

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

Memorandum

TO: Sharon S. Schellin
Secretary
Zoning Commission

FROM: Kenneth G. Laden
Associate Director

DATE: November 8, 2006

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission No. 06-15 Request for a consolidated review and approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and related Map Amendment

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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) and a corresponding amendment to the zoning map for the site. The subject property is located in the Arboretum neighborhood of Ward 5 and consists of approximately 697,874 square feet of land area or approximately 16 acres. The subject site is currently occupied by a number of commercial uses with large amount of surface parking. The property is currently located in the C-M-1 Zone District. The applicant requests a Zoning Map Amendment to the CR District to develop a mixed-use development consisting of eight buildings with approximately 3,600 new residential condominium and rental units and 148,120 square feet of ground floor retail space along New York Avenue. The project will provide 3,551 parking spaces for the residential component, 743 for the retail space and 27 spaces for residential recreation and a day center in a three- level underground garage. There will be several loading berths and service delivery spaces to service both the residential development and the retail component. Access to the parking area will be from both Bladensburg Road and Montana Avenue.

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Ingress to the loading facility and will be from Montana Avenue and egress from New York Avenue. The PUD will construct a 25-foot frontage road along New York Avenue with an additional driveway serving the retail uses.

The Transportation System

The project site is located on a triangular lot bordered by New York Avenue, a principal arterial to the north, Bladensburg Road, a minor arterial to the southeast and Montana Avenue, a collector street to the southwest. Other streets serving the immediate area are Mount Olivet Road, Queen Chapel Road, West Virginia Avenue, a minor arterial, and 16th and 17th Streets both local streets. 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. The Department concurs with the findings of the applicant's report on the District's street system.

The project is not well served by the District's transit system. The nearest Metrorail stations are the Rhode Island Metrorail Station and the New York Avenue Metrorail Station, both on the Red Line. These stations are approximately one and a half miles from the subject site. There is no direct bus service from the project to these stations. However, the X6, B2, E2, E3, D1, D2 and D3 lines run adjacent to or within a few blocks of the project with destinations such as Fort Totten, Stadium Armory and Union Station.

The Impact of the Proposal

As was stated previously, the applicant proposes to construct a mixed-use development consisting of approximately 3,600 condominium and apartment units and 148,120 square feet of retail space along New York Avenue. 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
- Public space improvements, and
- Transportation Demand Management.

Site Traffic generation and level of service

We have reviewed the applicant's transportation report with respect to trip generation and level of service calculations on the critical intersections leading to and from the proposed project. Trip generation used for this development was estimated based on the Institute of Transportation's Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation, 7th Edition. Based on a non-auto mode split of 20 percent and an average vehicle occupancy of 1.3 persons per vehicle, the project will generate approximately 244 inbound vehicle trips and 900 outbound trips for a total of 1,144 vehicle trips during a typical morning peak hour. During the typical evening peak hour, there will be about 899 inbound and 478 outbound trips for a total of 1,377 vehicle trips.

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 capacity analysis covers the existing pre-development traffic and post-development traffic conditions. However, DDOT primary concern is with the intersection of Bladensburg Road at New York Avenue, N.E. The existing LOS calculations depict arrival delay in the AM peak hour at 77.1 seconds, which is the equivalent to intersection LOS ratings of D. However, even with projected improvements the forecasted for the year 2013, the approach delay is estimated at 172.1 seconds, which brings this intersection to a LOS of F.

The Department notes that the New York Avenue corridor is one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the District. As such, most of the intersections along the corridor are operating at or above capacity. Accordingly, a solution to the capacity deficiency along this corridor is beyond the present proposed development. The New York Avenue corridor study, prepared by DDOT, identified improvements along the corridor to create capacity for additional residential and commercial development along the Avenue. One of these improvements, a grade-separated intersection for New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road would help address existing and projected regional travel demand. Additionally, WMATA has indicated that new development at the subject site and other sites nearby would cause them to investigate the possibility of new bus service along New York Avenue providing a more direct connection to Metrorail at New York and Florida Avenues, NE.

Although the proposed development will add some traffic to the existing system, DDOT believes that, with a strong Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, as discussed later in this report, and some signal timing modifications, as proposed by the applicant, the proposed development could be accommodated with an acceptable level of impact on the current LOS on the surrounding intersections.

Project Access and Circulation

With regard to parking, the applicant will provide 3,551 parking spaces for the residential development, compared to 1,200 spaces required by the zoning code, 743 spaces for the retail space compared to 193 spaces required by the zoning code and 27 spaces for recreation and a Day Care center. This amount of parking is more than adequate to meet the parking demand of the project, including visitors to the development. 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 for the retail development and 150 spaces for the residential development spread throughout the different garages and buildings, to encourage this mode of transportation and discourage the use of automobile in our urban congested streets. DDOT also recommends the applicant work with a car-sharing service to provide parking spaces for car-sharing vehicles for use by residents and visitors, to reduce the demand for car-ownership. We would recommend a minimum of 10 car-sharing spaces be provided.

