

**STATEMENT OF CONCERNS
REGARDING CITYWIDE ZONING REWRITE**

Prepared by Neighbors for Neighborhoods (N4N), Chevy Chase Chapter

The city Planning Office (OP) is completely rewriting the city's zoning codes. Their task morphed from simply making the code more "user friendly" to fundamentally altering neighborhoods across the city through dramatic zoning changes.

THESE CHANGES WOULD FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE CHEVY CHASE FROM A QUIET, RESIDENTIAL AREA TO A MORE TRANSIENT, BUSINESS-ORIENTED AREA

SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN. We identified four major areas of concern to Chevy Chase. Each is explained below.

1. CHANGE SINGLE FAMILY HOMES INTO BUSINESS AND RENTAL UNITS
2. TURN RESIDENTIAL STREETS INTO COMMERCIAL "TRANSIT ZONES"
3. NO "TRANSPARENCY" IN DEVELOPING THESE REGULATIONS
4. COMPRESSED SCHEDULE FOR FORMAL ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS

1. CHANGE SINGLE FAMILY HOMES INTO BUSINESS AND RENTAL

Proposed regulations allow the following "as a matter of right" (meaning anyone can do these things **without any consideration** of the impact on the neighborhood):

- build rental units in backyards or side yards, up to 22 feet high
- allow a range of "non-profit and institutional uses" in houses, including fraternity houses, "service organizations," and a variety of non-profits. On a residential block 1000 feet long, for example, four institutions would

be permitted. "Institutions," "service organizations," non-profits are not defined, and open the door for considerable commercial activity.

- carve out up to 12 parking spaces on the street for institutions
- reduce "setbacks" between houses (the distance between a house and the property line) from 8 feet to 5 feet on one side, reducing light, air and space. Additions could also be built on the front of houses, moving the existing house closer to the street.
- reduce rear setbacks from 25 to 20 feet, also reducing light, air, and greenspace
- increase allowable height of houses and increase number of stories per home

2. NEW ZONING CATEGORIES, SUCH AS "TRANSIT ZONES"

All zones are being redefined, with unknown effects. For instance:

A completely new category of "Transit Zones" is created. Selected areas and transportation arteries throughout the city are slated for intense development with commercial activity, higher buildings, reduction (or elimination) of low density areas.

The criteria for selection are *unknown*. Think Connecticut Ave., Military Rd? McKinley St? Nebraska Ave? The "transit" streets would see blocks of houses replaced "as a matter of right" by commercial activity or more dense residences (think multi-family). These changes could occur not only on Military, for example, but on any street within 500 feet of it. Streets like Chevy Chase Parkway, Nevada Ave, 32nd St, 27th St, etc., -- a two block swath outward from the transit street.

3. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN DEVELOPING REGULATIONS

The rationale for jumping from "cleaning up the code" to "reshaping the city" is not widely known or agreed to by the public.

OP has not kept the public informed about these proposed changes. In fact, they have made minimal effort to seek comment, or even to raise awareness about the changes. When OP provided information, their own designated Citizens Rewrite Task Force indicates the information is misleading and doesn't show the impact of proposed changes.

On the dc.gov website, OP has its own site, but the link for Zoning Rewrite has been shut down with no information about why, when it will return, or suggesting another method for accessing the information.

4. COMPRESSED SCHEDULE FOR FORMAL ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS

The appointed Zoning Commission has not scheduled Hearings to obtain public comment. Normally the period of time between Hearing and formal adoption is compressed, sometimes only a week from "comment" to "done deal." Moreover, by the time the Zoning Commission schedules hearings, the core of the changes will be set in stone, and input from the public will be marginalized.

The Zoning Commission cannot be overruled by the Mayor or the Council. Any appeal is done through the courts.

By the time the public is aware of what's happening, it's too late, too legalistic, and too unavailable for citizens or neighborhoods to participate in any meaningful way.

Adverse Zoning Regulations are coming unless you speak up.

Do you want----

- * New mega mansions built next to your property?**
- * A “rental unit” built in your neighbor’s back yard?**
- * A “Services” outfit operating next to your house?**
- * New “Transit Routes” that change your street to commercial zone?**

A neighborhood group has formed to alert the community.
Help us get the word out!

We will monitor the development of regulations and tell you
where to find more info, when and how to speak up.

Give your name, phone or email to a N4N volunteer.
(N4N= Neighbors for Neighborhoods, Chevy Chase Chapter)

NEIGHBORS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS (N4N) Chevy Chase Chapter

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE WANT. . . .

We are a growing body of neighbors who are concerned and willing to put these issues out in the community. We oppose many proposed changes, and expect to follow the City's zoning actions.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT. . . .

We won't bug you. We WILL keep you informed. Give your email, address and phone to one of the N4N members. Tell us what you want (e.g. "just email me info" or "call me, I want to know more," or "I will distribute flyers on my street" or "I will talk to my own neighbors" etc.). Sign up to volunteer. If you want to more about N4N, just ask.

THANKS. Your encouragement means a lot.

N4N REPRESENTATIVES:

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