

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Crystal Myers, Development Review Specialist
JS
 Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development, Design and Preservation

DATE: October 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report for Zoning Commission Case No. 78-17A, Modification of Significance to an approved Planned Unit Development at 450 5th St. NW

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends the Commission **set down** for public hearing this application by Judiciary Plaza LLC. The Applicant is requesting to significantly modify their approved Consolidated PUD to convert an office building into a residential building. The building would include an 8% IZ set aside for households at the 60% MFI levels. This modified building would slightly increase the approved density on the property and the project requires some areas of flexibility.

On balance the project would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including the Central Washington Area Element.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

| | |
|---|--|
| Applicant: | Judiciary Plaza LLC |
| Proposed Amendment: | PUD amendment with the approved PUD-related MU-8B zone |
| Address: | 450 5TH St. NW |
| Ward and ANC: | Ward 2, ANC 2C |
| Legal Description: | Square 489, Lot 21 |
| Property size: | 57,266 square feet |
| Existing PUD Zone: | MU-8B |
| Existing Base Zone: | D-2 |
| Future Land Use Map Designation: | High Density Commercial |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Generalized Policy Map Designation: | Central Washington |
| Comprehensive Plan Area Element | Central Washington |
| Historic District: | Pennsylvania Avenue Historic District |
| Existing Use of Property | Vacant office building |

III. SITE DESCRIPTION AND VICINITY

The subject property is bounded by 5th Street NW to the east, 6th Street NW to the west, and E Street NW to the north. The property is 57,250 sq.ft and zoned MU-8B. The property is the location of a federal office that is currently occupied by the United States Department of Justice. Besides office space the building has a 242-space parking garage. There is no active ground floor retail use on the property. The building is not considered a contributing building to the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic District.

The subject property is at the intersection of the Penn Quarter, Chinatown, Judiciary Square, and East End neighborhoods, which are high-density mixed-use, amenity-rich downtown neighborhoods. The property is also approximately 0.25 miles from the National Mall, National Gallery of Art, and the National Archives.



IV. BACKGROUND

In 1978 and 1979 the subject property was approved through a planned unit development for an office building with ground floor retail. It was approved with an FAR of 7.0 and a height of 120 feet. (Orders 213, 252 and 287). At the time its base zone was SP-2 and it was approved for a C-3-B zone. The SP-2 zone is now the D-2 zone and the C-3-B zone is now the MU-8B zone.

V. SUMMARY OF OP COMMENTS

| | OP Comment | Planning/Zoning Rationale |
|---|---|--|
| Habitable Penthouse IZ Requirement | The Applicant should include information about the Penthouse IZ set aside for households at 50% MFI level | The application does not discuss how the project would comply with the penthouse IZ set-aside in C§ 1003.8 |
| IZ Unit Location | The plans should show the location and size of the IZ units | Information on the location and size of the proposed IZ units helps to inform if they can be considered IZ units |

VI. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project proposes to convert an existing office building into a residential building. It would do this by preserving much of the existing massing but removing portions of the massing along the 5th street frontage. This would allow for sunken courtyards to be created which would allow for the additional light and air that is more appropriate for a residential building. The project would also enclose and infill the first and second floors with residential balconies, windows and doors. There would also be private residential terraces, garden walls, fences and paving and a 242 car garage. The property would also have extensive tree and landscape improvements

The new building would have approximately 500 residential rental units and 8 percent of the residential gross floor area is required to be set aside for households earning no more than 60% of the median family income (MFI).

VII. ZONING ANALYSIS

The site is currently within the approved PUD-related MU-8B zone.

| | D-2 (Base zone) | MU-8B (w/PUD) | Existing (78-17A PUD) | Proposed | Flexibility |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Lot Area | | | 57,265.6 sf | No Change | |
| Height I§303 X§ 203 | | 90 ft. max | 120 ft. ¹ | New portions of the building will exceed 90ft | Requested |
| Penthouse Height G§205 | 20 ft. (2 nd story only mech) | 20 ft. (2 nd story only mech) | Not provided | 12 ft and 8 ft for mech. | Conforms |
| Total FAR I§509 X§ 203 | 7.2 (with IZ) 3.5 (non-res) | 7.2 w/IZ max 5.36 non-res max | 7 | 7.19 | Conforms |
| Residential Open Court Width G§209 | 40.2 ft. | 40.2 ft. | N/A | 27 ft. | Requested |
| Closed Court Width G§209 | Min of 4in/1ft height 15ft min. | Min of 4in/1ft height 15ft min. | N/A | 24ft 9in | Conforms |
| Rear Yard G§207 | 2.5in/1ft ht, no less than 12ft | | Not provided | No Change | Conforms |
| Side Yard G§208 | 2in/1ft ht, no less than 5ft. | | Not provided | No Change | Conforms |
| Parking: C § 701.5 | 83 spaces | 83 spaces | 242 spaces | 242 spaces | Conforms |
| Bicycle Parking: C § 802.1 | Short: 1/20 units + 1/ 3,500 sq.ft. Long: 167 | | Not provided | 167 long 25 short | Conforms |
| Green Area Ratio I§ 208.1 G§ 211 | 0.3 min | 0.25 min. | Not provided | 0.25 | None needed |

¹ The approved PUD height became nonconforming when the property's zoning converted into the MU-8 in 2016.

VIII. REQUESTED ZONING FLEXIBILITY

The applicant requests the following flexibility through this PUD:

1. Open Court

The project includes creating a new open court along 5th St. It is proposed with a 27-ft width, which is less than the 40.2ft. width. required for an open court at its height. This height is driven by the existing building's structural system.

2. Building Height

The building's 120-ft height is non-conforming because it exceeds the MU-8 PUD height of 90-ft. Relief is requested to allow new portions of the building to exceed 90ft but not beyond 120 ft.

3. IZ MFI Levels

The applicant had requested relief to provide half of the 8% IZ set aside requirement to households at up to 80% MFI. The applicant has withdrawn that request and the project will now be compliant with the IZ requirements for 60% MFI for rental projects (see [Exhibit 12](#)).

