

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director for Development Review & Historic Preservation
DATE: January 29, 2018
SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case 17-24- Final Report** - Zoning map amendment to locate previously unzoned property within the RA-1 zone to allow the replacement of the Fort Greble Recreation Center with a new net zero urban nature center and community garden

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission adopt the following map amendment:

- a. Rezone the District Department of Parks and Recreation Fort Greble Recreation Center site (part of U.S. Reservation 412 transferred for use as a District recreation center) from unzoned to RA-1

II. BACKGROUND

The petitioner, the District of Columbia, has proposed the redevelopment of Fort Greble Recreation Center (part of U.S. Reservation 421) an approximately 6 acres (261,891 square feet) site in Southwest Washington. Jurisdiction for the District's recreation center portion of the site was transferred from the Federal Government to the District in the 1973 (see Exhibit 1).

The District's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Fort Greble Recreation Center has an existing baseball field, two basketball courts, two play areas with swings and slides, and a splash pad. The site is located off Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue with access from Elmira Street SW. The park was renovated in 2013 through the Play DC program. The existing recreation center was constructed in 1970 and does not meet current building codes.

The project scope is to raze the existing building while maintaining the park areas renovated in 2013. The DGS/DPR team plans to construct a net carbon neutral recreation center in compliance with all local and international building codes. Proposed site updates will include a community garden, a stormwater management system and an orchard (see Exhibit 2).

The site is located within the Fort Circle Parks Historic District and in 2016 the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts stated they had no objection to the concept design for the replacement building. The applicant is aware of the need to coordinate with the National Park Service, comply with historic preservation and archeology requirements, and acquire an easement for access in order to apply for any future building permits.

III. AREA DESCRIPTION

The surveyor’s plat and metes and bounds legal description for the part of U.S. Reservation 421 to be rezoned are in Exhibit 5.

The project site is located along the northeastern side of Fort Greble Park, which is part of the Fort Circle Parks system of the National Park Service. Surrounding the site are parkland and I-295 to the west and to the east are residential buildings, a health care facility and an elementary school.

The site is close to Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SW and Chesapeake Street SW, both which have metrobus routes.



Site Location and Zoning

IV. ZONING

Adjacent property to the east is zoned RA-1. The remainder of Fort Greble Park that is outside the Transfer of Jurisdiction boundary will remain unzoned, as is typical of federal parklands.

The proposed zone for the site is RA-1, which is consistent with the designation found on adjacent property to the east. The Zoning Regulations state: “*The Residential Apartment (RA) zones permit urban residential development and compatible institutional and semi-public buildings. The RA zones are designed to be mapped in areas identified as moderate- or high-density residential areas suitable for multiple dwelling unit development and supporting uses... The RA-1 zone provides for areas predominantly developed with low- to moderate-density development, including detached dwellings, rowhouses, and low-rise apartments.*”

Subtitle U Section 401 of the Zoning Regulations lists the following use as permitted as a matter of right in an RA-1 zone:

Recreation building, park, playground, swimming pool, athletic field, ice rink, or other similar athletic facility, public or private, operated on and using local or federal land and approved by a joint federal-local jurisdictional transfer agreement; subject to the following:

- (1) *No part of any use is nearer than seventy feet (70 ft.) to the nearest residential structure;*

- (2) The uses shall not be organized for profit;*
- (3) All parking areas shall be shared by all uses on a lot;*
- (4) Scoreboards shall be installed such that the highest point is no taller than twenty-five feet (25 ft.) above grade; and*
- (5) Any lighting used to illuminate a park, playground, athletic field, trail, or other outdoor space, shall be so arranged that all direct rays of lighting are confined to the boundaries of the lot.*

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As noted in OP’s setdown report of December 1, 2017, the proposed amendment would be not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Generalized Policy Map designates the area for “Federal Lands” and the Future Land Use Map designates it as “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space”.

While federal parklands are generally unzoned, District parklands are often zoned the same as the surrounding land uses. Adjacent land uses to the immediate east are zoned RA-1, the zone proposed for the subject property.

The proposed change is limited in its impact, would facilitates the replacement of a public recreation facility with a new public nature center, and would support the Comprehensive Plan policy objectives stated in the setdown report.

VI. ANALYSIS

OP supports the proposed rezoning in order to construct a new net-zero nature center while allowing the other park improvements to remain on site. The zoning is consistent with the adjacent zoning and is limited only to the DPR park boundaries.

The Applicant has requested a waiver for late posting (Exhibit 10). The Applicant has advised OP that there have been discussions with ANC 8D and that there is support in the community for the new nature center. However, as of the date of this OP report, the ANC had not filed their comments to the record.

No other District agencies have provided comments on this application at the time of this report.

JL/af