

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF PLANNING



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**Memorandum**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director *JS*  
**DATE:** July 03, 2008  
**SUBJECT:** ZC 08-13 – Marriott Marquis Hotel (Setdown Report)

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 08-13  
EXHIBIT NO. 13

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant, Marriott International, Inc., on behalf of the Washington Convention Center Authority and the District of Columbia, requests approval of a convention center hotel via a consolidated planned unit development in Square 370 in the northwest quadrant of the city. The applicant also requests a PUD-related map amendment to rezone several lots within this square from DD/C-2-C to DD/C-3-C. The applicant proposes to construct a Marriott Marquis hotel across the street from the Washington Convention Center. This project will require the closing of an existing public alley currently accessed from 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

Major components of the project include:

- 1,125 to 1150 guest rooms
- Adaptive reuse of the historic Plumbers' building
- 388 valet underground parking spaces
- 100,000 square feet of meeting room space
- 5 ground-level eating establishments including a specialty restaurant, main hotel restaurant, "corner bar", sports bar and grill, and a coffee shop
- Underground pedestrian connection to the Washington Convention Center
- Shared loading access with the convention center

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends** that the planned unit development and related map amendment be **set down for public hearing**. The proposed project would further an economic development priority of the District by creating a convention center hotel to support the Washington Convention Center. The site has been designated for a convention center hotel for several years, as evidenced by policies and recommendations found within the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and the adoption of the Convention Center Hotel Omnibus Financing and Development Act of 2006. This Act authorized the lease of certain lots in Squares 369 and 370 by the District to a private development team led by Marriott International, Inc., and approved tax increment financing to support the development of the hotel. The Act was later amended to limit the hotel development to be on lots located in Square 370.

The Office of Planning finds that the proposed PUD and related map amendment are **not inconsistent** with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

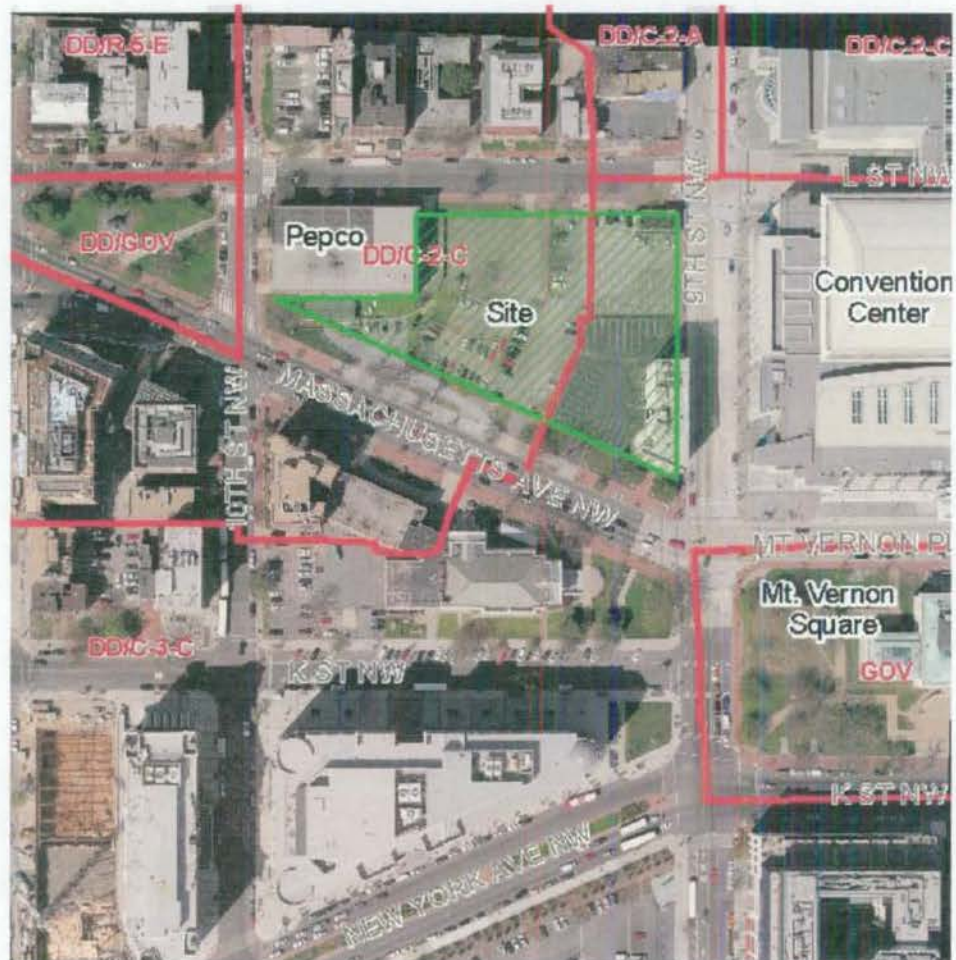
The Office of Planning will continue to work with the applicant on the circulation plan for the site and recommends that they provide additional information regarding the following issues prior to the public hearing:

