

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: ^{JLS} Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation
Matt Jesick, Development Review Specialist

DATE: December 7, 2020

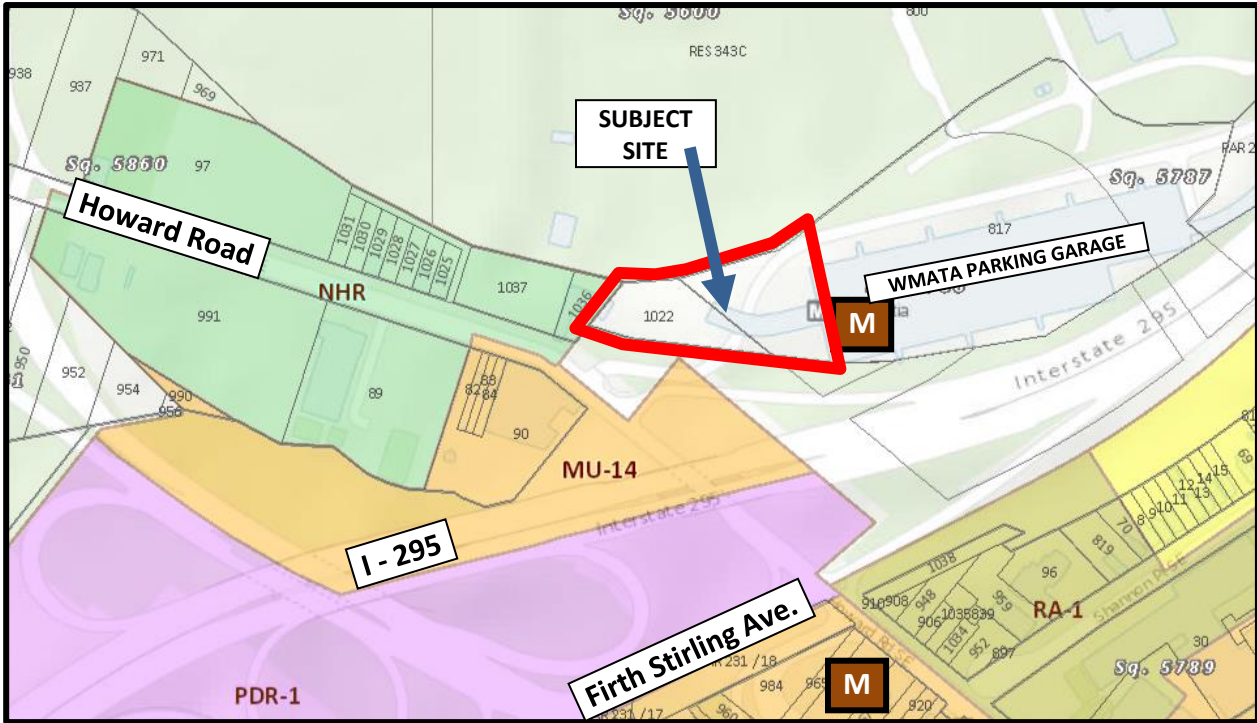
SUBJECT: ZC #20-22 – Setdown Report for a Proposed Zoning Map Amendment to Remap properties on Howard Road, SE to the Northern Howard Road (NHR) Zone

I. RECOMMENDATION

The applicant requests a map amendment to the Northern Howard Road (NHR) zone, a Special Purpose Zone specifically crafted for properties along Howard Road, SE, north of Interstate 295. The subject site is in an area considered appropriate for the NHR zone, is immediately adjacent to lots already zoned NHR, and is adjacent to the northern entrance to the Anacostia metro station. Also, the proposal would not be inconsistent with the policies and land use maps of the Comprehensive Plan. The Office of Planning (OP), therefore, recommends that the map amendment be set down for a public hearing.

II. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Applicant	CQ Metro Land, LLC
Owners	CQ Metro Land, LLC and WMATA
Ward and ANC	8A (across Howard Road from 8C)
Legal Description	Square 5860, Lots 1039, 1040, 1041
Total Area	55,436 sf (1.3 acres)
Existing Zone	Unzoned
Proposed Zone	Northern Howard Road (NHR – high density mixed use)
Brief Description	The applicant is an affiliate of Redbrick LMD, owner of adjacent parcels on Howard Road which are already zoned NHR. The applicant acquired most of the subject site from WMATA; WMATA would retain ownership of a portion of the subject site – the access road to the Anacostia metro station parking garage. The applicants propose rezoning the entire site to NHR. See the map below for the boundaries of the subject site.



III. SUMMARY OF THE NHR ZONE

The applicant proposes to rezone the property from Unzoned to NHR. The following table summarizes the basic parameters of the NHR zone. The full text of the NHR zone can be found at Subtitle K, Chapter 10.

Item	NHR
FAR	9.0 6.5 max non-res., 2.5 min. residential
Height	130' max.
Penthouse Height	20' 1 story + mezz. 2 nd story for mechanical
Lot Occupancy	No maximum
Rear Yard	2.5" / ft. of height, 12' min.; OR court-in-lieu
Side Yard	None required 5' minimum if provided

Item	NHR
GAR	0.2
Other Sustainability	Renewable energy standard; LEED Gold required
IZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12%, plus 8% for penthouses; - 50% and 60% MFI requirements, regardless of tenancy type; - Requirement for 3BR units
Permitted Uses	MU Use Group F
Designated Streets	Use and design requirements on Howard Road
Review Process	Mandatory Design Review by the Zoning Commission, subject to criteria.

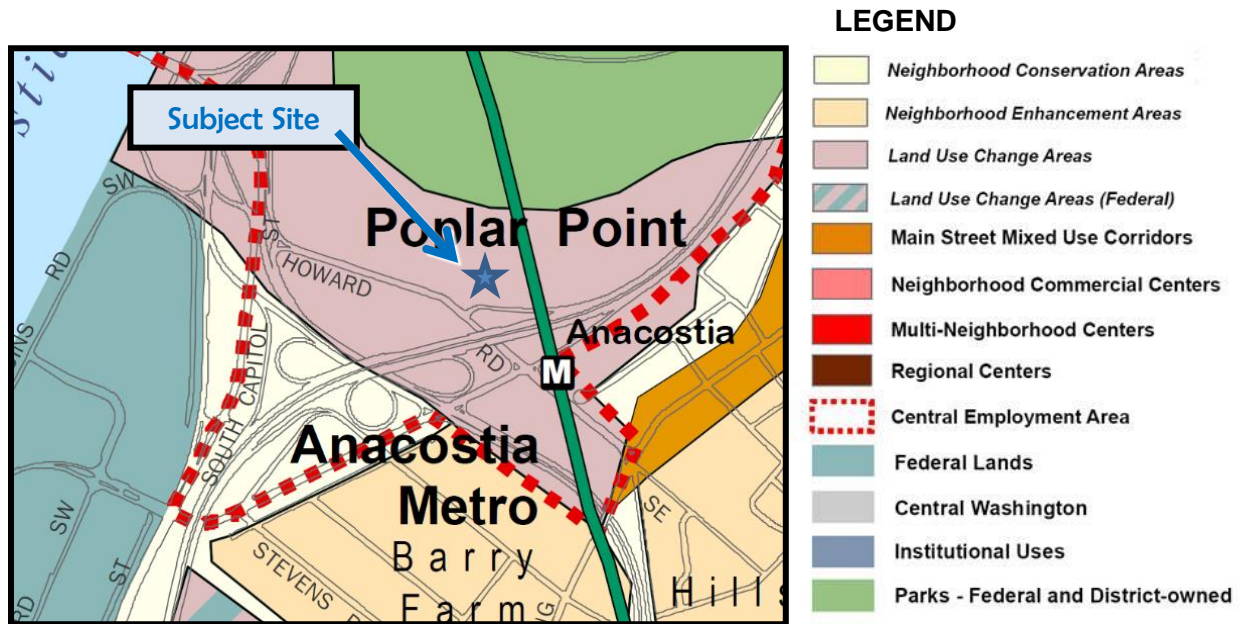
IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal to remap the property from Unzoned to NHR would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including the Plan’s land use maps and a number of written policies. An analysis of the rezoning’s conformance with the Plan is below, as well as an overview of the petition’s conformance with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

