GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

# Memorandum

**TO:** Andrew Altman
Director
Office of Planning

**FROM:** Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director

**DATE:** SEP 29 2003

**SUBJECT:** Zoning Commission No. 03-04C Request for a consolidated review and approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) located at 1447-1451 Belmont Street, NW, Zoned R-5 B

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application and other material submitted by the applicant. This report addresses the transportation elements of the proposal.

**The Proposal**

The applicant requests a consolidated review and one step approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 1447-1451 Belmont Street, NW, in Square 2661, Zoned R-5-B. The subject property is located in the Columbia Heights neighborhood and is currently occupied by the Pitts Motel, a now vacant structure. If the application is granted, the applicant will raze the existing Pitts Motel and construct an apartment building containing approximately 105 condominium units. The project will provide 165 parking spaces consisting of 147 spaces in a two- level underground garage and 18 spaces located at the rear of the building. There will be one loading berth adjacent and along the 20-foot public alley in the rear of the building. Access to the underground parking will be from Belmont Street while the loading facility and the surface parking will be accessed from the public alley.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-04
Exhibit 24



ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-04
EXHIBIT NO.24

**The Transportation System**

The project site is located on the north side of Belmont Street between 14th and 15th Streets. Other streets serving the immediate area are Florida Avenue, a minor arterial, and Chapin Street north of the site, a local street. The applicant has furnished a description of the local street system in his transportation assessment of the project. The description includes the number of lanes, turning movement counts, functional classification, and signalized and unsignalized intersections for these streets. We note that both 14th and 15th Streets are minor arterial streets in the area and not collector streets as stated by the applicant in his transportation assessment.

The project is located within the influence of the Columbia Heights Metrorail Station and is one half block from the 14th Street corridor where numerous Metro bus routes operate. These bus routes link the site to the rail system and to the Central Employment Area. We conclude that this project is ideally located with respect to the transit system.

**The Impact of the Proposal**

As was stated previously, the applicant proposes to construct an apartment building containing approximately 105 condominium units. For the purpose of this report, we have assessed the impact of the proposal in the following areas:

- Site traffic generation and level of service,
- Project access, parking and loading facility

We have reviewed the applicant's transportation report with respect to trip generation and level of service calculations at the critical intersections leading to and from the proposed project. Trip generation rates used for this development were derived from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) **Trip Generation, SIX Edition Publication**. These rates are higher than DDOT locally developed rates for similar development. It is further noted that the applicant did not take into account the good location of the project with respect to the existing transit system. In our estimate, a 40 percent modal split can be easily achieved for this development. According to the applicant, the project will generate approximately 10 inbound vehicle trips and 45 outbound trips for a total of 55 vehicle trips during a typical morning peak hour. During the typical evening peak hour, there will be about 45 inbound and 21 outbound trips for a total of 66 vehicle trips.

However, as we said before, this development will generate far less traffic than projected by the applicant. DDOT agrees with the applicant's capacity analysis and the level of service (LOS) calculation at the pertinent intersections in the vicinity of the project. The results of the analysis indicate that current level of service at the intersections leading to and from the site are all operating at level of service C or better during the a.m. and p.m. periods. Although the proposed development will add some traffic to the existing system, DDOT does not expect it would significantly impact current LOS on the surrounding intersections.

With regard to parking, the applicant will provide 165 parking spaces with 147 spaces in an underground parking garage and 18 spaces in the rear of building adjacent to the public alley. We note that this amount of parking provision is more than three times the Zoning Regulation requirements. Considering that there is a chronic deficit of off-street parking facilities in the Columbia Heights area, the excessive level of parking supply being provided for this project will be more than adequate to accommodate the parking needs of the development and minimize parking spillover on the adjacent neighborhood residential parking. The project is required to provide bicycle parking spaces at least equal to five percent of the number of automobile parking spaces required by the Zoning Regulations. DDOT recommends that this project provide at least 10 bicycles parking spaces to encourage this mode of transportation and discourage the use of automobile in our urban congested streets.

The applicant is required to provide one 12'x 55' loading berth, one 200-square foot loading platform and one service delivery space. What is shown on the site plan can only accommodate a 30-foot truck and a service delivery space. We note that it would be exceptionally difficult if not impossible for a 55-foot truck to access the loading berth via the existing public alley system. We further note that trash trucks serving the proposed development will also use the same loading facility. In addition, a secondary access to the garage is proposed adjacent to the loading area creating a potential conflicting demand on the loading activity and the operation of the garage. DDOT is concerned with the proposed combined secondary access to the garage and the location of the loading facility as shown on the site pan. At least a 6-foot refuge island should be provided to separate the two functions for safe operation of the garage.

In summary, DDOT supports the proposed Planned Unit Development to increase housing production in the area. Vehicular traffic generated by this project can be accommodated with little or no negative impact on the area road network. The amount of parking provision for the project is more than adequate to meet the parking needs of the development and minimize parking spillover and competition for curb parking in the neighborhood residential and business area. However, the secondary access design to the garage adjacent to the loading facility is not acceptable from a safety standpoint. Accordingly, the applicant should revise the design access and circulation along the alley for DDOT review and approval.