



Office of the Director

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 19, 2006  
**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** *EMM*  
Ellen McCarthy, Director OP  
**SUBJECT:** Zoning Commission Review of an application by the District of Columbia Sport and Entertainment Commission for a Proposed New Major League Baseball Stadium, pursuant to DCMR 11 §1606.18.  
**LOCATION:** Ballpark Site - Squares 702, 703, 704, 705, and 706 and Reservation 247, between South Capitol St. SE and 1<sup>st</sup> St. SE, and N St. SE and Potomac Ave. SE. Ward 6; Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D  
**ZONE:** CG/CR

CASE NO. 06-22  
EXHIBIT NO. 26

**I. RECOMMENDATION**

At this point, the Office of Planning (OP) is unable to recommend that the Zoning Commission approve Case # 06-22, Ballpark Review, for the ballpark structure with accessory office building, because of the above grade parking structures as proposed in the application. Amendments to the application to alter the parking scheme are anticipated prior to the public hearing – additional OP analysis and recommendation on parking will be provided in a Supplemental Report prior to the Public Hearing.

**II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Capitol Gateway (CG) Overlay District provides for mandatory review of any proposal within the boundaries of the Ballpark Site (Squares 702-706 & Reservation 247) This application is for the review of the proposed new Ballpark for the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball Team

As submitted, the application included a number of options for consideration. OP has since been advised by the applicant that an amendment to the application is pending to remove all but one option, called Option 1. OP feels that this is a step in the right direction, as Option 1 better addresses overall goals and objectives for the ballpark site than did the formerly proposed “Base” option. OP has further been advised that additional amendments for the parcels on the north side of the stadium – currently shown as above grade parking structures for the stadium – are also anticipated, but that the nature of these amendments are not, as of the date of drafting this report, finalized Accordingly, this OP report will analyze the stadium itself, and OP will provide supplemental analysis of parking and development on these parcels prior to the public hearing.

Full OP analysis of the proposal is provided in Section IX on page 11 of this report

OP is generally supportive of the proposal (with the exception of above grade parking and our concern about the relatively small amount of retail on the ground floor of the ballpark structures). The proposal

generally furthers the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, and the Capitol Gateway Overlay District

### **III. BACKGROUND**

On May 3, 2006, the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission (DCSEC) submitted an application to the Zoning Commission for review of the design for the new Baseball Stadium for the Washington Nationals, the Major League Baseball team. This application is in accordance with the Capitol Gateway Overlay District (DCMR Title 11 Chapter 16) which states that *"The Ballpark and all other proposed buildings or structures within the Ballpark Site shall be subject to the approval of the Zoning Commission in accordance with the provisions of §§1606.19 & 1606.20"* (§1606.18). §3011.1 of the zoning regulations provided for immediate scheduling of a hearing for this Zoning Commission review, provided the application was accompanied by a written report from the Office of Planning (OP) certifying that the application is compliant with the standards of that section. The OP certification was dated May 3, 2006.

The agency responsible for the design and construction of the Stadium is the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission (DCSEC), which also oversaw the design and construction of the MCI Center. Most of the same individuals also oversaw the design and construction of the new Convention Center. To design the new stadium, the DCSEC chose a design team consisting of HOK Sport and Entertainment, which has been responsible for the design of many recent ballparks and other sport facilities in the US and abroad, and Devroux & Purnell, a highly experienced DC architecture firm. Elements of the site plan and design for the new stadium result directly from the September 2004 agreement between the city and Major League Baseball and the December 2004 Ballpark Omnibus Financing and Revenue Act of 2004, which provides for the financing of the ballpark and states that the stadium construction will be of social and economic benefit to the District (Bill 15-1028, p. 2). The new stadium is intended to not only provide a permanent home for the new baseball team, but also to act as a catalyst for appropriate new development in this emerging part of the city.

### **IV. PROPOSAL**

The submission from the applicant includes schematic building plans, a review of the proposed design against the relevant zoning regulations, and a detailed Transportation Management Plan. As noted in the submission, the construction schedule is subject to time constraints, related to insuring that the stadium is ready for use on Opening Day in 2008, and budget limitations of the Ballpark Act. In response to the critical time and budget constraints, the applicant requested in the original application that the Zoning Commission consider a number of separate plan options for construction of the stadium – options which varied in response to various funding schemes. While the basic siting and design of the stadium itself was essentially identical in all options, important elements relating to retail, loading, and parking varied.

The application has since been amended to remove all options except what is called "Option 1" – an option which provides for a conforming amount of retail space, mainly located along First Street, internalization of loading areas within the footprint of the building, and the provision of above grade parking structures with ground floor retail on the parcels to the north of the ballpark.

OP is further of the understanding that the applicant is finalizing significant amendments to the parking plan, with above grade parking structures (as shown in the submission) replaced by parking that is underground and/or above ground but entirely wrapped in other forms of development such as retail and residential. As such, OP will not include in this report analysis of the parking issue or the parking

structures as currently proposed. A supplemental report will be provided prior to the hearing, analyzing the most recent parking plan as proposed by the applicant.

Basic elements of the proposal include:

- **Orientation:** home base to center-field orientation will be towards the northeast. This orientation provides the best fit of the stadium onto the shape of the site, and it allows the principal outfield opening to orient towards the Navy Yard Metro Station, where many if not most patrons will arrive to the site, in an exciting and inviting way. This orientation also allows development along South Capitol Street to take on a more formal and architecturally solid character in conformance to plans for this street, to provide the desired 15 foot setback, and to minimize impacts on existing residential areas on the opposite side of South Capitol Street.
- **Stadium Size:** Stadium capacity of 41,000 seats. It would have a footprint of about 500,000 sq ft., including the play field, and a total square footage of about 1.2 million square feet. This results in an FAR of about 1.4. This includes an office “annex” adjacent to the planned new South Capitol Street / Potomac traffic circle at the south-west corner of the ballpark site. Total FAR including the parking garages as currently proposed is approximately 2.02.
- **Stadium Height:** The height of the stadium is below the permitted height of 130 feet. The maximum defined height, measured from South Capitol Street, to the top of the floating canopy roof is about 110 feet, although light fixtures extend up from this by about 10 feet. Portions of the stadium, however, are considerably lower— along First Street SE, the defined height to the top of the uppermost roof canopy is less than 90 feet, and the height to the top of the more solid building form is about 45 feet. The height of the building along South Capitol Street is about 80 feet.
- **Streetscape Design:** The site plan provides for generous amounts of pedestrian sidewalk around the ballpark. Entrances to the stadium would be provided from each surrounding street, with principal entry openings onto a plaza at Half Street SE to the north, and onto Potomac Avenue SE and the Anacostia Riverfront to the south, funneling people towards the metro station and the planned entertainment/retail district along Half and First Streets SE and along the waterfront, and away from existing residential areas. A second plaza at the south end of the site would be partly hard and partly soft landscaping. Dramatic pedestrian ramps, which provide vertical movement to the various levels of the stadium, help to “anchor” the design on Potomac Avenue SE and South Capitol Street and provide important views for all stadium patrons towards the Capitol Dome and towards the waterfront. Ground floor street-oriented retail would be provided mainly along 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE, in conformance with the vision of a destination retail / entertainment district. Detailed landscape plans have not been provided, and it is not clear that the site planning fully conforms to recent planning studies completed by NCPD, AWC, and DDOT. OP is particularly concerned that the site plan shows a row of security related bollards on public space, surrounding the entire structure. If security measures are needed, a more creative approach is warranted.
- **Building Material:** Building façade materials include glass, metal, stone and masonry cladding, as described in the applicant’s submission with references shown on the building elevation sheets.
- **Scoreboard Location / Design:** The scoreboard is proposed to be located in the northeast corner of the ballpark site. The application notes the defined height as being 80 feet to the top of the scoreboard (as measured from South Capitol Street), but it will appear taller from other vantage points. In addition to being the most logical location in terms of effectiveness for fans, this allows it

