicant continue to coordinate with DOEE as part of any building permit process. Since the applicant proposes a facility that focuses on maritime education and training, the educational and institutional uses are appropriate for the site when compared to GPM policies.

## B. OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The site is located within the boundaries of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan (AWI Plan) (2003) and the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Master Plan (2007). The AWI Plan encourages environmental education on the Anacostia River. Environmental education can be combined with job training to help broaden young people's exposure to different fields of learning and future employment possibilities, just as environmental programs can be combined with recreation for the subject Parcel P3.

The SEFC Master Plan originally called for the subject site to be Community/Cultural land use as part of the Waterfront Park. The applicant previously applied and was approved for text amendment to add Education and Institutional uses as permitted uses in the SEFC-4 zone. The amendment also incorporated the subject site in the development area. Therefore, the proposed facility would not be inconsistent with both plans.

## C. RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Plan requires racial equity to be considered as part of the Comp Plan consistency analysis. The scope of the review and Comprehensive Plan policies that apply depend on the nature of the proposed zoning action.

### **10-A DCMR § 2501.8**

*Prepare and implement tools, including training, to assist District agencies in evaluating and implementing the Comprehensive Plan's policies and actions through an equity, particularly a racial equity lens. This includes tools to use as part of the development review process, preparation of plans, zoning code updates, and preparation of the capital improvement program, that consider how to apply an equity analysis in these processes, including any information needed. This shall specifically include a process for the Zoning Commission to evaluate all actions through a racial equity lens as part of its Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis.*

The Comprehensive Plan Framework Element also states that equity is achieved by targeted actions and investments to create equitable opportunities. (10-A DCMR § 213.6.) Further, “equitable development is a participatory approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies, programs and/or practices [and] holistically considers land use, transportation, housing, environmental, and cultural conditions, and creates access to education, services, healthcare, technology, workforce development, and employment opportunities.”

The Commission’s four-part Racial Equity Tool outlines information to be provided to assist in the evaluation of zoning actions through a racial equity lens.

### **Racial Equity Part 1: Comprehensive Plan Policies**

The proposed design and use are, on balance, not inconsistent with the Citywide Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly related to new resilient waterfront development, public space design, education and workforce development, compatible development with the surrounding historic context and the waterfront. The LAW/NSW Area Element encourages enhancing public access to and along the waterfront, and incorporating resilient design to mitigate flooding. The proposed design and development would further activate and complement the waterfront, would not detract from the waterfront park and trail experience, and would include flood-mitigating and sustainable design strategies.

#### ***Land Use***

Policy LU-1.1.1: Future Planning Analysis and Resilience Focus Areas

Policy LU-1.1.2: Resilience and Land Use

Policy LU-1.2.4: Urban Mixed-Use Neighborhoods – Near Southeast / Navy Yard

Policy LU-1.2.8: New Waterfront Development

Policy LU-1.2.9: Public Space Design

Policy LU-2.3.5: Institutional Uses

Policy LU-3.3.3: Nonprofits, Private Schools, and Service Organizations

The site is within a Resilience Focus Area and the 100-year floodplain. The proposed building is designed to be resilient against flooding with an elevation above both the 100- and 500-year

floodplain. The site and building are designed to be climate adaptive, which will be reviewed by DOEE prior to the permitting process to ensure such standards are met.

The site is within the Central Employment Area (CEA), which includes the greatest concentration of the District's private office development and aims to ensure land is used in a manner that reflects the area's historic and cultural significance. The proposed educational and institutional uses would be compatible with the CEA, as it would provide job training in an area with a high concentration of employment opportunities. The proposed uses would augment the existing mixed uses in the neighborhood and the proposed building is designed to ensure that it would not adversely affect the Yards Park open space.

### ***Economic Development***

Policy ED-1.3.5: Leveraging Environmental Policy for Economic Growth

Policy ED-2.2.1: Expanding the Retail Sector

Policy ED-2.2.8: Innovative Retail

Policy ED-2.3.9: Hospitality Workforce Development

Policy ED-2.3.10: Waterfront Destinations

Policy ED-4.1.4: Adult Education

Policy ED-4.1.5: Learning Outside the Classroom

Policy ED-4.2.2: Linking Job Training to Growth Occupations

Policy ED-4.2.3: Focus on Economically Disadvantaged Populations

Policy ED-4.2.6: Entry-Level Opportunities

Policy ED-4.2.11: Innovation in Training

The proposed development and use of the Parcel P3 for Living Classrooms should further the District's environmental sustainability policies for economic growth as the organization offers hands-on after-school and supplemental education programs and adult workforce development using urban, natural and maritime resources. Living Classrooms serves youth from disadvantaged communities by promoting workforce development, hands-on education, health and wellness and employment opportunities.

