

Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

The proposed PUD modification would allow for fast food eating and drinking establishment use in the ground floor of the originally approved mixed use building consisting of residential and ground floor retail uses. The proposed use is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan (“Comp Plan”) and will lead to favorable outcomes when evaluated through a racial equity lens. To the extent the application is inconsistent with any Comp Plan policies, such inconsistencies are outweighed by the application’s consistency with many other policies under the Citywide Elements of the Comp Plan and the Capitol Hill Area Element in which the Property is located. A detailed evaluation follows.

I. Future Land Use Map Designation

The Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”) designates the Property as Mixed Use Medium Density Commercial / Medium Density Residential. These designations have not changed since the original approval of the PUD. In Z.C. Order No. 10-03, the Zoning Commission determined that the proposed mixed-use development, which includes residential and retail uses, is not inconsistent with the FLUM.

The Medium Density Residential designation is suited for mid-rise apartment buildings and, in some cases, taller residential buildings where large areas of permanent open space are present. *See* 10-A DCMR § 227.7. The Medium Density Commercial designation allows for a mix of retail, office, and service businesses, with residential uses also commonly included. *See* 10-A DCMR § 227.12.

Given these designations, the proposed fast food use aligns with the intended mix of commercial and residential uses and is not inconsistent with the FLUM.

II. Generalized Policy Map

The Generalized Policy Map (“GPM”) designates the Property as a Main Street Mixed Use Corridor, which is characterized by a concentration of older storefronts along a traditional commercial business corridor. *See* 10-A DCMR § 225.14. These corridors are pedestrian-oriented, featuring traditional storefronts with upper-story residential or office uses. *Id.* Development and redevelopment within these corridors are intended to support transit use and enhance the pedestrian environment. *Id.*

The proposed fast food use is not inconsistent with this designation, as it would be located along the H Street corridor, an area designed to encourage pedestrian and transit activity. The use would contribute to the corridor’s active streetscape, benefiting from and supporting the existing public realm that prioritizes pedestrian accessibility. Additionally, its location provides convenient access to both Metro and Streetcar services, reinforcing the corridor’s transit-oriented development objectives.

III. H Street NE Strategic Development Plan

The purpose of the H Street NE Strategic Development Plan (“H Street Plan”) is to guide community, private sector, and public agency actions and investments in revitalizing the traditional neighborhood corridor over a ten year horizon. *See* H Street Plan, p. ii. The H Street Plan was approved by Council on November 26, 2003, approximately 21.5 years ago. While the H Street Plan is predominantly implemented, it establishes four thematic areas along the H Street corridor in which the proposed use is consistent.

The area from 7th Street to 12th Street is the “Central Retail District,” where retail uses will be strengthened, consolidated, and diversified to offer residents, shoppers, and visitors the range of goods and services they seek. *See* H Street Plan, p. v. The proposed fast food use aligns with this vision by expanding the variety of available services while ensuring accessibility for the community, as patrons can easily reach the corridor by walking, biking, or using transit without relying on a car.

IV. What Comp Plan policies related to racial equity will be advanced by approval of the zoning action?

a. Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is the cornerstone of the Comp Plan. It establishes the basic policies guiding the physical form of Washington, D.C., and provides direction on a range of development, preservation, and land use compatibility issues by outlining the policies through which growth and change will occur in the District. *See* 10-A DCMR § 302.1.

A fast food establishment within a mixed use development on the H Street corridor aligns with the Comp Plan’s Land Use Element by supporting walkable, transit-oriented development near Union Station and the Streetcar on H Street. (Policy LU-1.4.1). It is anticipated that most patrons will walk, bike, or take transit to the Property, as it the use is intended to serve the surrounding community. It contributes to the corridor’s role as a neighborhood center, offering accessible food options while reducing automobile reliance. (Policy LU-1.4.2). Additionally, it activates the ground floor of a mixed use development. (Policy LU-2.1.13), enhances the commercial vibrancy of the area (Policy LU-2.4.1), and supports neighborhood beautification efforts. (Policy LU-2.2.4). Potential concerns related to litter, noise, and traffic can be mitigated through waste management strategies and pedestrian-friendly design. (Policy LU-2.3.2).

