

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Energy and Environment

MEMORANDUM

TO: Anthony Hood
Chairman, DC Zoning Commission

FROM: Jay Wilson
Green Building Program Analyst

DATE: February 11, 2016

SUBJECT: **Z.C. CASE NO.** 15-20 (Sursum Corda Cooperative Association, Inc. – First-Stage PUD & Related Map Amendment @ Square 620, Lots 248-250 and 893-895, and Including Portions of First Terrace, L Place, and First Place to be Closed)

Given the scale and impact of the proposed development project, Sursum Corda, the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) wishes to express support for the project and offers the following comments.

DOEE participated in an interagency meeting with this applicant at the Office of Planning on September 25th. At that time, we discussed opportunities that this project may have to increase the project's commitment to sustainability, including energy efficiency upgrades, the addition of on-site renewable energy, and increased green infrastructure for stormwater management. The current plans submitted to the Zoning Commission seem to be moving in the right direction; however, there are always additional opportunities that can be pursued.

Green Building

The applicant indicates that this project will pursue and be certified under the LEED Homes Multi-family Midrise standard or the 2015 Enterprise Green Communities program. The LEED Checklist needs some additional investigation. However, on the Green Communities checklist, 57 optional credits and 60 possible credits are identified, which should be commended. The Enterprise Green Communities criteria was specifically developed for affordable housing developments with a focus on occupant health and wellness and decreasing energy costs in order to lessen a resident's utility burden. In order to be certified, an applicant must meet all mandatory credits and meet a minimum of 30 optional credits, which this application does.

As the project design continues to develop, additional consideration should be made for energy efficiency and occupant health. Optimized energy performance shows minimum compliance in both programs. However, additional investment is recommended to increase overall energy efficiency. Every dollar saved in utility cost has a significant impact on a resident's cost of living, especially for income restricted residents. DOEE's Property Assessed Clean Energy or PACE program can provide up front financing for

improvements that exceed code minimums so that there is no impact on a development's debt burden.

Renewable Energy

The project identifies on-site renewable energy as a possibility; however, DOEE would like to see this commitment strengthened. Per the Sustainable DC Plan, the District's goal is to increase the use of renewable energy to make up 50% of the District's energy supply by 2032. This cannot be accomplished without the participation of the private sector. The project should consider maximizing the potential for on-site renewable energy with installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays above the mechanical penthouses, solar shading above amenities, or building integrated PV. The District has one of the strongest markets for solar installations in the country and many developers are showing returns on their investment within 3-5 years. In addition, solar installers and capital providers are looking for investment opportunities (power purchase agreements, capital leases) that can aid development projects in incorporating solar power with zero up-front cost. Finally, the District's Community Solar program can be used to allocate site generated energy as a direct benefit to tenants to further decrease energy costs.

Stormwater Management

DDOE commends the project for exceeding the minimum stormwater management requirements. Additional green infrastructure may be able to be incorporated at the perimeter of the green space at the southwest corner of the site. Increasing the volume of retention would allow the developer to register additional Stormwater Retention Credits (SCR) with the SRC program and receive a greater return on the investment. In addition, the applicant is encouraged to register the credits once construction is completed.