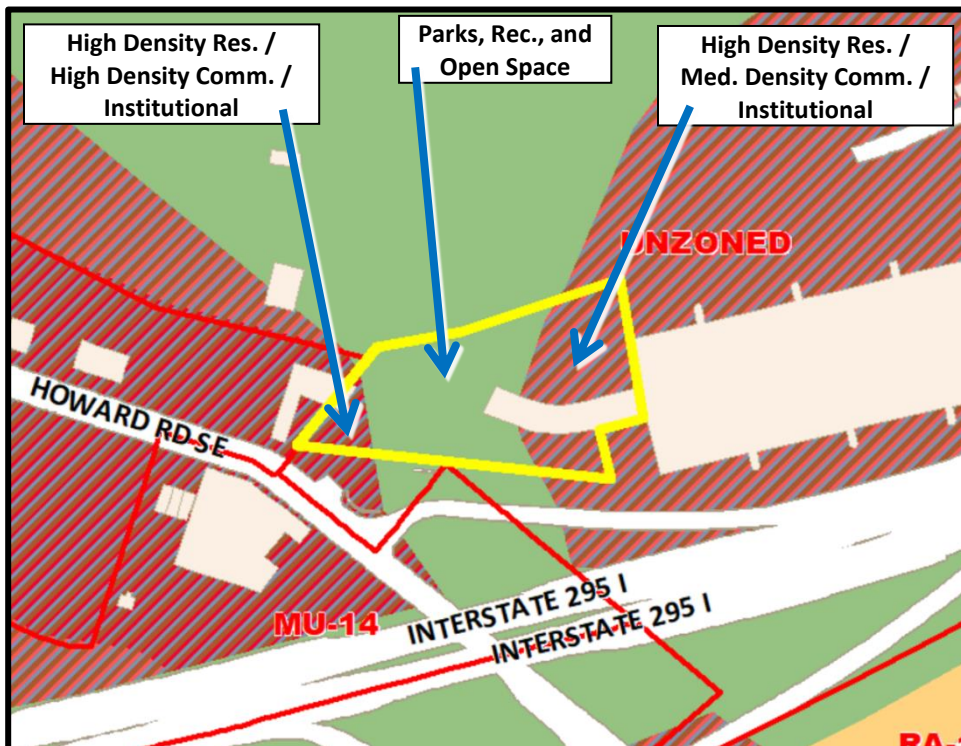
The Comprehensive Plan’s Generalized Policy Map describes the subject area as a Land Use Change Area. Land Use Change Areas are anticipated to become “high quality environments that include exemplary site and architectural design and that are compatible with and do not negatively impact nearby neighborhoods (Comprehensive Plan, § 223.12). In Land Use Change Areas the expected mix of uses is shown on the Future Land Use Map. The Policy Map also shows that the subject site is within the Central Employment Area, which is defined as:

...the business and retail heart of the District and the metropolitan area. It has the widest variety of commercial uses, including but not limited to major government and corporate offices; retail, cultural, and entertainment uses; and hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality uses. The Central Employment Area draws patrons, workers, and visitors from across the region. The Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use and Economic Development Elements, and the Central Washington Area Element and Anacostia Waterfront Element provide additional guidance, policies and actions related to the Central Employment Area. (Comprehensive Plan § 223.21)



The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) provides three separate designations for the subject site:

- Western end – High Density Residential / High Density Commercial / Institutional
- Central – Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Eastern end – High Density Residential / Medium Density Commercial / Institutional



The designation at the western end is the same as the adjacent lots that are already zoned NHR. While the other designations alone do not fully support a high density zone, the proposed NHR zone would not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan taken as a whole, including the land use maps and the written policies supporting high density, walkable development near a transit station; the provision of housing and affordable housing; and development at this particular location.

B. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WRITTEN ELEMENTS

Land Use Element

The proposed zoning would help implement the policies of the Land Use Element. Because the subject site is within the Central Employment Area, it is anticipated that properties would be developed with higher density mixed use. Permitting high density development would allow efficient use of the Anacostia metro station, and the zone would ensure a mix of uses in this area near the metro, both policy objectives of the Land Use Element. The proposed design guidelines would help achieve goals of promoting walkable and bikeable streets, active ground floor uses, and minimizing the impacts of automobiles on the streetscape.

Policy LU-1.1.3: Central Employment Area

Continue the joint federal/District designation of a “Central Employment Area” (CEA) within the District of Columbia. The CEA shall include existing “core” federal facilities such as the US Capitol Building, the White House, and the Supreme Court, and most of the legislative, judicial, and executive administrative headquarters of the United States Government. Additionally, the CEA shall include the greatest concentration of the city’s private office development, and higher density mixed land uses, including commercial/retail, hotel, residential, and entertainment uses. Given federally-imposed height limits, the scarcity of vacant land in the core of the city, and the importance of protecting historic resources, the CEA may include additional land necessary to support economic growth and federal expansion. The CEA may be used to guide the District’s economic development initiatives, and may be incorporated in its planning and building standards (for example, parking requirements) to reinforce urban character. The CEA is also important because it is part of the “point system” used by the General Services Administration to establish federal leases. The boundaries of the CEA are shown in Figure 3.2. 304.8

Policy LU-1.1.4: Appropriate Uses in the CEA

Ensure that land within the Central Employment Area is used in a manner which reflects the area’s national importance, its historic and cultural significance, and its role as the center of the metropolitan region. Federal siting guidelines and District zoning regulations should promote the use of this area with high-value land uses that enhance its image as the seat of the national government and the center of the District of Columbia, and that make the most efficient possible use of its transportation facilities. 304.9

Section 306.4

...certain principles should be applied in the management of land around all of the District’s neighborhood stations. These include:

- A preference for mixed residential and commercial uses rather than single purpose uses, particularly a preference for housing above ground floor retail uses;
- A preference for diverse housing types, including both market-rate and affordable units and housing for seniors and others with mobility impairments;
- A priority on attractive, pedestrian-friendly design and a de-emphasis on auto-oriented uses and surface parking;

- Provision of well-designed, well-programmed, and well-maintained public open spaces;
- A "stepping down" of densities with distance away from each station, protecting lower density uses in the vicinity;
- Convenient and comfortable connections to the bus system, thereby expanding access to the stations and increasing Metro's ability to serve all parts of the city; and
- A high level of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the stations and the neighborhoods around them. 306.4

Policy LU-1.3.1: Station Areas as Neighborhood Centers

Encourage the development of Metro stations as anchors for economic and civic development in locations that currently lack adequate neighborhood shopping opportunities and employment. The establishment and growth of mixed use centers at Metrorail stations should be supported as a way to reduce automobile congestion, improve air quality, increase jobs, provide a range of retail goods and services, reduce reliance on the automobile, enhance neighborhood stability, create a stronger sense of place, provide civic gathering places, and capitalize on the development and public transportation opportunities which the stations provide. This policy should not be interpreted to outweigh other land use policies which call for neighborhood conservation. Each Metro station area is unique and must be treated as such in planning and development decisions. The Future Land Use Map expresses the desired intensity and mix of uses around each station, and the Area Elements (and in some cases Small Area Plans) provide more detailed direction for each station area. 306.10

Policy LU-1.3.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations

Concentrate redevelopment efforts on those Metrorail station areas which offer the greatest opportunities for infill development and growth, particularly stations in areas with weak market demand, or with large amounts of vacant or poorly utilized land in the vicinity of the station entrance. Ensure that development above and around such stations emphasizes land uses and building forms which minimize the necessity of automobile use and maximize transit ridership while reflecting the design capacity of each station and respecting the character and needs of the surrounding areas. 306.11

