

Rezoning #2025-00003
3333 Helen Street

Application	General Data	
Public hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone from R-2-5/Residential to RB/Townhouse.	Planning Commission Hearing:	September 4, 2025
	City Council Hearing:	September 13, 2025
Address: 3333 Helen Street	Zone:	<u>Existing:</u> R-2-5/Residential <u>Proposed:</u> RB/Townhouse
Applicant: Morgan Tyler and Tomas Plaza Reneses	Small Area Plan:	Potomac West

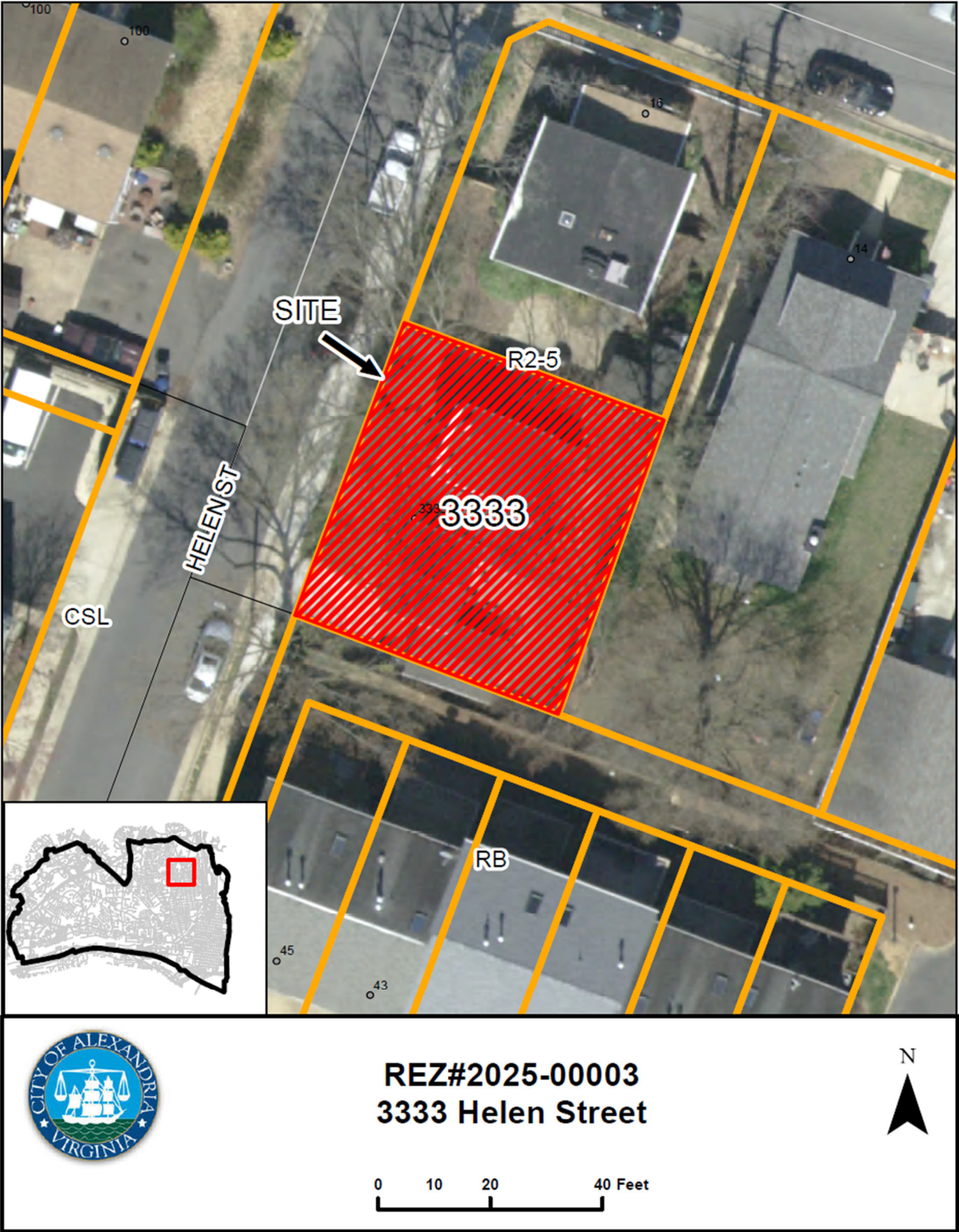
Staff Recommendation: APPROVAL subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and recommended permit conditions found in Section III of this report.