1. *Usage of public space*
2. *Development and refinement of the landscaping and streetscape improvements, especially along Massachusetts Avenue, NW*
3. *Refinement of the proposed elevations, particularly of the ground level retail*
4. *Development of the proposed underground pedestrian connection to convention center*

**SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

The subject property is located in Square 370 which is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue, NW on the south, L Street, NW on the north, 9<sup>th</sup> Street, NW on the east, and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW on the west. The property is located north of Mt. Vernon Square and immediately west of the Washington Convention Center. The site is located within the DD/C-2-C and DD/C-3-C zone districts and is approximately 82,888 square feet.

As shown in the map to the right, the property is improved with a 7-story office building and surface parking lots. The existing building is an historic structure, the American Federation of Labor Building (“Plumbers’ Building”), which will be preserved and reused as part of this proposal. A Pepco substation occupies the northeast corner of the subject square and is not a part of this development proposal. A mix of high density residential, office, and retail uses are located in the area immediately surrounding the site. A triangle park is located to the immediate west of the site. Neighboring zone districts include GOV districts for the open space areas to



the northwest and southeast, a DD/C-2-A district to the north along 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and a DD/R-5-E district to the north and west along 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

**ZONING**

The subject property is currently located within two zone districts. Within Square 370, lots 801-806, 830-836, 843, and 845 are zoned DD/C-2-C and are the subject of the requested map amendment. The remaining lots are already located in the DD/C-3-C district. The C-2-C and C-3-C districts are commercial districts that indicate high density mixed-use areas. The C-3-C District accommodates major business and employment centers and provides substantial amounts of employment, housing, and mixed uses. The DD Downtown Development Overlay District is designed to create a balanced mixture of retail, hotel, residential, entertainment, arts, and cultural uses in the downtown core. The applicant is requesting a PUD-related map amendment to place the entire property within the DD/C-3-C district. A comparison of the regulations of the existing and proposed zone districts and the planned unit development standards relevant to this site are provided in the table below.

	<i>DD/C-2-C</i>	<i>DD/C-3-C</i>	<i>PUD Standards</i>	<i>Proposal</i>
<i>Maximum Lot Occupancy</i>	80%	100%	-	-
<i>Maximum Building Height</i>	90'	90'	130'	130'
<i>Maximum FAR-residential</i>	8.0	9.5	8.0	n/a
<i>Maximum FAR-non-residential</i>	4.5	6.5	8.0	9.3

In addition, a text amendment (ZC 08-05) is pending review by the Zoning Commission to allow additional flexibility than currently exists within the planned unit development regulations that affect this site. The PUD regulations do not permit the same levels of density and height as provided for in the DD overlay. The proposed amendment would allow the Zoning Commission to grant increases in floor area ratio and building height in excess of 5%. This text amendment has been set down and will be addressed by the Zoning Commission on July 24, 2008.

**PUD EVALUATION STANDARDS**

The purpose and standards for Planned Unit Developments are outlined in 11 DCMR, Chapter 24. Section 2400.1 states that a PUD is “designed to encourage high quality developments that provide public benefits.” In order to maximize the use of the site consistent with the zoning regulations and to utilize opportunities for additional FAR the applicant is requesting that the proposal be reviewed as a consolidated PUD. This would allow the utilization of the flexibility stated in Section 2400.2.

*“The overall goal is to permit flexibility of development ands other incentives, such as increased building height and density; provided, that the project offers a commendable number of quality public benefits and that it protects and advances the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience.”*

Section 2403 further outlines the standards under which the application is evaluated.