Policy LU-1.3.4: 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 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. 306.13

Policy LU-1.3.6: Parking Near Metro Stations

Encourage the creative management of parking around transit stations, ensuring that automobile needs are balanced with transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel needs. New parking should generally be set behind or underneath buildings and geared toward short-term users rather than all day commuters. 306.15

Transportation Element

The goals of the Transportation Element would be advanced by mapping the NHR zone on the site. The zone would encourage a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly street with connections to metro and the broader neighborhood. It would specifically encourage a cycle track along Howard Road. Vehicular entrances would also be prohibited along Howard Road. The overall goal is to maximize the walkability of the neighborhood, especially given its proximity to the Anacostia metro station, while minimizing the need for automobiles. The NHR zone also requires connections for any future development on Poplar Point, with the intent of creating a future street grid.

Policy T-2.2.2: Connecting District Neighborhoods

Improve connections between District neighborhoods through upgraded transit, auto, pedestrian and bike connections, and by removing or minimizing existing physical barriers such as railroads and highways. However, no freeway or highway removal shall be undertaken prior to the completion of an adequate and feasible alternative traffic plan that has been approved by the District government. 408.6

Action T-2.2.B: Pedestrian Connections

Work in concert with WMATA to undertake pedestrian capacity and connection improvements at selected Metrorail transit stations, streetcar stations, and bus and stops and at major transfer facilities to enhance pedestrian flow, efficiency, and operations. 408.11

Policy T-2.3.1: Better Integration of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Integrate bicycle and pedestrian planning and safety considerations more fully into the planning and design of District roads, transit facilities, public buildings, and parks. 409.8

Policy T-2.3.2: Bicycle Network

Provide and maintain a safe, direct, and comprehensive bicycle network connecting neighborhoods, employment locations, public facilities, transit stations, parks and other key destinations. Eliminate system gaps to provide continuous bicycle facilities. Increase dedicated bike-use infrastructure, such as bike-sharing programs like Capital Bikeshare, and identify bike boulevards or bike-only rights of way. 409.9

Policy T-2.3.3: Bicycle Safety

Increase bicycle safety through traffic calming measures, provision of public bicycle parking, enforcement of regulations requiring private bicycle parking, and improving bicycle access where barriers to bicycle travel now exist. 409.10

Action T-2.3.A: Bicycle Facilities

Wherever feasible, require large new commercial and residential buildings to be designed with features such as secure bicycle parking and lockers, bike racks, shower facilities, and other amenities that accommodate bicycle users. 409.11

Action T-2.3.B: Bicycle Master Plan

Implement the recommendations of the Bicycle Master Plan to:

- a. Improve and expand the bike route system and provide functional and distinctive signs for the system;
- b. Provide additional bike facilities on roadways;
- c. Complete ongoing trail development and improvement projects to close gaps in the system;
- d. Improve bridge access for bicyclists;
- e. Provide bicycle parking in public space and encourage bicycle parking in private space;
- f. Update the District laws, regulations and policy documents to address bicycle accommodation;
- g. Review District projects to accommodate bicycles;
- h. Educate motorists and bicyclists about safe operating behavior;
- i. Enforce traffic laws related to bicycling;
- j. Establish a Youth Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program;
- k. Distribute the District Bicycle Map to a wide audience; and
- l. Set standards for safe bicycle operation, especially where bikes and pedestrians share the same space. 409.12

Sections 410.3 and 410.4

Improvements to pedestrian facilities can enhance the quality of the walking and public transit environments, and foster greater use of both modes. Improvements should focus on reductions in the number and severity of pedestrian-vehicle conflict points, clarified pedestrian routing, widened sidewalks, and improved aesthetic features such as landscaping. 410.3

Encouraging walking will bring many benefits to the District. It will provide convenient and affordable transportation options, reduce vehicular-travel and related pollution, and improve the health and fitness of District residents. 410.4

Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network

Develop, maintain, and improve pedestrian facilities. Improve the city's sidewalk system to form a network that links residents across the city. 410.5

Housing Element

Mapping the NHR zone on the site would further the goals of the Housing Element by mandating a minimum amount of residential use. This would result in an increase in the overall supply of housing, and the zone also requires a percentage of inclusionary zoning (IZ) housing greater than that presently required for this type of development. In addition, the zone requires a minimum percentage of all IZ units to be three-bedroom units.