4. Design Flexibility

- Interior Components: To vary the location and design of all interior components, including partitions, structural slabs, doors, hallways, columns, stairways, atria, and mechanical rooms, provided that the variations do not change the exterior configuration of the building as shown on the plans approved by the order.
- Exterior Materials – Color: To vary the final selection of the colors of the exterior materials based on availability at the time of construction, provided such colors are within the color ranges shown on the plans approved by the order.
- Exterior Details – Location and Dimension: To make minor refinements to the locations and dimensions of exterior details that do not substantially alter the exterior configuration of the building or design shown on the plans approved by the order. Examples of exterior details include, but are not limited to, doorways, canopies, railings, and skylights.
- Number of Units: To provide a range in the approved number of residential dwelling units of plus or minus ten percent (10%), except that (1) the total square footage of the residential dwelling units shall not be reduced, and (2) the number of units and the square footage reserved for affordable housing shall not be reduced
- Parking Layout: To make refinements to the approved parking configuration, including layout and number of parking space plus or minus ten percent (10%), so long as the number of parking spaces is at least the minimum number of spaces required by the Zoning Regulations.
- Streetscape Design: To vary the location, attributes, and general design of the approved streetscape to comply with the requirements of, and the approval by, the DDOT Public Space Division.

- Signage To vary the font, message, logo, and color of the project signage, provided that the maximum overall dimensions and signage materials are consistent with the signage on the plans approved by the order and are compliant with the DC signage regulations.
- Sustainable Features: To vary the approved sustainable features of the project, provided the total number of LEED points achievable for the project does not decrease below the minimum required for the LEED standard specified by the order.

OP will provide detailed analyses of the requested flexibility prior to the public hearing, should the Commission set the application down.

IX. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

The Guidelines for Using the Generalized Policy Map and the Future Land Use Map in the Framework Element state that the “*Generalized Policy Map and Future Land Use Map are intended to provide generalized guidance for development and conservation decisions and are considered in concert with other Comprehensive Plan policies.*” Additionally, “. . . the zoning of any given area should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, interpreted in conjunction with the text of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Citywide Elements and the Area Elements.”

As described below, on balance, the proposed PUD and related map amendment would not be inconsistent with the map designation.

Generalized Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) recommends High Density Commercial on the site.



High Density Commercial: This designation is used to define the central employment district, other major office centers, and other commercial areas with the greatest scale and intensity of use in the District. Office and mixed office/retail buildings with densities greater than a FAR of 6.0 are the predominant use, although high-rise residential and many lower scale buildings (including historic buildings) are interspersed. The MU-9, D-3, and D-6 Zone Districts are consistent with the High Density Commercial category, and other zones may also apply. 227.13

The proposed high density residential building would not be inconsistent with the property's High Density Commercial land use designation. The FLUM states that high-rise residential buildings can be interspersed in areas with this designation. Adding residents to the central employment district would allow them the opportunity to live near their employment and would likely make the area a more attractive location for potential employees, thus better support the longevity of the district.

Generalized Policy Map

The property is within the Central Washington area on the Generalized Policy Map. This area is not covered under any of the Generalized Policy Map's designation categories. This is because of the unique characteristics of Central Washington. Properties in this area rely on the guidance from the Central Washington Area Element.



This project would not be inconsistent with the Generalized Policy Map Central Washington designation. It is within the Central Washington area of the map which the map provides no specific land use guidance. Guidance is provided in the Central Washington Area Element, which strongly encourages more housing in this planning area.

The property also sits right outside the boundary of the National Mall/Federal Triangle Resilience Focus Area. According to DOEE's 2023 Resilience Focus Area Strategy the area is susceptible to riverine, tidal inundation, and interior flood risk. This project includes bioretention areas designed to capture stormwater runoff and mitigate effects of potential flooding. The project also includes a green roof on

the penthouse level that would help to absorb rainwater which would further decrease stormwater runoff on the property.

B. ANALYSIS THROUGH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS USING THE ZONING COMMISSION'S RACIAL EQUITY TOOL

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. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that advancing equity requires a multifaceted policy approach and that many areas of policy must be brought to bear on the challenge:

Equitable development is a participatory approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies, programs and/or practices that reduce and ultimately eliminate disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant. Equitable development holistically considers land-use, transportation, housing, environmental, and cultural conditions, and creates access to education, services, health care, technology, workforce development, and employment opportunities. As the District grows and changes, it must do so in a way that encourages choice, not displacement, and builds the capacity of vulnerable, marginalized, and low-income communities to fully and substantively participate in decision-making processes and share in the benefits of the growth, while not unduly bearing its negative impacts. 213.7

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. The Applicant's Racial Equity Analysis is provided in the Applicant's statement at [Exhibit 3A](#) and OP's analysis is provided below.

Equity is conveyed throughout the Comprehensive Plan, particularly in the context of zoning. The Comprehensive Plan encourages building more housing and affordable housing in Central Washington.

This would allow for more diverse households to live in one of the District's most amenity-rich and transit-accessible areas.

RACIAL EQUITY TOOL PART 1 – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE

In the context of zoning, certain priorities of equity are explicit throughout the Comprehensive Plan, including affordable housing, displacement, and access to opportunity. Below is an outline of Comprehensive Plan policies related to this project which, when viewed through a racial equity lens, provides the Commission with a framework for evaluating this request.

The project would not be inconsistent with both the Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Policy and Future Land Use Maps. On balance it would not be inconsistent with the Citywide Elements of the Comprehensive Plan and would particularly further the general policies of the Land Use, Transportation, and Housing elements. It would also further many of the policies in the Central Washington Area Element. For the complete wording of each policy statement, refer to Appendix I to this report.

Citywide Elements:

Land Use Element

- *Policy LU-1.2.1: Sustaining a Strong District Center*
- *Policy LU-1.2.4: Urban Mixed-Use Neighborhoods*
- *Policy LU-1.4.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations*
- *Policy LU-1.4.3: Housing Around Metrorail Stations*
- *Policy LU-1.4.5: Design to Encourage Transit*
- *Policy LU-1.4.6: Development Along Corridors*
- *Policy LU-2.1.1: Variety of Neighborhood Types*
- *Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods*
- *Policy LU-2.1.4: Rehabilitation Before Demolition*
- *Policy LU-2.1.10: Multifamily Neighborhoods*
- *Policy LU-2.1.12: Reuse of Public Buildings*
- *Policy LU-2.1.13: Planned Unit Developments in Neighborhood Commercial Corridors*
- *Policy LU-2.2.4: Neighborhood Beautification*

The project would not be inconsistent with the Land Use Element policies in the Comprehensive Plan. It would bring much needed residential development to the District's downtown neighborhood and improve the land use mix balance in the area. The neighborhood is also within the Central Employment area so adding high density housing in this location would allow more people better access to job opportunities and shorter commute times. The property is also within walking distance of multiple Metrorail stations.

The Land Use Element encourages adaptive reuse of public buildings and the project is proposing to reuse a federal office building as a residential building instead of demolishing it. This project intends to help revitalize the Judiciary Square area.

