

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

Memorandum

TO: Jamison L. Weinbaum Director
DC Office of Zoning

FROM: Karina Ricks *KR*
District Department of Transportation

DATE: November 20 2009

SUBJECT: ZC # 06-01 B (Application of Steuart-H Street LLC @ Square 776)

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APPLICATION

Steuart-H Street LLC (the Applicant) is requesting approval of modification to the approved planned unit development (PUD) for the subject property A related zoning map amendment from C 2 A to C-2 B for a portion of the subject property approved as part of the original PUD remains as part of the proposed modification The property that is the subject of this application consists of approximately 60 870 square feet of land area and is located in the block bounded by 3rd 4th H and I Streets NE The property fronts on 3rd 4th, and H Streets and is known as Square 776 Lot 54 The subject property is zoned C-2-B pursuant to the original PUD approval By Order No 06-01, dated December 11, 2006, effective October 12, 2007, the Zoning Commission approved the consolidated PUD and related map amendment from C-2-A to C-2-B for a mixed-use development containing approximately 210 to 250 apartment units and approximately 60,500 square feet of gross floor area devoted to retail and service uses, including a grocery store of approximately 45,000 square feet plus additional loading and support space The building was approved with a maximum height of 90 feet, stepping down to the north and east sides of the project The total gross floor area of the project was approved at approximately 287 930 square feet and the approved overall floor area ratio (FAR') of the project was 4.8 The project was approved with

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO

06-013

EXHIBIT NO

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approximately 400 parking spaces. The Applicant now seeks a modification to reduce the height, bulk, and number of parking spaces for the project. As proposed, the PUD would now have a maximum height of 75 feet, the maximum gross floor area would be 250,160 square feet, the maximum FAR would be 4.11, and the number of parking spaces proposed is 270.

RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) recommends conditional support of the Applicant's request for a PUD. DDOT believes that the applicant should:

- More thoroughly evaluate the access to the site and determine if vehicle traffic will queue into the site. If this is the case, the Applicant will need to mitigate this situation.
- Follow DDOT's policy for a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for a development of this size.
- Reduce the proposed supply of proposed parking spaces for this Transit Oriented Development (TOD).
- More thoroughly evaluate and propose a mitigation strategy to address inadequate pedestrian facilities.
- Provide street level bicycle parking.

DDOT ANALYSIS

As part of the previously approved PUD from two years ago, the Applicant submitted a transportation impact study evaluating the subject site. The initial study evaluated the impacts of 232 housing units, approximately 6,000 square feet of retail use, and approximately 63,000 square feet of grocery store use. At the time, DDOT consented to the Applicant's evaluation of impacts resulting from the development.

The Applicant has revised the proposed development program and is in the process of updating its transportation impact study. The updated development program for the site consists of 212 residential units, approximately 2,000 square feet of retail use, and approximately 41,000 square feet of grocery store use along with a 3,000 square foot loading dock. On August 17, 2009, DDOT held a scoping meeting for a transportation impact study with the Applicant. During the August 17 meeting, DDOT agreed to allow the applicant to utilize data from the previous study, approximately three years prior, and study the same intersections as in the previous study despite differences with current evaluation practice, which dictates a larger study area and more robust analysis. As part of the more current study, DDOT requested that the analysis be updated for the current development proposal, address some technical concerns, and evaluate the pedestrian facilities that will be impacted by the proposed development and the grocery

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store in particular. On Tuesday, September 22, an updated transportation impact study was submitted for DDOT review. DDOT responded to the Applicant with comments on October 1 and the Applicant's responses were received on November 6.

In response to DDOT comments, the Applicant made a variety of changes in their traffic study assumptions including but not limited to:

- Modified the pass-by assumptions such that trips are diverted from H Street
- Updated the trip distribution to assume more trips to and from the south and east
- Considered a more auto-centric mode split to account for the level of parking provided

For a more complete analysis, the Applicant could have collected intermodal transportation split data at similar retail sites in Washington, D.C. Instead, the Applicant relied on ITE's Trip Generation manual to provide its trip data. As a result, the use of ITE trip-generation rates for this project may not have taken into complete consideration a more accurate representation of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips. The use of auto-oriented suburban traffic generation data for this site may be contributing to the Applicant seeking 270 parking spaces. DDOT firmly recommends the Applicant reduce the overall number of parking spaces to ensure that parking is not overbuilt and that the development takes advantage of its prime location to the Union Station Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) rail station located at 701 First Street, N.E., the X series, D series, and 90 series of WMATA bus lines all within four blocks of the site. There are few places in the District outside of Downtown with more robust transit access than this site. DDOT strongly believes this development project should heavily rely on the use of mass transit.

