

Government of the District of Columbia

Office of the
Director



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OFFICE OF PLANNING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MEMORANDUM

TO: D.C. Zoning Commission

FROM: Jill C. Dennis
Director

Nathan W. Gross, Chief
Comprehensive Plan Implementation

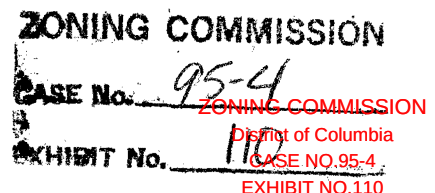
SUBJECT: Hearing Summary, Zoning Commission Case No. 95-4 (Union Station Area Rezoning)

Zoning Commission Case No. 95-4 is a proposed rezoning of the Union Station Area (more specifically, the Northeast No. 1/Eckington Yards Special Treatment Area), pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was completed on two dates, September 25 and November 9, 1995.

On the following pages are two maps, together with summaries of key points made in testimony, organized by specific subareas. The first map ("Consensus Rezoning Areas") identifies locations where testimony was substantially in agreement with the advertised rezoning. The second map ("Contested Areas Zoning Map") identifies locations where arguments were made for and against the advertised map amendments, or where alternative zoning proposals were suggested.

This summary is intended to assist the Commission's discussion and decision on this complex case and does not purport to represent the full record of the case, which speaks for itself.

Attachments



CONSENSUS REZONING AREAS

Legend:

A. M & CM to C-3-C.

- North Capitol St. Subarea.
- Med.-High Density Commercial land use designation
- Development Opportunity Area
- Encourage major office-retail redevelopment, a trend already in progress in southern part of area.

B. M to C-M-3. Square 747.

- Comply with Comprehensive Plan land use designation of mixed PTE/Commercial Uses
- Rule out some industrial uses that are now allowed in M zone, due to nearby residential uses.

C. C-M-1 & C-2-A to R-4.

Parts of squares 804, 773, 775, 776 & 777.

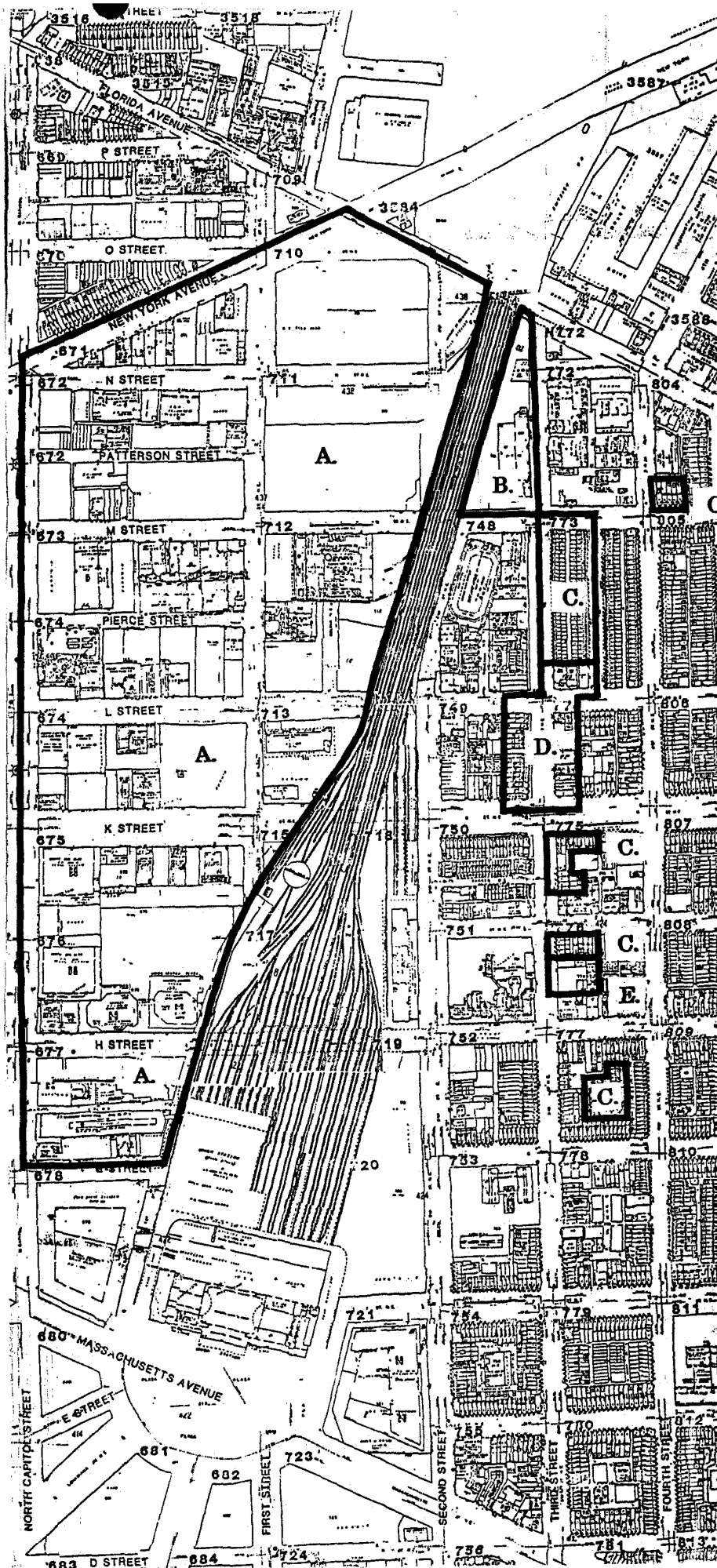
- Preserve existing row dwellings to stabilize residential areas
- Preserve housing supply
- Achieve zoning/Comprehensive Plan consistency.

