

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe 
Associate Director

DATE: September 11, 2015

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 08-33C – Conference Center

PROJECT SUMMARY

Conference Center Associates (the Applicant) seeks to modify an approved Stage 2 Planned Unit Development (PUD) in order to construct a hotel, conference center, parking structure, and retail space on the eastern half of the site (Phase 1). The site is bounded by Irving Street, Michigan Avenue, and North Capitol Street. The Applicant is seeking to retain the approved PUD-related C-3-A zone, but alter the development program. The modified PUD includes the following program:

- 336 hotel rooms (an increase of 22 rooms)
- 38,600 SF of conference center space (an increase of 14,700 SF)
- 9,900 SF of retail (a decrease of 2,000 SF)
- 600 vehicle parking spaces (no change)

The western half of the site has Stage 1 PUD approval (Phase 2) and a Stage 2 PUD is anticipated as part of a separate application.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, constructing safer streets, and providing outstanding access to goods and services. As one means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure that impacts from new developments are manageable within, and take advantage of, the District's multimodal transportation network.

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District's transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. The scope of DDOT's review of this PUD modification focused on the

proposed changes to the development program within the context of the surrounding transportation network and site access.

After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

Site Design

- The proposed Irving Street access point raises safety concerns because it is located at the confluence of the eastbound North Capitol Street ramp and eastbound Irving Street travel lanes;
- The curb cut requires public space permits from DDOT and, as currently designed, it is highly unlikely to be approved with full access movements into and out of the site;
- To address the safety concerns, the Applicant proposes to assume responsibility for the design, approvals, costs, and construction associated with the re-configuration of the Irving Street and North Capitol Street ramp within right-of-way (ROW). Such changes are appropriate and could allow full-access movements at the site access point. DDOT is starting the East-West Crosstown Multimodal Study that will address multi-modal access and safety in the area, and the Applicant's proposed ROW changes will need to be consistent with the study's recommendations.

Analysis

- The Applicant completed a Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) in 2008 to support the initial PUD, which identified several transportation impacts;
- The Applicant provided trip generation calculations for the adjusted development program and found negligible changes in site-generated trip generation compared to the original PUD;
- The TIS proposed two mitigations that were codified in the Zoning Order for ZC 08-33: to signalize the Irving Street/site access intersection and redesign the eastbound Irving Street approach at the Irving Street/Michigan Avenue intersection. These mitigations remain in place as part of the requested action and are appropriate to address the impacts of the action;
- To determine if additional mitigations are required, the Applicant proposes to complete a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) as part of Phase 2 of the project.

Mitigations

DDOT has no objection to the requested action with the following conditions:

- The Applicant complete a CTR as part of Phase 2 of the project; and
- The Applicant be responsible for the design, approvals, costs, and construction associated with the re-configuration of the Irving Street and North Capitol Street ramp prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for Phase 1 of the project.

Continued Coordination

Given the complexity and size of the action, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters outside of the zoning process:

- ROW changes to Irving Street and the North Capitol Street ramp, including coordination with DDOT's East-West Crosstown Multimodal Study;
- Re-design of the Irving Street/Michigan Avenue intersection;
- Installation of a traffic signal at Irving Street/site driveway intersection;

- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built to DDOT standards;
- Utility vaults locations and treatment; and
- Short-term bicycle parking locations and treatment.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

DDOT's review of the action is divided into two categories: site design and analysis & mitigations. The following review provided by DDOT assess the action's consistency with the District's vision for a cohesive, sustainable transportation system that delivers safe and convenient ways to move people and goods, while protecting and enhancing the natural, environmental, and cultural resources of the District.

Site Design

The proposed modification retains an Irving Street access point that was part of the original site plan. In reviewing the proposed modification request, DDOT identified safety concerns with this access point, which is located at the confluence of the eastbound North Capitol Street ramp and eastbound Irving Street travel lanes. The location of the Irving Street access point creates competing movements between merging vehicles, Irving Street vehicular traffic, and vehicles seeking to access or egress the site. The access point requires public space permits from DDOT and, as currently designed, it is unlikely to be approved with full access movements into and out of the site.

The Applicant has committed to resolve this issue by making geometric changes to the ROW, including modifications to the Irving Street and the North Capitol Street ramp. The Applicant will be responsible for design, process/approvals, costs, and construction associated with the re-configuration of the ROW. Changes must be completed prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy in order to have the access point operate with full access movements. DDOT requests that the ROW changes to Irving Street and North Capitol Street be included as a condition of Zoning Commission approval.

The Applicant has proposed conceptual changes that may be necessary to address the geometric challenges (Exhibit 16C). Although these concepts are consistent with types of modifications needed, final designs have not been determined. The changes must be closely coordinated with DDOT and be consistent with DDOT's policies and standards. Because North Capitol Street is part of the District's freeway system, changes affecting the ramp are subject to DDOT's *Policy and Process for Access to the DC Interstate and Freeway System*. This document sets forth a rigorous set of analysis, design, and process criteria that need to be satisfied by any proposal to modify freeway facilities, and will ensure that changes to the ROW address safety concerns with the Irving Street site access while preserving the functionality of the District's freeway system. Of note, DDOT is starting the East-West Crosstown Multimodal Study that will address multi-modal access and safety in the area. The final design of proposed ROW changes must be consistent with the findings and recommendations of DDOT's study.

Analysis & Mitigations

The Applicant completed a TIS in December 2008 in support of the original PUD application that identified transportation impacts and mitigations. Mitigations included the redesign of the Irving Street/Michigan Avenue intersection and the installation of a traffic signal at Irving Street/site access intersection. In addition to these mitigations, the Applicant proposes to reconfigure the Irving Street and

North Capitol Street ramp. Together, these mitigations are substantial investments that will address the major safety and vehicular impacts created by the action.

While the appropriate large scale mitigations are proposed, additional smaller mitigations may still be needed, particularly related to Transportation Demand Management strategies and minor operational adjustments such as signal retiming. To study the need for additional mitigations, the Applicant proposes to complete a CTR as part of Phase 2 of the project. The CTR will provide an opportunity to update the analysis completed as part of the initial TIS, and will identify any additional transportation impacts and mitigations needed as part of the overall development. DDOT requests that a CTR for Phase 2 be included as a condition of Zoning Commission approval.

SZ:jr