As proposed, the development will increase delay mainly on the side street movements at the intersections of 3rd and 4th at H Streets N.E., causing the 3rd and 4th St. intersection movements to experience failing conditions at various times in the peak periods. In particular, the 3rd St. southbound leg, impacted from traffic exiting the site, experiences a significant increase in delay which, without mitigation, would likely lead to a backup of traffic into the site from the intersection of 3rd and H Streets N.E. The Applicant has suggested that the signal timing be changed such that more green time from the cycle is allotted to the side street movement on 3rd Street from the main movement of H Street. While this will surely reduce delay for the southbound movements, DDOT is skeptical that this measure will be adequate to ensure queuing does not extend across the sidewalk into the site since the Applicant did not update the delay calculations utilizing a more auto-centric mode split which would account for the level of parking provided. Instead of the approximately 70 seconds of delay for the mitigated movement noted in the response to DDOT comments from November 6, delay will most likely be higher and may be on par with 200 or more seconds of delay for the movement as noted in the

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2006 traffic impact study DDOT recommends further study of the intersection including a queuing analysis. If it proves that queuing extends into the site, mitigation should be provided such that this does not occur. Mitigation measures may include reducing the level of parking or enacting more robust TDM measures. Depending on measures to mitigate potential impacts, the Applicant may need to work with the community to craft a parking plan such that the adjacent neighborhood will not be negatively impacted from site users parking in the surrounding area.

DDOT is very concerned about the prospect of constructing a grocery store which will attract a large share of pedestrian trips. The Applicant has not fully evaluated the pedestrian system in the area of pedestrian attraction for the project. While DDOT is in full support of encouraging non-auto mode trips, the agency does not have confidence that the pedestrian network is adequate for all transportation users. Under Chapter 45 of DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual, DDOT may request analysis of elements of the transportation system related to pedestrian safety. DDOT requested an evaluation of the pedestrian facilities within approximately a quarter of a mile from the development site in order to discern the adequacy of the pedestrian facilities patrons will utilize to access the site. The Applicant has not provided this evaluation. DDOT realizes the Applicant will upgrade small portions of the sidewalk system along 3rd Street adjacent to the site. Also, DDOT has already updated sidewalks adjacent to the site along 4th Street, much of 3rd Street, and H Street, but these infrastructure updates do not encompass the complete inventory of neighborhood sidewalks which will be utilized by patrons of the proposed development. Users of the site will come from the adjacent neighborhood and will concentrate along 3rd and 4th Street. In an evaluation of the area, DDOT found that the sidewalk facilities in this area will not be adequate to serve the future demand due to width and maintenance concerns. DDOT recommends that the Applicant evaluate the sidewalks in the two block area for width and maintenance concerns. In addition, DDOT recommends that the Applicant propose a plan to mitigate these concerns.

In addition to being in close proximity of a rich variety and supply, the site is also in close proximity to a variety of bicycle facilities and bicycle friendly facilities. On-street bicycle facilities exist along 4th and 6th Streets, and the Metropolitan Branch Trail is a block west of the site. Also, many of the neighborhood streets, though not signed or marked as bicycle facilities, are ideal for biking due to their relatively low speeds and volumes. The Applicant has proposed the minimum level of bicycle parking in the structured parking area and no street level bicycle parking. DDOT recommends that the Applicant consider more bicycle parking within the structured parking facility. DDOT also recommends that ample bicycle parking be provided near each of the pedestrian entrances of the site. Ideally, this parking would be on 3rd and 4th Streets as near to the entrances as feasible.

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Loading facilities are provided access from 3rd and 4th Streets. The loading facility located on 3rd Street has loading berths of 55 proposed. Large trucks of this size are inconsistent with the character of this street and may not be able to physically access the site. DDOT recommends that 30' loading berths be required. In addition, the Applicant must demonstrate that the trucks proposed to be used to supply the site will be able to physically access the site.

Although all proposed use of the public space will undergo further review by the DDOT Public Space Division staff, the Applicant's plans demonstrate deliveries to the grocery store will occur on 3rd Street. DDOT prefers to see a more rigorous delivery management system in place for the grocery store. The deliveries should occur during the off peak hours when roads and sidewalks may be least congested and residents will not experience significant adverse impacts.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

DDOT supports the Applicant's proposal with the conditions as previously stated. DDOT believes the Zoning Commission should require a meaningful reduction in the number of parking spaces, prohibition of queuing into the site, evaluation and mitigation of inadequate pedestrian facilities, more bicycle parking, and require 30' loading berths where the Applicant proposes 55 loading berths.

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