Staff Reviewers: Sam Shelby, sam.shelby@alexandriava.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION SEPTEMBER 5, 2025: On a motion made by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chair Koenig, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Rezoning #2025-00003. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0 with Commissioner Ramirez absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis.

Discussion: Commissioner Brown inquired about the existing dwelling's deficient side yard. Staff explained that it had received City approval and was not an illegal structure.



I. DISCUSSION

The applicants, Morgan Tyler and Tomas Plaza Reneses, request an amendment to the official zoning map to rezone the subject property at 3333 Helen Street from R-2-5/Residential to RB/Townhouse.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The subject property, 3333 Helen Street, consists of a single lot of record with 56 feet of frontage along Helen Street. It also has a lot width of 56 feet and a lot size of 2,800 square feet. A single-unit dwelling constructed circa 1979 occupies the subject property. The subject property has been zoned R-2-5 since 1992. Prior to 1992, it was zoned RB.



Figure 1 – Subject property (outlined in blue)

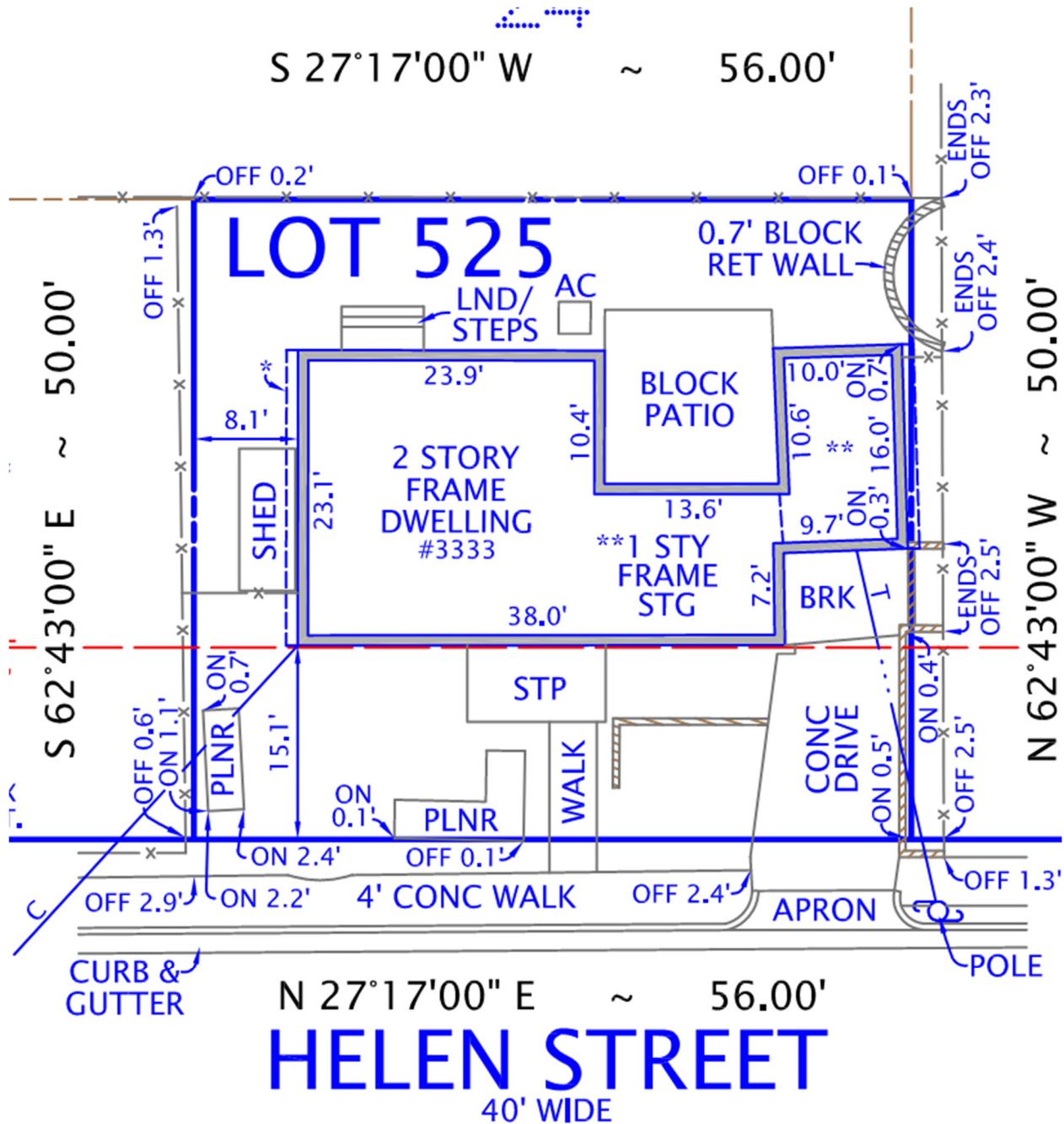


Figure 2 – Site plan

The subject property is located within the Potomac West Small Area Plan (SAP) Chapter of the City's Master Plan which designates the block as "RM" for medium-density residential uses.

The subject property became a substandard lot and the existing dwelling a noncomplying structure with the comprehensive rezoning in 1992. The rezoning made the subject property substandard with regard to lot size. The existing dwelling became noncomplying with regard to floor area ratio (FAR).

The zoning map, shown in Figure 3, below, shows a patchwork of zones surrounding the subject property. The townhouses to the south are zoned RB (shown in yellow), the nonresidential properties along Mount Vernon Avenue to the west are zoned CL (shown in red), and the single and two-unit dwellings to west, north, and east are all zoned R-2-5.