to be as far from South Capitol Street as possible, and to be at least partially screened by the rest of the stadium building from motorists and pedestrians on South Capitol Street

- **Lighting location / design:** Field lighting utilizing a band of lights incorporated into the uppermost roof canopy. This reduces light spill, minimizes the need for lights on standards, and minimize the visibility of the lights themselves, particularly as seen from outside the structure. However, two light standards, to light portions of the outfield, are shown, to a height of about 130 feet, slightly higher than the band of lights to be hung from the roof canopy.
- **Parking and Loading Access:** On-site parking is not required by the zoning regulations, but is required by the agreement between the city and Major League Baseball, in the amount of 1,225 spaces. The application, as of the date of drafting this report, includes some underground parking at the south end of the site with access from Potomac Avenue SE, as well as two above grade parking structures at the north end of the site with access from N Street SE. Additional OP analysis of updated parking plans will be provided prior to the public hearing

Access to an internal, enclosed loading area would be provided from First Street SE, at the north end of the stadium footprint. There is a separate loading / trash collection access from Potomac Avenue. Bus parking will be located off-site, although the location has not yet been finalized with DDOT. The applicant is proposing some media truck parking on Potomac Avenue.

In a separate application to the Council of the District of Columbia, the applicant also received permission for the closing of those portions of Half Street SE, O Street SE, P Street SE, and alleys within the ballpark site. The Council also approved a narrowing of Potomac Avenue SE, which currently has a right-of-way width of 160 feet, down to a more typical and pedestrian friendly width of 120 feet, with the 40 feet of former right-of-way added to the ballpark site.

## V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Proposed Baseball Stadium development would directly and indirectly (through being a catalyst for ballpark-area redevelopment) further the following major themes of the Comprehensive Plan, as outlined and detailed in Chapter 1 - General Provisions Element:

- (a) *Stabilizing and improving the District's neighborhoods*
- (b) *Increasing the quantity and quality of employment opportunities in the District*
- (e) *Respecting and improving the physical character of the District*
- (h) *Reaffirming and strengthening the District's role as the economic hub of the National Capital Region*
- (i) *Promoting enhanced public safety*
- (j) *Providing for diversity and overall social responsibilities*

Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives of particular relevance include ones within the Economic Development, Environmental Protection, Transportation, Urban Design, Land Use, and Ward 6 Chapters:

## CHAPTER 2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### 200 Declaration Of Major Policies

- 200.5 *The District's overall economic development goals are to generate a high-performance economy, create job opportunities for District residents, expand the revenue base through a strong, growing*

*citizen-business-government partnership, and develop a program that moves from economic development planning through implementation and completion of projects*

200 8 *The District places a high priority on expanding its role as a leading center for national and international tourism and international business*

#### **205 Economic Development In Downtown And The Central Employment Area**

205.1 *The economic development in Downtown and the Central Employment Area objectives are to stimulate renewed economic vitality and job generation Downtown and to encourage additional development, economic diversification, and job generation in portions of the Central Employment Area outside Downtown*

205 2 (f) *Encourage and assist development and employment growth in other parts of the Central Employment Area, with special emphasis on achieving the mix of land uses, residential and commercial, that promotes increased economic activity in the evenings and weekends as well as during the work day,*

(h) *Support significant new commercial and mixed-use developments in the Northeast No. 1 /Eckington Yards, South Capitol Street/Buzzard Point, and Anacostia Metrorail Station development opportunity areas as appropriate to their inclusion within an expanded Central Employment Area, and*

#### **209 Public Action**

209 1 *The public action objective is to facilitate the District's economic development program by providing coordinated governmental responses to program and implementation issues*

209.2 (i) *Recognize the importance of professional sports in achieving economic development goals and support efforts to return major league baseball to the District;*

### **CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ELEMENT**

#### **402 Improving Water Quality**

402.1 *The objectives of improving water quality are to improve the quality of water in the rivers and streams of the District to meet public health and water quality standards, and to maintain physical, chemical, and biological integrity of these watercourses for multiple uses, including recreation*

402 2 (b) *Minimize overflows of untreated sewage from the combined sewerage system,*

(d) *Reduce water pollution resulting from point and non-point sources;*

(f) *Promote water conservation,*

#### **403 Improving Air Quality**

403 2 (c) *Promote land use patterns and transportation services which decrease reliance on automobiles for commuting and other routine trips*

#### **404 Solid Waste Management**

404 1 *The objective for solid waste management is to develop safe and effective methods for reducing, collecting, recycling, and disposing of solid waste and sewage sludge*

#### **405 Protecting The Quality Of The Land Areas**

405 2 (f) *Ensure public access to waterfront areas and protect and enhance their aesthetic and recreational qualities*

#### **407 Conserving Water**

407.2 (a) *Practice water conservation in all District government facilities and operations and promote conservation by businesses, the federal government, and the general public,*

**408 Conserving Energy**

- 408.1 The conserving energy objective is to promote efforts to achieve and maintain efficient use of energy, sufficient energy supplies, and the maximum use possible of plentiful energy sources*
- 408.2 (a) Promote efficient use and management of nonrenewable energy resources through a series of incentives, initiatives, and mandates,*
- (b) Foster the development of alternative energy resources and systems that will reduce the dependence on imported energy, provide opportunities for economic and community development, and benefit the quality of the environment,*

**CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

**502 Transportation: General**

- 502.1 The general objectives for transportation are to support District policy to preserve and improve neighborhoods, to facilitate the commerce of the District, and to support District growth and development objectives to expand business and job opportunities.*
- 502.2 (a) Support land use arrangements that simplify and economize transportation services, including mixed-use zones that permit the co-development of residential and nonresidential uses to promote higher density residential development at strategic locations, particularly near appropriate Metrorail stations,*
- (d) Establish traffic management strategies to separate local traffic from through-traffic within residential neighborhoods, route through-traffic around identified neighborhood enclaves if possible . . .*
- (e) Require off-street loading of merchandise in commercial areas to the extent feasible . . .*

