

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

Memorandum

TO: Jamison L. Weinbaum, Director
DC Office of Zoning

FROM: Karina Ricks 
District Department of Transportation

DATE: December 7, 2009

SUBJECT: ZC 09-03 (Application of Skyland Holdings, LLC)
Intersection of Naylor Road, Good Hope Road, and Alabama Avenue, S.E.

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APPLICATION

The Applicant is requesting approval of a consolidated Planned Unit Development and Zoning Map Amendment. The property that is the subject of this application consists of approximately 18.7 acres of land area and is located at the intersection of Naylor Road, Good Hope Road, and Alabama Avenue, S.E. The subject property is currently zoned C-3-A, R-5-A, R-5-B, and R-1-B. The proposed Zoning Map amendment application will rezone the R-5-A, R-5-B, and R-1-B portions of the Subject Property to the C-3-A Zone District so that all of the Subject Property will be zoned C-3-A. The Applicant proposes to build a Town Center mixed-use retail and residential project. This project will create approximately 450-500 residential units, with approximately 30% of the units reserved for affordable housing. The residential units will be provided in three multi-family apartment buildings and approximately 20 townhouses. The project will include approximately 315,000 square feet of retail and service-related uses. The retail uses will include a large format retail store, multi-neighborhood retailers, and local retailers.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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CASE NO. 09-03
EXHIBIT NO. 36

ZC 09-03 - Application of Skyland Holdings, LLC**RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) recommends conditional support of the Applicant's request for a PUD and Zoning Map amendment. DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's transportation study that provides some information for the proposed site to avoid adverse impacts. The Applicant is following DDOT's policy for a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for the significant development. DDOT wishes to address the Applicant's proposed parking inventory, freight unloading for the retail fronting the Main Street within the development and needed pedestrian safety for the site to operate.

DDOT ANALYSIS

The initial project scope to review potential adverse impacts was evaluated by DDOT staff. That scope included intersections directly adjacent to the proposed development site. Subsequent meetings with the Applicant revealed the need for evaluation of intersections further away from the site due to the regional traffic in the area of the development. DDOT requested the Applicant provide a detailed review of existing and future pedestrian impacts. The initial project scope evaluated the impacts of a proposed "site with an 800,000 - 900,000 square foot town center, including a 125,000 - 145,000 square foot (SF) anchor retail tenant, +150,000 SF other retail uses, 50,000 SF flex office space and +500 apartment/condominium units." The Applicant originally provided information stating, "The site will be provided with two primary entrances. One entrance would be off a reconfigured/relocated Naylor Road at Good Hope Road intersection, and the other would be off Alabama Avenue at the Safeway shopping center entrance."

The Applicant revised some of the proposed access to the site and has updated its transportation impact study. The Applicant provided the following information in its September transportation impact study, "Vehicular access to the site would continue from the adjacent roadways, but would be consolidated from 11 to 6 driveways, three of which would be signalized." At meetings in 2008 and 2009, DDOT requested the Applicant review the following:

- The need for parking at the completion of each development stage. The use of auto-oriented suburban traffic generation data for this site may be contributing to the Applicant seeking 1698 parking spaces.
- The unloading of freight for the retail fronting along Main Street as it may lead to severe vehicle and pedestrian conflicts.
- A meaningful review of pedestrian access to and from the proposed site.

DDOT firmly recommends the Applicant reduce the overall number of proposed parking spaces to ensure that parking is not overbuilt and that the development takes

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advantage of its location close to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) bus lines all within 2 blocks of the site. Those bus routes include W series, A series, 30 series and 92. The Applicant's transportation report states, "Several Metrorail Stations (Anacostia, Southern Avenue, Congress Heights and Naylor Road) on the WMATA Green Line System are located within an approximate two-mile radius of the site, with the nearest (Naylor Road) being approximately one mile to the south."

The retailers fronting on Main Street have little opportunity to unload their freight without using Main Street to perform the task. There will be significant conflicts on Main Street while truck operators unload their freight. The Applicant needs to provide a better system for those retailers to unload and not cause conflicts and unsafe conditions for the future neighborhood street. DDOT suggests the Applicant demonstrate a detailed delivery system, including delivery loading berths and designated off peak unloading times, for the Main Street retailers and the larger retailers on the entire site. Based on the planned retail square footage, DDOT assumes approximately 50 weekday retail truck deliveries. It is currently unclear if the site can accommodate this kind of delivery truck traffic. DDOT does not believe the Applicant may have included the truck trips in its daily trip data calculations. The number of merchants that will lease retail space from the landlord leaves many opportunities for unsatisfactory loading practices. The Applicant will need to employ at least two (2) delivery coordinators as part of the future property management at the site.