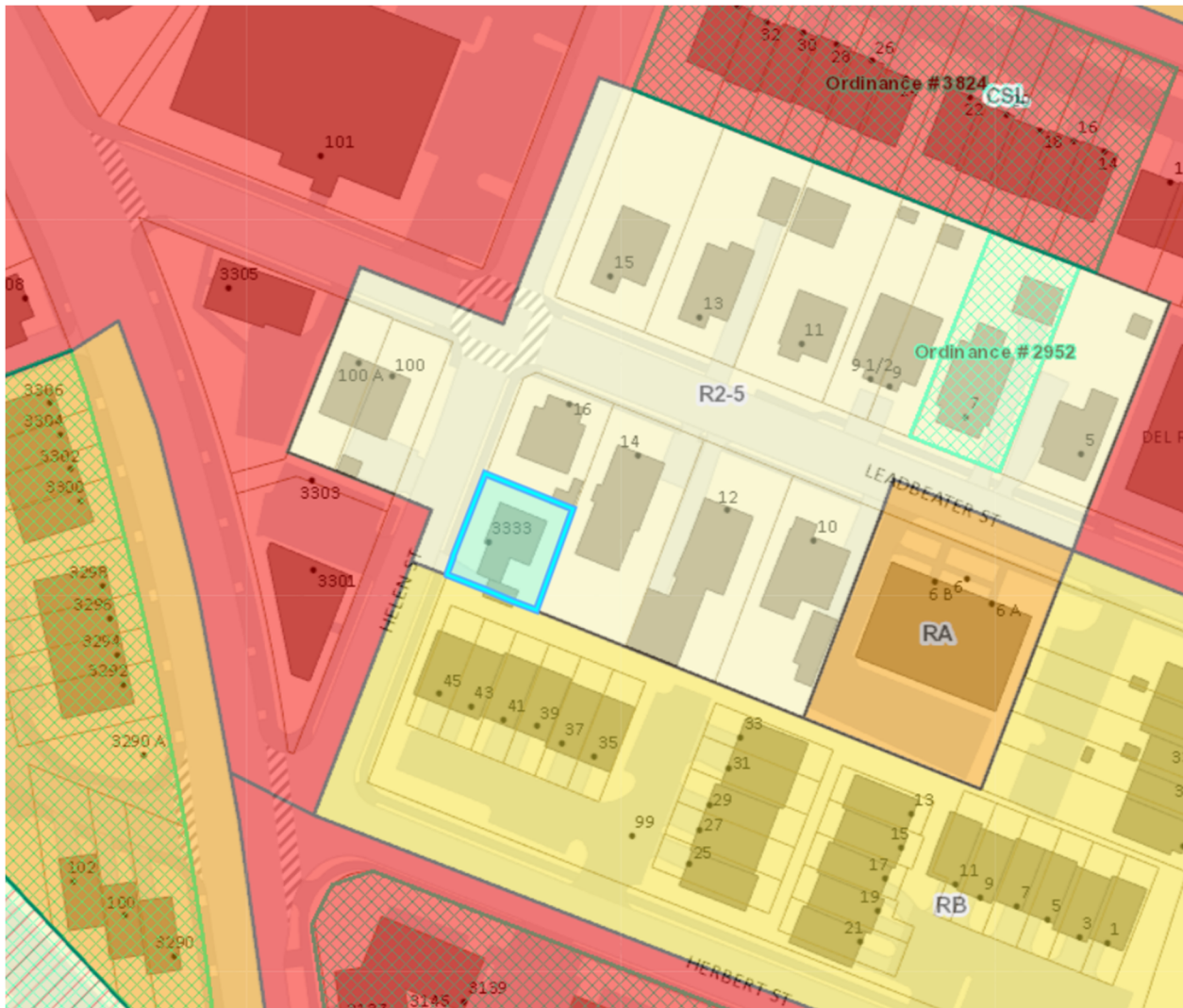


Figure 3 - Surrounding Zoning (subject property outlined in light blue)

Despite these different zones, this block, including the subject property, bounded by Herbert Street to the south, Helen Street to the west, Leadbeater Street to the north, and Commonwealth Avenue to the east all share the same land use designation of RM/Residential Medium.

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests an amendment to the official zoning map to rezone the subject property, lot 525, from R-2-5/Residential to RB/Townhouse. The applicants propose this change to bring the subject property into compliance. The rezoning would also allow for a modest addition to be constructed under the higher FAR permitted by the RB zone. A Master Plan Amendment is not required because the proposed zone is consistent with the Potomac West SAP land use designation of residential medium.

ZONING

The subject property is currently zoned R-2-5 which allows for residential development with a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.45. The Zoning Ordinance classifies the existing dwelling as noncomplying because it exceeds the maximum permitted floor area. The R-2-5 zone also requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet and the subject property is only 2,800 square feet in size. As such, the Zoning Ordinance classifies the subject property as a substandard lot.

The proposed RB zone allows for residential development with a maximum FAR of 0.75. It establishes a minimum lot size of 1,980 square feet.

Table 1 below shows the existing R-2-5 zone and proposed RB zone requirements compared to the existing conditions on the subject property.

Table 1 – Existing RB and proposed R-2-5 zone requirements with exiting lot conditions

Requirement	R-2-5 Zone	RB Zone	Lot 525
Size	5,000 Sq. Ft.	1,980 Sq. Ft.	2,800 Sq. Ft.
Width	50 Ft.	50 Ft.	56 Ft.
Frontage	40 Ft.	50 Ft.	56 Ft.
FAR	0.45	0.75	0.47