*“2403.3 The impact of the project on the surrounding area and the operation of city services and facilities shall not be found to be unacceptable, but shall instead be found to be either*

*favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of public benefits in the project.”*

### **FLEXIBILITY**

Provided the proposed text amendment (ZC 08-05) is granted, the applicants request that the Zoning Commission grant the project zoning relief to allow a building height and floor area ratio that exceed the 5% increase normally available for planned unit developments.

#### **Floor Area Ratio**

The proposed development would have a FAR of 9.3 or 1.3 FAR above 8.0 FAR permitted in a C-3-C/PUD and 2.8 FAR above the 6.5 matter of right density. Section 2405.3 grants the Commission the authority to increase in the FAR, provided that the increase is “essential to the successful functioning of the project” and meets PUD evaluation standards are met.

The requested increase of FAR will allow for the development of the amenities needed to provide a successful convention center hotel. This includes 1,125– 1,150 guest rooms, 100,000 square feet of meeting and assembly space, and ground level retail. OP notes that for residential uses, the permitted FAR in the DD/C-3-C district is 9.5. However, hotel uses are not classified as residential uses and the PUD standards limit FAR to 8.0 for this site.

#### **Building Height**

The applicant proposes a maximum height of 130 feet with an additional 18.5 feet for mechanical structures that are setback a minimum of 18.5 feet from the exterior walls. A maximum height of 90 feet is allowed as a matter-of-right in the DD/C-3-C District. The additional height requested is also consistent with the 130 feet maximum height allowed for a PUD in the C-3-C zone district.

In addition to those listed above, the applicant is requesting flexibility for the following:

#### **Variation in the number of hotel rooms**

The applicant proposes a range of 1,125 to 1,150 guest rooms for the hotel. OP has no objection to potential changes in the number of guest rooms so long as the appropriate number of off-street parking spaces is provided.

#### **Location of interior components and parking levels**

The applicant would like to be able to vary the location and design of interior components (e.g., including doors, hallways, and mechanical rooms) of the project that do not affect the exterior appearance or design of the building. The applicant also requests flexibility to alter the parking location and arrangement to provide valet parking for the entire development. OP does not object to flexibility being granted for this purpose so long as the location of the off-street parking area remains below grade.

#### **Exterior appearance and building materials**

The applicant also requests flexibility to vary the final building materials and colors within a proposed range, in order to account for the availability of materials at the time of construction. This would also include the ability to make minor adjustment to exterior details and any changes necessary to comply

with local building codes. OP has no objection to such changes as they are subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Review Board.

### **PUBLIC BENEFITS AND AMENITIES**

The objectives of a PUD are to permit flexibility of development in return for the provision of superior public benefits, provided the PUD process is not used to circumvent the intent and purposes of the Zoning Regulations, or results in an action inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Public amenities are defined in Section 2403.7 as including “*one type of public benefit, specifically a functional or aesthetic feature of the proposed development that adds to the attractiveness, convenience or comfort of the project for occupants and immediate neighbors*”.

The proposed project is an economic development priority of the District. The applicant requests zoning relief from the height and floor area ratio requirements to be able to provide an appropriate number of rooms that support the existing convention center. In addition, the proposed rezoning of a portion of the property from DD/C-2-C to DD/C-3-C permits a higher FAR, lot occupancy, and building height and precludes the development of a split-zoned property for a single development.

The applicant has listed a number of areas which they feel contribute towards their amenity package:

#### ***Urban Design, Architecture, Landscaping, and Open Space***

The proposed project will incorporate a landmark building, the Plumbers’ Building, into a larger, modern hotel building surrounding it. The new building will contain a glass atrium at the center and utilize stone and glass for the exterior materials. Landscaping and streetscape improvements are planned for the perimeter of the site, including areas for outdoor seating and street trees. The building will have two entrances, a main lobby with a porte cochere along Massachusetts Avenue and a secondary lobby serving as the large group entrance with a bus lay-by on L Street. Grade level retail in the form of several eating establishments and bars will be provided along the Massachusetts, 9<sup>th</sup> Street, L Street frontage with entrances provided both from the interior of the hotel and from the street.