D. C-M-1 to C-2-B. Parts of squares 749, 773 & 774.

- Achieve zoning consistency with land use designation of Mixed Use: Moderate Density Residential/Low Density Commercial
- Establish mixed use transition zone between intensive development near railroad tracks and residential neighborhood to the east.

E. C-M-1 to C-2-A. Part of Square 776.

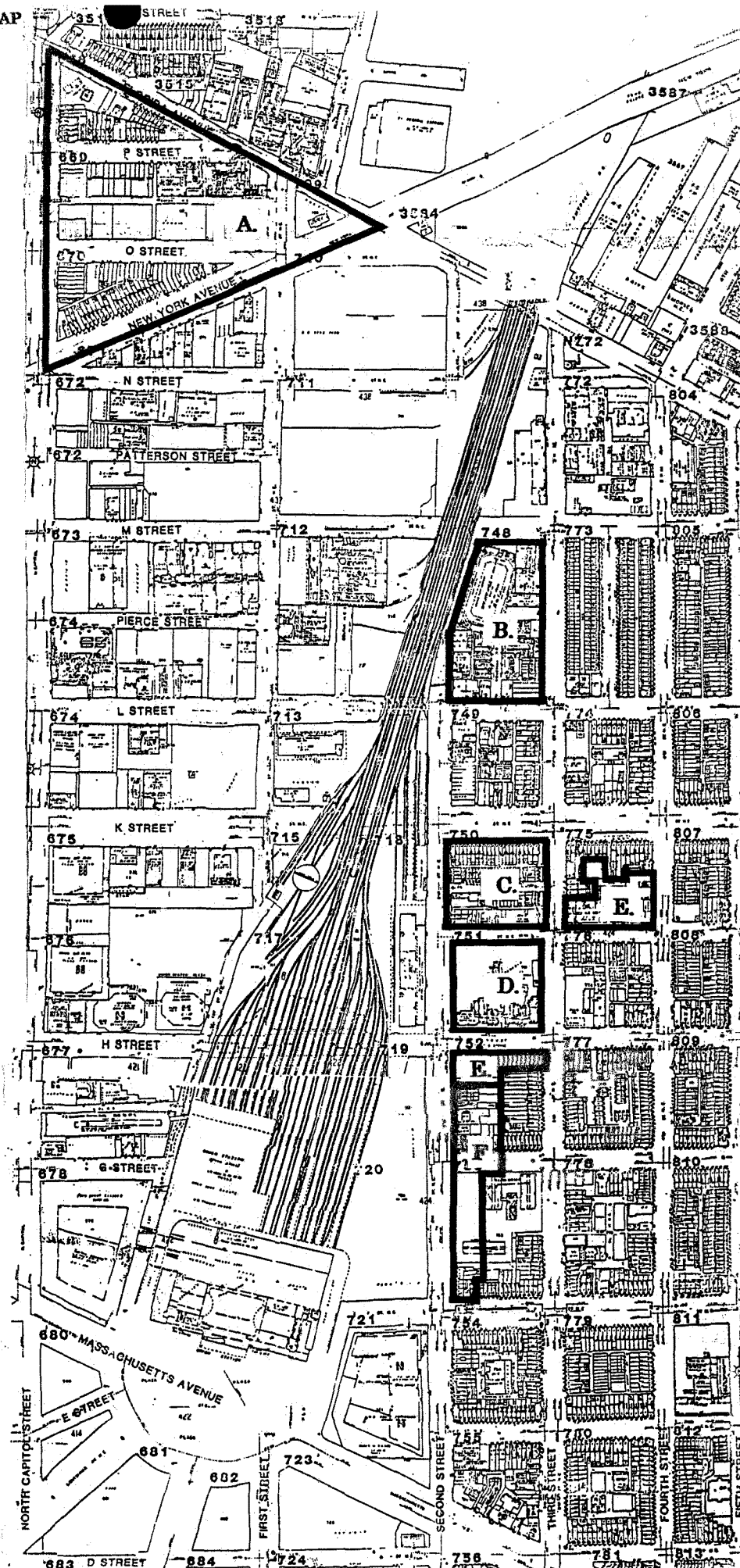
- Stabilize existing commercial uses
- Eliminate existing split-zoning of commercial property.



