

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Elisa Vitale, Project Manager
JL for Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review and Historic Preservation

DATE: December 30, 2019

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Report for Zoning Commission Case No. 19-23, Design Review in the D-5 Zone, at 80 M Street, SE (Square 699, Lot 28)

I. BACKGROUND

This application filed by Wells REIT II 80 M Street, LLC (Applicant) is for an addition to an existing office building in the D-5 zone and the M and South Capitol Street Sub-Area which establishes a mandatory Design Review by the Zoning Commission. Evaluation of the subject application is against the criteria contained in Subtitle I §§ 616.6 and 616.8.

II. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of this design review application. The OP recommendation is subject to the Applicant providing the following:

- LEED checklist;
- Calculation of green roof area;
- Plant material palette for the ground level planters and eighth-floor roof terrace; and
- Signage plan.

III. SITE AND CONTEXT

Address: 80 M Street, SE

Legal Description: Square 699, Lot 28

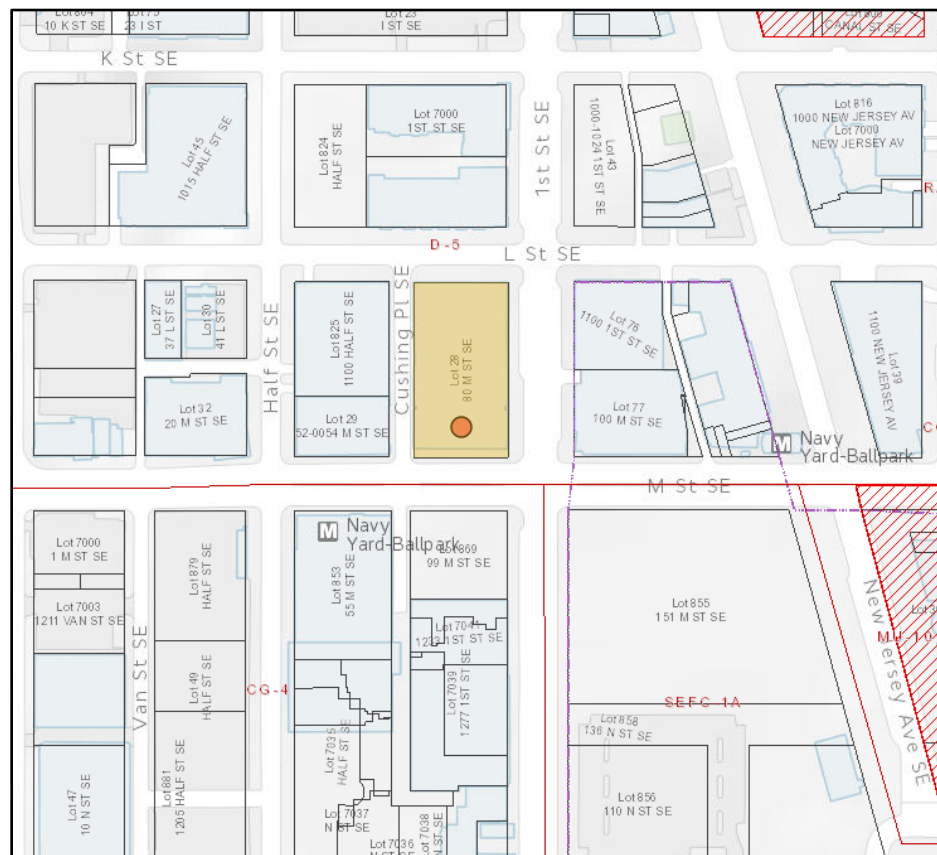
Property Size: 45,117 square feet of land area

Zoning: D-5 - intended to promote high-density development of commercial and mixed uses.

Ward, ANC: Ward 6; ANC 6D

General Context: The surrounding area consists of a mix of high density uses, including office buildings, hotels, and multi-family residential buildings that feature ground floor retail, service, and eating and drinking establishments. The property is one block north of National Park and one block west of the Navy Yard-Ballpark Metro Station.

Site Characteristics: The property comprises half of the block between Half and First Streets along M Street and is bound by M Street, SE to the south, 1st Street, SE to the east, L Street, SE to the north, and Cushing Place, SE to the west. The property is improved with an existing seven story office building. Parking and loading access are via a curb cut on L Street, SE.