H-1.1 Expanding Housing Supply

Expanding the housing supply is a key part of the District's vision to create successful neighborhoods. Along with improved transportation and shopping, better neighborhood schools and parks, preservation of historic resources, and improved design and identity, the

production of housing is essential to the future of our neighborhoods. It is also a key to improving the city's fiscal health. The District will work to facilitate housing construction and rehabilitation through its planning, building, and housing programs, recognizing and responding to the needs of all segments of the community. The first step toward meeting this goal is to ensure that an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land is available to meet expected housing needs. 503.1

Policy H-1.1.3: Balanced Growth

Strongly encourage the development of new housing on surplus, vacant and underutilized land in all parts of the city. Ensure that a sufficient supply of land is planned and zoned to enable the city to meet its long-term housing needs, including the need for low- and moderate-density single family homes as well as the need for higher-density housing. 503.4

Policy H-1.1.4: Mixed Use Development

Promote mixed use development, including housing, on commercially zoned land, particularly in neighborhood commercial centers, along Main Street mixed use corridors, and around appropriate Metrorail stations. 503.5

Economic Development Element

Policies of the Economic Development Element would be furthered by mapping the NHR zone on the site, which would permit high density mixed use development. The development of the area could help to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood through an increase in local employment. The zone would require Zoning Commission design review to help ensure any office buildings achieve a high standard of architectural design.

Policy ED-1.1.1: Core Industries

Continue to support and grow the District's core industries, particularly the federal government, professional and technical services, membership associations, education, hospitality, health care, and administrative support services. 703.9

Policy ED-1.1.5: Use of Large Sites

Plan strategically for the District's remaining large development sites to ensure that their economic development potential is fully realized. These sites should be viewed as assets that can be used to revitalize neighborhoods and diversify the District economy over the long term. Sites with Metrorail access, planned light rail access, and highway access should be viewed as opportunities for new jobs and not exclusively as housing sites. 703.13

Policy ED-2.1.1: Office Growth

Plan for an office sector that will continue to accommodate growth in government, government contractors, legal services, international business, trade associations, and other service-sector office industries. The primary location for this growth should be in Central Washington and in the emerging office centers along South Capitol Street and the Anacostia Waterfront. 707.6

Policy ED-2.1.3: Signature Office Buildings

Emphasize opportunities for build-to-suit/signature office buildings in order to accommodate high-end tenants and users and corporate headquarters. Consider sites in secondary office centers such as NoMA and the Near Southeast for this type of development. 707.8

Urban Design Element

The design review process contained in the NHR zone would help achieve the goals of the Urban Design Element. Allowing for high density development could help make this area a prominent East-of-the-River gateway. The design criteria would also help to ensure that pedestrians and bicycles are prioritized over the automobile, and use requirements would help ensure an active and interesting streetscape.

Policy UD-1.3.8: East of the River Gateways

Improve the visual and urban design qualities of the gateways into East-of-the-River neighborhoods from the Anacostia River crossings, with landscape and transportation improvements along Howard Road, Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Randle Circle (Minnesota and Massachusetts), Benning Road, and Kenilworth Avenue. 905.14

Action UD-1.3.A: Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

Continue to implement the Framework Plan for the Anacostia River, restoring Washington’s identity as a waterfront city and bridging the historic divide between the east and west sides of the river. 905.15

Policy UD-1.4.4: Multi-Modal Avenue/Boulevard Design

Discourage the use of the city’s major avenues and boulevards as “auto-only” roadways. Instead, encourage their use as multi-modal corridors, supporting transit lanes, bicycle lanes, and wide sidewalks, as well as conventional vehicle lanes. 906.10