**504 Private Passenger Automobiles**

- 504.1 The private passenger automobile objective is to reduce regional dependence on the private passenger automobile in order to improve air quality and reduce congestion*
- 504.2 (c) Promote the use of alternatives to the private passenger automobile, including bicycling and walking, and provide additional pedestrian paths and bicycle routes and facilities,*

**CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

**601 Public Facilities Goal**

- 601 It is the goal of the District to provide adequate and energy-efficient public facilities in good condition to support the cost-effective delivery of municipal programs and services, and to support economic development and neighborhood improvement objectives*

**CHAPTER 7 URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**

**700 Declaration Of Major Policies**

- 700.2 The District must afford more attention to the future design and development of its waterfronts. The Potomac and Anacostia Rivers offer tremendous amenities which are unrealized and underutilized*
- 700.4 Future development must be carefully controlled to protect and enhance the neighborhoods, natural open spaces, and national and international image qualities*

**701 Urban Design Goal**

- 701.1 It is the goal of the District to promote the protection, enhancement, and enjoyment of the natural environs and to promote a built environment that serves as a complement to the natural environment,*

*provides visual orientation, enhances the District's aesthetic qualities, emphasizes neighborhood identities, and is functionally efficient*

**702 Urban Design: General**

702.2 *The policy established in support of the urban design objectives is to strengthen and enhance the physical image and symbolic qualities of the District that establish its character as an urban center and the Nation's Capital*

**706 Waterfront Design Areas Policies**

706.2 (d) *Require that site planning in these areas establish, and be sensitive to, the close interrelationship between buildings, parks and open spaces, and the rivers,*

**708 Buildings**

708.2 (a) *Design residential, commercial, and all other buildings to complement or enhance the physical character of the District, and*

(b) *Design buildings to include the use of appropriate arrangements of building materials, height, scale, massing, and buffering to complement the immediate region*

**709 Streetscape**

709.2 (a) *Develop a unifying system of well-designed streets, sidewalks, parks, and pedestrian ways;*

(b) *Reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic in order to increase pedestrian safety and comfort,*

(c) *Create a visually interesting environment that utilizes the design opportunities present in the public space and defines a special image for both Downtown and District neighborhoods,*

**712 Areas In Need Of New And Improved Character**

712.2 (e) *Establish a new physical identity in areas having a strong negative image and where the surrounding areas lack character,*

(g) *Utilize large-scale development or capital improvement projects as opportunities for establishing a positive image or redirection in deteriorated areas*

**713 Commercial Activity Corridors**

713.2 (a) *Ensure that the design of future development respects the urban framework created by the L'Enfant Plan and complements its intent;*

(d) *Encourage the design of mixed-use development for large-scale projects to create active use during both day and evening hours,*

(e) *Orient major new development toward the street in order to emphasize the public space as a setting for active use,*

(g) *Encourage special design quality around Metrorail stations to create aesthetically pleasing physical concentrations of activity and development,*

(i) *Focus special design attention on corridors and centers in areas of the District that have poor images, low development of activity concentrations, and are underserved,*

(j) *Encourage the design of future development to be compatible with the established characters of the surrounding areas,*

(k) *Encourage the development of physical boundaries between commercial concentrations and adjacent residential areas so as to enhance the character and integrity of both sectors,*

## CHAPTER 11 LAND USE ELEMENT

### 1101 Land Use Goal

1101 1 *It is the goal of the District to assure the efficient use of land resources within legal, economic, fiscal, environmental, and other public policy constraints to meet neighborhood, community, and District-wide needs, and to help foster other District goals*

### 1105 Objectives For Commercial Areas

1105 1 *The objectives for commercial areas are to promote the vitality of the District's commercial areas, including Downtown, and to provide for the continued growth and vitality of the District's economy and its employment base*

## CHAPTER 17 WARD 6 PLAN

### 1701 Ward 6 Objectives For Economic Development

1701 1 (a) *To encourage a range of commercial services and facilities for Ward 6 residents through appropriate development of commercial areas when needed and to upgrade commercial areas such as . . . South Capitol from the Capitol to Buzzard's Point, and*

(b) *To stimulate economic activity and employment opportunities and growth consistent with the respective needs of the various neighborhoods in Ward 6.*

### 1714 Ward 6 Policies In Support Of Transportation Objectives

1714 1 (b) *Seek to ensure that development adjacent to the Ward 6 Metrorail Stations enhances ridership,*

(c) *Minimize conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic,*

### 1721 Ward 6 Objectives For Urban Design

1721 1 (c) *To encourage a high quality of architecture consistent with the styles and characteristics of buildings in Ward 6 ,*

### 1733 Ward 6 Objectives For Land Use

1733 1 (c) *To locate the more intensive and active land uses in areas of Ward 6 that, by virtue of existing and planned infrastructures, can accommodate and support those types of uses and to monitor development and redevelopment adjacent to designated historic districts to ensure compatibility*

In general, OP believes that the proposal generally furthers or is not inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, although more detailed plans are required to fully assess this, particularly with regards to environmental and transportation guidelines.

## VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP

The area is designated on the Generalized Land Use Map as mixed Production and Technical Employment, Medium to High Density Commercial, "a shopping and service area that generally offers the largest concentration and variety of good and services outside the Central Employment Area"; and High Density Residential (Comprehensive Land Use Map). This designation generally corresponds to zoning currently on the site, with the exception of "production and technical employment", which would more directly relate to the former industrial zoning on this site

However, the adopted Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) serves as supplemental guidance to the Comprehensive Plan and re-envisioned the area as a new and vibrant, high density mixed use neighborhood. A ballpark would not be inconsistent with this new vision



The site is within the Navy Yard Metro Development Area, and within the Central Employment Area, the core area of the District where the greatest concentration of employment in the city and region is encouraged. By supporting and encouraging the development of an urbane and high density mixed use residential / retail / office / and entertainment district, the ballpark proposal would further the overall objectives of these designations and adopted plans.

## **VII. PLANNING AND ZONING ISSUES**

### **1. Anacostia Waterfront Initiative / Near Southeast Target Area Plan**

The Ballpark Area is within the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) area. The vision of the AWI is of a clean and vibrant waterfront with a variety of parks, recreation opportunities, and places for people to meet, relax, encounter nature and experience the heritage of the waterfront. The AWI also seeks to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods, enhance and protect park areas, improve water quality and environment, and, where appropriate, increase access to the water and maritime activities along the waterfront.

