

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser
 Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation
DATE: December 29, 2016
SUBJECT: ZC Case 16-21 Setdown Report for a Proposed Map Amendment
 Petition to Re-Map Square 1326, Lots 152-156, 239 and 801-802 (1326 North
 Capitol Street, N.W.) from MU-4 to MU-5-A

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends the Zoning Commission set down this request to rezone Square 617, Lots 152-156, 239, 801 and 802, generally located north of New York Avenue and south of Florida Avenue. The site is currently vacant.

The proposal would not be inconsistent with the Mid-City East Small Area Plan, dated November 18, 2014, which encourages the infill of privately held vacant lots and recommends “*a change for the corner of North Capitol and Hanover Streets, NW for the low density residential to moderate density commercial/medium density commercial.*” (MCE 3.7)

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant	North Capitol Hospitality, LLC
Current Zone	MU-4
Proposed Zone	MU-5-A
Legal Description	Square 617, Lots 152-156, 239 and 801-802
Property Size	9,401 square feet
Generalized Policy Map Designation	Main Street Mixed Use Corridors
Future Land Use Map Designation	Mixed Use: Low Density Residential and Low Density Commercial
Ward, ANC	Ward 5, ANC 5E05

III. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located in the northwest corner of North Capitol Street and Hanover Place, N.W. Directly north of the site is a flat followed by former row houses that have been expanded and converted to office and apartment uses. West of the site, across a ten-foot wide public alley, are two-story flats and attached dwellings. To the east, across North Capitol Street and a portion of its grade-separated intersection with New York Avenue, are surface parking lots awaiting redevelopment as office space. To the south, across Hanover Place, are row dwellings and two-story commercial buildings.



IV. EXISTING AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

The applicant proposes to rezone the subject property from MU-4 to MU-5-A. Both the proposed and existing zones are mixed-use zones intended to be applied throughout the city consistent with the density designations of the Comprehensive Plan. MU-4 permits low to moderate density mixed use development with access to main roadways. MU-5 zones permit moderate to medium density compact mixed-use development on arterial roads with an emphasis on residential use. North Capitol Street is designated as a principal arterial roadway on the District of Columbia Functional Classification Map, dated September 26, 2016.

A summary of the two zones follows:

	MU-4	MU-5-A
Permitted Uses U § 500.2	MU-Use Group E	MU-Use Group E
Height G § 402.1 (max.)	50 feet	65 feet
FAR G § 402.1 (max.)	2.5 (1.5 residential)	3.5 (1.5 residential)
Lot Occupancy G § 404.1 (max.)	100% (60% residential)	100% (80% residential)
Rear Yard G § 405.2 (min.)	15 feet	15 feet
GAR G § 407.1 (min.)	0.3	0.3

Uses permitted within MU-4 are also permitted within MU-5-A, but with fewer restrictions on uses such as prepared food, fast food seating and gasoline service stations.

V. MID CITY EAST SMALL AREA PLAN

The Mid City East Small Area Plan was approved by Council on November 18, 2014 following extensive public discussion and input. The subject property is located within its boundaries, and is specifically called out for a change in the land use designation to allow more intensive use.

The Plan includes the following vision: *“Mid City East will prosper as an inclusive community with strong neighborhood fabric, thriving businesses and a diverse mix of quality housing options”*.

The following goal expands upon this vision:

GOAL #2: Encourage infill of privately-held vacant lots and increase site utilization to strengthen neighborhood fabric and create opportunities for new housing, unique retail offerings, and/or workplaces.