#### ***Site Planning and Efficient and Economical Land Utilization***

The site design is impacted by two existing buildings that will remain, the historic Plumber’s building and the Pepco site, which also poses additional site development constraints with regard to the location of an access easement. Despite this, the project makes efficient use of the site. Loading areas have been consolidated with those for the existing convention center and a secondary loading area has been located adjacent to the Pepco site, which will be largely shielded from view by the structure. The site design includes an underground pedestrian connection to the hotel to provide a safe, controlled access to the convention center. All off-street parking for the hotel will utilize valet services and will be located below grade.

#### ***Historic Preservation of Private or Public Structures, Places, or Parks***

The proposed hotel will preserve and reuse an existing historic structure located at the northwest corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Massachusetts Avenue, NW. The Plumbers’ Building is proposed to be converted into a boutique hotel that will connect to the new hotel building on the first level. The proposed boutique hotel will feature larger room sizes will feature a “corner bar” on the ground level.

### ***Employment and Training Opportunities***

An employment and training program has been mandated by the New Convention Center Hotel Omnibus Financing and Development Act of 2006 for this project. The Act requires that the program begin no later than 2 years prior to the completion of the hotel, will hire and train District citizens for permanent positions, and will provide job-specific training for the hotel. The applicant has also indicated they will voluntarily enter into an agreement to participate in the Department of Employment Services First Source Employment Program (DOES)

### ***Use of Special value to the Neighborhood or the District as a Whole***

The proposed project is of particular significance to the District as a whole. The project would allow for the development of lodging and conference facilities that would support the Washington Convention Center and the District's tourism industry. The convention center hotel would develop an underutilized site with a desired use. In addition, the restaurants proposed on the ground level would enhance the continued development of the Mount Vernon Square area and 9<sup>th</sup> Street retail corridor.

### ***Environmental Benefits***

The applicant has submitted a LEED for New Construction (NC) checklist for the proposed project. The applicant is attempting to achieve LEED Silver. OP is very supportive of this initiative.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the majority of the subject property for mixed uses including high density commercial and residential uses. The westernmost part of the site and the remainder of Square 370 are designated as high density residential. Both the DD/C-2-C and DD/ C-3-C districts are considered high density commercial districts that allow as-of-right mixed use development. The proposed **DD/C-3-C designation** is **not inconsistent** with the future land use(s) of the site, as shown on the Future Land Use Map in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan.

### **POLICY MAP**

The subject property is designated as a Land Use Change Area in the Generalized Policy Map of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan identifies priorities, policies, and actions to guide the growth and development of Land Use Change Areas. The proposed project supports several land use, economic development, and historic preservation comprehensive plan policies and actions. The following policies, found within the Central Washington area element, are particularly relevant to the proposed convention center hotel project:

#### **Policy CW-1.1.10: Central Washington Hotels and Hospitality Services**

*“Encourage the development of additional hotels in Central Washington, especially in the areas around the new Convention Center and Gallery Place, along Pennsylvania Avenue NW and Massachusetts Avenue NW, in the Thomas Circle area, and in the area east of Third Street NW. A range of hotel types, including moderately priced hotels, and hotels oriented to family travelers as well as business travelers, should be encouraged. Hotels generate jobs for District residents and revenues for the general fund and should be granted incentives when necessary. Retain existing hotel uses by allowing and encouraging the expansion of those uses, including the addition of one floor, approximately 16 feet in height subject to coordination with federal security needs, to the Hay-Adams Hotel 1608.11.” (emphasis added)*

**Policy CW-2.4 Mount Vernon District**

*“Mount Vernon Square itself was designed to be a focal point in Washington’s ensemble of great civic landmarks. Its focus is the 1902 former Carnegie Library building, an elegant historic structure that is now in use by the Washington Historical Society. Facing the north edge of the Square is the 2.3 million square foot Washington Convention Center, completed in 2003. To the southwest, the now vacant site of the former Convention Center is awaiting redevelopment. Immediately northwest of the Square, a major convention hotel is planned. Large-scale office buildings occupy other sides of the Square, framing it as a potentially great public space. 1714.2”* (emphasis added)

**Policy CW-2.4.3: Convention Center Area Land Uses**

*“Encourage land uses around Mount Vernon Square which capitalize on the presence of the Washington Convention Center. Such uses include hotels, restaurants, retail, and entertainment uses. Convention related hotel construction should be focused on vacant or underutilized land immediately adjacent to the Convention Center to minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. 1714.8”* (emphasis added)

**Action CW-2.4-B: Convention Center Hotel**

*“Develop a major convention center hotel in close proximity to the Washington Convention Center. The hotel should be sited and designed to complement adjacent uses and add activity and aesthetic value to the Mount Vernon Square neighborhood. 1714.14”*

**SMALL AREA PLANS**

The proposed convention center hotel site has been the subject of two small area planning studies, which are summarized below.