Housing Element

- *Policy H-1.1.1: Private Sector Support*
- *Policy H-1.1.5: Housing Quality*
- *Policy H-1.1.6: Housing in Central Washington*
- *Policy H-1.1.8: Production of Housing in High-Cost Areas*
- *Policy H-1.2.2: Production Targets*
- *Policy H-1.2.5: Moderate-Income Housing*

The project would not be inconsistent with the Housing policies in the Comprehensive Plan. This private sector project would bring high-quality market rate and affordable residential units to Central Washington, which is a high-cost area. Approximately 40 of the units would be affordable and these would be for moderate income households at the 60% MFI levels.

Transportation Element

- *Policy T-1.4: Transit-Oriented Development*
- *Policy T-1.1.7: Equitable Transportation Access*
- *Policy T-1.4.1: Street Design for Placemaking*
- *Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network*
- *Policy T-2.5.5: Natural Landscaping*
- *Policy T-3.1.1: TDM Programs*

This project would not be inconsistent with these Transportation policies in the Comprehensive Plan. It would bring new housing to a property that is in a very walkable area and within a short distance of three Metrorail stations. The project includes a bicycle storage room for 167 bikes and there would be 25 short-term bike spaces around the perimeter of the building near the entrance. The pedestrian experience would also be improved by the project through extensive natural landscaping and sidewalk improvements.

Environmental Protection

- *Policy E-1.1.2: Urban Heat Island Mitigation*
- *Policy E-2.1.2: Tree Requirements in Developments*
- *Policy E-2.1.3: Sustainable Landscaping Practices*
- *Policy E-2.1.5: Tree Planting on Private Lands*
- *Policy E-3.2.7: Energy-Efficient Building and Site Planning*
- *Policy E-4.1.2: Using Landscaping and Green Roofs to Reduce Runoff*
- *Policy E-7.1.1: GI and Green Building Methods for the District*
- *Policy E-7.1.3: Sustainable Landscaping*

This project would not be inconsistent with the Environmental Protection policies in the Comprehensive Plan. The landscaping plan includes planting native species plants at the perimeter of the building and on the penthouse. The extensive landscaping includes planting approximately 75 trees and should help to reduce the urban heat island effect. The project would also be LEED certified.

Urban Design

- *Policy UD-1.1.3: Preeminent View Corridors*
- *Policy UD-1.1.7: Public Space Landscape*
- *Policy UD-1.4.3: Thoroughfare Vistas and View Corridors*
- *Policy UD-2.1.1: Streetscapes that Prioritize the Human Experience*
- *Policy UD-2.1.2: Neighborhood Streetscapes*
- *Policy UD-2.2.1: Neighborhood Character and Identity*
- *Policy UD-2.2.2: Areas of Strong Architectural Character*
- *Policy UD-2.2.3: Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers*
- *Policy UD-2.2.4: Transitions in Building Intensity*
- *Policy UD-2.2.7: Preservation of Neighborhood Open Space*
- *Policy UD-4.2.1: Scale and Massing of Large Buildings*
- *Policy UD-4.2.2: Engaging Ground Floors*
- *Policy UD-4.2.3: Continuity and Consistency of Building Frontages*
- *Policy UD-4.2.4: Creating Engaging Facades*

This project would not be inconsistent with the Urban Design policies in the Comprehensive Plan. The converted building would have additional cutouts which would provide expressive massing that creates visual interest. The upper floors of the building would create a pillar-like appearance that gestures to the surrounding courthouse context. The building would enhance the view corridor for the DC Court of Appeals, which is noted is considered a “Significant National and Civic Corridor” in this section of the Comprehensive Plan. The accompanying landscape plan for the site would give the surrounding public space area a park-like character. The tree plantings and lush plantings would help to frame Judiciary Square. The landscaping would help improve the pedestrian experience in this area.

The Urban Design element encourages creating engaging facades. In this project, the western and eastern facades would be activated by connecting their entrances with an interior lobby. The building’s terraces and balconies would also encourage social interactions.

Central Washington Area

- *Policy CW-1.1.1: Promoting Mixed Use Development*
- *Policy CW-1.1.3: Incentives for Non-Office Uses*
- *Policy CW-1.1.4: New Housing Development in Central Washington*
- *Policy CW-1.1.5: Central Washington Housing Diversity*
- *Policy CW-1.1.11: Reinforcing Central Washington’s Characteristic Design Features*
- *Policy CW-1.1.12: Creating Active Street Life and Public Spaces*
- *Policy CW-1.1.16: Making Central Washington’s Streets More Pedestrian Friendly*
- *Policy CW-1.1.20: Design Character*
- *Policy CW-1.1.23: Architectural Excellence*
- *Policy CW-1.2.1: Enhancing the Identity of Central Washington Neighborhoods*
- *Policy CW-2.5.1: Judiciary Square Improvements*
- *Policy CW-2.5.5: Enhancing the Identity of Downtown East*
- *Policy CW-2.5.6: Designate Downtown East as a Placemaking Pilot Zone*

The project would not be inconsistent with the Central Washington Area policies in the Comprehensive Plan. It would convert a mostly inactive office building into a residential building which would add more use mix in the area and better realize the goals in the Central Washington Element. The project would not cause displacement, would add affordable housing to the area and it would improve the housing diversity in Central Washington. The building's new design would incorporate the characteristic Central Washington features of the existing building while incorporating new elements such as more cut outs in the massing to bring in more light. The pedestrian experience would be enhanced by the project's landscaping and streetscape improvements.

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

At this time OP is unaware of Comprehensive Plan policies that would not be advanced by this map amendment.

RACIAL EQUITY TOOL PART 2 – APPLICANT/PETITIONER COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Applicant discussed the project with ANC 2C03 and ANC 6E08 Single Member District Commissioners. They expect to present to the ANCs at upcoming meetings before the public hearing.

RACIAL EQUITY TOOL PART 3 – CENTRAL WASHINGTON PLANNING AREA DATA

Part 3 of the Racial Equity Tool asks for disaggregated data to assist the Commission in its evaluation of zoning actions through a racial equity lens for the planning area. The data source is the 2012-2016 and 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates by Planning Area available via the OP State Data Center ([ACS DATA](#)). Part 3 also asks if the planning area is on track to meet affordable housing goals.

The subject property is in the Central Washington Planning Area (“planning area”). Each table below compares data for this planning area with District-wide data.

Population by Race or Ethnicity

The Central Washington Planning Area has a majority white population at 57.5% in the 2019-2023 period. Second largest demographic group is Black residents, but as with the District-wide trend this group declined since the 2012 to 2016 period. All other groups in the planning area have increased since the 2012 to 2016 period.