### ***Parks, Recreation, and Open Space***

Policy PROS-1.1.3: Park Diversity

Policy PROS-1.3.1: Balancing Competing Needs

Policy PROS-1.3.4: Conversion of Parkland/Open Space

Policy PROS-1.3.6: Compatibility with Adjacent Development

Policy PROS-2.1.3: Quality and Compatible Design

Policy PROS-3.2.4: Waterfront Visibility and Accessibility

Policy PROS-3.2.6: River Facilities

The facility is designed in a way that is compatible with nearby residential, commercial and recreational uses. The proposed uses would contribute to establishing a network of facilities along the Anacostia River that would provide equitable access to maritime uses, educational space, and other amenities. The landscaping is designed to provide adequate transitions and connections to the river and park, while the building would offer programs that utilize the adjacent marina.

### ***Urban Design***

- Policy UD-1.3.1: Diverse Waterfront Experiences along the Anacostia River
- Policy UD-1.3.3: Innovative and Resilient Waterfront Development
- Policy UD-1.3.4: Resilient Waterfront
- Policy UD-1.3.5: River Views
- Policy UD-1.3.6: Waterfront Access and Connectivity

The proposed building is designed to be respectful of the waterfront and incorporates flood-mitigating strategies that remove the building from the 500-year floodplain. It is also designed to be connected and interactive with the riverwalk trail, with multiple views onto the river.

### ***Historic Preservation***

- Policy HP-2.5.3: Compatible Development
- Policy HP-2.5.4: Suitability to the Historic Context

The site is in the Navy Yard Historic District and the building is designed not to imitate other historic buildings in the area but is sensitive to and compatible with the established historic character, scale and form of the area. The proposed building does not obstruct views of the riverfront, and enhances and embraces its natural features. Landscaping is consistent with the existing open green space and park space.

### ***Educational Facilities***

- Policy EDU-3.2.3: Workforce Development

The site is appropriate for educational and institutional uses. The proposed facility would provide new opportunities to build practical career skills that prepare students for current and future employment, and provide connections among educational programs, skills training, and workforce development initiatives to support the development of career pathways.

### **Area Element:**

#### ***Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Area (NAW/NSW) Element***

- Policy AW-1.1.2: New Waterfront Neighborhoods
- Policy AW-1.1.7: Waterfront Area Commercial Development
- Policy AW-1.1.8: Waterfront Development Amenities
- Policy AW-2.3.2: Near Southeast/Capitol Riverfront Shoreline Access
- Policy AW-2.3.6: Near Southeast/Capitol Riverfront Urban Amenities

The Area Element supports enhancing public access to and along the waterfront and incorporating resilient design to mitigate flooding. The proposed facility would provide multiple services to new and existing residents, including job training, educational opportunities and new community services. A component of the facility would involve educational space and opportunities related to maritime. The proposed development would increase public activity, including a new dining establishment, on the waterfront that would serve the area's residents, workforce and visitors.

### **Racial Equity Tool Part 2: Applicant Community Outreach and Engagement**

The applicant identified ANC 8F, residents in the southeast Waterfront area, and users of the marina as impacted communities with the petition. However, the proposed development and programming

would draw in residents, visitors and workers from all over the District. The applicant previously conducted outreach efforts with ANC 6/ 8F, the Capitol Riverfront BID and other District and federal agencies during the previous text amendment process. ANC 6/8F submitted a letter to the record indicating support of the design review at [Exhibit 15](#).

### **Racial Equity Tool Part 3: Disaggregated Data Regarding Race and Ethnicity**

Analysis of data over time can yield insights into trends in the planning area. The following data compares the American Community Survey 2012-2016 data with that of the 2019-2023 data, available from [OP's State Data Center](#). Each table below covers both 5-year periods for both the LAW/NSW planning area and Districtwide. As part of this design review, the site is subject to required Zoning Commission review of both the building and uses on the site, subject to Comprehensive Plan review, including through a racial equity lens.

#### 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/NS W% 2012-2016	LAW/N SW 2019-2023	LAW/NSW % 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 LAW/NSW planning area. The planning area's population increased to 27,641 in 2019-2023 period, demonstrating that the area is growing in population. The table shows that the planning area has a higher percentage of residents who are white as 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 rose but remained below the Districtwide average. It is unlikely the proposed building and use would impact, or would be impacted by, these trends.

Age & Vulnerable Population

**Table 2. Vulnerable Population**

Vulnerable Population	District 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Percent Disabled	11.3%	11%	11.8%	8.9%

**Table 3: Residents under the age of 18, and 65 and older**

People under 18 Years (%)	District 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Total Population	17.4	18.70	10.0	8.98
White	11.1	11.76	4.4	3.37
Black	21.5	22.21	16.5	16.73
American Indian and Alaskan Native	12.5	11.69	20.6	0.00
Asian alone	8.5	8.32	9.5	13.11
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0	8.99	0.0	0.00
Some other race	28.3	34.72	27.7	14.10
Two or more races	32.8	29.10	14.6	14.96
Hispanic	25.4	27.89	9.0	6.89

