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: July 20, 2015

SUBJECT: **Zoning Commission Case No. 15-04** – Totten Mews

PROJECT SUMMARY

Comstock Sixth Street, LLC (the "Applicant") seeks approval of a Planned Unit Development ("PUD") and related map amendment to allow construction of a 40-unit townhome development in the existing C-M-1 and R-2 Districts at premises 4815 6th Street NE (Square 3788, Lot 814) (the "Site").

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

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

Site Design

- Vehicle and loading access is proposed via 6th Street NE, which becomes a private street in front of the development, and a private roadway loop serving the Site;
- A bicycle and pedestrian connector is proposed from the Site leading towards the nearby Metro station;
- The proposed Site layout meets DDOT standards along the proposed 6th Street with multimodal accommodation; and
- Vehicular parking is provided onsite with one space per home and added spaces on 6th Street.

Travel Assumptions

- The Applicant utilized sound analysis methodology and assumptions; and
- The action is projected to minimally increase traffic in the area;

Analysis

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will be improved via the proposed project.

DDOT has no objection to the requested PUD considering the following mitigations agreed to by the Applicant:

Mitigations

- Provision of a full bicycle and pedestrian connection between the 6th Street NE street ends, meeting DDOT design standards; and
- Upgrade at least six sidewalk ramps, four crosswalks, and some missing sidewalk links along the path to the Metro station, as agreed to with DDOT.

Continued Coordination

The Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- Design of the mitigation elements within the public realm; and
- Additional design plans for public space elements, which should be provided as part of the public space permitting process.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

DDOT requires applicants who request PUD approval from the Zoning Commission perform a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) in order to determine the PUD's impact on the overall transportation network. Accordingly, an applicant is expected to show the existing conditions for each transportation mode affected, the proposed impact on the respective network, and any proposed mitigations, along with the effects of the mitigations on other travel modes. A CTR should be performed according to DDOT direction. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR that is consistent with the scale of the action.

The review of the analysis is divided into four categories: site design, travel assumptions, analysis, and mitigations. The following review provided by DDOT evaluates the Applicant's CTR to determine its accuracy and 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

Site design, which includes site access, loading, and public realm design, plays a critical role in determining a proposed action's impact on the District's infrastructure. While transportation impacts can change over time, the site design will remain constant throughout the lifespan of the proposed development, making site design a critical aspect of DDOT's development review process. Accordingly, new developments must provide a safe and welcoming pedestrian experience, enhance the public realm, and serve as positive additions to the community. The proposed Site plan is shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1. Site Design (Source: Applicant)

Site Access

This Site is located at the end of the 4800 block of 6th Street NE, north of Buchanan Street, with a private road loop proposed around the development. The portion of 6th Street in front of the Site will remain private, however its design matches the 6th Street width to the south. The townhome residences will be accessed via the roadway loop around the Site, off of which garages will be loaded. Vehicular parking spaces are also provided on 6th Street. The proposed site access is consistent with DDOT's approach to site access.

This development area was originally part of the Rocky Gorge Development, LLC project (ZC Case No. 06-26). As part of that proposal, a full street connection was proposed connecting the gap in 6th Street at this location. Since this southern portion of that former project never proceeded, the connection was not completed. During dialogue on this current project, the continuing possibility of opening this connection as a through street connection of 6th Street was discussed, which DDOT would support.

However, the proposed development includes just the bicycle and pedestrian connection. The proposed connector does not, however, preclude a future street connection.

Pedestrians access the Site via sidewalks along 6th Street NE and the bicycle and pedestrian connector that feed into a private network of pedestrian connections within the Site. The transportation components of the local site access are shown in *Figure 2*.

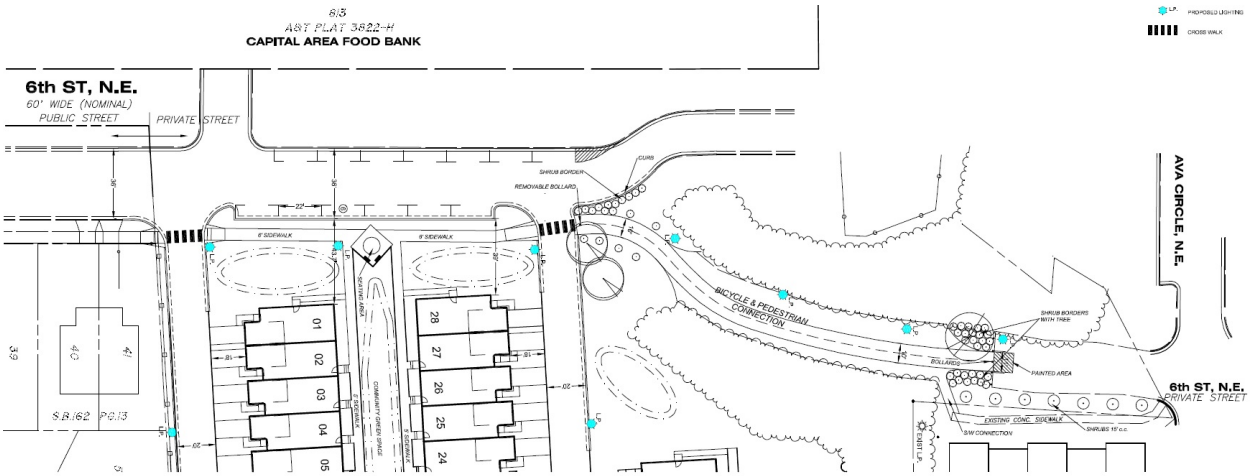

Figure 2. Site Access (Source: Applicant)