Table 1: Population/Race or Ethnicity Districtwide and in the Planning Area

| Race or Ethnicity | Districtwide 2012-2016 | CW 2012- 2016 | CW % 2012- 2016 | Districtwide 2019-2023 | CW 2019-2023 | CW % 2019-2023 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Population | 659,009 | 17,976 | 100% | 672,079 | 24,357 | 100% |
| White alone | 266,035 | 9,250 | 51.45% | 262,549 | 14,000 | 57.5% |
| Black alone | 318,598 | 5,698 | 32% | 290,772 | 5,680 | 23.3% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| American Indian and Alaskan Native alone | 2,174 | 5 | 0.03% | 2,044 | 47 | 0.2% |
| Asian alone | 24,036 | 2,010 | 11% | 27,465 | 2,105 | 8.6% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | 271 | 0 | 0% | 378 | 0 | 0% |
| Some other race alone | 29,650 | 481 | 2.68% | 32,338 | 530 | 2.2% |
| Two or more races | 18,245 | 532 | 2.96% | 56,533 | 1,995 | 8.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 69,106 | 1,493 | 8.3% | 77,760 | 2,523 | 10.4% |

Median Income

Central Washington had a higher median income than the District's median income during both five-year periods. However, during both periods when looking at each race/ethnic group in comparison with their Districtwide counterpart, most groups in the planning area had a lower median income. In the 2019 to 2023 period only the Hispanic/Latino and Some Other Race groups had a higher median income.

As with the Districtwide trend the group with the highest median income was the White residents' group. Different from the Districtwide trend was that the group with the second highest median income during the 2019 to 2023 was the Hispanic/Latino residents' group.

During both five-year periods the Black or African American population had the lowest median income of all segments of the population with available income information during both time periods, (\$24,232 and \$31,365). They along with White, Asian, and Hispanic residents saw an increase in median income between the two periods.

Between the two five-year periods both Some other Race and Two or More Races experienced a decrease in their median income with a decrease of \$7,450 and \$2,253, respectively.

Table 2: Median Income Districtwide and in the Planning Area

| Median Income (disaggregated by race and ethnicity) | Districtwide 2012-2016 | CW 2012-2016 | Districtwide 2019-2023 | CW 2019-2023 |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Median Household Income | \$72,935 | \$86,637 | \$106,287 | \$121,010 |

| Median Income (disaggregated by race and ethnicity) | Districtwide 2012-2016 | CW 2012-2016 | Districtwide 2019-2023 | CW 2019-2023 |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| White alone | \$119,564 | \$110,772 | \$166,774 | \$149,493 |
| Black or African American alone | \$ 40,560 | \$24,232 | \$ 60,446 | \$31,365 |
| American Indian and Alaskan Native alone | \$ 51,306 | Not Available | \$ 63,617 | Not Available |
| Asian alone | \$ 91,453 | \$66,925 | \$121,619 | \$83,795 |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | N/A | Not Available | Not Available | N/A |
| Some other races | \$ 41,927 | \$114,149 | \$74,754 | \$106,699 |
| Two or more races | \$ 83,243 | \$119,122 | \$116,869 | \$106,659 |
| Hispanic or Latino | \$60,848 | \$91,589 | \$106,435 | \$129,751 |

Housing Tenure

The rising cost of housing in the District limits the ability to provide housing for a variety of household types, including family, senior housing, rental and ownership housing, and housing for all income levels. Given the land use characteristics of the District, only a small amount of the total land area (28.1 percent) is dedicated to residential use (205.3). Scarcity of land increases the cost of new housing, limits the availability of housing, and intensifies housing cost burdens, particularly for lower- and middle-income households. The Comprehensive Plan states that “*residents of color are a majority of lower-income households in the District and, therefore, face a disproportionate share of the problems caused by housing insecurity and displacement*” (206.4).

Between 2012-2016 and 2019-2023, the percentage of owner occupancy in the District stayed relatively the same, 40.7% to 41.4%, while in Central Washington there was a small decline from 20.5% to 18.6%.

In Central Washington, white and Asian households had the highest percentage of owner-occupied housing at 22.3% and 19% respectively in 2019-2023, while Black households had the lowest owner occupancy at 7.2%.

Table 3: Owner Occupied Households Districtwide and in the Planning Area

| Owner Occupancy (disaggregated by race and ethnicity) | Districtwide 2012-2016 | CW 2019-2023 | Districtwide 2019-2023 | CW 2019-2023 |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Total Owner Occupied | 40.7% | 20.5% | 41.1% | 18.6% |
| White alone | 47.8% | 24.6% | 48.0% | 22.3% |
| Black or African American alone | 35.9% | 9.0% | 34.9% | 7.2% |
| American Indian and Alaskan Native alone | 32.9% | 8.5% | 19.6% | Not Available |
| Asian alone | 39.4% | 29.9% | 41.4% | 19% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone | 9.1% | 0.0% | 31.8% | Not Available |
| Some other races | 17.5% | 10% | 28.7% | 20.2% |
| Two or more races | 32.7% | 16% | 41.3% | 16.0% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 30.9% | 20% | 36.4% | 17.6% |

Unemployment/Poverty/Cost Burden

In 2012-2016, Central Washington had an unemployment rate of 6.3%, which was lower than the District's 8.7% rate. In the 2019 to 2023 period both unemployment rates improved by decreasing to Central Washington's 3% and the District's 6.5%.

In the 2012-2016 period Central Washington and the District had essentially the same cost burden (38%) and poverty rates (17.9%). During the 2019-2023 period both the District's and Central Washington's cost burden and poverty rates slightly improved but the District's rates improved more than Central Washington's rates. Therefore, Central Washington's cost burden and poverty rates were slightly higher than the District's rates.