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the applicant's proposal to rezone the subject property from R-2-5 to RB. The applicant's proposal would bring the subject property into compliance with the Zoning Ordinance lot requirements while maintaining consistency with the Potomac West SAP.

A. Conformance with the Potomac West SAP

The rezoning would be in conformance with the Potomac West SAP. The subject property has a Residential Medium (RM) land use designation in the SAP. Both R-2-5 and RB are consistent with the RM land use designation. The block surrounding the subject property (bounded by Herbert Street to the south, Helen Street to the west, Leadbeater Street to the north, and Commonwealth

Avenue to the east) contains a mix of residential densities (single-unit, two-unit, townhouse, and multi-unit dwellings) and all are envisioned under the RM land use designation. The unified land use designation of this block indicates that both R-2-5 and RB are appropriate zoning districts for achieving and maintaining the medium-density residential character envisioned by the SAP.

The RB zone does allow townhouse dwellings, whereas the R-2-5 zone does not, however, townhouse dwellings could not be constructed on the subject property. The lot does not have sufficient size to accommodate more than a single dwelling unit.

The SAP also encourages residential infill development consistent with the scale and density of surrounding housing. The rezoning would increase the subject property's maximum floor area increase from 1,260 (0.45 FAR) to 2,100 (0.75 FAR). The RB zone also has an open space requirement whereas the R-2-5 zone does not. Given the existing configuration of the subject property, only a modest addition could be constructed before running up against the RB zone's maximum height limit and its minimum open space, side, or rear yard requirements. Even if the dwelling were to max out the available floor area, it would still be consistent with the FAR of surrounding buildings and lots.