From a racial equity perspective, the inclusion of a fast food establishment in the mixed use development enhances food accessibility for low- and moderate-income residents, ensuring affordable dining options within a high-cost area. (Policy LU-2.4.1). Fast food establishments will also create jobs, particularly entry-level opportunities for community members. (Policy LU-2.1.10). The transit-accessible location benefits workers and families who rely on public transportation, further promoting economic and social inclusion. (Policy LU-1.4.1). By prioritizing community hiring, incorporating healthy menu options, and encouraging small business leasing opportunities, the proposed use can advance equity while contributing to a thriving commercial corridor.

The application specifically advances the following Land Use Element policies:

LU-1.4 Transit-Oriented and Corridor Development

- Policy LU-1.4.1: Station Areas as Neighborhood Centers
- Policy LU-1.4.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations

LU-2.1 A District of Neighborhoods

- Policy LU-2.1.10: Multi-Family Neighborhoods
- Policy LU-2.1.13: Planned Unit Developments in Neighborhood Commercial Corridors

LU-2.2 Maintaining Community Standards

- Policy LU-2.2.4: Neighborhood Beautification

LU-2.3 Residential Land Use Compatibility

- Policy LU-2.3.2: Mitigation of Commercial Development Impacts

LU-2.4 Neighborhood Commercial Districts and Centers

- Policy LU-2.4.1: Promotion of Commercial Centers

b. Transportation Element

The overarching goal for transportation in the District is to create a safe, sustainable, equitable, efficient, and multimodal transportation system that meets the access and mobility needs of District residents, the regional workforce, and visitors; supports local and regional economic prosperity; and enhances the quality of life for District residents. *See* 10-A DCMR § 401.1.

A fast food establishment within a mixed use development on the H Street corridor aligns with the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan by supporting pedestrian-oriented, transit-accessible development. The use is intended to serve the surrounding community, ensuring that most patrons will walk, bike, or take transit rather than rely on a car. The corridor's proximity to Union Station Metro and the Streetcar ensures that the establishment will serve residents, commuters, and visitors without increasing automobile dependency. (Policy T-1.1.4). By prioritizing pedestrian access and last-mile connectivity, the proposed fast food use will enhance the walkability of the corridor, making it easier for transit users to access dining options on foot or by bicycle.

Additionally, the fast food establishment aligns with policies discouraging auto-oriented uses by not requiring excessive parking, curb cuts, or drive-through facilities, thus maintaining a continuous and pedestrian-friendly streetscape. (Policy T-1.2.3). The presence of a commercial use within walking distance of high-density residential and employment areas supports the efficient use of transit infrastructure while reducing the need for vehicular trips. (Policy T-1.3.1). Further, by contributing to the vibrancy and economic development of a major thoroughfare, the establishment will support targeted investments in multimodal infrastructure improvements. (Policy T-1.2.1 and Policy T-1.2.2).

From a racial equity perspective, the fast food establishment enhances economic opportunity, transportation access, and affordability for low-income and transit-dependent residents. (Policy T-1.1.7). Many communities of color face disproportionate transportation burdens, including longer commutes, higher travel costs, and limited food access in certain neighborhoods. By locating within a well-connected, transit-accessible corridor, fast food establishment use would ensure that low-cost meal options are available to those who rely on public transportation, thereby removing transportation as a barrier to economic and food security.

Additionally, fast food uses will create local job opportunities, particularly in entry-level and service-sector positions, providing employment for historically underserved communities. (Policy T-1.3.1). If efforts are made to hire locally, support small business ownership, and encourage livable wages, the proposed use would contribute to economic mobility while reinforcing the corridor's role as an equitable commercial hub. By integrating into a pedestrian-oriented environment and avoiding auto-centric design, the proposed use would support a sustainable, transit-friendly development model that benefits all District residents, regardless of income or mobility needs.

The application specifically advances the following Transportation Element policies:

T-1.1 Land Use: Transportation Coordination

- Policy T-1.1.4: Transit-Oriented Development
- Policy T-1.1.7: Equitable Transportation Access

T-1.2 Transforming Corridors

- Policy T-1.2.1: Major Thoroughfare Improvements
- Policy T-1.2.2: Targeted Investment
- Policy T-1.2.3: Discouraging Auto-Oriented Uses

T-1.3 Regional Smart Growth Solutions

- Policy T-1.3.1: Transit-Accessible Employment

c. Economic Development Element

The overarching goal for economic development in the District is to drive inclusive economic expansion and resilience by growing the economy and reducing employment disparities across race, geography, and educational attainment status. *See* 10-A DCMR § 701.1.