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle modes and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through an alley network.

The Applicant proposes that all loading activities, trash pickup, and deliveries will occur curbside along the internal private loop road within the development.

Streetscape and Public Realm

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure. This includes curb and gutters, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

Relatively little public right of way exists at this Site. However, the Applicant worked closely with DDOT to ensure that the design of some of the private access areas meets DDOT's preference and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the area for public users needing to access the property or circulate around it. Various other upgrades such as trees and landscaping are included as part of the development. Additionally, several areas where pedestrian infrastructure deficiencies are present along the walking path between the Site and the nearby Metro station will be upgraded by the Applicant. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

Travel Assumptions

The purpose of the CTR is to inform DDOT's review of a proposed action's impacts on the District's transportation network. To that end, selecting reasonable and defensible travel assumptions is critical to developing a realistic analysis.

Trip Generation

The Applicant provided trip generation estimates utilizing the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual and the assumed mode split to convert base vehicular trips to base person trips using average auto occupancy data and then back to vehicular trips. DDOT generally finds this method appropriate.

Each trip a person makes is made by a certain means of travel, such as vehicle, bicycle, walking, and transit. The means of travel is referred to as a 'mode' of transportation. A variety of elements impact the mode of travel, including density of development, diversity of land use, design of the public realm, availability and cost of parking, among many others. The Applicant developed the following mode split assumptions:

- Auto - 55%
- Transit - 34%
- Bike - 5%
- Walk - 6%

Based on the trip generation and mode split assumptions discussed above, the Applicant predicted the following level of weekday peak hour trip generation:

Trip Gen Summary for Residential

Mode	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Auto	3 veh/hr	12 veh/hr	15 veh/hr	11 veh/hr	5 veh/hr	16 veh/hr
Transit	2 ppl/hr	8 ppl/hr	10 ppl/hr	8 ppl/hr	3 ppl/hr	11 ppl/hr
Bike	1 ppl/hr	1 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr	0 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr
Walk	1 ppl/hr	1 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr	0 ppl/hr	2 ppl/hr

Figure 3. Weekday Peak Hour Vehicle Trip Generation (Source: Applicant)

DDOT guidance suggests that a more comprehensive vehicular traffic analysis be completed if various thresholds for added traffic are met, which could signify the potential for impacts to the surrounding street network. Based on this project's level of trip generation, a more comprehensive vehicle traffic analysis is not required, as thresholds are not met and impacts to the surrounding vehicle network are expected to be minimal.

Analysis

Analysis of the existing transportation network was completed in the following categories.

Pedestrian Facilities

The District is committed to enhance the pedestrian accessibility by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including pedestrian trips. Walking is expected to be an important mode of transportation for this development.

The Site has pedestrian access to nearby destinations and transit via the existing pedestrian infrastructure, with the addition of a pedestrian network proposed as part of this Site and the proposed pedestrian connector. The Applicant's analysis revealed several substandard pedestrian curb ramps, crosswalks, or sidewalks in the vicinity of the site, and they will work with DDOT to upgrade several of these locations. Deficiencies are shown in *Figure 4*. Preliminarily, upgrading of at least six sidewalk ramps, four crosswalks, and some missing sidewalk links along the path to the Metro station will be included. And these will be coordinated with DDOT as part of the public space permitting process. With these improvements, residents will be able to safely travel to and from the Metro station within the neighborhood.

