

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



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Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: D. C. Zoning Commission

FROM: *for* Ellen McCarthy
Director

DATE: October 6, 2006

SUBJECT: Supplement to the Preliminary Report on Zoning Commission Case No. 04-24A

BACKGROUND

During its public meeting on September 11, 2006, the Zoning Commission considered a request from Mid-City Urban LLC and A&R Development Corporation, the applicants, to schedule a public hearing for approval of the 2nd Stage application for the referenced planned unit development. The Office of Planning (OP) report, dated September 1, 2006, recommended that the proposal be set down for a public hearing, but noted a number of issues of concern or for which additional information was needed.

Following presentation of the OP report, the Commission continued this request to allow these applicants time to submit additional information into the public record. Overall, the Commission was unable to gain a full understanding of how vehicular circulation would function for buses and other transit vehicles, retail customers and residents from materials submitted to date. Specifically, Commissioners requested:

- Better explanation or illustration of how the proposed circulation plan is "pedestrian friendly;"
- Better differentiation between pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfares;
- Further explanation of the "controls" that would be implemented on Main Street to limit the duration of surface parking and control vehicular circulation;
- Information about expected number of hourly bus trips, particularly during peak hours;
- An explanation of the need to locate garage entrances along Main Street;
- The alternative strategy for including local businesses if they are unable to pay market lease rates along with a definition of "community business;"
- Justification for the amount of parking planned onsite for a transit-oriented development;
- Clarification about the proposed building architecture including:

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 04-24A

- Perspectives, a model, and/or “bird’s eye” views of the project along Rhode Island Avenue;
- Detailed information about the rooftop plaza on Building 2;
- Better explanations and/or color illustrations of building façades and materials;
- Options for lessening the visibility of condenser grills on the building façades associated with the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system; and
- Better illustrations of the project plans and building massing in general.

There was general consensus that breaks (“relief”) were needed in the continuous (long) Main Street facades. Concern was also expressed about the “quality” of the selected building materials, including the use of stucco, vinyl, “cultured stone” and the unknown garage screening material. Interest was expressed in viewing material samples. There was also willingness to view a short presentation from the traffic consultant that further explains the anticipated project traffic patterns.

The applicants were invited to return before the Commission after substantively addressing the stated concerns and requests.

APPLICANTS’ RESPONSE

In a response, the applicant placed extensive plans and other materials to the public record. A letter to the Commission dated October 5, 2006, summarized the additional submissions. Regarding the architectural design, submission materials include:

- Color renderings of the proposed building plans and facades;
- Detailed building elevations that better illustrate “... the variation in depth between alternating building sections of the (proposed) buildings;”
- Additional façade details such as window muntin patterns, shutters and balconies, and more accurate renderings of the HVAC grills;
- Proposed site landscaping on every plan sheet and the stairway from Rhode Island Avenue to the WMATA Metro rail station to help orient certain plans;
- Plans for (southern) Garage 1 that reflect exterior changes and corrections needed “... to accurately reflect the building configuration;” and
- Views of (northern) Garage 2 as seen from the Metro rail station and Main Street.

Regarding proposed construction materials, additional submissions include:

- A more accurate depiction of the materials planned for use such as Hardieplank/siding and elimination of any reference to stucco and vinyl siding, materials that will not be used;
- General information about Hardiplank/panel and cultured (artificial) stone building materials; and
- An explanation of the proposed HVAC system.

Plans also detail the “green roof” that would be installed in the open plaza atop Building 2.

Regarding vehicular circulations, additional civil engineering plans expand on the how the proposed circulation pattern would be pedestrian friendly. There are also explanations of the need for garage ingress and egress along Main Street, and the different requirements that resulted in the amount of parking proposed onsite. Besides printed materials, the applicant's transportation consultants have prepared a slide show that explains the anticipated pattern of pedestrian and vehicular circulation onsite, and a traffic simulation that animates the results of their analysis. In addition, a massing model of the site and the immediate surroundings, detailed renderings and scale model are being prepared for Commission review during the further consideration of this set-down request.

There is also a letter from the Brentwood Community Civic Association in support of this project (refer to Exhibit 1). Furthermore, the applicants expressed a willingness to have panel of representatives available during the continuation of the set-down meeting on this application, including the traffic consultants and others, to answer Commission questions about the additional submissions.

Regarding community businesses, the summary outlines the applicant's proposal to make 10% of the lease space available to community businesses. It also indicates that "Special underwriting will apply (to established businesses with long-term track records) to allow them to participate and to ensure that they will have a place in the community."

Based on this summary, the Office of Planning thinks that applicant has substantially addressed the Commission's requests. In light of a previous determination by OP that the application generally complies with requirements in the Zoning Regulations and Order 04-24, OP continues to recommend set-down of this application for a public hearing while noting the following:

- A plan showing the location of critical slopes on the site and the dimensions of open space and common areas, required per Order 02-24, was provided in the additional submission; and
- The applicant begins to explain in the letter how parking resources would be allocated and shared on a daily basis between WMATA commuters, retail clientele and residents.

However, a plan of the proposed site grading including the location of retaining walls is still lacking, more details about how the proposed community business amenity are needed to explain how it would be implemented, and the applicant has yet to document that both the WMATA real estate and operations divisions consider the current proposal sufficient to meet their differing requirements.

OP continues to encourage the applicant to complete ongoing negotiations so a signed Local and Small Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (LSDBE) Memorandum of Understanding for this project can be added to public record, and to examine options for keeping commuters abreast of available long-term parking resources onsite. The Office of Planning will also continue to work with the applicant to refine the proposed building architecture.

BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY CIVIC ASSOCIATION

1340 Downing Street, NE
Washington, DC 20018

September 15, 2006

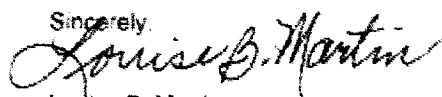
To Whom It May Concern:

At its monthly meeting, the Brentwood Community Civic Association met to review a presentation by Mid City Urban and its partner A & R Development, for the proposed redevelopment at Rhode Island Metro. What is envisioned is a mixed-use residential and commercial development with apartments and neighborhood-serving retail.

Our members were quite impressed by the presentation and voted wholeheartedly to support this exciting development. Our community needs developments that benefit the entire community. We need places to shop, restaurants, and gathering places. Moreover, we are pleased to see that affordable housing is included in the market mix. Further, we welcome the developer's plan to recognize this historical African American burial place with an appropriate symbolic recognition.

The Brentwood Civic Association enthusiastically supports the redevelopment of Rhode Island Metro.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louise B. Martin".

Louise B. Martin
President