

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Sara Bardin  
Director, Office of Zoning

**FROM:** Jim Sebastian  
Associate Director 

**DATE:** July 9, 2019

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 19-02 – Meadow Green Apartments

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

Milestone East Capitol 2 LLC, Milestone East Capitol 3 LLC, Milestone East Capitol 4 LLC, and Milestone East Capitol 5 LLC, (jointly the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone Squares 5413, 5413N, 5412, and 5411 from RA-1 (Residential Apartment Low Density) to RA-2 (Residential Apartment Moderate Density). The four (4) blocks are located adjacent to each other, south of East Capitol Street NE, west of Minnesota Avenue SE, north of B Street SE, and east of the Anacostia Freeway (Route 295). The Applicant is proposing to demolish the existing 435 apartments and redevelop the blocks with 907 residential units (881 apartments and 26 townhouses).

#### SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and 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 impacts of the proposed map amendment on the District’s transportation network. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

#### Site Design

- The proposed RA-2 zone would allow for approximately 472 additional residential units as compared to the maximum allowed in the existing RA-1 zone due to an increase in maximum permitted Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 1.08 to 2.16 FAR (with Inclusive Zoning bonus);

- The site is located approximately ¾ to 1.0 mile from the Minnesota Avenue, Benning Road, and Stadium-Armory Metrorail Stations. As such, DDOT strongly encourages the Applicant to minimize the amount of vehicle parking provided on-site to reduce demand for driving and increase demand for nearby transit services;
- The proposed parking ratio of 0.35 spaces per unit is excellent and consistent with DDOT's preferred parking rate of 0.50 spaces per unit or less, as defined in the *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*;
- DDOT encourages the Applicant to provide at least 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging station for every 50 parking spaces in each garage. Conduit should be included in the parking garage(s) so that EV stations can be installed at a later time; and
- Any redevelopment proposals for the site will need to account for a long-term bicycle parking storage room, either below- or at-grade in an easily accessible location from the lobby, as well as short-term bicycle parking in public space, as required by ZR16.

### **Travel Assumptions**

- Maximum build-out in the proposed RA-2 zone is estimated to generate an additional 97-118 vehicle trips and 204-249 person trips during the weekday AM and PM peak hour trips, as compared to the existing development in the RA-1;
- There are currently no Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) stations within ½ mile of the site. Redevelopment of these four (4) blocks would be an excellent opportunity to expand the CaBi system and further connect this neighborhood with public transportation service; and
- The increase in density will further support nearby transit services and generate additional foot traffic to support local businesses. This is consistent with DDOT's approach to redevelopment of large properties which should be dense, compact, transit-oriented, well-connected, and contribute to a high-quality public realm.

### **Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)**

- Due to the anticipated increase in person- and vehicle-trips, the Applicant was required to complete and submit a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study, dated June 7, 2019, prepared by Symmetra Design; and
- The CTR identified traffic impacts at three (3) intersections throughout the project's four (4) phases that meet DDOT's policy for requiring mitigation: Minnesota Avenue and Ames Street NE, East Capitol Street and Texas Avenue SE, and Ridge Road and B Street SE.

### **Mitigation**

- To mitigate the intersection impacts, the Applicant will provide a reduced maximum parking ratio of 0.40 spaces per unit (327 spaces total plus the 49 spaces approved separately for Building C2 in BZA 19704), develop and implement a Baseline TDM plan, and fund the installation of a 19-dock CaBi station on either Block A or D;
- In the event DDOT installs a CaBi station within the project area prior to redevelopment, the Applicant will install a 19-dock station in an alternate location within 1,500 feet of the site;
- The 327 maximum parking spaces may be all be located on one block and shared or could be spread throughout the four (4) blocks within the project area. If all located on one or two blocks then the remaining blocks will not provide off-street parking. This will not apply to the 49 spaces previously approved for Building C2; and
- With a low off-street parking supply, a TDM program in place for each building, and a new CaBi station installed, DDOT can support the proposed rezoning. These commitments will be implemented during Environmental Impact Screening Form (EISF) and public space permitting.

## RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant’s request and determined that based on the information provided, the proposed increase in density coupled with a low off-street vehicle parking supply and a robust TDM program would likely not lead to a significant impact on the District’s transportation network if developed with the most intense future matter-of-right uses. Therefore, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested Map Amendment and looks forward to working with the Applicant on a high quality public space design and appropriate TDM program during permitting.

## CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the achievable matter-of-right density possible on the subject property, it is expected that the Applicant will work with DDOT through the permitting process (e.g., public space permitting and EISF) when a redevelopment proposal is put forth, on the following actions to minimize impacts to the transportation network:

- Develop and implement a Baseline-tier Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, as defined in *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, commensurate with the uses, parking supply, and scale of future development ultimately proposed, and inclusive of the proposed 19-dock Capital Bikeshare Station;
- The Applicant has proposed developing a Transportation Vision Document to share with the community. It is requested that the Applicant coordinate with DDOT as these materials are being created;
- Depending on the ultimately proposed development program and if any future relief is requested from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) or Public Space Committee (PSC), the Applicant may be required to scope and conduct additional transportation analyses;
- Continue to coordinate with DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 7 arborist regarding the presence of existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property as they cannot be removed and will impact the design of the blocks; and
- Continue coordination with DDOT on the design of public space adjacent to the site. The Applicant should participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with the Office of Planning and DDOT to discuss and refine the proposed public space design prior to submitting for permits. See the Streetscape and Public Realm section later in this report for initial streetscape and site design issues identified.

## TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

### Vehicle Trip Comparison

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of rezoning the subject properties from RA-1 to RA-2. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on current and proposed zoning. Given the existing site constraints (e.g., steep grades and presence of heritage trees), it was assumed that the existing 435 apartments and proposed 907 apartments/townhouses represent the highest achievable densities under each RA-1 and RA-2 zones.

The existing RA-1 zone allows for the site to be redeveloped with low- to moderate-density development including detached dwellings, rowhouses, and low-rise apartments with a maximum 1.08 FAR (w/IZ Bonus) and maximum height of 40 feet. If rezoned to RA-2, the site could potentially achieve a

Zoning Scenario	Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
<b>Existing Conditions RA-1 Zone</b>	435 Apartments	185	226	88	107
<b>Applicant Proposal RA-2 Zone</b>	881 Apartments 26 Townhouses	388	475	184	225
<b>Net Change</b>	+446 Apartments +26 Townhouses	+204	+249	+97	+118
<i>Note: Person trips based on Multi-Family Housing (Mid-Rise) #221 and Multi-Family Housing (Low-Rise) #220 categories in ITE Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Auto mode-share based on 56% assumption in June 7, 2019 Symmetra CTR .</i>					

**Table 1 – Trip Generation Comparison**

2.16 FAR (w/IZ bonus) of moderate density residential with a 50-foot height limit. Based on the Applicant’s proposal, this additional 1.08 FAR would yield approximately 472 additional residential units.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the trip generation rates for multifamily residential (low-rise and mid-rise) uses published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ *Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Mode split assumptions were based on projects located comparable distances from high frequency transit. DDOT’s estimated person- and vehicle-trips for each scenario are shown in Table 1 below.

As shown above, development of the site with the maximum number of allowable units (907 units), will add approximately 97 to 118 vehicle trips to the roadway network depending on the weekday commuter peak period. These projected increases in vehicle trips triggered DDOT’s requirement for a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study with a traffic impact analysis.

Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Requirements

The site is located approximately ¾ to 1.0 mile from the Minnesota Avenue, Benning Road, and Stadium-Armory Metrorail Stations. As such, DDOT strongly encourages the Applicant to minimize the amount of vehicle parking provided on-site to reduce demand for driving and increase demand for using nearby transit services. The proposed parking ratio of approximately 0.35 spaces per unit is excellent and consistent with DDOT’s preferred parking rate of 0.50 spaces per unit or lower, as defined in the *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*. As one strategy for mitigating the identified intersection impacts noted later in this report, the Applicant has agreed to provide a parking supply as close as possible to the zoning minimum. Specifically, a maximum parking ratio of 0.40 spaces per unit (327 spaces, exclusive of the 49 spaces approved for building C2 under BZA 19704) will be provided. These spaces may be entirely on one block and shared with the rest of the development or spread evenly across the four (4) blocks in the project area. If they are located entirely on one or two blocks, then the other blocks will not provide off-street parking (except for the already approved building C2).

DDOT recommends the Applicant consider installing at least 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging station for every 50 parking spaces in the garages. At a minimum, the parking garage(s) will include electrical conduit so that EV stations can be installed at a later date.

Long-term bicycle parking spaces should be provided in storage rooms in accessible locations near the building lobbies or ground floor of the parking garage. Short-term bicycle parking spaces should be accommodated with inverted U-racks near building entrances in public space.

Table 2 below details DDOT’s estimates of the vehicle and bicycle parking zoning requirements for each of the evaluated development scenarios. Note that the exact requirements will be based on the specific development ultimately proposed.

Zoning Scenario	Development Program	ZR16 Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT-Preferred Max # of Parking Spaces*	ZR16 Long-Term / Short-Term Bicycle Spaces
Existing Conditions RA-1 Zone	435 Apartments	144 (0.35 ratio)	218 (0.50 ratio)	145 / 22
Applicant Proposal RA-2 Zone	881 Apartments 26 Townhouses	318 (0.35 ratio)	454 (0.50 ratio)**	294 / 44
Notes: * Based on Table 2 in the <i>Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review</i> . ** The Applicant will provide a maximum parking ratio of 0.40 spaces per unit which equates to 327 spaces plus 49 additional spaces already approved for building C2.				