The project will provide ten (10) 12'x 55' loading berths, ten (10) 200-square foot loading platforms and five service delivery spaces. This amount of loading provision is more than adequate to service the mixed-use residential/retail development. Truck access the site will be

from Montana Avenue and will leave the project via New York Avenue. DDOT supports the proposed access and circulation. Access to the garage for both residential development and the retail space is from both Montana Avenue and Bladensburg. An additional driveway for the retail development is from the new frontage road parallel to New York Avenue. DDOT has no objection to the access and circulation.

Public space improvements

The project design calls for substantial improvements to the public space abutting the site that will complement parks and open areas within the site. The new residential buildings will have a 45-foot setback from the curb-face on Bladensburg Road, NE and a 35-foot setback from the curb-face on Montana Avenue, NE. For the portion of the project fronting New York Avenue, the applicant proposes installing 21-foot wide sidewalks adjacent to the buildings and a new service road providing a tree-lined buffer from the main roadway and an opportunity for parallel on-street parking. This roadway will absorb most of the newly created traffic destined for the development and remove that traffic from the through-put traffic stream heading towards US Route 50. The substantial setbacks provide an area to enhance the public space with new sidewalks, landscaping, streetlights and a continual tree space along the curb. The public space behind the sidewalks on Bladensburg Road and Montana Avenue, NE will be landscaped and provide access to open-spaces within the project site, including the 3.9 acre park to be placed at the interior of the site, which will be visible from, and linked to, all of the sidewalks surrounding the site. In addition, a triangular-shaped park will be placed at the back edge of the sidewalk at the corner of Bladensburg and Montana Avenue, NE straddling the property line. Improvements on Bladensburg Road also include a lay-by lane, which will remove traffic from Bladensburg road for pick-up and drop-offs at the development. Additional lay-by lanes and driveways are proposed for Montana Avenue to aid in the ingress and egress to the site. Most traffic heading westbound on New York Avenue will utilize driveways on Montana Avenue to access New York Avenue or Bladensburg Road.

The condition of the existing sidewalks are fair on New York Avenue, NE and poor on Bladensburg Road, NE. There are no sidewalks installed on Montana Avenue, NE. On Bladensburg and New York Avenues, DDOT recommends the applicant provide ten-foot sidewalks plus six-foot wide tree boxes for a total of at least 16' between the curb and the back of sidewalk. Based on our site visit and the bike plan in that area, DDOT recommends that Montana Avenue be widened from 44 to 48 feet to allow bike lanes on that street.

Of concern to DDOT are the existing overhead electrical lines and electrical poles installed adjacent to the curb on Montana Avenue and Bladensburg Road, NE, that conflict with the proposed streetscape improvements for both streets, which show curb, trees and light fixtures. DDOT recommends the applicant coordinate with the DDOT Infrastructure Project Management Administration (DDOT-IPMA) and the appropriate utility companies to determine if the existing overhead utilities can be placed underground as part of the reconstruction of the block. In addition, the applicant should continue to work with DDOT for any proposed improvements or modifications to the public space abutting the site including the design and construction of the New York Avenue service road and proposed streetscape improvements for the entire site.

Transportation Demand Management

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures as listed on pages 36 through 37 are absolutely critical to mitigate traffic impacts resulting from this proposed development. The applicant needs to commit to implement these measures, and not just "consider" them. Specifically, we recommend that ALL of these TDM measures be incorporated into the Zoning Commission Order, with a requirement that the developer or future property management company submit an annual report to the DDOT, Transportation Policy and Planning Administration and ANC 5-B on the impact on traffic resulting from the implementation of these TDM measures.

The most important measures include:

- Provide shuttle bus service to a nearby Metrorail station (either Rhode Island or New York Ave.) Until and unless WMATA expands its bus service, frequent and convenient shuttle service is necessary to ensure utilization of transit in lieu of private autos.
- Allow purchase of apartments without purchase of a parking space.
- Allocate parking spaces for car-sharing vehicles for use by residents and visitors.
- Establish a "Commuter Center" where transit, car-sharing and ridesharing information would be provided and where transit fare media would be sold.
- Provide "SmarTrip" cards to residents and commercial tenants when they close the deal on their units.
- Consider allowing" should be changed to "allow," in reference to use of the Commuter Center by others. On page 37, under E., another strategy should be added: 7. Provide priority parking for vanpool vehicles.

In summary, DDOT supports the proposed Planned Unit Development to increase housing and retail development in the area. The amount of parking provided for the project is more than adequate to meet the parking needs of the development and minimize parking spillover in the surrounding neighborhood. Vehicular traffic generated by this project can be reduced by the implementation of the above referenced TDM measures. However, we recommend that the developer must make a commitment to implement these measures as a condition for development approval. Furthermore, there must be negative sanctions for failure to implement these measures after the development has been initiated.

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NOTES/COMMENTS:**See attachments**

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