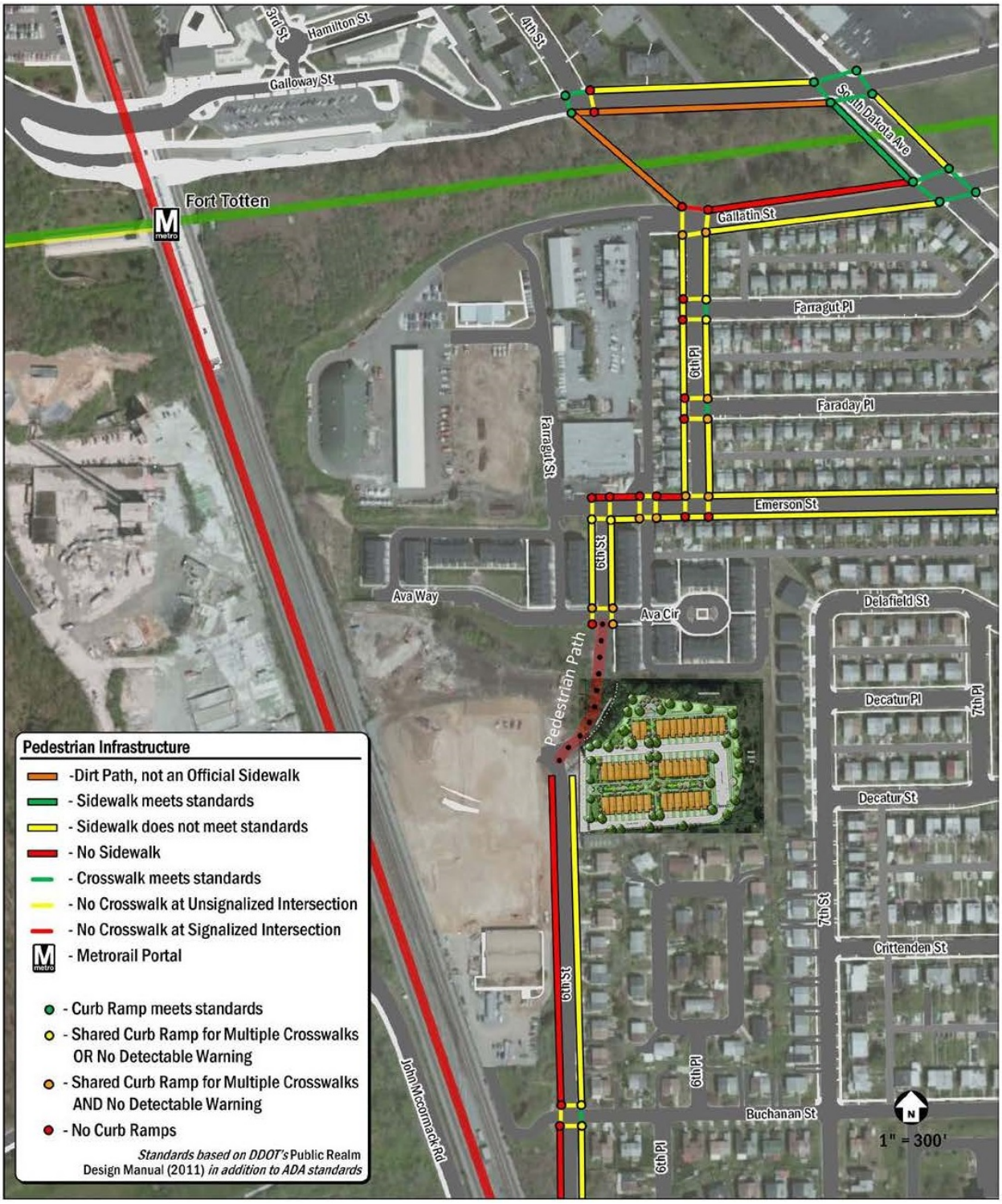

Figure 4. Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure (Source: Applicant)

Bicycle Facilities

The District of Columbia is committed to enhance bicycle access by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including bicycling trips.

The site is currently served for bicycles via the surrounding low volume street network. Bicycle racks will be located throughout the development, and parking can occur within townhome garages.

Transit Service

The District and 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 site is located approximately ½ of a mile from the Fort Totten Metro station. The Metro station is served by Metro's Red, Yellow, and Green lines, and is accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists from the Site via the new connection. The Site is also served by bus routes along South Dakota Avenue and at the Metro station. Bus routes include:

- 80 – North Capitol
- E2, E3 – Military Road - Crosstown
- F6 – New Carrollton - Fort Totten

Mitigations

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires the Applicant to mitigate the impacts of the development in order to positively contribute to the District's transportation network. The mitigations must sufficiently diminish the action's vehicle impact and promote non-auto travel modes. This can be done through Transportation Demand Management (TDM), physical improvements, operations, and performance monitoring.

Physical Improvements

DDOT seeks physical improvements that provide transportation infrastructure enhancements aimed to mitigate any impacts from a proposed development. The specific elements proposed vary depending on the land uses, site context, proximity to transit, scale of the development, and other factors.

This development is not expected to generate high vehicular traffic, but residents will travel to and from the local Metro station via the local pedestrian and bicycle network if it is available. Encouraging these modes will require infrastructure to support this choice. The Applicant proposes the following improvement strategies:

- Creation of a full bicycle and pedestrian connection between the 6th Street NE links, meeting DDOT design standards; and
- Upgrading of at least six sidewalk ramps, four crosswalks, and some missing sidewalk links along the path to the Metro station, as agreed to with DDOT.

DDOT agrees with these measures and finds the proposal to be sufficient for support of the non-auto mode split of this development and to mitigate the transportation impacts seen.

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