**Table 2 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Requirements**

Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)

The Applicant submitted a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study, prepared by Symmetra Design, dated June 7, 2019. The CTR evaluated the impacts of additional traffic on the roadway network that will be generated due to the proposed doubling of density on the subject properties. It was assumed that the site would be developed in four (4) phases by 2029.

The CTR identified impacts at the following three (3) intersections:

- Minnesota Avenue NE and Ames Street NE – in Phase 1, the westbound approach degrades from LOS E to LOS F during the AM peak hour and the delay worsens by more than 5% during the PM peak hour as compared to background (no build). The delay for this approach is projected to continue to worsen in both peak hours all the way through Phase 4.
- East Capitol Street SE and Texas Avenue SE – in Phase 2, the delay for the eastbound approach worsens by more than 5% during the PM peak hour as compared to background (no build) conditions. The delay for this approach is projected to continue to worsen all the way through Phase 4.
- Ridge Road and B Street SE – in Phase 3, the delay for the westbound approach worsens by more than 5% during the PM peak hour as compared to background (no build) conditions. The delay for this approach is projected to continue to worsen all the way through Phase 4.

To offset the traffic impacts identified at these intersections, the Applicant has agreed to a lower parking ratio, as well as developing and implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan during the public space permitting process. DDOT concurs with this approach and notes that the Applicant has also agreed to plan, design, and fund the installation of a Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) station on either Block A or Block D to reduce the demand for driving and further connect the neighborhood into the public transportation system. The neighborhood where the site is located is currently underserved by CaBi as the nearest station is located more than ½ mile from the site. In the event that

DDOT has already installed a CaBi station in the project area prior to redevelopment, the Applicant will fund the installation of a 19-dock station up to 1,500 feet from the site.

## STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

If the site develops or there are any substantial renovations to future buildings, the property owner will be expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines, in line with District policy and practice. 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.

DDOT has reviewed the Meadow Green master plan, Figure 1, and provides feedback below regarding potential site access and public space issues that the Applicant should be aware of when the site redevelops.



Figure 1 – Meadow Green Master Plan (Source: Symmetra, CTR Figure 3, 6/7/19)

- Public space permits should be sought for the entirety of each block to avoid piecemeal approvals and to ensure the public space design is reviewed holistically for that block;
- Note that there are Building Restriction Lines (BRL) along A Street, 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and 35<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The area between the BRL and curb is treated the same as public space for the purpose of DDOT permitting and as such must comply with public space regulations;
- Minimize the number of curb cuts serving each block and combine as many proposed curb cuts and driveways as possible;
- Each building should be designed for loading and trash pick-up to occur on-site with only head-in and head-out truck maneuvers;
- All building entrances must be constructed at-grade with the sidewalk to avoid unnecessary stairs and ramps in public space. If ramps or stairs are determined to be necessary, they must be constructed on private space or within the building;

- Maintain the natural topography of the public “parking” area surrounding each block as much as possible;
- For Block A, provide a north-south vehicular and pedestrian connection from A Street SE to the East Capitol Service Road at approximately the halfway point of the existing “super block” consistent with the block size requirements of DEM 31.5(d);
- For Blocks B, C, and D, explore the creation of alleys and vehicular through connections and then provide parking and loading access from those facilities. If not possible due to severe grades or presence of Heritage trees, provide pedestrian connectivity through the blocks;
- Upgrade all curb ramps and sidewalks along the site frontage to ADA compliance. This includes upgrading facilities at the pedestrian bridge over East Capitol Street. There must be two (2) curb ramps on each corner and sidewalks must have a minimum clear path of 6 feet;
- Install curb extensions on the corners of all intersections within and around the Meadow Green project area in conjunction with redevelopment of each block, subject to DDOT approval;
- Upgrade all bus stops around the site to ADA compliance, as necessary, and fund the installation and electrification of bus shelters if required by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). All bus stops must be accommodated during construction;
- Install missing street trees and treeboxes within the 4-foot buffer between sidewalk and street;
- Identify a location for a 19-dock Capital Bikeshare station (53 feet long by 6 feet wide) on either private property or adjacent public space and design it into the plans for that block. The station must be funded prior to the development of the first Meadow Green block and installed in conjunction with the block associated with its final location; and
- Identify locations within public space for short-term bicycle parking spaces. These should be accommodated with inverted U-racks and meet the zoning and design requirements in Appendix F of *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*.

DDOT encourages the Applicant to participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with the Office of Planning and DDOT to discuss the public space design when a future development is proposed.

In conjunction with Chapters 11, 12A, and 24 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, DDOT’s *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* and the *Public Realm Design Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

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