People 65 or Older (%)	District 2012-2016	District 2019-2023	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023
Total Population	11.4	12.72	13.4	9.33
White	10.1	11.85	11.2	6.80
Black	14.0	15.98	18.0	16.21
American Indian and Alaskan Native	14.6	23.63	0.0	0.00
Asian alone	6.5	8.11	6.2	1.96
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3.3	9.52	0.0	0.00
Some other race	3.0	4.28	0.0	4.45
Two or more races	4.7	6.69	7.8	4.62
Hispanic	5.3	6.57	7.9	3.13

Table 3 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 time period. For most racial groups, the percentage of older residents is lower or similar in the planning area than for the District as a whole, and the percentage in the planning area has declined over this time period. The exception is older Black residents, for whom the percentage remains higher than for the District as a whole. 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. It is unlikely the proposed development would impact, or would be impacted by, these trends; however, Living Classrooms aims to target young people through hands-on education and job training. As such, the proposed development could be beneficial to those residents under 18, both in the planning area and Districtwide.

### Income and Employment

**Table 4. Median Household Income**

	District Total 2012-2016	District Total 2019-2023	Percentage Change	LAW/NSW 2012-2016	LAW/NSW 2019-2023	Percentage Change
<b>Total households</b>	\$72,935	\$106,287	37%	\$80,779	\$122,548	41%
<b>White alone</b>	\$119,564	\$166,774	33%	\$98,831	\$154,160	43.7%
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	\$40,560	\$60,446	39%	\$41,641	\$73,153	54.9%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</b>	\$51,306	\$63,617	21%	\$148,020	N/A	N/A
<b>Asian alone</b>	\$91,453	\$121,619	28%	\$85,634	\$120,717	34%
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Some Other Race alone</b>	\$48,047	\$74,754	43.5%	\$103,796	N/A	N/A
<b>Two or More Races</b>	\$83,243	\$116,869	33.6%	\$79,722	\$126,830	45.6%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	\$60,848	\$106,435	54.5%	\$85,067	\$138,062	47.5%

Table 4 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 time 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. The proposed building and uses should not impact, or be impacted by, the median household trends.

**Table 5. Unemployment and Poverty**

	District Total 2012-2016	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (Population 16 years and over)			
		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	
<b>Percent in poverty</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	

Both the District and the planning area have seen a significant decline in the unemployment rate over the period. There was a significant decrease in unemployment for Black residents; however, this group continues to have the highest unemployment rate. While the proposed development would impact only a small area of existing unoccupied space, it would facilitate workforce training skills, educational coursework and offer some job opportunities.

Homeownership

**Table 6. Housing Tenure**

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

Table 6 shows that the percentage of renter households in the planning area is higher than that of owner households in the planning area, is lower than the District percentage, and has decreased between these time periods. This is the case for all groups but is particularly pronounced for Black and Hispanic households. Most of the housing stock in the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning

Area is contained in multi-family buildings, and most of these are rental buildings. The proposed development would not result in new housing and should not impact the existing housing stock.

**Table 7. 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% of their income on their housing	38.6%	34%	35.8%	32.6%

*Housing cost burden by race is not available.*

Table 7 shows that, overall, the percentage of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing has declined, both District-wide and in the planning area, but remains high. Only a small amount of the total land area of the District - 28.1% - is dedicated to residential use and this scarcity of land increases the opportunities and the cost of new housing and intensifies housing cost burdens, particularly for lower- and middle-income households. The proposed development should have no impact, positive or negative, on this trend.

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

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? Please refer to OP's analysis above under Part 1 of the Racial Equity Tool discussion for policies that potentially would be advanced or not advanced by this design review and the proposed development.

Table 9 below provides the OP response to themes/questions from the Racial Equity Tool, based on Comprehensive Plan policies related to racial equity, that are anticipated to have positive or negative impacts and/or outcomes as a result of the design review.

Factor	Question	OP Response
<b>Direct Displacement</b>	Will the zoning action result in the displacement of tenants or residents?	The proposed development would not result in displacements of residents or tenants as this does not involve residential use and there are currently no businesses on this site.
<b>Indirect Displacement</b>	What examples of indirect displacement might result from the zoning action?	OP does not anticipate indirect displacement as a result of this zoning action.
<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 proposed development would have no impact on current or future housing options.
<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 action would result in changes to the physical environment as the applicant proposes to develop the site for educational and office use, and food and drink establishments, which would have impacts on public space and the waterfront; however, OP does not anticipate

		significant negative impacts or outcomes from the proposed facility.
<b>Access to Opportunities</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>	The zoning action would not result in any changes to access to job, retail, or healthcare opportunities. It would permit job training, educational courses, professional development and 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 presented to the ANC, who voted in support of the expansion of educational and workforce development opportunities in the area. There appear to be no changes recommended by the ANC.

## **X. AGENCY COMMENTS**

At Exhibit 16 is a DDOT report indicating no objection to this proposal. OP has not received comments from other District agencies. No other agencies had filed a report to the Office of Zoning record as of the date OP completed this report.

## **XI. ANC COMMENTS**

ANC 6/8F provided a letter of support to the record in [Exhibit 15](#).

## **XII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

To date, there are no community comments in the case record.