Policy UD-3.1.7: Improving the Street Environment

Create attractive and interesting commercial streetscapes by promoting ground level retail and desirable street activities, making walking more comfortable and convenient, ensuring that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic, minimizing curb cuts and driveways, and avoiding windowless facades and gaps in the street wall. 913.14

Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Area Element

The NHR zone would help implement the policies of the Lower Anacostia Waterfront / Near Southwest Area Element which seek to create new mixed use neighborhoods, including at Poplar Point. Mapping the NHR zone on this site would help to create high density mixed use development near the waterfront. The area element also calls for multi-modal streets, and the review criteria of the zone would help ensure that new development prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists. Any

development that occurs on the subject site would also need to demonstrate if there are any impacts, positive or negative, how access could be granted to future development on Poplar Point.

Policy AW-1.1.2: New Waterfront Neighborhoods

Create new mixed use neighborhoods on vacant or underutilized waterfront lands, particularly on large contiguous publicly-owned waterfront sites. Within the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning Area, new neighborhoods should be developed at the Southwest Waterfront, Buzzard Point, Poplar Point, Southeast Federal Center and Carrollsburg areas. These neighborhoods should be linked to new neighborhoods upriver at Reservation 13, Poplar Point, and Kenilworth-Parkside. A substantial amount of new housing and commercial space should be developed in these areas, reaching households of all incomes, types, sizes, and needs. 1908.3

Policy AW-1.1.3: Waterfront Area Commercial Development

Encourage commercial development in the Waterfront Area in a manner that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Such development should bring more retail services and choices to the Anacostia Waterfront as well as space for government and private sector activities, such as offices and hotels. Commercial development should be focused along key corridors, particularly along Maine Avenue and M Street Southeast, along South Capitol Street; and near the Waterfront/SEU and Navy Yard metrorail stations. Maritime activities such as cruise ship operations should be maintained and supported as the waterfront redevelops. 1908.4

Policy AW-1.1.7: Multi-modal Waterfront Streets

Design streets along the waterfront to be truly multi-modal, meeting the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as motor vehicles. Safe pedestrian crossings, including overpasses and underpasses, should be provided to improve waterfront access. 1908.8

Policy AW-2.4.8: Access Improvements to Poplar Point

Improve access to Poplar Point by redesigning the road system on the site's perimeter, rebuilding the Frederick Douglass (South Capitol) bridge, converting the Anacostia Metrorail station to a multi-modal terminal, adding provisions for pedestrians and bicycles along Howard Road, W Street SE, and Good Hope Road, and providing water taxi service on the Anacostia River. 1914.14

C. OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

The subject site is within the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) area. The vision of the AWI is of a clean and vibrant waterfront with a variety of parks, recreation opportunities, and places for people to meet, relax, encounter nature and experience the heritage of the waterfront. The AWI also seeks to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods, enhance and protect park areas, improve water quality and environment, and, where appropriate, increase access to the water and maritime activities along the waterfront. The subject site is included within two of the areas called out for improvement in the plan – the Poplar Point target area and the South Capitol Street Corridor target area. The proposed

development is not inconsistent with the AWI’s planning guidance for these areas, including the following:

- Howard Road is to be an “enhanced gateway” to the existing neighborhood, as well as to the parkland at Poplar Point (pp. 114-115);
- Howard Road should contain a “vibrant mix of uses” (p. 115);
- The South Capitol Street area “is a long-term growth and employment corridor that can support a mixture of uses, including new residential and office development” (p. 120);
- Higher density development near South Capitol Street should be clustered near metro stations (p. 121);
- Streetscape design should include wide sidewalks and other facilities to encourage pedestrian, bicycle and transit access (p. 121).

D. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The subject site is in an area considered appropriate for the NHR zone, is immediately adjacent to lots already zoned NHR, and is adjacent to the northern entrance to the Anacostia metro station. The proposal would not be inconsistent with the policies and land use maps of the Comprehensive Plan. The Office of Planning (OP), therefore, recommends that the map amendment be set down for a public hearing.

If the case is set down for a public hearing, the application will be circulated to relevant agencies for review and comment.

JS/mrj