Table 4: General Characteristics of the District and the Planning Area

| Characteristic | Districtwide 2012-2016 | CW 2012-2016 | Districtwide 2019-2023 | CW 2019-2023 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Unemployment Rate | 8.7% | 6.3% | 6.5% | 3% |

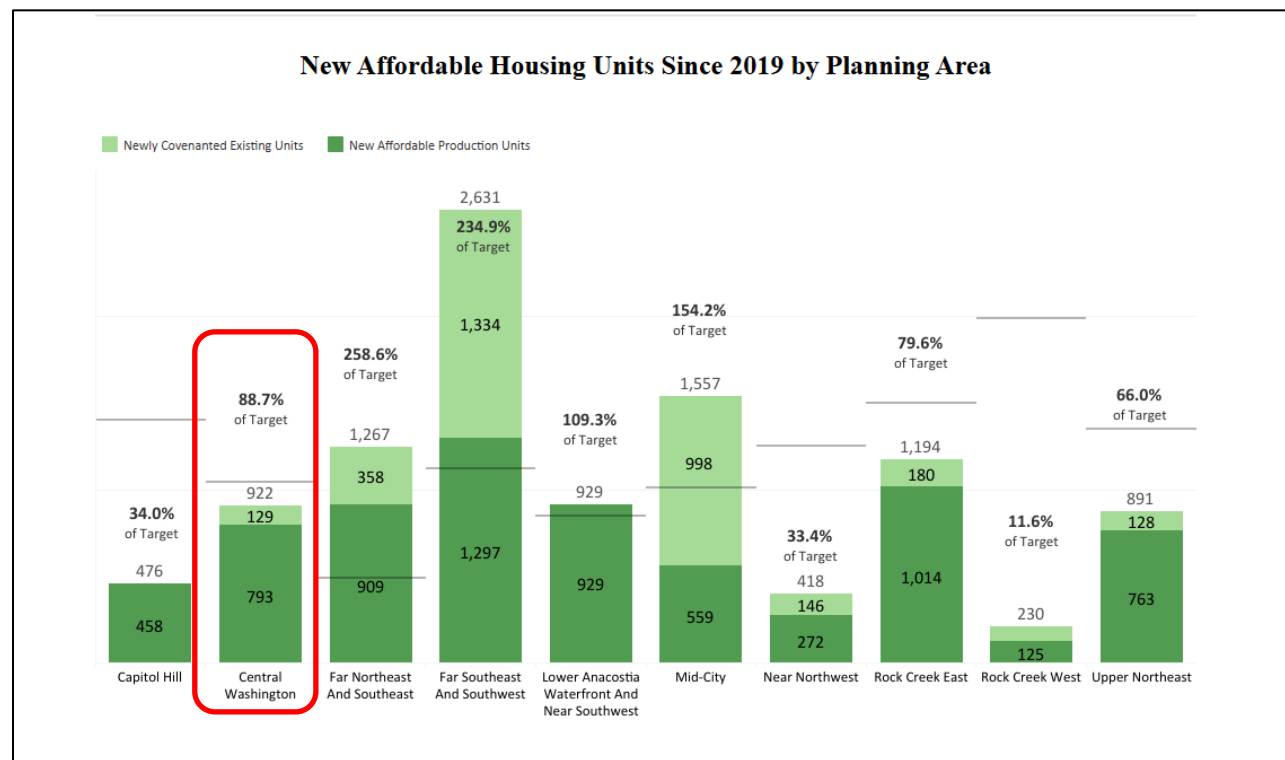
| | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Cost Burdened Households² | 38.6% | 38% | 34% | 36% |
| Poverty Rate | 17.9% | 17.9% | 14.5% | 17.3% |

Progress Toward Meeting the Mayor's 2025 Housing Equity Goals

The Mayor's housing goals include the production of 12,000 new affordable units citywide for households earning below 80% of Median Family Income (MFI). As of the end of December 2024, the District produced 10,515 affordable units which is 88% of this goal.

The Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) provides regular updates on how each planning area is progressing to meet their portion of the affordable housing target. Their last update indicates that the planning area is within 88.7% of the target amount (DMPED 36,000 by 2025 Dashboard).

This proposed PUD would provide more housing, including affordable housing than can be constructed on the site today. This would help the District get closer to meeting the new affordable housing target for Central Washington.



² Percentage of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing

The Project's Potential Impact

The Central Washington planning area has a high-income, majority white population. Through the provision of approximately 500 residential units with about 40 units being IZ affordable units, this proposal could provide opportunities for more non-white residents to live in an employment district area that is well-served by public transit and within walking distance of various neighborhood services and amenities.

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? (Racial Equity Tool)

| Factor | Question | OP Response |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Direct Displacement | Will the zoning action result in displacement of tenants or residents? | No, the proposal would replace a vacant office building. There is currently no residential use on the property. The current office tenant, the Dept. of Justice decided not to renew their lease. |
| Indirect Displacement | What examples of indirect displacement might result from the zoning action? | The project will include affordable IZ units for households up to 60% MFI. This could help to attract some local or District-wide residents who are becoming housing cost burdened. As a rental building it is not expected to have a measurable impact on homeowners' property values in the planning area. The new residential units would bring more residents to the area. They could become new customers to local businesses. |
| Housing | Will the action result in changes to: ▪ Market Rate Housing ▪ Affordable Housing ▪ Replacement Housing | The project would provide approximately 500 residential units and would have market rate and affordable units |
| Physical | Will the action result in changes to the physical environment such as: ▪ Public Space Improvements ▪ Infrastructure Improvements ▪ Arts and Culture ▪ Environmental Changes | Landscaping would be added around the building's perimeter and connect to the adjacent park. This would improve the pedestrian experience. Converting the building to residential use is expected to increase vehicle and pedestrian trips to the site. However the site's close |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Streetscape Improvements | proximity to multiple Metrorail stations should help to minimize vehicle trips. |
| Access to Opportunity | <p>Is there a change in access to opportunity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Training/Creation ▪ Healthcare ▪ Addition of Retail/Access to New Services | <p>The site is within close proximity to multiple Metrorail stations. The site's easy access to public transit would allow residents easy commutes to job opportunities all around the DC Metro area.</p> <p>Furthermore, the site is within a Central Employment area so there are numerous employment opportunities in the area. The area has many amenities, retail, and other services.</p> |
| Community | <p>How did community outreach and engagement inform/change the zoning action?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (e.g., did the architectural plans change, or were other substantive changes made to the zoning action in response to community input/priorities etc.?) | <p>The Applicant's community engagement efforts are in the early stages. They discussed the case with the Single Member District Commissioners but have not met with ANC 2C and ANC 6E yet. As of July 31, the Applicant had not received input from the community about this project.</p> |

X. Other District Policy Documents

Downtown Action Plan

The subject property is covered in the 2024 Downtown Action Plan. The Action Plan provides strategies to ensure the long-term success of downtown DC's commercial core. It aims to reimagine downtown DC and focuses on five foundational elements. One of these elements is to build a residential base. The Plan also encourages office to residential conversions and promotes attracting new residents to downtown DC.

The project would convert a federal office building into a high-density residential building that includes an 8% IZ set aside. This would be in line with the Downtown Action Plan's policies to bring more residents to downtown DC.

Gallery Place Chinatown Task Force

The subject property is located directly east of the area covered under the Gallery Place Chinatown Task Force. The Task Force highlights Judiciary Square as the future "Judiciary Gardens" and envision the area as a "horticultural destination of national significance". It also encourages increasing the residential community downtown.