**CONVENTION CENTER AREA STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This planning study, adopted in 2006, is for the area bounded by New York Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, 12th Street, Vermont Avenue, U Street, Florida Avenue, and New Jersey Avenue. The purpose of the plan was to accomplish three main objectives: (1) strengthen neighborhood businesses, (2) generate quality housing, and (3) improve the public realm. Relevant findings with respect to the convention center hotel site are listed below:

**Retail**

- *Establish a hierarchy of retail that includes primary and secondary commercial areas, as well as corner stores*
  - *Locate Convention Center headquarters hotel at 9th and Massachusetts Avenue as the southern anchor of the retail corridor.*
- *Develop a retail corridor that will attract convention goers, tourists and residents from other parts of the DC metropolitan area*
  - *Create safe, on-street pedestrian connection between the Convention Center and the headquarters hotel.*
  - *Ensure that the pedestrian scale and main street character of the historic buildings are retained or sensitively incorporated into new development.*

**Public Realm**

- *Reinforce a clear street hierarchy that differentiates between residential streets and commercial streets*

- Study 6th, 7th, 9th, and 11th streets to determine current levels of traffic and necessary number of travel lanes, and make recommendations to improve use of public right-of-way.
- Develop, maintain, and enforce standards for different street types that address sidewalks, streets, tree boxes, and public right-of-way.
- Improve appearance of gateway intersections.

The proposed project will help meet these planning goals by preserving and reusing the existing Plumbers' building and suggesting changes to the traffic patterns along 10<sup>th</sup> and L streets to improve traffic conditions. While the applicants have developed a below-grade connection from the hotel to the convention center, improvements are also planned for the site, which should enhance the street-level pedestrian connection. The Office of Planning will continue to work with the applicant regarding streetscape and landscaping improvements on the site.

#### ***MOUNT VERNON SQUARE DESIGN WORKBOOK***

This document was created by the Office of Planning in 2004 to provide a design framework for the Mount Vernon Square District, defined as the area between M Street, NW on the north and H Street, NW on the south and 5<sup>th</sup> Street, NW on East to 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW on the west. The workbook discusses the convention center hotel site and its potential to help define the Mount Vernon Square District. Massachusetts Avenue is shown as an important avenue providing vehicular access to the Square while 9<sup>th</sup> Street is designated as one of the primary retail corridors in the area. The workbook includes proposed renderings of future development, one of which includes street level retail on the 9<sup>th</sup> Street side of the convention center hotel.

#### **AGENCY COMMENTS**

The proposed project was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board on June 26, 2008. HPRB was generally positive about the project but expressed concerns about the appearance of the mass of the building, particularly the Massachusetts Avenue frontage, the building height and its impact on the skyline, and the provision of additional green space on the site. As of the date of this report, formal comments have not been received from the District Department of Transportation. However, staff is aware of at least two meetings that have taken place between the applicants and DDOT staff regarding this proposal.

The applicant has met with DDOT for a preliminary design review meeting (PDRM) and will continue to have discussions regarding the public realm elements of the proposed development.