The AWI includes a number of target areas, including the Near Southeast target area within which the subject site lies. The new stadium would not appear to be in conflict with planning principles cited in the AWI for the Near Southeast target area (AWI Framework Plan, p. 119), and would particularly further the following:

- 1. Extend the surrounding urban fabric to the waterfront, bringing the city to the Anacostia River*
- 2. Build upon the current wave of public and private development to create a comprehensive vision for the Near Southeast, integrating diverse projects.*
- 4. Create a linked network of public parks, open spaces, greenways, and tree-lined streets to tie the Near Southeast neighborhood together and to the waterfront.*
- 6. Maximize access to the waterfront from residential areas by extending existing streets and view corridors to the river*
- 7. Emphasize mixed-use development, integrating commercial and residential areas, to form a lively and active neighborhood throughout the Near Southeast.*

OP is somewhat concerned that the proposal has not adequately addressed, in the submission, how the proposal achieves the following objective

- 9. Encourage commercial development to maximize economic growth and job creation, emphasizing major street corridors and transit connections*
- 11 Encourage low-impact development with "green" building techniques for sustainable architecture and landscape design )*

The baseball site is on the western edge of the Near Southeast Target Area, which is undergoing rapid transition. The Zoning Commission has already given approval to a number of separate development projects, including the Southeast Federal Center site, the Hope VI Arthur Capper / Carrollsburg site, and the US Department of Transportation Headquarters, while a Public Hearing for review of PUD Phase II review of the Florida Rock Property site has been scheduled for September 2006. The area is also close to the Washington Navy Yard, which has received significant investment to accommodate over 10,000 employees, including restoring historic structures, constructing infrastructure improvements, and enhancing the waterfront area. A

number of other commercial developments have recently been completed or are under construction, while a design for the new Canal Blocks Park has been chosen and construction is imminent. Together, these projects represent significant public and private investment in this area.

The Near Southeast Area Urban Design Framework Plan was drafted to tie together these many separate development initiatives. The Plan includes a number of Urban Design Principles for the area and for specific sites within the area, which are generally more detailed and specific versions of the AWI Near Southeast Area planning principles noted above. The building of a baseball stadium and the surrounding mixed use residential, office, retail and entertainment district are intended to further the general urban design objectives, particularly by addressing the introduction of a mixture of uses along the Waterfront, and encouraging an interconnected system of parks and trails (connectivity to and through the site to the waterfront).

## **2. South Capitol Street Studies**

The District Department of Transportation is currently managing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the reconstruction of South Capitol Street. The street is envisioned as a grand and lively urban boulevard in the tradition of Pennsylvania Avenue and Connecticut Avenue, serving residents and visitors as a principal gateway to the U.S. Capitol, the Anacostia waterfront and the Southwest, Southeast and Buzzard Point neighborhoods. Through meetings with stakeholders, including area residents and business owners, the study will build on the broad principles that underlie the AWI, including improving public access to the waterfront, providing greater continuity in the waterfront open space system and trail network, encouraging economic revitalization, and respecting the Anacostia River as a central element of the city and region. The EIS is expected to be completed in 2006. DDOT has indicated to OP that it is their intention to provide to the Zoning Commission separate analysis of the stadium proposal against traffic and transportation goals and objectives for the District.

NCPC has also completed a new vision for South Capitol Street, also acknowledging the need and opportunity to transform South Capitol Street into a grand urban boulevard, and providing specific recommendations for the form and character of the street and new development fronting the street.

## **3. South Capitol Street, Ballpark District and Ballpark Master Plan**

The Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC) has been charged with overseeing a Master Planning process for the baseball site and the surrounding area. This study is intended to create a detailed development plan for a larger baseball district, encompassing lands from M Street to the north to the Anacostia River to the south. This study follows other recently completed planning studies for the area in general and for the South Capitol Street corridor.

## **VIII. Zoning Regulations**

The property is zoned CG/CR (Capitol Gateway Overlay District / Commercial Residential District). The base CR District permits a medium to high density mixed use form of development. By-right density is limited to 6.0 FAR, of which a maximum of 3.0 may be non-residential. Height is limited to 90 feet.

The CG Overlay was adopted by the Zoning Commission in 2002, and was amended in 2005 (Zoning Commission Case 05-08) to (among other things).

- permit a sport and entertainment stadium on this site,
- permit an FAR of 6.0 and a maximum height of 130 feet,
- require a 15 foot setback along South Capitol Street;
- require a portion of the exterior façade to be devoted to “preferred” retail uses; and
- establish a mandatory review process against a detailed set of guidelines and objectives.

The stadium building, under the option being considered, is consistent with many aspects of the zoning regulations, including FAR, height, setback, and amount of retail required. However, as proposed, the ballpark structure would require Zoning Commission relief from the following requirements:

- §1606.7, which requires that any on-site parking be located underground. As proposed, much of the parking would be located in above grade parking structures. As presented, the parking proposal is contrary to the wording and intent of the Overlay and other planning initiatives for the area and OP cannot support it as shown. OP further notes that, technically, most of the parking is considered “off-site”, since it is located in separate parking garages but that, since the zoning does not require on-site parking, this does not require relief.
- §1606.14 (d), which requires a minimum clear height for required retail of 14 feet minimum, to ensure that the retail space to accommodate as wide a range of commercial users as possible. The proposed retail space would have clear heights of 13 feet to 17 feet.
- §1606.14 (e), which requires a minimum average depth for required retail of 50 feet. The average would be about 37 feet, to a minimum of 24 feet in depth.
- §1606.16, which requires a setback of 15 feet minimum along South Capitol Street – the bulk of the stadium would conform to this provision, but the proposed pedestrian ramp would extend into the setback area above a height of 15 feet.

OP analysis of these relief requests is provided in detail below, but in summary, OP cannot support the above grade parking request as currently submitted; OP has some concerns with the viability of some of the retail space that is as narrow as 24 feet in depth, and has no concerns with the requested relief for retail height or South Capitol Street setback.

## **IX. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS**

OP analysis of Option 1 for the ballpark site is against the Capitol Gateway (CG) Overlay regulations, guidelines, and objectives of §1606 of the Zoning Regulations. Any additional, future development on the ballpark site would also have to meet zoning regulations and address the goals and objectives for the area, and would be reviewed separately by the Zoning Commission once plans are prepared and an application for review made to the Commission.

### **1600 PREAMBLE**

*1600.2 The purposes of the CG Overlay District are to*

- (a) *Assure development of the area with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, and a suitable height, bulk and design of buildings, as generally indicated in the Comprehensive Plan and recommended by planning studies of the area,*

The stadium has already served as a catalyst for proposals for new residential, retail, and office development in the area. The ballpark itself is well within density and height zoning restrictions, provides for safe and convenient pedestrian movement through the area, and provides ground floor retail at the most appropriate places on its perimeter. The design provides for streetscape improvements along major streets, although additional detail is required. The building is designed to be appropriately "monumental" along South Capitol Street, and less formal on other streets.

- (b) *Encourage a variety of support and visitor-related uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, cultural and hotel or inn uses,*

The current proposal provides the minimum required amount of street oriented retail. While additional on-site retail would be highly desirable, the stadium is also expected to support off-site retail, entertainment, and hotel uses in the surrounding ballpark area.

- (c) *Allow for continuation of existing industrial uses, which are important economic assets to the city, during the extended period projected for redevelopment,*

The intention of this guideline was to provide for existing industrial uses to be retained until such time as the property redevelops, so is not applicable to this proposal.