The proposal would add more housing right next to “Judiciary Gardens”. It would also make landscaping improvements that would connect to the gardens across the street and would advance the Task Force’s “Botanical Streets” concept.

XI. PUD EVALUATION STANDARDS

The Zoning Regulations define a Planned Unit Development (PUD) as “*A plan for the development of residential, institutional, and commercial developments, industrial parks, urban renewal projects, or a combination of these, on land of a minimum area in one (1) or more zones irrespective of restrictions imposed by the general provisions of the Zoning Regulations, as more specifically set forth in Subtitle X, Chapter 3.*” (Subtitle B§28). The purpose and general standards for a Planned Unit Development are established in Subtitle X§300:

- 300.1 The purpose of the planned unit development (PUD) process is to provide for higher quality development through flexibility in building controls, including building height and density, provided that the PUD:*
- (a) Results in a project superior to what would result from the matter-of-right standards;*
 - (b) Offers a commendable number or quality of meaningful public benefits; and*
 - (c) Protects and advances the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience, and is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*
- 300.2 While providing for greater flexibility in planning and design than may be possible under conventional zoning procedures, the PUD process shall not be used to circumvent the intent and purposes of the Zoning Regulations, or to result in action that is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*

If this application is set down for public hearing, OP will evaluate this project against the standards above.

Public Benefits and Amenities:

The proposed modified PUD would result in an increase in density and height over the matter-of-right zones as noted in the table below. The project would also exceed the PUD height of the MU-8B zone. This is related to the existing building’s nonconforming height, which was approved in the original

PUD. The application includes flexibility to maintain the original PUD height for the new portions of the building.

| | MU-8B (PUD) | Existing | Proposed |
|--------|--------------------|-----------------|--|
| FAR | 7.2 max | 7 | 7.19 |
| Height | 90 ft. max | 120 ft. | 120 ft. |
| Use | Mixed Use | Office building | Multiple dwelling residential building |

Chapter X Section 305.2 states that “*Public benefits are superior features of a proposed PUD that benefit the surrounding neighborhood or the public in general to a significantly greater extent than would likely result from development of the site under the matter-of-right provisions of this title.*”

Subtitle X § 305.5 provides a summary of categories for potential PUD benefits and amenities. While the final benefits amenities proffer is typically refined and resolved later in the PUD process, at this point, the applicant has proffered the following for the proposed PUD:

Superior urban design and architecture

The project balances new features with the existing features of the building. It retains the original massing and prominent framing of Judiciary Square and integrates modern elements such as the champagne bronze metal panels. The project includes warmer materials and variation to the 5th Street facing façade.

Superior Landscaping and Preservation of Open Spaces

The project includes a landscape plan with approximately 75 tree plantings. The increased tree canopy and new greenery should improve the pedestrian experience in this area. The landscape improvements should also help to reactive this underutilized block.

Site planning and efficient and economical land utilization

The project would reuse an existing office building and convert it into much-needed residential units.

Historic Preservation

Though the building is a non-contributing structure in the historic district, this project retains much of the existing building’s character and features. Its design incorporates new elements while still maintaining the character of depth and shadow of the existing facades.

Housing and Affordable Housing

The proposal would introduce approximately 500 new residential units to this transit-oriented downtown site. This would include an 8% IZ set aside with half of the affordable units reserved for households at 60% MFI. The conversion of the building to residential is a benefit of the PUD and the required IZ units are also a benefit.

XII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The project received concept approval from the Commission of Fine Arts on February 20, 2025. The Historic Preservation Review Board will review it in the future.

XIII. AGENCY REFERRALS

If this application is set down for a public hearing, the Office of Planning will refer it to the following District agencies for review and comment:

- Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE)
- Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)
- District Department of Transportation (DDOT)
- Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)
- DC Public Schools (DCPS)
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS)
- Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)

JLS/cm

Appendix I: Comprehensive Plan Policies

Policy LU-1.2.1: Sustaining a Strong District Center

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

Policy LU-1.4.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations

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

Policy LU-1.4.3: Housing Around Metrorail Stations

Build housing adjacent to Metrorail stations that serves a mix of incomes and household types, including families, older adults, and persons with disabilities, and prioritize affordable and deeply affordable housing

Policy LU-1.4.5: Design to Encourage Transit Use

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

Policy LU-1.4.6: Development Along Corridors

Encourage growth and development along major corridors, particularly priority transit and multimodal corridors. Plan and design development adjacent to Metrorail stations and corridors to respect the character, scale, and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods, using approaches such as building design, transitions, or buffers, while balancing against the District's broader need for housing. 307.14

Policy LU-2.1.1: Variety of Neighborhood Types

Maintain a variety of neighborhoods, ranging from low-density to high-density. The positive elements that create the identity and design character of each neighborhood should be preserved and enhanced while encouraging the identification of appropriate sites for new development and/or adaptive reuse to help accommodate population growth and advance affordability, racial equity, and opportunity. 310.7

Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods

Recognize the importance of balancing goals to increase the housing supply, including affordable units, and expand neighborhood commerce with parallel goals to preserve historic resources, advance environmental and sustainability goals, and further Fair Housing. The overarching goal to create vibrant neighborhoods in all parts of the District requires an emphasis on conserving units and

character in some neighborhoods and revitalization in others, including inclusive and integrated growth and meeting communities and public facility needs. All neighborhoods have a role to play in helping to meet broader District-wide needs, such as affordable housing, public facilities, and more. 310.10

Policy LU-2.1.4: Rehabilitation Before Demolition

In redeveloping areas characterized by vacant, abandoned, and underused older buildings, generally encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of architecturally or historically significant existing buildings rather than demolition. 310.11

Policy LU-2.1.12: Reuse of Public Buildings

Rehabilitate vacant or outdated public and semi-public buildings for continued use including residential uses, particularly if located within residential areas. Reuse plans should be compatible with their surroundings and co-location of uses considered to meet broader District-wide goals. Reuse of public buildings should implement Small Area and Framework Plans where possible. 310.19

Policy LU-2.1.13: Planned Unit Developments in Neighborhood Commercial Corridors

Planned unit developments (PUDs) in neighborhood commercial areas shall provide high-quality developments with active ground floor designs that provide for neighborhood commercial uses, vibrant pedestrian spaces and public benefits, such as housing, affordable housing, and affordable commercial space. 310.20

Policy LU-2.2.4: Neighborhood Beautification

Encourage projects that improve the visual quality of neighborhoods, including landscaping and tree planting, facade improvement, anti-litter campaigns, graffiti removal, murals, improvement or removal of abandoned buildings, street and sidewalk repair, park improvements, and public realm enhancements and activations. 311.5