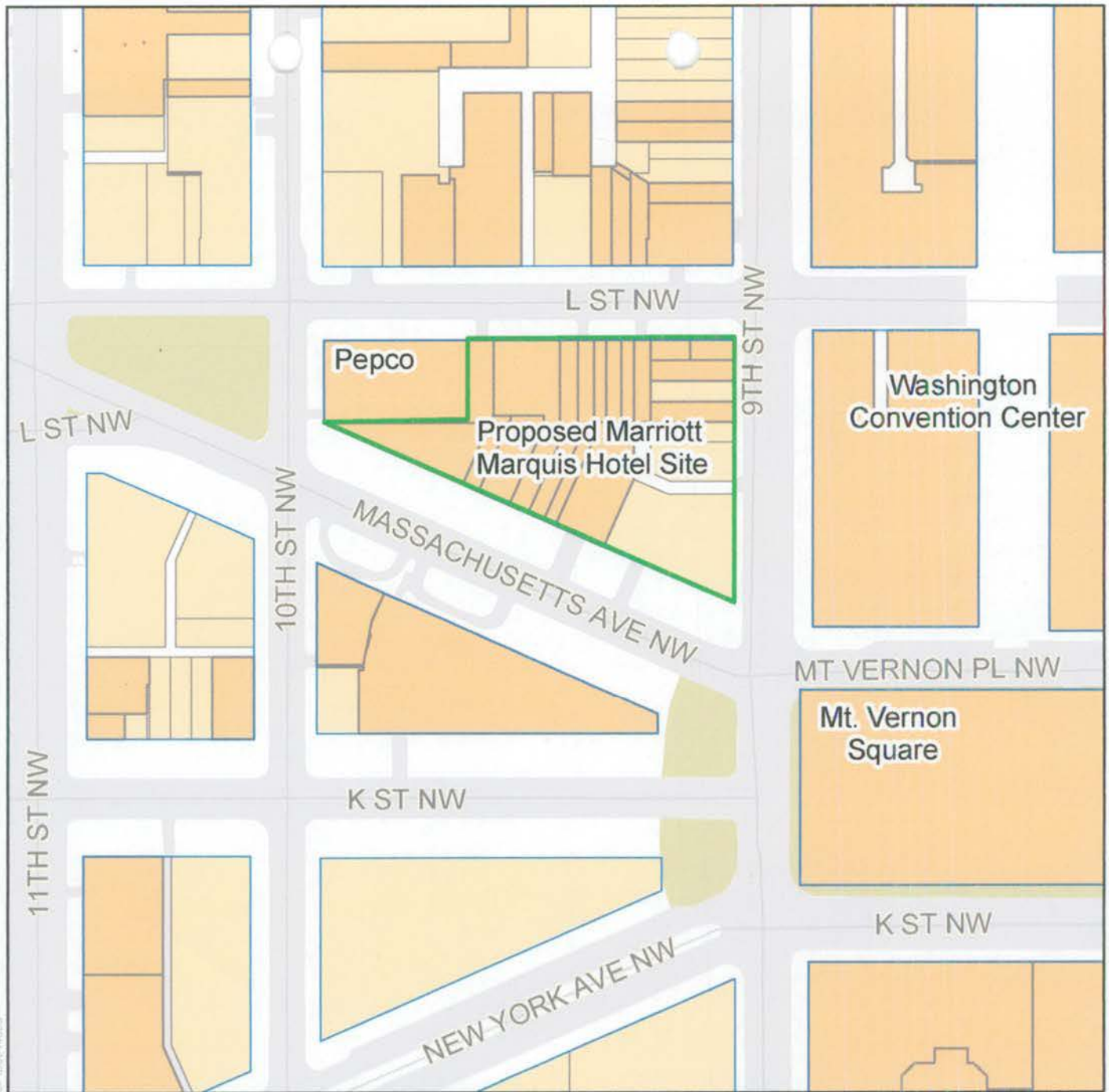
#### **RECOMMENDATION**

OP concludes that the hotel proposal for the site would be of benefit to the District overall as well as the Mount Vernon Square neighborhood. OP will continue to work with the applicant and other District agencies to ensure that the following issues are more fully addressed by the applicant prior to the public hearing:

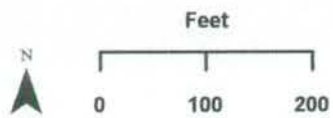
1. Usage of public space – The project will require the usage of public space for several functions/uses including parking and meeting room areas.
2. Development and refinement of the landscaping and streetscape improvements, especially along Massachusetts Avenue, NW – OP requests additional information about the provision of landscaping and the width and design of pedestrian walkways

3. Refinement of the proposed elevations, particularly of the ground level retail – Additional information is needed about how these areas will look and the location of street entrances.
4. Development of the proposed underground pedestrian connection to the Convention Center – Additional information is needed about the design and function of this passageway.

The Office of Planning **recommends the Zoning Commission setdown** the proposed planned unit development and related map amendment. OP supports the DD/C-3-C designation which is **not inconsistent** with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use designation for high density residential and commercial uses and the District’s desire to develop a convention center hotel.



