

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation

DATE: March 31, 2016

SUBJECT: DOEE Evaluation of LEED for ZC #08-30B
JBG Half Street
Zoning Commission Design Review Under the Capitol Gateway Overlay

At the February 25 Public Hearing, the Commission requested that the Office of Planning (OP) coordinate with the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) on a review of the applicant's revised LEED information. Please find DOEE's response attached to this memorandum.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Energy and Environment



MEMORANDUM

TO: Anthony J. Hood,
Chairman, DC Zoning Commission

FROM: Jay Wilson, DDOE
Green Building Program Analyst

DATE: March 28, 2016

SUBJECT: 08-30B West Half II Residential – LEED and Green Building criteria

The objective of this memorandum is to respond to concerns raised by the Zoning Commission, and applicant response, regarding the level of commitment to LEED certification and sustainable building strategies for the design review application for 08-30B, West Half Street Residential.

DOEE met with the applicant on January 29, 2016. The applicant's response letter to the Zoning Commission (Exhibit 34B) indicates that while they are unable to attain LEED certification at the Gold level, their design surpasses the "intent" of LEED Gold. While we agree that well-designed architecture contributes to the quality of the neighborhood and an activated streetscape, it does not address the sustainable building strategies and possible improvements discussed with the applicant at our initial meeting. As the applicant stated, LEED is a measurement tool. The measure of sustainability typically requested by the Zoning Commission in design review applications is a Gold level. This is consistent with the baseline required of publicly financed projects in the Anacostia Waterfront Development Zone and the DC Green Construction code.

Below is a list of strategies that the project could incorporate that would increase the project's commitment to sustainability:

- Energy efficiency – By adopting the 2012 International Conservation Code, the District has strong standards in place for energy efficiency. The LEED checklist indicates that this project is meeting the minimum standard required by code. Given market conditions and the District's goal of net zero energy properties by 2032, it is strongly encouraged that the project team revisit their energy model and commitment to increased energy efficiency. The multifaceted and all glass façade design, while beautiful does have implications for energy efficiency. If not considered with this in mind, solar heat gain and glare could make units uncomfortable and require residents to spend more on heating and cooling. Financial tools like the DC Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program can help pay for increases in construction cost for high performance glazing or other strategies that increase efficiency above the baseline.

The VRF mechanical system is a very energy efficient system and should also help the

project claim additional credits for energy efficiency. Over the past few years it had decreased in cost and we have seen it incorporated into many multifamily and mixed-use projects.

- Vegetation – Incorporating vegetation into the façade is a great amenity for residents and the project. DOEE recommends that all planting materials are native species in order to minimize maintenance and irrigation needs. We advised the applicant to maximize opportunities to reduce irrigation demand on potable water including drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting.

All projects have constraints relative to the LEED Rating system including the limited number of innovation credits, applicability to the commercial sector, and unit size. However, well integrated designs prioritize green building goals in order to hit the LEED Gold target. This is not an unrealistic target for a project of this size in an urban setting. DOEE would ask that this project reconsider opportunities to increase its commitment to LEED Gold certification. Incorporating on-site renewable energy, increasing efficiency, increasing ventilation and indoor environmental quality, or limiting parking could be considered in order to guarantee the additional credits.

DOEE is glad to be a technical resource as the project continues forward. In addition, all projects are urged to take advantage of the strong financials for solar power in DC (less than a 3-5 year return on investment), the DC PACE program, and/or our Stormwater Retention Credit Trading program to decrease first cost and maximize operational savings.