- (d) *Provide for a reduced height and bulk of buildings along the Anacostia riverfront in the interest of ensuring views over and around waterfront buildings, and provide for continuous public open space along the waterfront with frequent public access points, and*

This provision is not directly applicable as the stadium is not directly on the waterfront. However, the form of the stadium does "devolve" (lower and open up) at the 1st and Potomac corner, where a destination retail node is anticipated on the waterfront (Florida Rock site).

- (e) *Require suitable ground-level retail and service uses and adequate sidewalk width along M Street, S E , near the Navy Yard Metrorail station*

This is also not directly applicable as the stadium has no M Street frontage, but it is expected that stadium users will support retail and entertainment uses throughout the ballpark area, including along M Street.

- (f) *Provide for development of Squares 702-706 and Reservation 247 as a ballpark for major league sport and entertainment and associated uses*

The proposal directly achieves this guideline.

## **1606 BALLPARK**

**1606.1** *A Ballpark may be constructed and operated within Squares 702, 703, 704, 705 and 706 and Reservation 247 (the "Ballpark Site")*

The ballpark will be entirely on the named squares. Additional development parcels at the north and south ends of the stadium are also noted in the application.

**1606.2** *For the purposes of this section, the term Ballpark means a stadium or arena, including accessory buildings or structures (including, but not limited to office and transportation facilities) that has as its primary purpose the hosting of professional athletic team events*

The design of the facility clearly has the “hosting of professional athletic team events” as the primary purpose

**1606.3** *The Ballpark may also be used to host events customarily held in such facilities including, but not limited to performances, amateur sporting events, municipal functions, and public or private ceremonies*

The applicant notes that the stadium facility would be capable of hosting such events. Events other than baseball games are anticipated.

**1606.4** *Notwithstanding § 631.1 of this Title, no portion of the FAR need be used for residential purposes within the Ballpark Site*

This regulation essentially permits an FAR of 6.0 for non-residential uses. As proposed, the 1.2 million sq.ft. stadium would have an FAR of about 1.4.

**1606.5** *The Ballpark's maximum permitted height shall be that permitted by the Act to Regulate the Height of Buildings in the District of Columbia, approved June 1, 1910 (36 Stat. 452, D.C. Official Code §§ 6-601.01 to 6-601.09), as amended. For the purposes of determining height for a Ballpark, height shall mean the vertical distance measured from the level of the curb opposite the middle of the front of the building to the highest point of the building including a scoreboard, roof, cantilevered sunscreen, or parapet, with the exception of elements noted in §630.3*

The Height Act permits a building of up to 130 feet on this site. The stadium building at its highest point is shown to have a height of just less than 120 feet, including light fixtures (110 feet to top of roof canopy). The freestanding light standards would have a height of 130 feet. Enclosed portions of buildings would have a much lower defined height – about 80 feet on South Capitol Street and 45 feet on First Street SE.

The scoreboard is noted as having a defined height of just over 80 feet. Due to grade changes, it will appear higher from some vantage points, but does not extend up beyond the height of the roof canopy.

**1606.6** *In addition to the streetwall setbacks of §1606.15, any portion of the Ballpark that exceeds 110 feet in height shall provide an additional one-to-one (1:1) step back from the building line along South Capitol Street*

As the highest point of the roof is 110 feet, this requirement is not applicable.

**1606.7** *All parking spaces within the Ballpark Site shall be provided underground. At or above grade parking spaces shall be permitted if approved by the Zoning Commission pursuant to §1606.18, subject to the applicant demonstrating*

*(a) Practical difficulty with the provision of underground parking; and*

*(b) Compliance with the provisions of §§ 1606.19 & 20*

As noted earlier, the parking structures shown on the original application appear to OP to be inconsistent with this requirement as they are entirely above grade. However, the applicant has indicated that amendments to the parking solution are pending, so OP will defer analysis of parking regulations at this time. If the proposal is amended, OP analysis of consistency with the regulations may change. OP will provide additional analysis and recommendation in a supplemental report prior to the hearing.

**1606.8** *A maximum of 1,225 vehicular parking spaces shall be provided for the Ballpark use within the Ballpark Site, in addition to bus parking requirements of §1606.10. Of this number, a minimum of 125 shall be designated handicapped parking spaces. Any parking spaces in addition to the 1,225 amount shall be permitted if approved by the Zoning Commission pursuant to §1606.18; subject to the applicant demonstrating*

- (a) That the parking spaces are needed to satisfy parking demand generated by the Ballpark not met by existing or approved but not yet constructed parking facilities, and*
- (b) Compliance with the provisions of §§ 1606 19 and 20.*

To date, all proposals reviewed by OP have indicated that 1,225 parking spaces shall be provided within the ballpark site. To date, there has been no indication of a desire or need for more ballpark related parking spaces. As the applicant has indicated that amendments to the parking solution are pending, OP will defer analysis of parking regulations at this time. Additional OP analysis of this issue will be provided prior to the public hearing.

**1606.9** *In considering whether to approve additional ballpark related at or above ground parking spaces under §1606 8, the Commission shall judge, balance, and reconcile the need for additional on-site parking against any adverse impacts the presence of the parking will have on traffic, and the aesthetics and development of the surrounding neighborhood.*

OP analysis of this issue will be provided prior to the public hearing.

**1606.10** *Any on-site bus parking shall be located internal to a building, with doors and entranceways designed to compliment the building façade, and shall permit safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian movement.*

The proposal is technically conforming to this regulation, as there are no bus parking locations on-site. Rather, the applicant is proposing to locate bus parking offsite, although it appears to OP that a definitive location has not been identified. The application notes that media trucks would be parked inside the building, and along Potomac Avenue. OP would join DDOT in opposing the location of bus and media truck parking on any road right-of-way.

**1606.11** *The Zoning Commission may grant relief from the requirements of § 1606 10 pursuant to §1606 18 if necessary to the economic viability of the Ballpark and if consistent with the purposes of the CG Overlay as stated in §1600 2 and the provisions of §§ 1606 19 & 20.*

Relief is not required as part of the application as submitted.

**1606.12** *Loading platforms and berths for the Ballpark shall be located internal to a building, with doors and entranceways designed to complement the building façade, and shall permit safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian movement.*

The loading area layout for Option 1 is generally conforming to this regulation, as it shows one main loading area accessed from one entrance on First Street SE. The internal area is large enough to accommodate the required number of trucks, and provides adequate turning radius for trucks so that they do not have to back into or out of the space. This represents a significant improvement over the previously proposed "base" option which had banks of garage doors along First Street and which clearly did not meet the intent of this regulation.

However, the plans also indicate a second loading entry which provides direct access to the field from First Street SE; and a separate loading / trash collection area adjacent to underground parking access from Potomac Ave. OP has recommended to the applicant that they consolidate access ways to further minimize the number of garage doors, for reasons of design, streetscape character, pedestrian / vehicular safety, and to minimize breaks in the retail streetscape.