A fast food establishment within a mixed use development on the H Street corridor is consistent with the Economic Development Element of the Comp Plan as it supports the food services industry, one of the District's core industries. (Policy ED-1.1.1). By contributing to the growth of the local food service sector, the establishment aligns with the District's broader economic development goals while fostering job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Additionally, fast food use would enhance neighborhood commercial vitality by expanding the retail mix and supporting foot traffic in a high-density, transit-accessible corridor. (Policy ED-3.1.1). Its presence would attract both local residents and visitors, strengthening the customer base

and ensuring the continued vibrancy of the H Street commercial district. Further, the proposed use would advance commercial revitalization efforts in historically underserved areas. (Policy ED-3.1.2). By targeting investment into mixed use developments along major corridors, the District fosters a more equitable distribution of commercial amenities, ensuring that all residents—particularly those in historically neglected communities—benefit from economic growth.

The corridor’s proximity to Union Station and the Streetcar would also ensure efficient transit access for workers and customers alike, reinforcing the District’s objective of improving access to jobs through transit investments. (Policy ED-4.3.1). Locating a fast food establishment in a highly transit-accessible area allows low-income and transit-dependent workers to reach employment opportunities with ease, reducing transportation barriers to economic participation.

From a racial equity perspective, a fast food establishment along H Street promotes economic inclusion by expanding job opportunities and providing accessible, affordable food options. Many fast food establishments serve as entry points to the workforce, particularly for young workers, immigrants, and individuals without advanced degrees. Ensuring that fast food establishments hire locally and provide pathways to higher-wage positions or managerial roles can help reduce employment disparities among communities of color. (Policy ED-4.3.1).

The presence of affordable food options in an area undergoing significant economic growth ensures that residents of all income levels have equitable access to basic retail services, preventing displacement of lower-income consumers while reinforcing H Street’s role as an inclusive, thriving commercial corridor.

The application specifically advances the following Economic Development Element policies:

ED-1.1 Diversifying the Economic Base

- Policy ED-1.1.1: Core Industries

ED-3.1 Strengthening Retail Districts

- Policy ED-3.1.1: Neighborhood Commercial Vitality
- Policy ED-3.1.2: Targeting Commercial Revitalization

ED-4.3 Getting to Work

- Policy ED-4.3.1: Transportation Access to District Jobs

d. Capitol Hill Area Element

The overarching goal of the Capitol Hill Area Element is to preserve and enhance the neighborhood’s historic character, maintain its residential appeal, and support balanced growth that integrates transit accessibility, economic vitality, and quality of life improvements. As one of Washington, DC’s most well-defined and historically significant neighborhoods, Capitol Hill is characterized by a strong sense of identity, a mix of residential, commercial, and civic spaces, and a commitment to historic preservation. *See* 10-A DCMR §§ 1500.3 and 1500.10. The area’s planning priorities emphasize maintaining its historic fabric while accommodating thoughtful infill

development, especially along major corridors like H Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. *See* 10-A DCMR §§ 1500.4 and 1506.2.

Additionally, the Capitol Hill Area Element seeks to improve transportation connectivity, enhance commercial corridors, and promote equitable access to amenities. *See* 10-A DCMR §§ 1500.6 and 1500.7. While there is strong demand for expanded retail and services, residents also express concerns about managing growth to prevent displacement, mitigate traffic impacts, and ensure that new development respects the scale and character of the neighborhood. *See* 10-A DCMR § 1506.3. The Element calls for strategic investments in public spaces, schools, and transit while fostering a vibrant and diverse community that retains its long-standing residential appeal.

The establishment of fast food use on the H Street corridor aligns with efforts to reinforce and upgrade the corridor with appropriate retail services, particularly because fast food establishments provide affordable and convenient dining options that serve a diverse range of residents, workers, and visitors. (Policy CH-1.1.3). When designed to respect the character and scale of the corridor, such businesses can contribute to a vibrant retail environment, as they activate the street frontage by attracting foot traffic, fostering social interaction, and providing accessible dining options that serve both residents and visitors, thereby enhancing the overall economic vitality of the corridor.