A total of three (3) new traffic signals will be installed by the Applicant to provide safe access for all transportation users. The signals are mitigation components to provide safety along the surrounding minor arterials. At DDOT's request, the Applicant has agreed to install a traffic signal for residents to safely cross Alabama Avenue to access the south side of Alabama Avenue, especially the Good Hope Market Place retail. Otherwise, the future residents would have to cross 4 lanes of unsignalized vehicular travel on Alabama Avenue. The Applicant will need to adhere to DDOT's standards for pedestrian amenities (i.e. curb radius, sidewalk widths, crosswalk striping, signalized pedestrian countdowns, etc.).

The Applicant became aware of DDOT's pedestrian safety concerns during a number of meetings in 2008. The site will serve as an important neighborhood attraction and will generate a number of new pedestrian trips. A central public gathering location is the paseo that is planned between Good Hope Road and the internal Main Street. The paseo will sit across from the Naylor Road and Good Hope Road "T" intersection. The "T" intersection is currently served by a traffic signal. However, the intersection contributes to unsafe vehicle speeds with the wide and sweeping curb radii. A wide curb radius typically results in high-speed turning movements by motorists. Reconstructing the turning radius to a tighter turn will reduce turning speeds, shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians, and also improve sight distance between pedestrians and motorists. Tighter turning radii are particularly important where streets intersect at a skew as the "T" intersection is positioned. DDOT fully expects the

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Applicant to make the necessary improvements at the following intersections to ensure pedestrian safety for visitors to the new development:

- Naylor Road / Good Hope Road (across from the planned paseo)
- Alabama Avenue / Main Street (on all intersection approaches)
- Alabama Avenue / Good Hope Road / Main Street (future 5 legged intersection)

The intersection improvements will serve as the necessary mitigation measures for future pedestrian trips and tempering vehicle speeds in the area of the planned land use.

Although DDOT is aware the Applicant proposes a total of six (6) curb cuts to access the proposed development, each one will undergo further review by the DDOT public space division staff. DDOT reserves the right to deny any of the curb cuts based on the agency's public space standards. The two (2) curb cuts associated with Block 2 providing access to Good Hope Road are problematic for DDOT's pedestrian safety standards. Realigning the existing Good Hope Road service road should be further investigated by the Applicant. Realignment of the service road may provide a better opportunity to maintain a consistently wide sidewalk along the Good Hope/Naylor frontage. The minimized Good Hope Road service road sidewalk does not provide sufficient travel space for all transportation users (i.e. safe mix of bicyclists and pedestrians). DDOT's policy is to reduce the size and number of curb cuts as they significantly alter the streetscape and interrupt safe pedestrian environments.

The roadways within the proposed Skyland development shall remain fully accessible to the public but maintained by the Applicant or future property managers. DDOT will not be responsible for right of way maintenance including removal of precipitation due to weather or otherwise.

The Applicant shall be responsible to work with DDOT to locate a site for a District of Columbia bike sharing kiosk. The kiosk will need to be accessible to the public on either public or private space.

The Applicant has proposed future bus stop locations around the development site. DDOT will remain involved in the location of those bus stops as the Applicant's construction plans evolve. The two (2) bus stop locations on Good Hope Road may be more appropriately located to other locations around the site to provide safer passenger access to and from the bus.

A featured amenity the Applicant plans to provide is a retail location dedicated to providing residents, visitors and those working in Washington, D.C. with convenient, one-stop shopping for schedules, fares, and information about the many transportation options available in the Washington metropolitan area. The staff at the retail location

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will assist customers in planning the best way to travel, whether by bus, rail, carpool, vanpool, or bicycle. DDOT will continue to work with the Applicant on the retail location and its staffing needs. Adequate funding to staff this location is crucial for delivery of this amenity.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The major lacking factor of the Applicant's transportation report is the thorough review for safe pedestrian crossings on Alabama, Naylor and Good Hope Road. DDOT has cited the necessary intersection improvements for those new pedestrian trips to safely occur. Without those improved intersections, the new development and its attractions will cause undue conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles as they are currently happening.

The Applicant has been receptive to meeting with DDOT but has not made the various DDOT pedestrian safety concerns paramount in its transportation review.

If the Commission votes to approve the application, DDOT strongly recommends the Commission require the previously mentioned DDOT approved measures for the Applicant to receive the PUD.

KR:jj