**1606.13** *A minimum of one pedestrian entrance gate to the Ballpark shall be provided on each street frontage.*

There is at least one entry way from each street.

- A major entrance from N Street at the end of Half Street,

- A major entrance from Potomac Avenue, across from the anticipated waterfront retail node,
- Three significant entrances along South Capitol Street, at the ends of O and P Streets and at the north-west corner of the site, and
- A somewhat secondary entrance from First Street SE at the north end of the ballpark (adjacent to the loading access) From this point, patrons can ascend a relatively narrow flight of stairs to the main concourse level OP is concerned that its location and design, making this the least successful entrance Additional attention is needed to ensure a convenient, safe, and inviting entrance on this important pedestrian street at this location.

**1606.14** *Not less than twenty percent (20%) of the Ballpark building's exterior perimeter frontage, not including any detached accessory building, shall be devoted to retail, service, entertainment, or arts uses ("preferred uses") as permitted in §1807.2 of this Title, with the addition of "museum", in accordance with the following provisions*

Calculations provided by the applicant indicate that 21% of the perimeter of the building would be devoted to retail use. At the proposed depths, this equates to about 32,000 sq.ft in total. Retail space is provided mainly on First Street SE, with some retail also on South Capitol Street, and facing the plaza at N Street. The exact types of retail occupying most of this space has not yet been determined.

**(a)** *Preferred uses shall have a street orientation,*

All of the retail space faces onto public streets and plazas that are accessible to the public, although OP notes that the main restaurant fronting onto the N Street Plaza is not on a street, and would not be accessible to the general public during game times.

**(b)** *Preferred uses shall provide direct exterior access at ground level,*

All retail space appears to be designed to provide direct, individual access to public ways at ground level

**(c)** *Not less than fifty percent (50%) of area devoted to preferred uses shall be devoted to display windows having clear or low-emissivity,*

The applicant has not requested relief from this requirement, and elevation drawings for Option 1 indicate significant amounts of glazing for the retail.

**(d)** *The minimum floor to ceiling height of area devoted to preferred uses shall be 14 feet clear,*

Portions of the proposed retail space would not conform to this requirement, and the applicant has requested relief. Although most of the retail space would provide 14 foot height minimum, retail height would vary from 13 to 17 feet. OP feels that, while fully meeting this requirement would be preferable, the proposed relief would not result in unmarketable retail space, and does not object.

**(e)** *The average depth from the exterior façade in towards the center of the building for space devoted to preferred retail shall be 50 feet minimum*

Retail space would have a depth varying from 24 feet to 52 feet. The average would be about 37.3 feet and the applicant has requested relief OP is not opposed to a variety of retail depths, and in fact the regulation states that the retail space is to have an "average" depth of 50 feet – not that 50 feet is the minimum permitted While the more shallow space may be appropriate for some forms of retail, OP has some concerns that the limited retail depth in places may limit the types of retail users and OP would encourage proposals to increase retail amount and depth The sidewalk at this

location is quite wide, so there appears to be an opportunity for expansion of the retail space outwards and/or the provision of outdoor seating associated with the retail space.

**1606.15** *The Zoning Commission may grant relief to a maximum of 50% of the amount of space required by § 1606.14 if necessary for the economic viability of the Ballpark and if consistent with the purposes of the CG Overlay as stated in §1600.2 and the provisions of §§1606.19 & 20.*

Relief is not required.

**1606.16** *Each building or structure located on the portion of South Capitol Street that lies within the Ballpark Site shall be set back for its entire height and frontage not less than 15 feet, provided that a minimum of 60% of the street-wall shall be constructed on the setback line*

Generally, the building footprint and façade fully meet this requirement. However, the applicant has proposed a small projection into this space (totaling about 40 feet or less than 5% of the total façade length) for an internal pedestrian ramp connection between the various levels of the stadium. The projection would be up to 15 feet in depth from the façade, and would start at a height of 15 feet above the sidewalk. While OP would not support most forms of projection into this setback area, OP does not object to this particular projection. The pedestrian ramp provides a unique opportunity for all ballpark attendees to enjoy a variety of views, of the Capitol Dome, the waterfront, and the new bridge (when constructed). As such, the ramp anchors the South Capitol Street design, provides for an interesting public experience; and reinforces the public nature of the building. The encroachment would not have a significant impact on the overall character of South Capitol Street, since it would read as a special, visually open feature. It would not extend down to the ground so would not impact pedestrian movement or the placement of trees and other streetscape improvements. It would extend only into the setback but not into public space. If denied, the pedestrian ramp would presumably be pulled back into the building (likely a less costly alternative), and a unique opportunity would be lost to augment the baseball arrival experience.

**1606.17** *No private driveway may be constructed or used from South Capitol Street to any parking or loading berth areas in or adjacent to a building or structure constructed after {Effective Date of This Section}*

To date, no access to any parking has been proposed from South Capitol Street. OP would not support such access, as it would be inconsistent with the reconstruction of South Capitol Street as a monumental boulevard. As parking plans are evolving, OP will provide an update on this issue in a supplemental report prior to the public hearing.

**1606.18** *The Ballpark and all other proposed buildings or structures within the Ballpark Site shall be subject to the approval of the Zoning Commission in accordance with the provisions of §§1606.19 & 1606.20*

**1606.19** *An applicant requesting approval under this section must prove that the proposed building or structure, including the siting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will minimize potential impacts to the neighborhood and the United States Capitol by*

**(a)** *Minimizing associated noise, particularly into adjacent residential neighborhoods,*

The orientation of the ballpark and the relatively solid and high South Capitol Street façade should minimize noise spill into existing residential neighborhoods to the west. Major entrances “funnel” patrons towards the planned retail / entertainment nodes on the east side of the site and away from residential areas. OP would support ongoing dialogue between the applicant, the team, and the neighborhood to assess actual impacts following completion of the stadium.



The OP certification letter requested clarification of the applicant's noise level analysis. To date, OP has not received this additional information.

*(b) Minimizing light spill, particularly into adjacent residential neighborhoods,*

The orientation and the relatively solid and high South Capitol Street façade should minimize light spill into existing residential neighborhoods to the west, as the stadium itself should block most of the potential light spill. Most of the field lights have been incorporated into a band of lighting attached to the outside edge of the roof structure. In addition to being an interesting design feature, this results in lower than normal lighting, and minimization of the number of freestanding light standards.

The applicant has not yet addressed exterior building lighting in detail, to show where and at what levels the building and the public plazas will be lit and the possible impacts this might have. The application notes that there will be some nighttime "sky glow", but that the limited amount should not result in competition with lighting for the US Capitol dome. The band of lighting could result in an interesting and distinctive design element for the stadium as viewed from afar.

The OP certification letter requested clarification of the applicant's light level analysis – to date, OP has not received this additional information.