IV. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant is proposing to renovate the existing seven-story office building and construct a two-story addition with a habitable penthouse.

V. ZONING ANALYSIS

The subject site is zoned D-5, which is intended to promote high-density development of commercial and mixed uses in areas that had been receiving areas for transferable development rights under the 1958 Zoning Regulations. Pursuant to Subtitle I § 616.8, this zone includes a mandatory Zoning Commission review against specific criteria found in Subtitle I § 701.

The following tables compares the proposal (Exhibit 9A1, sheets 3,5, and 9) to the zoning:

Zoning Table	Zone – D-5	Existing – ca. 2000	Proposal	Relief
Lot Area	N/A	45,117 sq. ft.	45,117 sq. ft.	N/A
Height (ft.) I § 540	130 ft. max. 1 st Street SE - 110 ft. ROW	89 ft. 9 in.	128 ft. 9 in.	None
Penthouse C § 1500		15 ft. 7 in. mechanical	16 ft. habitable penthouse 20 ft. total penthouse height which includes embedded mechanical	None
FAR I § 539				
Total:	6.5 max.	6.44	8.38	None ¹
Residential:	N/A	N/A	N/A	--
Non-Residential:	6.5 max.	6.44	8.38	--
GFA				
Total:	--	290,760 sq. ft.	378,266 sq. ft.	None
Residential:	--	0 sq. ft.	0 sq. ft.	
Non-Residential:	--	290,760 sq. ft.	378,266 sq. ft.	
Lot Occupancy I § 202	100% max.	100%	100%	None
Rear Yard I § 205	Not required if building fronts on three streets per I §205.2(b)	Not provided as building fronts on three streets	Not provided as building fronts on three streets	None
Side Yard I § 206	None required, 4 ft. min., if provided	None	None	None
Front Setback I §§ 542 and 616.6 (b)	15 ft. min.	15 ft. from M Street, SE curb	15 ft. from M Street, SE curb	None
Parking I § 212.1	162 spaces req. (ZR 58) No parking req. (ZR 16)	295 spaces 181 standard spaces 114 tandem spaces	288 spaces 175 standard spaces 113 tandem spaces	None
Bicycle Parking C § 802	LT: 1 space / 2,500 sq.ft. ST: 1 space / 40,000 sq.ft.	No long term spaces 6 short term spaces	43 long term spaces 12 short term spaces	None
Loading C § 901	3 loading berths and 1 service/delivery space min.	3 loading berths 3 loading platforms 1 service/delivery space	3 loading berths 3 loading platforms 1 service/delivery space	None

Pursuant to Subtitle I § 701.3, the Zoning Commission may consider requests for relief from specified provisions in the zone. The Applicant has not requested zoning flexibility through this design review process.

¹ Employing credits in accordance with Subtitle I, Chapters 8 and 9.

VI. REVIEW CRITERIA

The zoning for this site provides specific criteria for Zoning Commission review of proposed developments in Subtitle I § 701. The following is OP's analysis of the standards applicable to this application.

A. Standards for Zoning Commission Review Under the Design Review Regulations for the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area (Subtitle I § 701)

701.1 The provisions of Subtitle I, Chapter 7 apply to a new building or structure or building addition that has frontage on a designated street segment within the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area, the Independence Avenue Sub-Area, the North Capitol Street Sub-Area, or within a D zone and with frontage on North Capitol Street south of M Street, N.W., and to buildings seeking additional height pursuant to Subtitle I § 525.2.

The Applicant is proposing an addition to the existing structure, which has frontage on a designated street segment within the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area. Therefore, the provisions of Subtitle I, Chapter 7 apply. The applicant is also proposing a renovation of the existing building.

701.2 All proposed uses, site plans, buildings, and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in an alteration of the exterior design to any property within an area listed in Subtitle I § 702.1(a), shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) In addition to proving that the proposed use, building, or structure meets the special exception standards set forth in Subtitle X, Chapter 9, an applicant requesting approval under this section shall prove that the proposed building or structure, including the siting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will:

(1) Help achieve the objectives of the sub-area, as set forth in Subtitle I, Chapter 6, in which it is located;

The objectives of the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area are to ensure the preservation of historically important axial views of the Capitol Dome and to further the development of a high-density, mixed-use corridor north of the Capitol Gateway neighborhood.

