

Height Master Plan for Washington, DC

PHASE 2

COMPILED PUBLIC COMMENTS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6 | DOROTHY I. HEIGHT/BENNING LIBRARY

GENERAL SESSION QUESTION & COMMENTS

The following summarizes questions asked at the August 6 meeting. All responses were provided by Harriet Tregoning, Director, DC Office of Planning, unless otherwise noted.

Q: If the federal government was to raise the height limit, would federal building be governed by DC zoning?
A: Federal government says that they don't have to follow by zoning, but by good efforts, they do. We didn't model those changes to federal buildings, however, most of our existing taller buildings are civic buildings.

Q: Architectural details to the models would be really helpful, because the blockiness of the models are off-putting to people.
A: We are not able to do it for all of the models, but we will try and see if the architects can do it to a couple of views, and what it would look like if it was more detailed.

Q: I'm a real estate agent and I want to know why we are asked to do this. I heard that somebody had a particular interest in increasing height for a specific building.
A: Congress did not ask for any particular buildings, but Congressman Issa came to our first meeting and said he didn't like the ugliness of our rooftops. Interested in ways those rooftop structures could be hidden and more beautiful buildings in the future. Can't speak for him, we are doing an honest thoughtful look at what impacts would be.

Q: I'm wondering why you guys chose old soldiers home. Isn't that a historic district? Why was it considered for clustering?
A: We called it illustrative for a reason: it is a site where there has been a lot of development proposed (unique views to and from the city), so we wanted to look at what the impacts of taller buildings would be. This would be a process that we would look at when updating the comprehensive plan.

Q: Approach 1 (rooftop) - I thought I read that the new zoning regulations already address issues of rooftop and beauty, where mechanical and penthouse needs to be of similar quality and materials. Doesn't that already exist?
A: Our existing zoning proposals does not go into great detail about rooftop and beauty, they are minor changes to the existing zoning. The existing zoning proposals does not include occupancy.

Q: Could we figure out how many sq ft is available to build to the current limit?
A: We started that analysis and will have that information during the 3rd phase of our project with our recommendations. We have room to grow, and we will talk about that and how many years of growth that will get us and at what rate of growth. We will look at how different height changes might impact our availability of occupancy to the city.

Q: What is this for (worksheet) – Wants to know about the feasibility study (worksheet)
A: DCOP Chief of Staff Tanya Stern was unable to attend to day for medical reasons, but we've printed out copies of the economic feasibility presentation for you to view. It looks at similar illustrative areas, and analyzes whether the economic conditions of those areas can justify the construction of taller buildings.