CONTESTED AREAS ZONING MAP

Legend:

See issues summaries for each lettered area on following three pages.



CONTESTED AREAS ZONING MAP

Legend:

A. C-M-3 to C-M-3 (no change) or C-3-C.

Location: Triangular area bounded by Florida and New York avenues and North Capitol Street.

- Comprehensive Plan land use designation is Medium-High Density Commercial.
- Existing and projected traffic constraints based on continuing major office development.
- More parking is required in C-M-3; relevant because of distance from Metrorail station.
- Maximum commercial density and height (90', 6.0/6.5 FAR) are very similar.

B. M to C-M-3 and C-M-2 or C-M-1.

Location: Square 748, bounded by L, M, 2nd and 3rd streets, N.E.

- Comprehensive Plan land use designation is Mixed Use: PTE/Medium-High Density Commercial.
- Rationale for CM zones was to rule out certain heavy industrial uses allowed in M zone, and to use C-M-3 along railroad tracks and either C-M-1 or C-M-2 along 3rd Street across the street from row dwellings.
- Solid waste transfer station in former Uline Arena and adjacent properties prompted testimony by residential neighbors and D.C. Councilmembers about adverse effects, including odors, rats, trucks, noise and ill-advised proximity to residential area.
- The company, L & G Industries, testified about its clean operation, the Comprehensive Plan land use designation including PTE, truck routing, nonconformity problems, loss of blue collar jobs and industrial development.
- A few residents favored M zoning for L & G Industries, having worked with L & G to obtain amenities for the neighborhood.
- Some testimony favored a further hearing to consider commercial zoning.
- Businesses other than L & G industries are located in Square 748.

C. C-M-1 to R-4 or C-2-B.

Location: Square 750, bounded by I, K, 2nd and 3rd streets, N.E.

- Comprehensive Plan land use designation is Mixed Use: Moderate Density Residential and Low Density Commercial.
- Southern portion of square is primarily small office buildings; northern portion is row structures converted to office use plus some residential occupancies. OP proposed C-2-B for office area and R-4 for mixed use area.