The policy framework discourages the proliferation of fast food outlets and other automobile-oriented businesses along Capitol Hill's commercial corridors, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a pedestrian-oriented environment. (Policy CH-1.1.6). To remain consistent with this policy, the fast food establishment use at the Property will not include a drive-through component and will be designed to prioritize pedestrian accessibility and integrate seamlessly with the surrounding urban fabric, including with the other retail and service uses within the building, thus improving the walkable nature of the corridor.

Additionally, the proposal supports efforts to concentrate new development in commercially zoned areas like H Street, NE while promoting mixed use projects with ground-floor retail and upper-story residential uses. (Policy CH-1.1.4). A well-integrated fast food establishment could contribute to economic vitality while complementing residential growth. Streetscape improvements—such as outdoor seating, decorative facades, and pedestrian amenities—could further enhance the corridor's urban design quality while promoting multimodal transportation access for pedestrians, bus riders, and Streetcar users.

The proposal is also in line with the vision for revitalizing H Street as a thriving mixed use corridor, where existing retail space is strengthened, and new mixed use projects are encouraged. (Policy CH-2.1.1). A fast food establishment that complements the corridor's evolving retail mix, while respecting its character, will strengthen its role as a neighborhood-serving commercial hub.

From a racial equity perspective, the inclusion of a fast food establishment will contribute to economic inclusivity and access to affordable food options. Given the corridor's historic ties to Black and immigrant communities, supporting fast food businesses could provide entrepreneurship opportunities, job creation, and accessible food choices for lower-income residents. Ensuring fair wages and benefits for employees can help address economic disparities.

The application specifically advances the following Capitol Hill Area Element policies:

CH-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation

- Policy CH-1.1.3: Upgrading Commercial Districts
- Policy CH-1.1.4: Directing Growth
- Policy CH-1.1.6: Inappropriate Commercial Uses

CH-2.1 H Street / Benning Road NE

- CH-2.1.1: H Street NE Revitalization

V. What Comp Plan policies related to racial equity will potentially not be advanced by the approval of the zoning action?

The proposed zoning action supports Comp Plan policies related to racial equity by effectively advancing key equity objectives. The inclusion of a fast food establishment in a mixed use development provides accessible dining options, creates local jobs, and enhances the vibrancy of the H Street corridor. These benefits align with policies that seek to expand economic opportunities and enhance commercial activity.

Since auto-oriented uses are discouraged along the corridor and are not part of the proposed development, the proposed fast food use advances racial equity by improving access to economic and social opportunities, particularly for residents who rely on public transit or walking. The use is intended to serve the surrounding community – people who live and work in the immediate area – so it is expected that most patrons will walk, take transit, or bike to the Property rather than use a car. Historically marginalized communities have often faced barriers to economic participation due to car-dependent development patterns. By prioritizing pedestrian engagement and excluding auto-oriented features, the proposed use helps create a more inclusive commercial corridor, enhancing local economic mobility and contributing to a vibrant, accessible neighborhood..

A fast food establishment designed with an active street presence contributes to a safer, more inviting public realm, which benefits all residents, including those from communities of color who have historically faced disinvestment in commercial areas. Additionally, the creation of transit-accessible jobs and affordable dining options supports racial equity by expanding economic opportunities for lower-income workers and ensuring that the benefits of revitalization efforts are shared equitably. By integrating seamlessly into the walkable, mixed use environment of H Street, the establishment helps reinforce an inclusive and thriving commercial district that serves the needs of a diverse population.

Overall, the zoning action aligns with racial equity goals by fostering inclusive economic development, supporting transit-accessible jobs, and contributing to the dynamic commercial landscape envisioned for the H Street corridor.

VI. When considering the following themes / questions based on Comp Plan policies related to racial equity, what are the anticipated positive and negative impacts and/or outcomes of the zoning action?