The Project will further these objectives by updating and expanding an existing commercial office building, which will help to continue generating an appropriate level of daytime activity in the neighborhood. The proposed addition should not negatively impact axial views of the Capitol Dome as the project does not abut any axial thoroughfares running to the Capitol.

(2) Be in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns;

The Project would be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood context and street patterns. The proposed addition would result in a nine-story office building that would be in more character with nearby office development. The existing building fronts on M Street with vehicular access provided at the rear of the building. The building entry would continue to be accessed from M Street, SE and the Applicant is not proposing to modify the parking and loading access on L Street, SE.

(3) Minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians;

The Project would maintain vehicular access from L Street, SE, which removes vehicular access from the primary designated segment of M Street, minimizing potential conflicts with pedestrian traffic that is focused on M Street, SE. The Applicant should consider ways to maximize the available sidewalk space on M and 1st Streets, SE as they serve as pedestrian thoroughfares leading to the Navy Yard Metro Station entrances.

(4) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation; and

The existing building fronts on M, 1st, and L Streets, SE and has minimized the unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces. The Applicant is proposing an upper story addition to the existing commercial office building. The existing building features a combination of glass curtainwall with metal trim and brick at the ground floor with an elevated recessed entry at the southeast corner of the site. The Applicant is proposing to maintain the glass curtainwall façade at the southern building elevation and to maintain the existing brick on the east, west, and north facades. The building entry would be highlighted under the proposal with new metal panel column covers and a new metal panel apron that would highlight a decorative wood soffit at the existing recessed entry (Exhibit 9A2, Sheets 32 through 39).

The Applicant is proposing the use of metal panel and terracotta to accent and complement the new entry and upper floor addition. As such, the building will include the existing brick and curtainwall, and new construction featuring glass curtainwall, metal accent panel, structural steel “y” columns, terra cotta accent, and wood soffit; the applicant should ensure that these materials tie together and that the building reads as a whole (Exhibit 9A2, Sheet 40 and Exhibit 9A3, Sheets 43 through 45), and should consider editing the material palette to achieve a more cohesive building design.

(5) Minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards; and

The Applicant is proposing to use mass timber for the new upper story addition and is proposing to incorporate other “green” building features, including low flow plumbing fixtures, green roof, electric vehicle charging stations, VRF mechanical system, and energy efficient destination dispatch elevators. The Applicant is pursuing LEED certification for new construction and should provide a LEED checklist prior to the hearing.

701.3 The Zoning Commission may hear and decide any additional requests for special exception or variance relief needed for the subject property. Such requests shall be advertised, heard, and decided together with the application for Zoning Commission review and approval.

The Applicant is not requesting special exception or variance relief for the Project.

B. Special Exception Standards (Subtitle X § 901)

Pursuant to X §§ 604.6 and 701.2(a), the Zoning Commission must find that the Project meets the general special exception requirements of the Zoning Regulations.

(a) Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;

The Project is in keeping with the scale, density, and height of surrounding buildings, which consist largely of 10-12 story commercial and residential buildings. The Project would renovate and expand an existing

office use, which will complement the mix of uses in the Navy Yard and continue to generate daytime commercial activity in the area.

(b) *Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and*

The Applicant has designed the building to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and the Project would maintain the current site circulation that mitigates transportation impacts associated with the building by directing vehicular and truck traffic to the rear of the building. Vehicular access would continue to be accommodated on L Street, SE to minimize conflicts with pedestrian traffic focused along M Street adjacent to the Navy Yard Metro Station.

The proposed upper floor addition features a terrace at the eighth floor, as well as habitable penthouse space. The proposed building amenities, including new outdoor space, would be focused on the M Street, SE façade and should minimize any impacts to neighboring properties.

(c) *Will meet such special conditions as may be specified in this title.*

The Project meets the special conditions specified in Subtitle I.

C. General Design Review Standards (Subtitle X § 604)

The Applicant satisfies the general Design Review standards as follows.

604.5 The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and with other adopted public policies and active programs related to the subject site.