- R-4 zoning would reinforce the existing residential uses in the northern part of the square. Opponents of R-4 favored either retention of C-M-1 or adoption of C-2-B for several reasons: small office conversions have actually improved public safety, and the trend is too far along for R-4 to be suitable zoning; R-4 makes nearly all of the row house lots nonconforming as to minimum lot area, most of them being only 900 to 1,200 s.f., thereby precluding additions and new construction; C-2-B allows 80% lot coverage vs. 60% in R-4 and would allow residential additions; C-2-B makes residential use a matter-of-right and also allows commercial or mixed uses; small commercial conversions are good for start-up businesses (low commercial rents) and the investor-owners of 75% of the structures in the square have invested large sums towards this objective.
- The street frontage along 2nd Street includes the proposed site for the Congressional Black Caucus office building (3.0 FAR, 40') and other commercial buildings, as well as some residential uses. OP recommended SP-1 for the Black Caucus site as a way of achieving a 2.5 FAR (close to the 3.0 FAR contemplated in preliminary plans), although a BZA process would be required. The Caucus requested retention of C-M-1. The seller of the site recommended retention of C-M-1 along the 2nd Street frontage.

D. C-M-1 & C-2-A to SP-1.

Location: Square 751, bounded by H, I, 2nd and 3rd streets, N.E.

- Comprehensive Plan designation is Institutional, reflecting the existing use of the entire block as the National Capital Children's Museum.
- Existing C-2-A along H Street is inappropriate because of the barrier of the H Street overpass; existing C-M-1 is inappropriate because industrial uses would be unsuited to surrounding office and residential character.
- Permitted scale or FAR in advertised SP-1 zone is too low for the museum/learning center buildings and too limiting regarding the museum's financial situation, architectural flexibility for reconfiguring space and buildings and regarding sale or lease of surplus land along 2nd Street for commercial uses to help support the institution's survival in this location.
- The museum requests readvertising for rezoning the eastern half of the square C-3-B and the western half C-3-A. The ANC has supported this request.

E. C-M-1 to C-2-B; C-2-A to C-2-A (no change).

Location: Southern two-thirds of Square 775 and H Street frontage of Square 752; other areas generally proposed for C-2-B zoning.

- In Square 775, the existing buildings in some cases exceed the 1.5 FAR commercial allowed in C-2-B. The office building at the corner of 3rd and I streets is approximately 4.0 FAR, according to the owner.
- In proposed C-2-B locations generally, because of difficult economic trends, the depressed residential real estate market in this area, and outmigration from the District, it is important to enact zoning that stimulates development. In this area, the demand is primarily for more office space, and office development has greatly helped improve the area and offset local crime and drug activities, which continue.
- The advertised rezonings from C-M-1 to C-2-B represent a severe reduction from 3.0 FAR commercial to 1.5 FAR, which will create some nonconforming structures. This will not be a problem for continued use of existing buildings nor for adaptive reuse, but is limiting over the long run for new development.
- C-3-A or C-3-B zoning should be considered for much of the area previously advertised for C-2-B. The H Street frontage of Square 752, zoned C-2-A, should be included in this consideration. C-3-A or C-3-B zoning would still provide a step-down from more intensive CM zoning near the railroad tracks and would spur development of vacant and underutilized properties in the area. C-3-A can be considered "not inconsistent" with the land use designation of Moderate Density Mixed Use.

F. C-1 and R-4 to C-2-A.

Location: Second Street frontage of squares 752 and 753 (east frontage of 2nd Street from F Street to nearly H Street).

- Comprehensive Plan land use designation is Mixed Use: Moderate Density Residential and Low Density Commercial. R-4 and C-1 are not really consistent with this designation; however, C-2-A is generally consistent.
- The C-2-A commercial FAR of 1.5 will accommodate the floor area of most row structures in the area, which are predominant, whereas C-1 will create undue instances of nonconformity.
- A commercial transition at moderate scale is needed between future, major office development across 2nd Street to the west and residential areas to the east.
- Some testimony favored C-1 as providing a more limited range of business uses than C-2-A and a lesser potential height and bulk of buildings.