B. Compliance with RB Requirements

Under the applicant's proposal, the subject property, at 2,800 square feet would exceed with the RB zone's minimum lot size requirement of 1,980 square feet. Under its current zoning, it is 2,200 square feet below the minimum required for a single-unit dwelling. The applicant's proposal would bring the subject property into compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. The existing dwelling would also no longer be considered noncomplying with regard to FAR.

C. Additional Considerations

Staff notified the Del Ray Civic Association's Land Use Committee of this request. To date, staff has not received comments from the committee.

CONCLUSION

The proposed rezoning represents a reasonable "correction" to address existing noncompliance. It would also maintain consistency with the Potomac West SAP and established character of the neighborhood. Staff finds that the request meets all applicable criteria and recommends approval.

STAFF: Sam Shelby, Urban Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning
Tony LaColla, AICP, Division Chief, Department of Planning and Zoning

III. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

No comments.

Code Administration:

C-1 Building permit required for new construction.

Archaeology:

No comments.

Police Department:

No comments received.

Fire Department:

No comments.



APPLICATION

☐ Master Plan Amendment MPA# _____
☒ Zoning Map Amendment REZ# _____

PROPERTY LOCATION: 3333 Helen Street, Alexandria VA

APPLICANT

Name: Morgan Tyler and Tomas Plaza Reneses

Address: _____

PROPERTY OWNER:

Name: Morgan Tyler and Tomas Plaza Reneses

Address: _____

Interest in property:

☒ Owner ☐ Contract Purchaser

☐ Developer ☐ Lessee ☐ Other _____

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, a realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which they are employed have a business license to operate in Alexandria, VA:

☐ Yes: If yes, provide proof of current City business license.

☐ No: If no, said agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application.

THE UNDERSIGNED certifies that the information supplied for this application is complete and accurate, and, pursuant to Section 11-301B of the Zoning Ordinance, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria, Virginia, to post placard notice on the property which is the subject of this application.

Morgan Tyler

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

Mailing/Street Address

City and State

Zip Code

Morgan Tyler

Signature

Telephone #

Fax #

04/27/2025

Date

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Received: _____

Fee Paid: \$ _____

Legal advertisement: _____

ACTION - PLANNING COMMISSION _____

ACTION - CITY COUNCIL: _____

MPA # _____

REZ # _____

SUBJECT PROPERTY

Provide the following information for each property for which an amendment is being requested. (Attach separate sheets if needed.)

Address Tax Map - Block - Lot	Land Use Existing - Proposed		Master Plan Designation Existing - Proposed		Zoning Designation Existing - Proposed		Frontage (ft.)
	Res.	Res.	Res.	Res.	R-2-5	RB	Land Area (acres)
1 015.04-02-02 _____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	56 ft. 0.06 acre _____ _____
2 _____ _____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____ _____
3 _____ _____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____ _____
4 _____ _____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____ _____

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

☒ Individual Owner☐ Corporation or Partnership Owner

Identify each person or individual with ownership interest. If corporation or partnership owner, identify each person with more than 3% interest in such corporation or partnership.

1. Name: Morgan Tyler Extent of Interest: 50%
Address: _____
2. Name: Tomas Plaza Reneses Extent of Interest: 50%
Address: _____
3. Name: _____ Extent of Interest: _____
Address: _____
4. Name: _____ Extent of Interest: _____
Address: _____

MPA # _____
REZ # _____

JUSTIFICATION FOR AMENDMENT

(attach separate sheets if needed)

1. Explain how and why any proposed amendment(s) to the Master Plan are desirable, beneficial to surrounding properties, in character with the applicable Small Area Plan and consistent with City policies:
We are not requesting to change the master plan.

2. Explain how and why the proposed amendment to the Zoning Map(s) is consistent with the proposed amendment to the Master Plan, or, if no amendment to the Master Plan is being requested, how the proposed zoning map amendment is consistent with the existing Master Plan:

We are requesting to update the zoning of our home from R25 to RB. Our lot is currently substandard for the R25 zone and limits our ability to expand the square footage of our house due to the FAR requirements. Rezoning to RB would allow us to expand our home with updated FAR regulations that are more appropriate for the lot.

3. Explain how the property proposed for reclassification will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as highways, streets, parking spaces, police and fire, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewers, and schools.

We are proposing the same residential classification.