The Property is located in Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest and furthers policies in this Area Element, as well as policies in the Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Protection, Economic Development, and Urban Design Citywide Elements.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the Property as appropriate for high density commercial uses. The proposed development, with an overall FAR of 8.38 and a height of 128 feet 9 inches is consistent with this designation.

Generalized Policy Map

The Property is designated as a Land Use Change Area on the Generalized Policy Map. The Applicant is proposing a renovation and expansion of an existing building that was constructed in 2000. The Navy Yard area has seen extensive development and change since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Element

Policy LU-1.1.3: Central Employment Area - *Continue the joint federal/District designation of a “Central Employment Area” (CEA) within the District of Columbia. The CEA shall include existing “core” federal facilities such as the US Capitol Building, the White House, and the Supreme Court, and most of the legislative, judicial, and executive administrative headquarters of the United States Government. Additionally, the CEA shall include the greatest concentration of the city’s private office development, and higher density mixed land uses, including commercial/retail, hotel, residential, and entertainment uses. Given federally-imposed height limits, the scarcity of vacant land in the core of the*

city, and the importance of protecting historic resources, the CEA may include additional land necessary to support economic growth and federal expansion. The CEA may be used to guide the District's economic development initiatives, and may be incorporated in its planning and building standards (for example, parking requirements) to reinforce urban character. The CEA is also important because it is part of the "point system" used by the General Services Administration to establish federal leases. The boundaries of the CEA are shown in Figure 3.2. 304.8

Policy LU-1.1.4: Appropriate Uses in the CEA - Ensure that land within the Central Employment Area is used in a manner which reflects the area's national importance, its historic and cultural significance, and its role as the center of the metropolitan region. Federal siting guidelines and District zoning regulations should promote the use of this area with high-value land uses that enhance its image as the seat of the national government and the center of the District of Columbia, and that make the most efficient possible use of its transportation facilities. 304.9

The property is located within the Central Employment Area and the proposed renovation and expansion of an existing commercial office building would add to the stock of commercial office space, serve the mix of uses surrounding the Navy Yard Metro Station, and help to maintain a high level of daytime activity in the area. The Applicant has indicated that the current office tenants would remain in the building; however, the proposed improvements would position the building to serve a new single tenant in the future. The Applicant is also considering ways to activate the entry level terrace on M Street with a ground floor retail tenant.

Transportation Element

Policy T-3.1.1: Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs - Provide, support, and promote programs and strategies aimed at reducing the number of car trips and miles driven (for work and non-work purposes) to increase the efficiency of the transportation system. 414.8

Policy T-3.3.4: Truck Management - Manage truck circulation in the city to avoid negative impacts on residential streets and reduce the volume of truck traffic on major commuter routes during peak travel hours. 416.11

The existing building is located approximately one block from the Navy Yard Metro Station, which provides access to Metro's Green Line. The Applicant is proposing to introduce long-term bike parking in the building, where none exists today. The Applicant also is proposing to provide access to shower and changing facilities for employees. A total of 4 showers and 25 lockers would be made available.

The Applicant has provided Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Loading Management Plans and continues to coordinate with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) (Exhibit 9C). The TDM Plan would include a Transportation Management Coordinator; new bicycle facilities; two electric vehicle charging stations in the garage; unbundled parking; installation of missing street trees on the 1st Street, SE frontage; and provision of a CaBi expansion plate for the Capital Bikeshare station at 1st and M Streets, SE.

The development will also enhance the streetscape and create a pedestrian-friendly experience by shifting the building entry to the corner of 1st and M Streets, SE, activating the entry terrace, and exploring ground floor retail opportunities. The existing and proposed vehicular and loading access is from L Street, SE, which reduces traffic and the potential for pedestrian and vehicular conflicts on M Street, SE.