*(c) Minimizing parking and traffic conflict between Ballpark patrons and neighborhood residents,*

As the applicant has indicated that parking plans are evolving, detailed analysis of conformity to this guideline will be provided in a supplemental report. However, to date, proposals seen by OP would seem to generally conform to this provision. There would be no access to parking or loading from South Capitol Street.

The applicant's Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP) will detail the flow of traffic, where parking (on and off site) will be located, and measures to ensure that residential neighborhoods are not impacted. DDOT has indicated to OP that while this plan has not been completed by the applicant, they are working on obtaining assurances that the applicant will complete it to DDOT satisfaction. The utilization of off-site parking (mainly by sharing parking provided for future area developments) will spread out potential impacts and lessen impacts on directly adjacent neighborhoods. Off-site parking located in residential neighborhoods or which require or encourage access through residential neighborhoods will not be supported.

*(d) Encouraging the use of bicycles through the provision of safe, secure and convenient bike storage, as well as other forms of alternative transportation to the site,*

The majority of ballpark patrons are expected to arrive from the Navy Yard (green line) Metro Station, for which Federal funds have been allocated for a major upgrading and expansion. The stadium provides for convenient access from the Navy Yard Metro station at the end of Half Street SE. The applicant also notes that they are working with DDOT to improve the walking experience for patrons who may arrive from the Capitol South (orange and blue lines) Metro Station.

Utilization of a broad range of other options as alternatives to the automobile are encouraged. The stadium will be in proximity to the future Anacostia Riverwalk and trail. The application notes the provision of 65 secure bicycle parking spaces, which meets minimal zoning requirements, but it was not clear on the plans where these spaces are located. Additional secure bicycle parking, which could be very popular for day games, would be encouraged.

The applicant also notes the pending water taxi service, which would be a fun and convenient way to access the ballpark area from points up, down, and across the Anacostia River

Finally, OP would encourage the team to consider the provision of incentives through an inventive traffic management plan, to encourage and reward patrons using alternative means to access the stadium

*(e) Minimizing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians,*

Detailed analysis will be provided as part of the supplementary review of parking for the site. Plans to date has shown that major access to parking is likely to be from N Street SE, and would have to be sited to minimize conflicts with pedestrians approaching the site from Half Street and N Street SE. Half Street, a major access point from the north, would be closed to vehicular traffic directly before and after games to minimize potential conflicts. As First Street will not be closed, it is critical that sidewalks on the ballpark site and sites to the north be made wide enough to accommodate significant pedestrian flows. Minimizing the amount of parking on the site, in favor of utilizing a more diverse range of parking options, will further limit conflicts.

The access to ungrounded parking on Potomac Avenue should not present a significant pedestrian safety hazard. The plan shows three separate loading / delivery areas (two on First Street and one on Potomac Avenue). OP has encouraged the "consolidation" of these garage spaces as much as possible to minimize impacts. However, it is unlikely that the loading areas would be active at times of peak pedestrian activity (before and after a game or other event).

*(f) Encouraging the design and development of properties in a manner that is sensitive to the establishment of South Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard while recognizing the proximate residential neighborhood use and context,*

The South Capitol Street design and massing is in keeping with plans for the creation of a more monumental character along the street, from the new bridge to the Federal core. The stadium is designed, on this side, with a more solid and formal façade treatment of concrete, glass and stone. While the design is somewhat "static" in that the façade is generally not animated by associated internal uses, the overall form and character of the building along South Capitol Street is in character with other monumental boulevards. However, the way that the curved form of the ballpark will be visible behind the outer screen is supported.

While the roof is at an appropriate height of 110 feet (to reflect anticipated height for other future development along this side of the street), the more solid building form directly along the street has a height of 80 feet, not inappropriate given the lower current and potential (90 feet) height of development across the street.

Site plans indicate a row of trees, furnishings, and a possible row of security bollards (in public space) along South Capitol Street. This does not conform to the various NCPC and AWC plans prepared for the streetscape, which call for a double row of trees, and a more pedestrian friendly experience. OP is concerned about the security bollards. If such security measures are actually deemed necessary, they should be minimized and designed in full compliance with the standards of NCPC's "Designing for Security in the Nation's Capital" to minimize their visual and psychological impact. In particular, the use of bollards should be minimized, in favor of landscape elements or furnishings such as benches which can double as security barriers. Any elements on the public space, including the bollards, will require Public Space Committee review. Such security measures for public buildings such as this have not generally been supported.

*(g) Being in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns,*

Much of the immediately surrounding neighborhood, to the north, east, and south, is anticipated to be redeveloped in the near future, so the immediate context will change significantly from what exists now. Overall design and context are being assessed and coordinated by the AWC. The stadium would generally support and further efforts to create a new context – that of a new mixed use neighborhood with active retail and entertainment streetscapes, particularly along First Street SE, although the relationship between the actual form of the stadium and site plan to overall context is not entirely clear. Relationship to the waterfront context is also critical, and discussions are continuing with the owners and designers of the Florida Rock site to ensure that the plans for these two critical areas are coordinated. The relationship of the stadium form to lower scale existing and potential development on the west side of South Capitol Street has been detailed above.

The construction of the stadium has necessitated the closing of portions of O, P, and Half Street SE. The applicant also received approval for a narrowing of Potomac Avenue from 160 feet to 120 feet, with the 40 remaining feet annexed to land on the north (ballpark) side of the street. In return, the proposal provides for feature entrances to the ballpark across from the ends of P and O Streets. OP supports this initiative, although OP's Historic Preservation (HP) and Development Review staff members have encouraged additional articulation of these entrances to further their visual importance. HP has particularly noted the P Street vista as being of importance as a prominent vantage point of this new civic monument.

*(h) Providing view analysis which assesses openness of views and vistas around the Ballpark, including views toward the Capitol Dome, other federal monumental buildings, and the waterfront, from the surrounding neighborhood and neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River, South Capitol Street, the Frederick Douglass Bridge, and the waterfront,*

The applicant has submitted 3 dimensional view analysis from a variety of vantage points directly around the stadium. Additional, longer range view analysis – to assess the impact of the stadium on the broader skyline of the District – has been requested.

*(i) Providing for safe and convenient movement to and through the site, including to public transit and to the Anacostia River, and*

The stadium layout and siting preserves pedestrian movements around the site. The site plan shows substantial sidewalks along all surrounding streets, although detail of the streetscape design and landscaping is needed to fully assess the pedestrian experience. First Street SE is envisioned as a particularly important pedestrian connection between the waterfront and the metro station / pending development to the north. The provision of retail along First Street is important to the success of this street as an active, inviting, and safe pedestrian way. The ballpark provides a wide setback from the actual property line in addition to that portion of the road right-of-way devoted to sidewalk, so the sidewalk appears wide enough to possibly accommodate some additional retail. This additional retail could be in the form of enclosed space to deepen the retail dimensions, or in the form of outdoor seating or even vendor retail, either of which would further animate this street. Maintaining an adequate width for the sidewalk for large volumes of pedestrians, however, is also important.