4. If this application is for conditional zoning approval pursuant to Section 11-804 of the Zoning Ordinance, identify all proffered conditions that are to be considered part of this application (see Zoning Ordinance Section 11-804 for restrictions on conditional zoning):

N/A

April 23, 2025
DESCRIPTION OF
Lot 525
Section 2
Of A Resubdivision Of Lot 25
St. Elmo
(Deed Book 1191, Page 1967)
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Beginning at a point in the easterly line of Helen Street (40' Wide), a corner common to Lot 526, Section 2, Of A Resubdivision Of Lot 25, St Elmo; thence with southerly line of Lot 526 S 62° 43' 00" E 50.00' to a point in the westerly line of Lot 24, Section 2, St Elmo; thence with the westerly line of Lot 24 S 27° 17' 00" W 56.00' to a point in the northerly line of Lot 500, Herbert Street Partnership; thence with the northerly line of Lot 500 N 62° 43' 00" W 50.00' to a point in easterly line of Helen Street (40' Wide); thence with the easterly line of Helen Street (40' Wide) N 27° 17' 00" E 56.00' to the point of beginning containing 2,800 square feet of land.

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. Morgan Tyler	[REDACTED]	50-1.
2. Tomas Plaza Rensis	[REDACTED]	50-1.
3.		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 333 Helen St. (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than three percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. Morgan Tyler	[REDACTED]	50-1.
2. Tomas Plaza Rensis	[REDACTED]	50-1.
3.		

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity indicated above in sections 1 and 2, with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property are required to disclose **any** business or financial relationship, as defined by [Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance](#), existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review. **All fields must be filled out completely. Do not leave blank. (If there are no relationships please indicate each person or entity and "None" in the corresponding fields).**

For a list of current council, commission and board members, as well as the definition of business and financial relationship, [click here](#).

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1. None	None	None
2. None	None	None
3. None	None	None

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

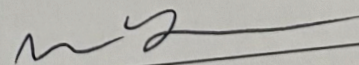
As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

6/9/25

Date

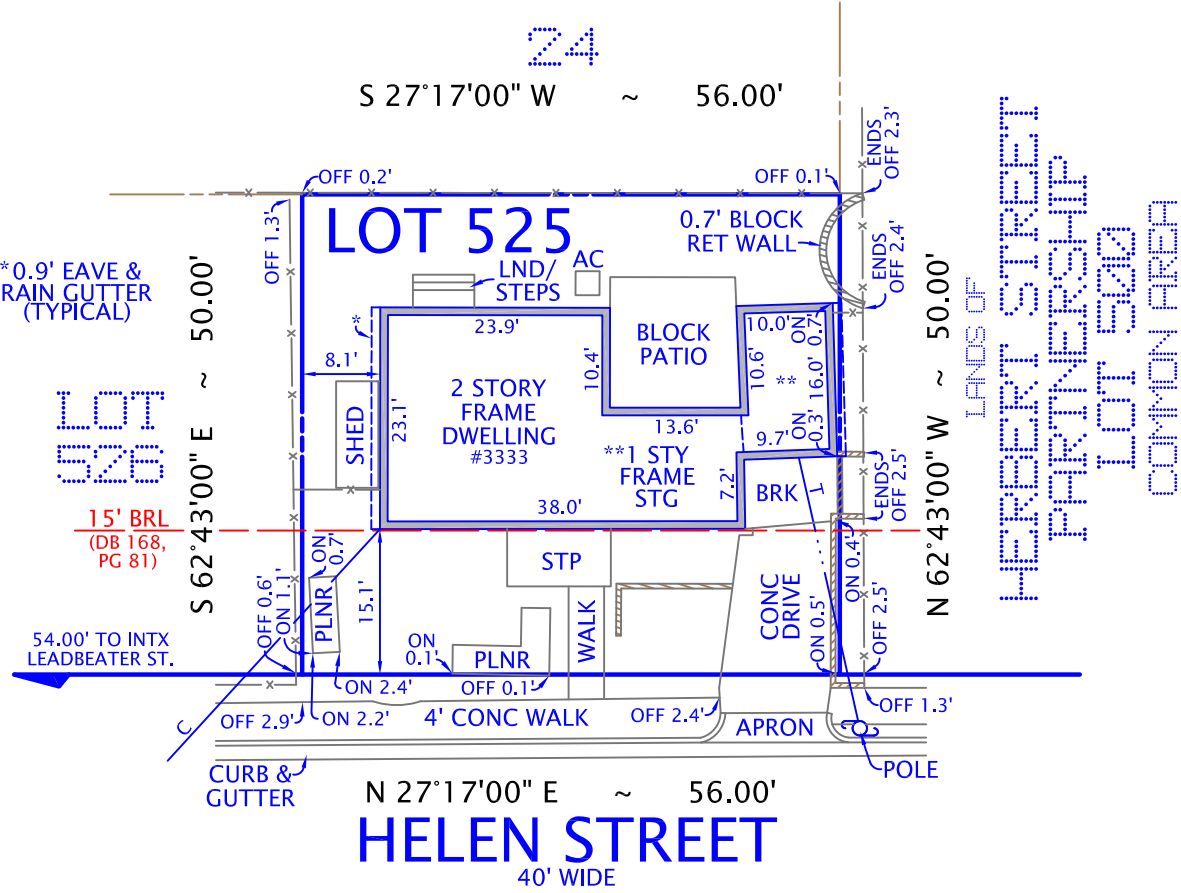
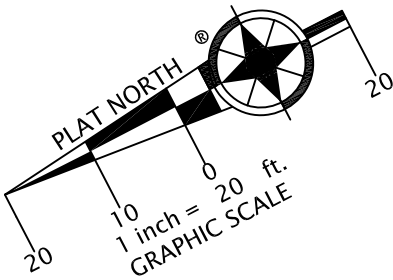
Morgan Tyler