Environmental Protection Element

Policy E-3.1.2: Using Landscaping and Green Roofs to Reduce Runoff - Promote an increase in tree planting and landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff, including the expanded use of green roofs in new construction and adaptive reuse, and the application of tree and landscaping standards for parking lots and other large paved surfaces. 613.3

Policy E-3.2.1: Support for Green Building - Encourage the use of green building methods in new construction and rehabilitation projects, and develop green building methods for operation and maintenance activities. 614.2

Policy E-5.1.1: Low Impact Development and Green Building Methods for the District - Strongly encourage the use of low impact development (LID) methods and green building design methods and materials in new construction and major rehabilitation projects undertaken by the District of Columbia government. 627.3

The Applicant is proposing to use mass timber construction for the addition. This is a new construction method that offers potential environmental benefits and a reduced carbon footprint (Exhibit 9A1, Sheets 12 through 16). While it has been used in other cities, this construction technique has not yet been used for commercial purposes in the District and this project would serve as a case study.

Economic Development Element

Policy ED-2.1.1: Office Growth - Plan for an office sector that will continue to accommodate growth in government, government contractors, legal services, international business, trade associations, and other service-sector office industries. The primary location for this growth should be in Central Washington and in the emerging office centers along South Capitol Street and the Anacostia Waterfront. **Policy ED-2.1.4: Diversified Office Options:** Diversify the tenant base by attracting both high-end, mid-range, and low-end office space users, and by supporting a range of office space types. Recognize that while many firms seek to be located in the District, some may prefer lower end space over premium Downtown office space. 707.6

Policy ED-2.1.5: Infill and Renovation - Support the continued growth of the office sector through infill and renovation within established commercial districts to more efficiently use available space while providing additional opportunities for new space. 707.10

The Project would renovate and expand the existing office building on the Property, which would increase the supply of commercial office space available in the area. The expanded and renovated office space would strengthen the area as a commercial center and would increase daytime activity in the neighborhood.

Urban Design Element

Policy UD-1.2.4: View Protection - Recognize and protect major views in the city, particularly characteristic views of city landmarks, and views from important vantage points. Recognize the importance of views to the quality of life in the city and the identity of Washington and its neighborhoods. 904.6

Policy UD-1.4.3: Avenue/Boulevard Vistas and View Corridors - Protect views and view corridors along avenues/boulevards, particularly along streets that terminate at important civic monuments or that frame distant landmarks. Vistas along such streets should be accentuated by creating more well-defined street

walls, improving landscaping, and requiring the highest architectural quality as development takes place.
906.9

Policy UD-2.2.5: Creating Attractive Facades - Create visual interest through well-designed building facades, storefront windows, and attractive signage and lighting. Avoid monolithic or box-like building forms, or long blank walls which detract from the human quality of the street. 910.12

The proposed renovation and vertical addition to the building would complement the existing urban fabric in the surrounding area. As previously stated, given the building's location at 1st and M Streets, SE the proposed addition would not negatively impact any significant axial views or view corridors. The existing building respects the 15-foot setback on M Street, SE. Although the Applicant is proposing minor modifications at the ground level, including an enhanced building entry and terrace, the renovations and proposed upper floor addition would not infringe on any required setbacks.

The Applicant is proposing to shift the building entrance eastward to better emphasize the corner. The new entry will feature a wood soffit that echoes the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers (Exhibit 9A2, Sheets 35 through 39). The metal panel, terracotta accent, and wood details are carried through to the new upper floor addition. The terrace at the eighth floor is framed by "Y" shaped supports, which provide visual interest.

The Applicant should provide a signage plan for the Project.

604.6 *The Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed design review development will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property and meets the general special exception criteria of Subtitle X, Chapter 9.*

See discussion above in Section B. Special Exception Standards (Subtitle X § 901) of this report.

604.7 *The Zoning Commission shall review the urban design of the site and the building for the following criteria:*

- (a) *Street frontages are designed to be safe, comfortable, and encourage pedestrian activity, including:*
 - (1) *Multiple pedestrian entrances for large developments;*
 - (2) *Direct driveway or garage access to the street is discouraged;*
 - (3) *Commercial ground floors contain active uses with clear, inviting windows;*
 - (4) *Blank facades are prevented or minimized; and*
 - (5) *Wide sidewalks are provided;*

The existing building features one main pedestrian entry, which is accessible from M Street, SE via an elevated terrace. The Applicant is shifting the building entrance slightly eastward to emphasize the corner at 1st and M Streets, SE, which should strengthen the building's presence at this intersection.

The entry terrace is set off from the street by large integrated planters, the Applicant should provide additional information regarding the proposed plant materials for the planters, as well as for the eighth-floor roof terrace. The Applicant has agreed to plant any missing street trees along the 1st Street, SE frontage.