Housing Element

Policy H-1.1.1: Private Sector Support

Encourage or require the private sector to provide both new market rate and affordable housing to meet the needs of present and future District residents at locations consistent with District land use policies and objectives. 503.3

Policy H-1.1.5: Housing Quality

Require the design of affordable and accessible housing to meet or exceed the high-quality architectural standards achieved by market-rate housing. Such housing should be built with high-quality materials and systems that minimize long-term operation, repair, and capital replacement costs. Regardless of its affordability level, new or renovated housing should be indistinguishable from market rate housing in its exterior appearance, should be generally compatible with the design character of the

surrounding neighborhood, and should address the need for open space and recreational amenities. 503.7

Policy H-1.1.6: Housing in Central Washington

Absorb a substantial component of the demand for new high-density housing in the Central Washington Planning Area and along the Anacostia River. Through regulation and incentives, encourage affordable housing production. Absorbing the demand for higher-density housing within these areas is an effective way to meet housing demands, maximize infrastructure and proximity to jobs, create mixed-use areas, and minimize the cost pressure on existing residential neighborhoods throughout the District...

Policy H-1.1.8: Production of Housing in High-Cost Areas

Encourage development of both market rate and affordable housing in high-cost areas of the District, making these areas more inclusive. Develop new, innovative tools and techniques that support affordable housing in these areas. Doing so increases costs per unit but provides greater benefits in terms of access to opportunity and outcomes. 503.10

Policy H-1.2.2: Production Targets

Consistent with the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, work toward a goal that one-third of the new housing built in Washington, DC from 2018 to 2030, or approximately 20,000 units, should be affordable to persons earning 80 percent or less of the area-wide MFI...

Policy H-1.2.5: Moderate-Income Housing

In addition to programs targeting persons of very low and extremely low incomes, develop and implement programs that meet the housing needs of those earning moderate incomes with wages insufficient to afford market rate housing in the District. 504.13

Transportation

Policy T-1.1.4: Transit-Oriented Development

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

Policy T-1.1.7: Equitable Transportation Access

Transportation within the District shall be accessible and serve all users. Residents, workers, and visitors should have access to safe, affordable and reliable transportation options regardless of age, race, income, geography or physical ability. Transportation should not be a barrier to economic, educational, or health opportunity for District residents. Transportation planning and development should be framed by a racial equity lens, to identify and address historic and current barriers and additional transportation burdens experienced by communities of color. 403.13

Policy T-1.4.1: Street Design for Placemaking

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

Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network

Develop, maintain, and improve pedestrian facilities. Improve the District’s sidewalk system to form a safe and accessible network that links residents across Washington, DC. 411.5

Policy T-2.5.5: Natural Landscaping

Work with other District and federal agencies to identify, plant, and manage natural landscaping areas along highways, traffic circles, bike paths, and sidewalks. 412.15

Policy T-3.1.1: TDM Programs

Provide, support, and promote programs and strategies aimed at reducing the number of car trips and miles driven (for work and non-work purposes), to increase the efficiency of the transportation system. 415.10

Environmental Protection Element

Policy E-1.1.2: Urban Heat Island Mitigation

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

Policy E-2.1.2: Tree Requirements in New Development

Use planning, zoning, and building regulations to promote tree retention and planting, as well as the removal and replacement of dying trees when new development occurs. Tree planting and landscaping required as a condition of permit approval should include provisions for ongoing maintenance. 605.6

Policy E-2.1.3: Sustainable Landscaping Practices

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

Policy E-3.2.7: Energy-Efficient Building and Site Planning

Include provisions for energy efficiency and for the use of alternative energy sources in the District’s planning, zoning, and building standards. Encourage new development to exceed minimum code requirements and contribute to energy efficiency and clean energy goals. 612.9

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

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

615.4

Policy E-7.1.1: GI and Green Building Methods for the District

Strongly encourage the use of GI best management practices and green building design methods and materials in new construction and major rehabilitation projects undertaken by District government.

630.4

Policy E-7.1.3: Sustainable Landscaping

Require sustainable practices for landscaping projects, GI, and restoration projects on District properties that reduce the need for watering and mowing, control the spread of invasive species, increase the use of landscaping for stormwater management, provide habitats, and reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides. Consider using industry best practices and certifications to guide this policy.

630.6

Urban Design

Policy UD-1.1.3: Preeminent View Corridors

Reinforce the prominent role of views as a defining feature of the District's character through careful planning of streetscapes and public parks to preserve and frame views of existing landmarks and significant structures and through consideration of the various types of view corridors when designing and planning public projects and streetscapes. Such views could include preeminent views of nationally symbolic architecture, important views of nationally or locally significant civic structures, landmarks, and parks and open spaces. (see Figure 9.5). 903.11

Policy UD-1.1.7: Public Space Landscape

Continue and enhance the use of public parking regulations (see Figure 9.6) to promote a verdant park-like character of the District's streets, with landscaped yards, generous tree canopy, and pedestrian scaled retaining walls and fences. Maintain building restriction lines, limit below-grade building projections that detract from green space, and preserve the existing grades along a block or corridor in public space and building restriction areas. 903.16

Policy UD-1.4.3: Thoroughfare Vistas and View Corridors

Protect picturesque views and view corridors along avenues, parkways, and other major corridors, particularly along streets that terminate, connect, and frame important neighborhood and national institutions, memorials, and parks. Vistas along such streets should be accentuated by street trees and include distinct facades of high architectural quality along well-defined street walls and, if appropriate, maintain a park-like character. 906.10

Policy UD-2.1.1: Streetscapes That Prioritize the Human Experience

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

Policy UD-2.1.2: Neighborhood Streetscapes

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

Policy UD-2.2.1: Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the visual qualities of Washington, DC's neighborhoods as infill development and building renovations occur by encouraging the use of high-quality and high-performance architectural designs and materials. In neighborhoods with diverse housing types, or when introducing more diverse infill housing types, use design measures to create visual and spatial compatibility. 909.5

Policy UD-2.2.2: Areas of Strong Architectural Character

Preserve the architectural continuity and design integrity of historic districts and other areas of strong architectural character. New development, additions, and renovations within such areas do not need to replicate prevailing architectural styles exactly but should be complementary. 909.6

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. 909.8

Policy UD-2.2.4: Transitions in Building Intensity

Design transitions between large- and small-scale development. The relationship between taller, more visually prominent buildings and lower, smaller buildings (such as single-family or row houses) can be made more pleasing and gradual through a variety of context-specific design strategies, such as a slender massing of taller elements, stepping back the building at floors above its neighbors' predominant roof line, stepping a building's massing down to meet the roof line of its neighbors, or strategic placement of taller elements to mark corners, vista terminations, or large open-space frontages. 909.9