Printed Name



Signature

- NOTES: 1. FENCES ARE FRAME.
2. ELECTRIC SERVICE IS UNDERGROUND.
3. RETAINING WALLS ARE 0.5' FRAME UNLESS NOTED.
4. AREA = 2,800 SF.



PLAT
SHOWING HOUSE LOCATION ON
LOT 525, SECTION 2
OF A RESUBDIVISION OF LOT 25
ST. ELMO
(DEED BOOK 1191, PAGE 1967)
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
SCALE: 1" = 30' MARCH 31, 2025

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE POSITIONS OF ALL THE EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY ESTABLISHED BY A CURRENT FIELD SURVEY AND UNLESS SHOWN THERE ARE NO VISIBLE ENCROACHMENTS AS OF THIS DATE:

THIS PLAT IS SUBJECT TO RESTRICTIONS OF RECORD.

A TITLE REPORT WAS NOT FURNISHED.

NO CORNER MARKERS SET.



ORDERED BY:

MORGAN TYLER



DOMINION

Surveyors
Inc.®

8808-H PEAR TREE VILLAGE COURT
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22309
703-619-6555
www.dominionsurveyors.com

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

TO: CHAIR MCMAHON AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: PAUL STODDARD, INTERIM DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

SUBJECT: DOCKET ITEM #4 – REZONING #2025-00003

This memorandum provides an update on 3333 Helen Street regarding the status of the existing lot and dwelling. In the report on the final docket, staff wrote that “...the applicant’s proposal would bring the subject property and existing dwelling into compliance with the Zoning Ordinance zone’s lot requirements...” Staff would now like to clarify this statement based on new records that staff discovered and concerns raised about the compliance of the existing dwelling and subject lot.

Lot size

The subject lot is substandard as to lot size under the existing R-2-5 zoning. Under the proposed RB zone, the subject lot would comply with the minimum lot size required for a single-unit dwelling.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The existing dwelling exceeds the maximum FAR permitted by the R-2-5 zone. Under the proposed RB zone with a higher maximum FAR allowance, the existing dwelling would become complying with regard to FAR.

Setbacks and prior approvals

The existing dwelling provides a deficient south side yard of 0.3 feet. A portion of the dwelling, measuring approximately 10 by 16 feet, is located within this required south side yard. The R-2-5 zone requires a minimum setback of seven feet and the RB zone would require a minimum setback of eight feet. The rezoning would not bring the existing dwelling’s south side yard into compliance.

Staff located a permit that was approved by zoning staff on October 28, 1988 for renovation and repair of the portion of the dwelling within the then-required seven-foot side yard and the structure was erected and has not been changed since that time. As such, the existing structure that created the deficient south side yard is not an illegal structure and can remain regardless of City Council’s decision on the rezoning request.

Conclusion

Staff continues to recommend approval of the rezoning request. Any additions to the existing dwelling would have to comply with the RB zone's minimum yard requirements.