

DRAFT Under Review by BNCA Members

The following draft was developed by neighbors on the 900 block of Evarts and the 2700 block of 10th Street NE on the anticipated Reed Street Development for the BNCA to consider including in its letter on the Comprehensive Plan. The references and quotes are from the Comprehensive Plan provided to the Council on April 23, 2020 <https://plandc.dc.gov/publication/comprehensive-plan-elements>

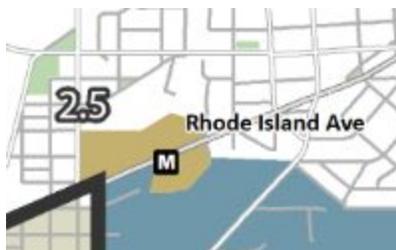
To: Councilmember McDuffie and the DC Council

Brookland residents have recently engaged in conversations with representatives of the owner of the property highlighted in red on the map below and located south of Franklin Street between railroad tracks and 10th Street NE (Square 3841 Lots: 38, 825, 828, 829, 832, 834, Square 3846 Lots: 82, 846, 856). A residential and commercial mixed use development called Reed Street Development is proposed for this site. The proposed Reed Street Development includes nine (9) parcels equalling approximately four (4) acres or 150,000 square feet. Currently the Amended Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan as submitted to Council for approval shows this area as PDR/RHD. We, the residential neighbors immediately adjacent to the subject property, oppose this change. We request that the Council revise the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate the proposed development in a way that provides for an appropriate transition to the existing homes and integration into this family-oriented neighborhood.



The Comprehensive Plan Supports a Gradual Transition to Existing Homes

We support and recognize the importance of “Promoting more housing proximate to transit and linking new housing to transit” (500.2); however we must consider how these developments not only provide additional housing but also “[strengthen] neighborhood quality of life while accommodating growth and change” (900.2). Brookland has long been known as a family-friendly neighborhood. We should encourage any new developments to maintain this important characteristic and provide housing for families. This aligns with the Comprehensive Plan’s desire to increase housing for families throughout the city¹. New developments in Brookland “should prioritize individual, ground-level entrances to units that open up to the street in addition to interior access to units through a shared private lobby” (916.3).

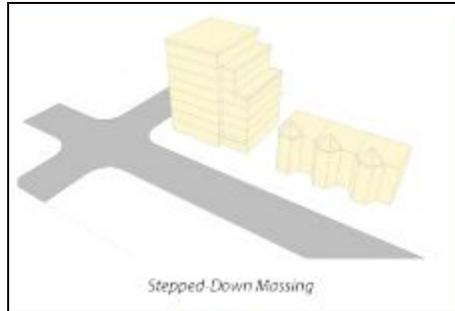


The comprehensive plan does not provide a basis for the proposed change to the FLUM for this property from the current PDR to RHD. The Future Land Use Map currently identifies the entire property slated for the new Reed Street Development as Residential-High Density and Production, Distribution & Repair. We can find no record

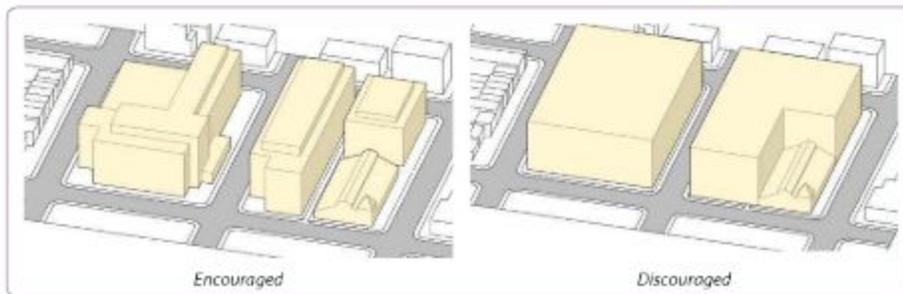
¹ 913.7 “Action UD 2.4.A: Design Guidelines for Higher-Density, Family-Sized Housing - Develop design guidelines for higher-density, family-sized housing with the intent to address key design issues at the scale of the neighborhood, site, building, and unit that relate to residential livability for families with children.”

of this request for the change in the Future Land Use Map², and can only assume it was made by the Office of Planning given its proximity to the metro station. While we recognize that the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station is not far from this collection of properties, it is not “near” the property as defined in the Comprehensive Plan. Map 24.1: Upper Northeast Policy Focus Areas (2410.3) shows that the area the city intends for high density residential development is near the Rhode Island Avenue metro station and the surface lots southeast of the station³. Therefore the Comprehensive Plan does not support identifying Residential-High Density for the entire Reed Street Development, which is adjacent to existing two-story row homes.