Policy UD-2.2.7: Preservation of Neighborhood Open Space

Ensure that infill development respects and improves the integrity of neighborhood open spaces and public areas. Buildings should be designed to minimize the loss of sunlight and maximize the usability of neighborhood parks and plazas. Buildings adjacent to parks or natural areas should orient their entrances or other community-serving functions toward these shared resources. 909.13

Policy UD-4.2.2: Engaging Ground Floors

Promote a high standard of storefront design and architectural detail in mixed-use buildings to enhance the pedestrian experience of the street. Promote a high degree of visual interest through syncopated storefronts that vary every 20 to 30 feet, provide direct lines of sight to interior social spaces, provide socially oriented uses along the public street, and use tactile, durable materials at the ground level. 918.4

Policy UD-4.2.3: Continuity and Consistency of Building Frontages

Maintain the established frontage lines of streets by aligning the front walls of new construction with the

prevailing facades of adjacent buildings. Avoid placing new construction that extends beyond the existing facade line unless it significantly benefits the public life of the street. Where existing facades are characterized by an established pattern of windows and doors or other elements, new construction should complement the established rhythm. 918.5

Policy UD-4.2.4: Creating Engaging Facades

Design new buildings to respond to the surrounding neighborhood fabric by modulating façade rhythms and using complementary materials, textures, and color, as well as well-designed lighting. Varying design tactics may be used to engage a building with its surroundings. In contexts with smaller lot sizes and multiple closely spaced building entrances, breaking up a building façade in the vertical direction is encouraged, along with strongly defined

Central Washington

Policy CW-1.1.1: Promoting Mixed Use Development

Expand the mix of land uses in Central Washington to attract a broader variety of activities and sustain the area as the hub of the metropolitan area. Central Washington should be strengthened as a dynamic employment center, a high-quality regional retail center, an internationally renowned cultural center, a world-class visitor and convention destination, a vibrant urban neighborhood, and the focus of the regional transportation network. New office and retail space, hotels, arts and entertainment uses, housing, and open space should be encouraged through strategic incentives and preservation so that the area remains attractive, exciting, and economically productive. 1608.2

Policy CW-1.1.3: Incentives for Non-Office Uses

Take action to attract non-office uses within the area to create a vibrant collection of central neighborhoods. Continue using zoning and other regulatory mechanisms to incentivize mixed-use development, including housing, ground floor retail, educational uses, and arts facilities in locations consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. 1608.4

Policy CW-1.1.4: New Housing Development in Central Washington

Continue to encourage the development of new high-density housing in Central Washington, particularly in NoMa and east Mount Vernon Square, including Mount Vernon Triangle, Northwest One, and the L'Enfant Plaza/ Near Southwest areas. Ground floor retail space and similar uses should be strongly encouraged within these areas to create street life and provide neighborhood services for residents. A strong downtown residential community can create pedestrian traffic, meet local housing needs, support local businesses in the evenings and on weekends, and increase neighborhood safety and security. 1608.5

Policy CW-1.1.5: Central Washington Housing Diversity

It is important to keep Central Washington a mixed-income community and avoid the displacement of lower-income residents. Preserve Central Washington's existing low- to moderate-income housing, including public housing, housing (both contracts and vouchers), and other subsidized units. The District has taken a proactive approach to preserving affordable units at the Museum Square, Golden Rule, and other Central Washington Area redevelopment sites. The District should continue to expand the number of affordable units through land disposition with affordability requirements and through the use of zoning and other regulatory incentives. 1608.6

Policy CW-1.1.11: Reinforcing Central Washington's Characteristic Design Features

Reinforce the physical qualities that set Central Washington apart from all other major American city

centers. Balance the symbolic monumentality of the national civic center with a respectful, but distinct and impressive, expression of local life. Blend historic, traditional, and contemporary architecture to express the vitality of a diverse and growing District that is as proud of its neighborhood amenities, architectural heritage, and character as it is of its position as the seat of the national government.

1608.12

Policy CW-1.1.12: Creating Active Street Life and Public Spaces

Promote active street life throughout Central Washington through the design of buildings, streets, and public spaces... 1608.13

Policy CW-1.1.16: Making Central Washington's Streets More Pedestrian Friendly

Enhance Central Washington's pedestrian network and improve pedestrian safety. This should be achieved through such measures as... 1608.17

Policy CW-1.1.20: Design Character

Create a more coherent design character for Central Washington by improving the physical linkages among the Monumental Core, the business sub-districts on the perimeter of the National Mall, and the expanding mixed-use areas east and southeast of downtown. Urban design strategies should focus on making the entire area more walkable, discouraging monolithic architecture, improving signage and streetscape features, and adding new land uses that make the area more lively, interesting, and dynamic.

1608.21

Policy CW-1.1.23: Architectural Excellence

Promote excellence in the design of downtown buildings and landscapes. Particular attention should be focused on ground floor levels, with greater architectural details used to improve visual image. 1608.24

Policy CW-1.2.1: Enhancing the Identity of Central Washington Neighborhoods

Enhance the sense of identity of the different neighborhoods within Central Washington based on their history and natural features, their ethnic and cultural heritage, the design and scale of their buildings, and the types of activities and uses they support. Unique identities should be established in the emerging areas around downtown, rather than replicating existing development patterns 1609.1

Policy CW-2.5.1: Judiciary Square Improvements

Maintain the primary function of the Judiciary Square area as a judicial center, and enhance the area's appearance as a great pedestrian-oriented civic space with a strong sense of identity. Consistent with the 2005 Master Plan for the site, buildings in the area should be better related to one another and to the square itself. 1615.6

Policy CW-2.5.5: Enhancing the Identity of Downtown East

Strengthen Downtown East as a geographically distinct mixed-use area of hotel, commercial, retail, and residential development, taking advantage of its strategic location as a crossroads community between Capitol Hill, downtown, and Union Station. New buildings and redevelopment sites should incorporate well-designed architecture and provide high-quality streetscape improvements that provide amenity spaces for the public to reduce the canyon-like feel that many large-scale developments impose on the sidewalk... 1615.10

Policy CW-2.5.6: Designate Downtown East as a Placemaking Pilot Zone

Create a Downtown East placemaking pilot zone where property owners, the BIDs, and other area stakeholders can conduct innovative, creative, and tactical placemaking interventions within the public right-of-way and in publicly accessible private spaces, such as office lobbies. Encourage uses that are open to the public, create visual interest from the street, provide pedestrian or neighborhood amenity space, and promote local retailers. 1615.11