The Project would maintain the existing vehicular circulation, with access on L Street, which provides

deference to the pedestrian traffic on 1st and M Streets, SE.

(b) *Public gathering spaces and open spaces are encouraged, especially in the following situations:*

- (1) *Where neighborhood open space is lacking;*
- (2) *Near transit stations or hubs; and*
- (3) *When they can enhance existing parks and the waterfront;*

While the Project would not include any public space, the existing building entrance at the corner of 1st and M Streets, SE features an entry terrace, which could serve as a gathering place. The Applicant should consider opportunities to activate the terrace with seating opportunities or via a ground floor retail tenant that would draw area residents and visitors to the building.

(c) *New development respects the historic character of Washington's neighborhoods, including:*

- (1) *Developments near the District's major boulevards and public spaces should reinforce the existing urban form;*
- (2) *Infill development should respect, though need not imitate, the continuity of neighborhood architectural character; and*
- (3) *Development should respect and protect key landscape vistas and axial views of landmarks and important places;*

The Applicant is proposing a renovation and addition to an existing building, which is part of the established fabric of the M Street corridor. The proposed renovations to the building entry and upper floor addition would respect the surrounding neighborhood character and would complement the existing commercial and residential development in the immediate vicinity. The proposed wood soffit entry feature would provide a visual connection to the nearby Anacostia River and provide visual interest for passersby on 1st and M Streets, SE.

(d) *Buildings strive for attractive and inspired façade design, including:*

- (1) *Reinforce the pedestrian realm with elevated detailing and design of first (1st) and second (2nd) stories; and*
- (2) *Incorporate contextual and quality building materials and fenestration;*

As discussed above and shown in Exhibit 9A, the proposed renovation and addition would feature an innovative construction technique and would include high quality building materials. The relocated entry would strengthen the building's street presence and relationship to the pedestrian environment. The wood soffit at the ground level entrance and the "Y" shaped steel supports at the eighth-story terrace would emphasize the corner and provide visual interest. As previously stated, the Applicant should consider the contrast and interplay between the existing brick and curtainwall building and the proposed timber, steel, and terracotta accent features of the proposed renovation and addition to ensure that the building components read as a whole.

(e) *Sites are designed with sustainable landscaping; and*

The Applicant has stated that the Project would be LEED certified and would include other green features.

The Applicant should provide a LEED checklist and a calculation of the proposed green roof area.

- (f) *Sites are developed to promote connectivity both internally and with surrounding neighborhoods, including:*
- (1) *Pedestrian pathways through developments increase mobility and link neighborhoods to transit;*
 - (2) *The development incorporates transit and bicycle facilities and amenities;*
 - (3) *Streets, easements, and open spaces are designed to be safe and pedestrian friendly;*
 - (4) *Large sites are integrated into the surrounding community through street and pedestrian connections; and*
 - (5) *Waterfront development contains high quality trail and shoreline design as well as ensuring access and view corridors to the waterfront.*

The existing building is located in close proximity to the Navy Yard Metro Station and the Project would provide additional available office space in a metro-accessible location. The Applicant is proposing to provide the following bicycle facilities: a bicycle room on the P1 level, which will include 43 long term spaces; expansion of the existing shower facilities on the ground floor, increasing the number of showers from two (2) per locker room to four (4) per locker room; addition of storage lockers; and an expansion plate for the nearby CaBi station. The Applicant has also proposed streetscape improvements that include re-planting missing street trees and activating the ground level terrace.

604.8 The Zoning Commission shall find that the criteria of Subtitle X § 604.7 are met in a way that is superior to any matter-of-right development possible on the site.

The Applicant is not requesting relief for height or density and could proceed with this project as a matter-of-right, but for the Design Review requirement.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS

OP circulated project information to District agencies and has had discussions with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE). These discussions are reflected in this report. DDOT has also filed a report to the record at Exhibit 10, noting no objection to the proposal subject to implementation of Transpiration Demand Management and Loading Management Plans.

No agencies had filed a report to the Office of Zoning record as of the date OP completed this report.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At the time the OP report was drafted, comments from ANC 6D had not been filed in the record.