



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale

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February 14, 2020

Mr. Andrew Trueblood
Director
Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW, Suite 650 East
Washington, DC 20024
plandc@dc.gov

RE: Proposed Changes to DC's Comprehensive Plan

Dear Director Trueblood,

On February 3, 2020 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by eight commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (8-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

ANC 2E has been asked to comment upon roughly 1,500 pages of proposed amendments to the District Elements of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Office of Planning, the author of the proposed amendments, tells us “the changes are substantive and constitute a major revision” to the Comprehensive Plan. ANC 2E believes the Office of Planning has understated the scope of the proposed amendments. What ANC 2E has been asked to review is much more than a “major revision”; it can fairly be described as a completely new plan that has been prepared without the robust process of community engagement that led to the adoption of the 2006 plan.

ANC 2E will comment in detail upon the proposed amendments after receiving and considering comments from residents at a public meeting to be held on February 12, 2020, but as a preliminary matter, we comment now on a theme running through the proposed amendments that ANC 2E finds concerning. Many of the language changes proposed by the Office of Planning appear to be designed to give the Office of Planning more discretion in making decisions or in giving advice to other District agencies on issues that affect neighborhoods throughout the city. An example of this grant of expanded power is the simple change of a few words. Where the 2006 plan used words like “protect” and “preserve” when referring to neighborhoods, neighborhood character, and historic resources, the proposed amendments would delete those words and replace them with “respect.” The change may be subtle but it is very important. If the proposed

COMMISSIONERS:


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amendments are adopted, the Office of Planning and other District agencies would no longer be directed to protect neighborhoods throughout the city. Instead, the agencies would be given the discretion to approve actions that could negatively affect a neighborhood as long as the neighborhood is “respected.”

That is but one example but it illustrates the point. ANC 2E is concerned that the document that is now before us is in reality a new Comprehensive Plan that has been produced by the Office of Planning without the active community and engagement that preceded adoption of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. To quote from that plan, isn't it time for residents of Washington to participate in “an in-depth analysis of existing conditions and trends, and a fresh look at the City's future”? ANC 2E urges the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia to defer action on the proposed amendments and to instead initiate a robust campaign of public engagement, including the formation of a Plan Revision Task Force, or a similar body made up of members who represent a broad cross-section of the residents of our city with the goal of preparing an entirely new Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Rick Murphy (2E03@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission's representative in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard G. Murphy, Jr." in a cursive script.

Rick Murphy
Chair, ANC 2E