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Direct Displacement	The proposed fast food establishment will not displace any existing businesses or residents, as it will occupy a currently vacant ground-floor space within a mixed use building.
Indirect Displacement	The proposed fast food establishment is designed to complement the existing commercial landscape without triggering rent increases or shifts that could displace long-standing businesses or residents. As it will occupy a currently vacant ground-floor space in a mixed use building, it does not contribute to a reduction in available commercial or residential units. Additionally, by enhancing foot traffic and economic activity along the corridor, the establishment may strengthen the viability of surrounding businesses, fostering a more stable and diverse commercial environment rather than creating pressure for higher rents or property turnover.
Housing	<p>The proposed fast food establishment will have no direct impact on housing, as it will occupy a currently vacant ground-floor commercial space within a mixed use building. Since it does not replace existing residential units or convert residential space into commercial use, there will be no reduction in the housing supply.</p> <p>Indirectly, the proposed use will contribute positively to the housing environment by enhancing neighborhood amenities and fostering economic activity, which can improve the overall appeal and stability of the area. Increased foot traffic and a thriving commercial corridor can help sustain mixed use development, supporting a balanced live-work environment that aligns with the District's transit-oriented growth strategies. Additionally, job creation associated with a fast food establishment, and accessibility to affordable food options, will provide economic benefits to nearby residents, particularly lower-income households.</p> <p>By maintaining the existing residential component of the building and reinforcing H Street's role as a vibrant mixed use corridor, the proposed use supports the District's goals of fostering inclusive growth while preserving housing opportunities.</p>
Physical	The proposed fast food establishment is expected to have a positive impact on the physical elements of the surrounding area,

	<p>particularly the streetscape and pedestrian experience. By occupying a vacant ground-floor commercial space in a mixed use building, the proposed use will contribute to an active street frontage, enhancing the vibrancy of the H Street corridor. The inclusion of pedestrian-friendly design elements, such as inviting storefronts, transparent windows, and potential outdoor seating, will create a more engaging and visually appealing streetscape, encouraging foot traffic and social interaction.</p> <p>From a landscape and environmental perspective, the use's impact will be minimal, as it does not involve new construction or alterations to existing green spaces. Additionally, the exclusion of auto-oriented features, such as a drive-through, aligns with sustainable urban design principles by prioritizing walkability and reducing car dependency.</p>
<p>Access to Opportunity</p>	<p>The proposed fast food restaurant increases access to opportunity by creating employment, fostering economic mobility, and expanding affordable dining options in a highly accessible, transit-oriented location. The proposed use will provide job opportunities for local residents, including entry-level positions that can serve as a stepping stone to long-term career advancement in the food service and hospitality industries. These jobs are particularly important for individuals from historically marginalized communities who may face barriers to employment in other sectors.</p> <p>Additionally, the restaurant enhances commercial activity, attracting foot traffic that can benefit surrounding businesses and contribute to the overall economic vitality of the corridor. By activating a vacant ground-floor space, the proposed use will strengthen the local retail environment and help to sustain a mix of businesses that serve a diverse range of needs.</p> <p>From an equity perspective, the Property's location in a walkable, transit-accessible corridor ensures that residents who do not own cars—including lower-income individuals, students, and employees of surrounding businesses—can easily access food options. By offering affordable, convenient meals in a mixed use setting, a fast food use will help bridge gaps in food accessibility, ensuring that more residents can meet their daily needs without traveling long distances. The use's presence within a vibrant commercial district supports broader goals of economic inclusion and community development, making opportunity more accessible to all residents.</p>

Community	<p>The Applicant engaged with the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”) 6A prior to filing the subject application. On March 19, 2025, the Applicant presented the application at the regularly-scheduled meeting of the ANC’s Economic Development and Zoning (“EDZ”) Committee, which voted in favor of the application and to relay its support to the full ANC. On March 26, 2025, the Applicant met individually with Commissioner Velasquez, the Single-Member District (“SMD”) representative for the Property (6A02) to discuss EDZ Committee’s support and seek additional feedback. The Applicant is scheduled to present the application at the ANC’s regularly scheduled and duly noticed public meeting on April 10, 2025, and will update the record, as appropriate, before the Zoning Commission considers this application at a public meeting.</p>
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VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed fast food establishment use at the Property advances racial equity by expanding economic opportunities, improving access to affordable dining options, and fostering an inclusive, pedestrian-friendly commercial corridor. By locating in a transit-accessible, walkable environment, the proposed use will ensure that residents—particularly those who rely on public transportation—can benefit from the economic and social opportunities it provides. The creation of local jobs, which may be more accessible to historically marginalized communities, contributes to workforce development and economic mobility. Additionally, by integrating into the mixed use development without auto-oriented features, the proposed use will support equitable neighborhood growth while maintaining the character of the H Street corridor. Overall, the proposed use will help bridge disparities in access to restaurants and employment, reinforcing a more inclusive and vibrant commercial district that serves all residents.