

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, PPSA
District Department of Transportation

DATE: November 19, 2012

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 08-34A – Center Place Holdings, LLC - 2nd-Stage PUD @ Square 568

PROJECT SUMMARY

Center Place Holdings, LLC (“the Applicant”), on behalf of the District of Columbia, through the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development is requesting approval of a second-stage PUD. The property that is the subject of this application consists of approximately 85,429 square feet of land area and is located at Lot 44 in Square 568, being generally bounded by 2nd Street, N.W., to the east, E Street, N.W., to the south, and 3rd Street, N.W., to the west and the extension of F Street, N.W., to the north. The subject property is known as the South Block in Zoning Commission Order No. 08-34, which zoned the subject property C-4. The Applicant requests a second-stage PUD approval for the office building in the South Block. As proposed, the building will include twelve stories with ground floor retail. If approved, the building will have a maximum height of 130 feet and contain 689,802 square feet of gross floor area, with approximately 670,701 square feet devoted to office uses and approximately 19,101 square feet devoted to retail uses.

The subject property consists of all the land located in Square 68 (excluding Lot 43) and the air rights above I-395 Freeway in Square 568 in Northwest, DC. This second-stage PUD approval is for the South Block of the overall first-stage PUD approved in Z.C. Order No 08-34 with proposed improvements to include an office building with ground floor retail.

Construction of private buildings in the air rights above the I-395 freeway necessitated the disposal of air rights above the freeway and a modification of access to the freeway. DDOT worked with the

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to produce an Environmental Assessment (EA) to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed project. Following completion of the EA, DDOT completed an Interstate Modification Report process (IMR) with FHWA to analyze the impacts of the operational and access changes of the proposed interchange reconfiguration. These two federal processes are independent of the zoning effort and were necessary for any development project that would be constructed in the Interstate Highway System air rights. However, DDOT utilized the transportation analysis performed for these processes as the basis of the following review.

DDOT notes that this report to the Zoning Commission is not a legal agreement with the Applicant, does not dispose of rights of way, nor does it supersede agreements already executed with the Applicant or any future agreements or approvals. DDOT's review, included in this document, only reflects the agency's review of zoning matters related to the land development proposed in the air-rights above I-395 and does not summarize or memorialize our position related to the reconfigured ramps or remaining rights of way.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The Zoning Commission approved a mixed used project for the redevelopment of the land and air rights above the I-395 Center Leg Freeway, known as Capitol Crossing. The project will be constructed on a platform over I-395 at-grade with the existing street grid and will include the restoration of F and G Streets between 2nd and 3rd Streets. The result will be the creation of three new blocks of development over I-395.

The projects, as approved in ZC 08-34, were divided into 3 development blocks; north, central, and south. The current application is for second stage PUD approval of the South Block related to the construction of the office and retail uses. The project includes a 12-story office building with ground floor retail. More specifically, the development program includes:

- Office: 675 ksf of gross floor area
- Retail: 19 ksf gross floor area

As part of the EA and IMR processes, DDOT evaluated transportation conditions that can be expected upon completion of the proposed project. Analysis concluded that the proposed I-395 Air-rights is not expected to significantly impact travel conditions such as delay, speed, and travel times. The restored F and G Streets will re-establish the street grid and provide pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity between 2nd and 3rd street over the depressed portion of the freeway. These streets will be built on the original alignment of the L'Enfant Plan and thus will help re-establish two blocks of L'Enfant Streets that were disconnected by the construction of the freeway. This will redistribute traffic and improve circulation through the study area without impacting the local public transit systems.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

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 alternative modes of transportation are adequate to accommodate new travel demand while discouraging single occupancy vehicle trips.

Roadway Capacity and Operations

DDOT aims to provide a safe and efficient roadway network that provides for the timely movement of people, goods and services. As part of the evaluation of potential impacts on the transportation network, analysis of travel conditions for the area have been performed for the existing conditions as well as for future conditions. The analysis satisfactorily incorporates assumptions into the operations analysis related to parking, mode split, trip generation, trip distribution and assignment, and site access.