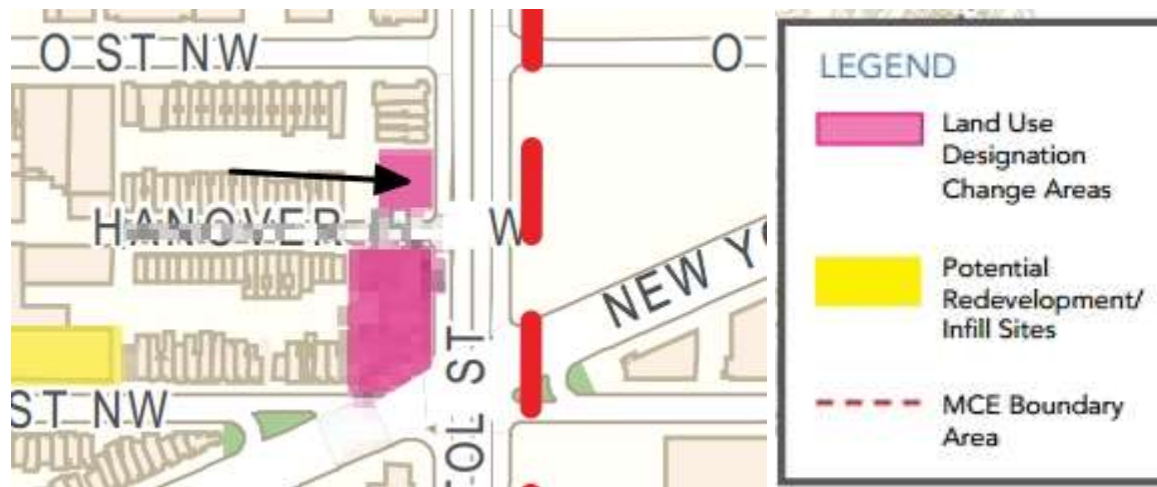
Plan recommendations directly relevant to the subject site include the following:

MCE 3.7 - Pursue a future land use designation change for the corner of North Capitol and Hanover Streets, NW from low density residential to moderate density commercial/medium density residential.

MCE 3.8 - Infill vacant parcels, redevelop underutilized parcels or repurpose existing vacant buildings.

Opportunity sites listed for the implementation of Goal #2 are listed below and as shown on the map below.

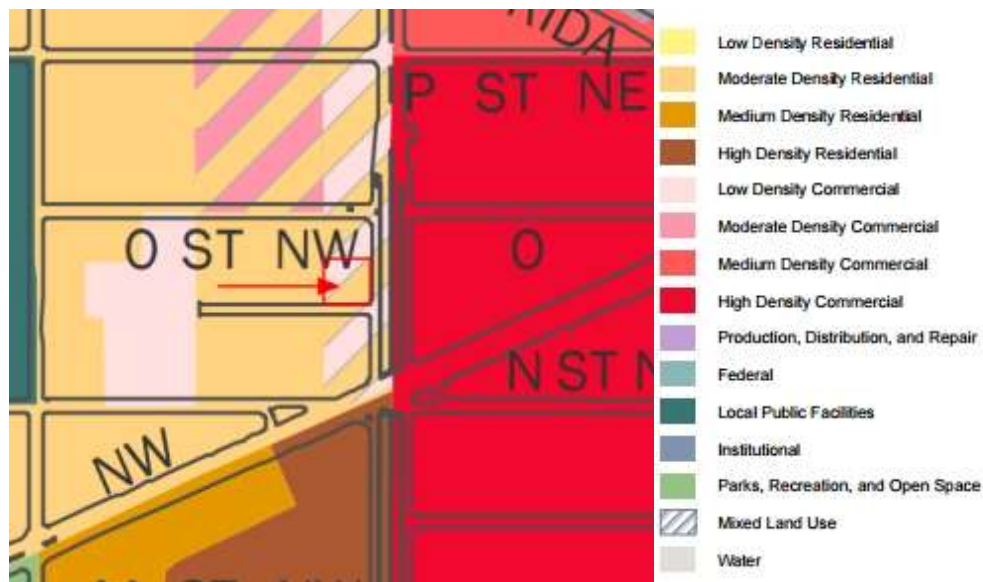
- Vacant sites along North Capitol Street NW at Bates Street and Hanover Place.
- **Vacant parcel between Hanover and O Street NW, along the west side of North Capitol Street.**



