

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Carol Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission

FROM: Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director

DATE: September 14, 2006

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-14C/01-31TE/98-17F/95-16P; Review of Second Stage Planned Unit Development Application for the Florida Rock Property at 100 Potomac Avenue, SE.

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This memorandum summarizes the evaluation by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) of the above referenced Application by Florida Rock Properties, Inc. to develop Squares 707, 708, 708E, and 708S, consisting of 1.1 million square feet of office, residential, hotel, and retail space in four buildings connected by underground parking.

DDOT recommends approval of the PUD Application, conditioned on the resolution of issues identified and described in this report.

I. Coordination with South Capitol Street EIS

As stated in the memorandum from DDOT dated August 22, 2006 (Modified Supplemental Pre-Hearing Submission, Appendix B), the South Capitol Street Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not complete. DDOT is currently considering and analyzing two bridge alternatives, which both include replacement of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge on a new southern alignment. However, one major difference between the alternatives is the improvements to the intersection of South Capitol St. and Potomac Ave. One alternative includes a traffic oval, as shown and described in the PUD application. The other alternative includes an at-grade intersection. Therefore, the decision to build the oval is not final. This is contrary to the description of coordination with DDOT on Page 9 of the Pre-Hearing Submission. Additionally, DDOT has not **approved** the diagram cited in Appendix A.

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As the August 22nd memorandum suggests, DDOT is comfortable with the proposal to straighten property lines, once DDOT finalizes improvement plans and moves forward with the project development process for the South Capitol Street Corridor. Additionally, DDOT is supportive of the general phasing of the Florida Rock complex from the east side to the west side of the site. As suggested in the PUD application, this sequencing allows for coordination with DDOT's planned improvements, including the replacement of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

II. Design of First Street SE and Potomac Avenue

In preparation for long-term improvements along the South Capitol Street Corridor and the opening of the ballpark in Southeast, DDOT is developing detailed designs for several roadways in the project vicinity. The current designs are modifications of earlier concept designs that were included in the PUD application. Recently established cross sections for both Potomac Avenue and First Street, SE no longer include medians, but include 5' bicycle lanes on both sides of the street, adjacent to on-street parking. Additionally, the intersection of Potomac Avenue and First Street SE is now designed as a standard "T" intersection, as opposed to a gradual curve shown in the PUD application. This change reflects the desire to eventually construct Potomac Avenue east of First Street SE.

The intersection of First Street SE and Potomac Avenue is envisioned as a critical connection linking the Waterfront to the Ballpark and points north, as well as destinations along the Anacostia River. The PUD Application contains illustrations and descriptions of a proposed landscaped public plaza at the terminus of First Street SE. DDOT would like to ensure that the design of this area includes comfortable passage for pedestrians, defined routes for bicyclists, and an attractive waiting area / lay-by to serve public transit. It is critical that the applicant continue its coordination with DDOT, Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC), and DC Office of Planning (OP) to achieve these goals.

III. Esplanade Design and Waterfront Features

DDOT is supportive of an Esplanade that promotes vibrant recreational and economic interaction along the Waterfront. As depicted in the PUD design proposal, the narrow width of the Esplanade along the Florida Rock frontage does not support the anticipated pedestrian traffic and planned retail uses along the Waterfront. DDOT recommends a re-evaluation of the proposed landscaping and spatial distribution along the waterside frontage.

It is important that the Applicant continue to coordinate with DDOT and AWC in designing the Esplanade to ensure the integration of a clearly defined Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. The Trail should run continuously through the site and connect seamlessly to segments of the Trail on adjacent properties. The Trail can be distinguished through special paving, landscaping, or other treatments according to the Anacostia Waterfront Trail Design Guidelines. Since the Esplanade is an important piece of the overall Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, DDOT recommends construction of this facility during Phase One.

IV. Water Taxi Dock

The proposal for a water taxi landing on Page 8 of the Pre-Hearing Submission does not coincide with DDOT's plan to implement a water coach in 2007-2008. The proposed dock would not be complete in time for initiation of service, and it duplicates current efforts by AWC to locate a water taxi landing on the Anacostia River near the terminus of First Street, SE. Additionally, based on information from AWC, a water taxi landing in the proposed location would require significant dredging, which is not included in the Applicant's public amenity proposal. Given the timing, proposed alternative locations, and dredging requirements, DDOT does not consider the proposed water taxi landing a suitable public amenity. As an alternative public amenity, DDOT would recommend the installation of an interim Anacostia Waterfront Trail through the full length of the site (and connecting contiguous segments) as soon as possible.

V. Traffic Impact Analysis

The following subjects reflect areas of the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA -- conducted by Gorove Slade and contained in Exhibit F) that raise concerns for DDOT, and require revision and/or further commitments by the Applicant:

1. *Trip Generation*: The alternate mode and synergy reduction rates for trip generation are not realistic and do not reflect available data. The proposed development is approximately 0.5 miles (walking distance on the street grid) away from the Navy Yard Metro Station. The alternate mode reduction rates do not reflect the regression equation for the distance from the metro station to the cited source (WMATA 2005 Development-Related Ridership Survey). Additionally, since the cited source (WMATA 2005 Development-Related Ridership Survey) did not include survey data for the Navy Yard Metro Station, a comparable Metro Station should be used, as opposed to station averages. Reductions for synergy are difficult to predict without additional information about the potential tenants, especially for the retail developments. The trip generation rates must be revised, based on the site-specific conditions and proposed development program, before DDOT can concur that the development will have no negative impact on the surrounding local roadway network.
2. *Access to Site*: DDOT is supportive of aligning entrances and exits with ballpark entrances and exits, which is not part of the proposed plan for Florida Rock driveway and loading dock locations. DDOT does not support a direct access point from the proposed traffic oval to the development site and therefore opposes Site Drive 4 (as shown on Figure 10, page 26, TIA). Generally, driveways and loading dock locations should be provided on Potomac Avenue; however Site Drive #3 (Figure 10) is problematic because its close proximity to the intersection of South Capitol St. and Potomac Avenue may create queuing on Potomac Avenue and South Capitol Street in the proposed traffic oval.

3. *Bicycle and Pedestrian Access*: Although connections to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail are mentioned, the TIA does not address bicycle and pedestrian access to the site, circulation within the site, and the provision of bicycle parking. These are particularly critical issues, given the site's proximity to the ballpark, other major developments in the Near Southeast / Southwest area, and the proposed traffic oval and new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.
4. *Transportation Management Plan*: DDOT is generally supportive of a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) and the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures for the proposed development. However, the TIA does not address the sustained funding and implementation for the recommendations, which are essential to decreasing demands on transportation infrastructure. Since the development program includes supplying significantly more parking spaces than what is required, DDOT questions the effectiveness of policy or programmatic measures to decrease vehicular demand. Finally, the TMP or the TIA does not adequately address the relation to transit and how the Applicant will promote the use of Metrorail / Metrobus using measures such as transit subsidies or shuttle service to the Navy Yard station.