Trip generation was projected by mode for the site through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) travel demand model. Travel forecasts for 2040 conditions also utilized outputs from the MWCOC model (Version 2.2). Travel conditions were analyzed through state of the practice methods using micro-simulation to evaluate conditions expected on city streets as well as interstate facilities. This is the most robust approach to travel analysis currently available. DDOT concludes that the methodology utilized to evaluate the project is robust and meets the needs of the project.

While the site is expected to generate a large amount of trips, the impact to the larger network should be minimal. Many of the trips will be accessing the site from the freeway directly below the site and should cause minimal delay to adjacent streets. Further, the additional street connections on F and G Streets will help disperse vehicle traffic. DDOT believes that impact to the larger travel network will be minimal.

Safety

The design of the transportation network will provide new accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians through the building of F Street and G Street over I-395 and their connection to the street grid. Future development projects in the I-395 Air Rights project area are expected to design additional streetscape elements, access points to the buildings, and loading per our Design and Engineering Manual in order to meet existing safety standards.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The District of Columbia is committed to enhancing the walk-ability and bike-ability of the District by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian and bike infrastructure in both the public and private realms. Generally, DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all generated trips including pedestrian and bicycle trips.

The reestablishment of F and G Streets over the I-395 Air Rights would create pedestrian connections that join 2nd and 3rd Street between E Street and Massachusetts Ave. Currently, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity is obstructed by the below street grade I-395 between 2nd and 3rd Streets. Pedestrian connectivity is also obstructed by the intersection design at Massachusetts/3rd/H Streets, that does not allow for some pedestrian movements and has high volumes of vehicles conflicting with other pedestrian movements. The proposed transportation network would upgrade existing conditions by reducing conflicting vehicle volumes and reestablishing pedestrian connections. These improvements are expected to increase connectivity, improve safety, and shorten walk times.

As part of the original First stage PUD ZC Order 08-34, the project will contain one internally-located Capital Bikeshare station. This will serve a portion of the bicycling needs in conjunction with the four adjacent docking stations located near the study area that have a capacity of 91 bicycles. In addition, another station is planned for 4th and F Street NW.

Transit Services

The District and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District of Columbia. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The Overall I-395 Air-rights project, as well as the Stage 2 PUD under consideration, is served by multiple high frequency bus routes as well as the Circulator. In addition, the area is served by the Judiciary Square Metro Station and the Union Station Metro Station, which also serves as a terminus for two commuter rail lines – Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC).

Site Access and Loading

DDOT strives to accommodate vehicle loading in a reasonable and safe manner while at the same time preserving traffic flow and safety. All proposed parking and loading for the entire project are located in a centralized below grade facility. This central location serves all three development blocks. General parking for the project will be via two entrances on 3rd Street – one at the north block and one at the south block. The below grade loading will be via E-Street on the South block. For the Stage 2 PUD, the proposed loading entrance has shifted 30' to the West of the original driveway location in the Stage 1 PUD.

Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/supply of parking spaces. However in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking such as price and the availability of nearby high-quality public transit. With the Site in proximity to such transit, DDOT expects a moderate need for on-site parking.

Because the majority of the study consists of Air Rights over I-395, most of the existing parking supply consists of on-street metered parking on select streets. In addition, there are several privately-owned and operated public parking garages in, or adjacent to, the study area.

Parking for the entire 3-block development will be located in a centralized below-grade parking structure, with access via the north and south blocks on 3rd Street. This parking structure will have 1088 vehicle parking spaces, the zoning-required minimum. The project will also contain 440 on-site bike parking spaces, well in excess of the zoning-required 57 spaces.

Streetscape and Public Realm

The transportation network will include newly dedicated rights of way for F and G Streets. In the November 8th, 2012 Supplemental Prehearing Submission, the Applicant's Landscape Plan (page 6.1) is described as "Approved" by DDOT. DDOT notes that no streetscape design has been approved at this

time. The re-established F and G Streets, as well as street frontage on 2nd, 3rd, and E Streets along with Massachusetts Avenue, needs to designed District standards for streets and public space and may be subject to public space permitting action. Further, the study area falls within the Downtown CBD, where DDOT's *Downtown Streetscape Regulations* apply.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

As part of the 08-34 Zoning Order, the I-395 Air Rights Project will install a Capital Bike Share on the Site.

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