The proposed rezoning of the subject property to the MU-5-A zone would permit the infill redevelopment of this privately owned vacant property to medium density residential, consistent with the goals and recommendations for this property in the Council approved Small Area Plan. MU-5-A allows for an expansion of commercial uses over that permitted by the existing zone, MU-4, by expanding the list of permitted uses, potentially allowing for the redevelopment of the site to include thriving new businesses.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

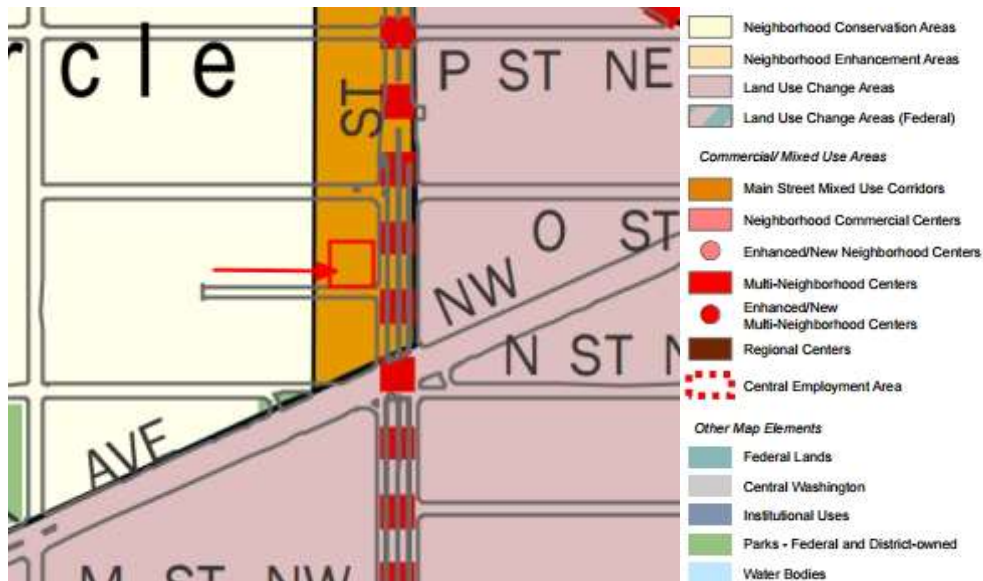
FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)



The current Future Land Use Map, last amended in 2011, designates the site for mixed use development, a combination of low density residential and moderate density commercial. However, as discussed above, the Mid City East Small Area Plan, approved by Council in November, 2014 subsequent to adoption of the 2011 amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, specifically designates this site for moderate density commercial/medium density commercial use. This has been identified

for a land use change designation to the FLUM as a part of the Comprehensive Plan update currently underway.

GENERALIZED POLICY MAP



This map identifies the area as being located within a Main Street Mixed Use Corridor. This designation encourages redevelopment that supports transit use, enhances the pedestrian environment, and fosters economic and housing opportunities.

VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles outlined in Chapter 2, the Framework Element:

4. The District needs both residential and non-residential growth to survive. Nonresidential growth benefits residents by creating jobs and opportunities for less affluent households to increase their income. 217.4

6. Redevelopment and infill opportunities along corridors and near transit stations will be an important component of reinvigorating and enhancing our neighborhoods. Development on such sites must not compromise the integrity of stable neighborhoods and must be designed to respect the broader community context. Adequate infrastructure capacity should be ensured as growth occurs. 217.6

7. Growth in the District benefits not only District residents, but the region as well. By accommodating a larger number of jobs and residents, we can create the critical mass needed to support new services, sustain public transit, and improve regional environmental quality. 217.7

The MU-5-A zone permits larger nonresidential buildings, providing an opportunity for an increase in the variety and types of employment generated by the site.