### ZC 08-13 Marriott Marquis - Base Map

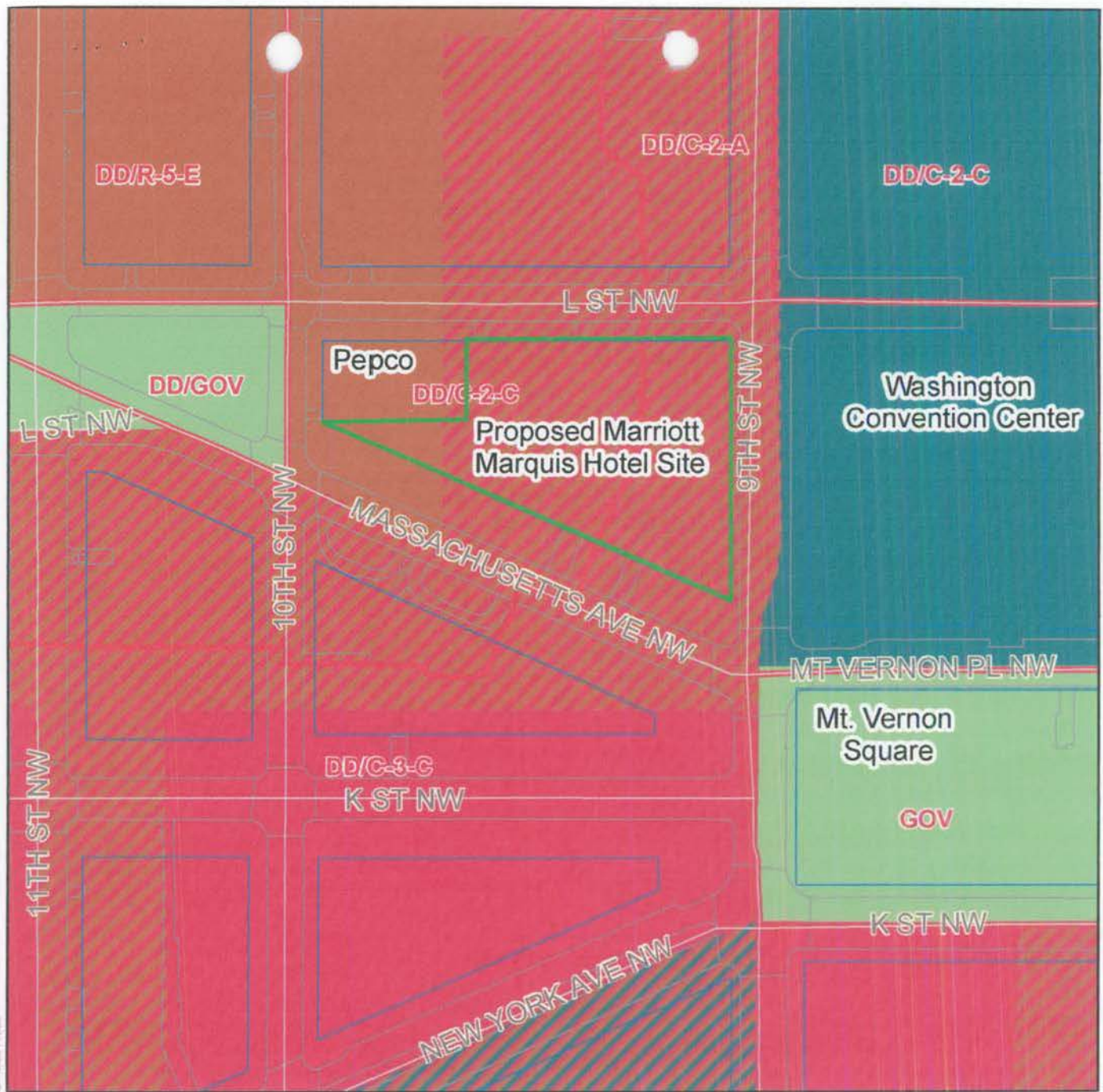


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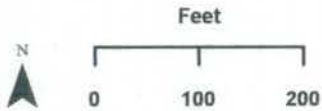
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### ZC 08-13 Marriott Marquis - Future Land Use Map



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