We agree that higher density is appropriate closest to the metro station. We also agree with the stated goals of the Comprehensive Plan to implement step-down or reduced height as the property moves away from higher density and towards existing lower density homes⁴. For example, section 909.8’s visualization aligned to “Encouraged Transitions in Building Intensity and Scale”.



The properties abutting a large section of the proposed Reed Street Development are 1920s, single-family row homes with lot sizes of less than 1,500 square feet, which are drastically smaller than the four acres that will be part of the Reed Street Development. As this development is created it should take into consideration “Policy UD-2.2.85: Large- Scale Development - New developments on parcels that are larger than the prevailing neighborhood lot size should be carefully integrated with adjacent sites. Structures on such parcels should be broken into smaller, more varied forms, particularly where the prevailing street frontage is characterized by small, older buildings with varying facades.” (909.12). This is also visualized through Development Massing (909.18).



² Part of the property under previous owners “Old Town Trolley tours of Washington, Inc.” requested a zoning change to MU-6 that was not acted on, based on our understanding.

³ 2415.56 “Policy UNE-2.5.12: Rhode Island Avenue/-Brentwood Metro Station - Encourage the development of additional medium- to high-density mixed-use, pedestrian and multimodal-friendly development around the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station, particularly on the surface parking lots in the station vicinity. Review the Rhode Island properties west of and proximate to the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station for transit connections and appropriate land use recommendations.”

⁴ 909.10 “Policy UD-2.2.4: Transitions in Building Intensity - Design transitions between large-scale and small-scale development. The relationship between taller, more visually prominent buildings and lower, smaller buildings (such as single-family or row houses) can be made more pleasing and gradual through a variety of context-specific design strategies, such as a slender massing of taller elements, stepping back the building at floors above its neighbors’ predominant roof line, stepping a building’s massing down to meet the roof line of its neighbors, or strategic placement of taller elements to mark corners, vista terminations, or large open-space frontages.”

Our Ask

To align with the language of the Comprehensive Plan, we urge the Council to change the Future Land Use Map to provide the highest density (Residential/Commercial High Density) at the part of the property closest to the metro (South Lot) and transition to Residential/Commercial Medium Density for properties north of Evarts Street (West Lot) and Residential/Commercial Moderate Density for properties abutting the existing row homes (East Lot). Please see Exhibit A showing the proposed density map that we will support.

This change will better align the Future Land Use Map with the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan and allow for a smoother transition of the new development to the existing homes⁵. It will also allow for a development that connects and builds upon the strengths of the existing neighborhood. Thirdly, this change will allow the property to be developed as a Mixed Use development, which is in alignment with what we understand to be under consideration by the owner's representatives.

Going Forward

We appreciate the Council's consideration of our proposed change to the Future Land Use Map. We would be happy to meet to provide additional context, if helpful.

We know this is just the beginning of a much longer process, and we look forward to engaging with the nearby community and ANC-5B-O4 in a Planned Use Development process⁶.

We expect that part of this process, at a minimum, will include discussions on:

- New traffic patterns with any proposed road changes and alley closures
- Efforts to create a vehicle-independent lifestyle for residents in the new developments⁷
- Review and plan adjustments to account for the increased traffic, loading and trash access as a result of the community
- Documentation of existing conditions to identify any changes to the almost 100-year-old row homes as a result of the construction
- Environmental impact given the increase of air and noise pollution, as well as the potential risks associated with the demolition of old structures and their foundation to make way for new construction
- Integration of the development with the street through public green space⁸, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks
- Retail opportunities that align with community priorities

⁵ 920.3 "Policy UD-4.2.1: Scale and Massing of Large Buildings - Design the scale, height, volume, and massing of large buildings to avoid monotony and enhance the human scale. Varied roof heights, facade widths, and more expressive massing can provide variety and visual interest. Massing should be articulated with a special emphasis placed on corners, especially along important view corridors or intersections. Patterns of architectural elements, expressive structure, or other design tactics can provide variety and visual interest."

⁶ 2415.91 "Action UNE-2.5.A: Rhode Island Avenue Station Area Planning - Work with WMATA, the local ANC, local businesses, and the community to encourage plans for the Rhode Island Avenue Metro area to enhance the surrounding neighborhoods and address issues such as traffic, parking, and station access."

⁷ 916.4 "Policy UD 3.2.2: Social and Community Meeting Spaces - New planned unit developments (PUDs) and other large-scale developments should provide for a mix of social and third spaces—for example, schools, retail stores, cultural and community spaces, and recreational facilities."

⁸ 916.5 "Policy UD 3.2.3: Recreational Space Design for Large Site Development - Design open spaces conducive to physical activity as part of large-scale developments or create new recreation spaces (such as parks, walking paths, trails, and waterfront recreation) in neighborhoods lacking access to public open spaces."