GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Jerrily R. Kress, FAIA
Director
Office of Zoning

**FROM:** Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director for Transportation Planning

**DATE:** May 7, 2002

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 16868 – Application for a Special Exception to Allow for the Construction of a Mixed Use Office Building on a Vacant Lot Zoned C-2-A, Uptown Arts-Mixed Use Overlay (Arts) District Located at 1290 U Street, NW, Lot 133, Square 274

The District Division of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application and materials for subject site listed above. This memorandum addresses the transportation aspects of the proposal.

The applicant proposes to construct a four-story office building with 6,000 sq ft of ground floor retail. The top three floors of the building, totaling 34,758 sq ft, will house the Department of Mental Health offices currently located at 1536 U Street, NW. The subject site, located above the U Street/Cardoza Station on the Metro Green Line is currently owned by WMATA. The lot is vacant except for an entrance platform and a set of elevators serving the rail station, which will remain after construction. The applicant seeks a special exception for a reduction in the required off-street parking spaces. The applicant also seeks special exceptions from the requirements that 75% of the street walls be constructed to the property line and building entrances on U Street be separated by no more than 40 linear feet.

The site is required to provide a total of 72 parking spaces for the proposed retail and office uses, however the applicant proposes to provide only 12 off-street parking spaces. An additional five stacked parking spaces, not to be included in the zoning request, are proposed for the exclusive use of Department of Health staff. The applicant is restricted from providing an underground parking garage on site due to the Metrorail station and tunnel below, and as the applicant states:

BZA
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CASE NO.16868
EXHIBIT NO.23

> "WMATA has encumbered the property with various easements which basically preclude construction of improvements in front of and around the escalators on U Street as well as the construction of below grade space on site."

The WMATA restrictions on construction around Metro facilities prevents the applicant from meeting the requirements of new buildings and structures in the Arts Overlay District that not less than 75% of the street wall to a height of 15' shall be constructed to the property line between the subject lot and the street, and that building entrances shall not be separated by more than 40' on average for the linear frontage of the building.

The applicant conducted an employee transportation survey for the Department of Health to determine the current modes of transportation used by employees, and their intended use upon relocation of the facility. Approximately two-thirds of the 35 staff members drive to the existing facility, which does not provide any parking for staff or visitors. Upon relocation, the employees who intend to drive to work are reduced to half of the proposed new staff total of 40. The existing facility serves approximately 65 clients a day and 99% of all clients use public transportation. The applicant states that within a two-block radius of the site there are potentially 100 parking spaces available including the municipal parking in the Reeves Center.

The proposed ground floor retail portion of the project totals 6,000 sq ft. The off-street parking requirements for the use are to provide 10 parking spaces. Four (4) of the proposed 13 parking spaces are reserved for the exclusive use of the retail stores, and the Department of Mental Health has agreed to make all of their parking space available after business hours, to accommodate retail activity. The applicant states the retail use will be divided into three or more smaller stores primarily serving the local neighborhood and does not anticipate the uses will generate vehicular traffic.

On street parking metered and non-metered parking is available along 12th Street, 14th Street, U Street, and V Street and can accommodate retail patrons. Other streets in the vicinity of the site have scattered on street parking available for the public, however most parking spaces have Ward 1 Residential Parking restrictions.

In §2107, the BZA is authorized to reduce or eliminate the amount of required parking spaces for nonresidential buildings or structures located outside the central employment area provided that the building has a direct connection to a Metrorail station. Accordingly, DDOT has no objection to the application.

KL:lb