Area Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

Land Use Element

Policy LU-1.4.1: Infill Development

Encourage infill development on vacant land within the city, particularly in areas where there are vacant lots that create “gaps” in the urban fabric and detract from the character of a commercial or residential street. Such development should complement the established character of the area and should not create sharp changes in the physical development pattern. 307.5

Policy LU-1.4.2: Long-Term Vacant Sites

Facilitate the reuse of vacant lots that have historically been difficult to develop due to infrastructure or access problems, inadequate lot dimensions, fragmented or absentee ownership, or other constraints. Explore lot consolidation, acquisition, and other measures which would address these constraints. 307.6

The subject property is a vacant lot made up of several small and narrow properties that would be consolidated into lot for reuse. Its development would eliminate a “gap” in the street wall along the west side of North Capitol Street with rear public alley access.

Economic Development Element

The overarching goal for economic development in the District is:

Strengthen the District’s economy by sustaining its core industries, attracting new and diverse industries, accommodating future job growth, fostering the success of small businesses, revitalizing neighborhood commercial centers, improving resident job skills, and helping a greater number of District residents find and keep jobs in the Washington regional economy. 701.1

The redevelopment of a vacant tract of land would return it to active use. The proposed mixed-use zoning designation would allow it to accommodate neighborhood business activities, which in turn could positively affect other industries throughout the District.

Urban Design Element

Policy UD-1.4.1: Avenues/Boulevards and Urban Form

Use Washington’s major avenues/boulevards as a way to reinforce the form and identity of the city, connect its neighborhoods, and improve its aesthetic and visual character. Focus improvement efforts on avenues/ boulevards in emerging neighborhoods, particularly those that provide important gateways or view corridors within the city. 906.6

Policy UD-1.4.2: City Gateways

Create more distinctive and memorable gateways at points of entry to the city, and points of entry to individual neighborhoods and neighborhood centers. Gateways should provide a sense of transition and arrival, and should be designed to make a strong and positive visual impact. 906.8

Policy UD-1.4.5: Priority Avenues/Boulevards

Focus the city’s avenue/boulevard design improvements on historically important or symbolic streets that suffer from poor aesthetic conditions. Examples include North and South Capitol

Streets, Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and Georgia Avenue and the avenues designated by the “Great Streets” program. 906.11

The subject property is a long vacant site at a gateway location on a priority avenue/boulevard. Redevelopment of this property would improve the aesthetic conditions of North Capitol Street through the elimination of a vacant lot. The increased building height and FAR would allow the applicant to transition from the high density residential permitted south of New York Avenue to the lower densities permitted north of the site.

Citywide Element of the Comprehensive Plan

Near Northwest Area Element

The most significant challenge facing the Near Northwest Planning Area is retaining the physical and social fabric of the community in the face of intense economic pressure. 2100.9

The proposed zone for the subject property would help to retain the social fabric of the community east of North Capitol Street. It would allow for a taller building (50 versus 65 feet) along North Capitol Street, a principal arterial roadway separating the residential neighborhood east of North Capitol Street, from the more intensive office and high-rise apartment use, either planned constructed, on the west side of North Capitol Street in the NoMa neighborhood.

VIII. ANALYSIS

The Future Land Use Map recommends mixed-use development for the subject property, a combination of low-density residential and moderate density commercial for the west side of North Capitol Street, so includes not only the subject property, but also the residential row house neighborhood behind it. However, the more recent and more detailed Mid City East Small Area Plan recommends a higher designation of moderate density commercial and medium density residential for this site. This would allow for slightly taller buildings fronting on the west side of North Capitol Street, which would encourage the appropriate level of development on this site, and could help to buffer existing rowhouses from the noise and traffic of North Capitol Street, while also providing for a gradual step-down in density from east to west. North Capitol Street, on which the subject property fronts, is a principal arterial roadway with high traffic volumes and a grade-separated intersection at New York Avenue.

IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

No comments have been received to date from ANC 5E05 or the community.