The ballpark design includes a large entry plaza at the foot of Half Street SE, envisioned as an active pedestrian connection between the stadium and the Navy Yard Metro station to the north. An additional large plaza is provided at the south end of the stadium, with access from Potomac Avenue and South Capitol Street, via a pedestrian way along the former P Street alignment.

- (j) *Ensuring that signage on the exterior of building or internal to the ballpark structure but visible from the outside, including the scoreboard, will not have such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or impair the vision of any driver, or otherwise interfere with the driver's operation of a motor vehicle, adversely impact an owner's enjoyment of residential property located proximate to the ballpark, or impact the character and integrity of the ballpark site*

Signage does not appear to be finalized in the application to date. The applicant states that internal signage will have limited visibility from outside the stadium. The most significant external signage will be the naming rights sign, which is noted as being no more than 17 feet in height and 62 feet above the plaza below. The naming sign would be on the Potomac Avenue elevation, so would not be visible from existing residential areas. It would be visible from the new bridge, the waterfront, and from Potomac Avenue. Another naming rights sign will be located above the turnstiles on the Half Street plaza (between what is currently shown as the parking structures).

**1606.20** *In addition to the required provisions of 1606.19, an applicant requesting approval under this section shall also demonstrate that the proposed building or structure, including the siting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation will*

- (a) *Help achieve the objectives of the CG Overlay District as set forth in §1600 2,*

Analysis of the proposal against the objectives of the CG Overlay is provided above

- (b) *Be of a superior quality,*

The applicant notes that the design will be of superior quality, and notes the experience and expertise of the design team chosen. The significance of this structure, as a prominent Washington's "monumental" building and the way that it could contribute to making the District and this neighborhood unique cannot be over-stated.

While design is a highly subjective matter, OP is generally supportive of the overall design intent for the ballpark, although there are design details – mainly related to the site planning - which OP continues to question, as noted throughout this report. OP particularly supports the overall massing and the way the curvilinear form of the ballpark and the cantilevered roof form is permitted to be on display on parts of the site, especially along South Capitol Street and Potomac Avenue. The materials are generally appropriate to the location and the use.

OP has concerns that budgetary constraints have, and may continue to, result in cost cutting measures to the external appearance of and site plan for the stadium, which would negatively impact the overall quality of the design. OP is also concerned about the minimal use of best practice environmental design features, which contributes to truly superior design. Opportunities for inventive, innovative, and precedent-setting measures for this important structure do not seem to be a major design consideration. Particularly given its proximity to the Anacostia, this appears to be a significant under-realized opportunity.

- (c) *Encourage safe and active streetscapes through building articulation, landscaping, and the provision of active ground level uses including retail, entertainment, cultural, and pedestrian concourse space,*

The design and articulation of the various elevations of the ballpark appears to be generally appropriate to the various elevations. Active ground floor uses have been provided, mainly along First Street SE (retail) and, to some extent, N Street / Half Street Plaza. Significant plaza areas have been provided at both the north and south ends of the stadium. However, there are some concerns that if the Half Street plaza is not lined with appropriate retail, will be underutilized and somewhat uninviting. The south plaza is made up of a hard-scape circulation route, the baseball

history time-line, and a large lawn. While this space may be active and well used on game days, it is not clear how this area would be programmed to be an inviting space on non-game days

Additional details regarding the design of the public spaces, including space on public lands, is needed. On a site this large with this much pedestrian and plaza space, the character of this space will be critical, not just for the success of the ballpark, but of the surrounding ballpark district as well

*(d) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation; and*

There are concerns that portions of the Potomac Avenue and the South Capitol Street elevation are not as well articulated as they should be, and will present expanses of well designed but not animated façade. Much of the ground level programming of the building in these locations is “service” oriented, so will not contain uses which supplement the public ways and pedestrian experience.

On a smaller scale, portions of First Street, which is generally retail in character, are devoted to openings for service vehicles and functions. This interferes with the retail continuity and creates “dead zones” in the otherwise lively street frontage. The applicant has proposed to articulate these sections of the building – if the service spaces cannot be relocated to the interior, then landscaping, lighting, and street furnishings should be utilized to minimize the negative impacts.

*(e) Promote the use of best practice environmental design, including minimizing potential impacts on the Anacostia River through stormwater management and recycling practices*

The applicant notes that the ballpark will meet the minimal storm water management standards of DCRA, that recycling will be encouraged, and that Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards will be followed where economically feasible. The design team has considerable experience in the use of best practice environmental design.

As noted above, to date, the commitment to best practice environmental design is considered minimal in both the building and the landscape planning and design. The stadium was originally intended incorporate “green” design<sup>1</sup>, and as a monumental civic building, should serve as an example for the provision of best practice environmental design, which could, over the life of the building, result in sizeable cost savings.

## **X. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In general, the amended application which requests review of only Option 1 meets most of the objectives and guidelines of the CG Overlay. As noted throughout the report, OP has some detailed areas of concern, including:

- Design and character of the pedestrian entry on 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE;

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<sup>1</sup> The Ballpark Omnibus Financing and Revenue Act of 2004 includes the following provisions

“(5) The ballpark shall be designed and constructed in a manner to promote the minimization of:

- (A) The life cycle cost and environmental impact of the facility and dependence on petroleum-based fuels by utilizing energy efficiency, water conservation, or solar or other renewable energy technologies; and
- (B) Waste production, water pollution, and storm water runoff from the facility, taking into account applicable criteria in effect, on the effective date of this title, of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovation, LEED-NC version 2.1, as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council.”

- Number of separate loading access ways,
- Media truck parking on road rights-of-way,
- Retail with a depth of only 24 feet;
- Some stretches of potentially unarticulated and unanimated walls along South Capitol Street, Potomac Avenue, and First Street SE;
- Visibility and viability of the main restaurant on the N Street Plaza, especially on non-game days, and consequently, the vitality of this area in general on non-game days;
- Animation of the Potomac Avenue Plaza, especially on non-game days,
- Lack of a detailed and complete Traffic Operations and Parking Plan;
- Lack of firm commitment to innovative environmental design features; and
- Security measures, shown as a row of bollards on public space around the structure.

In addition, OP notes some issues for which additional clarity would be of assistance.

- Site plan details, including trees, furnishings, and bollards,
- Height, location, and design of any external signage;
- Clarification of noise and light-spill analysis; and
- Types of retail that would be anticipated / permitted, particularly along First Street SE.

The Office of Planning (OP) can not recommend that the Zoning Commission approve Case # 06-22, Ballpark Review for the ballpark structure with accessory office building at this time. OP has serious concerns about the existing proposal for above grade parking north of the stadium, and does not recommend approval of the above grade parking structures as proposed in the application. Amendments to the application to alter the parking scheme are anticipated prior to the public hearing – additional OP analysis and recommendation on parking will be provided in a Supplemental Report prior to the Public Hearing.

#### Attachments.

##### I. Context Plan

EM/jl