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Zoning Commission  
of the District of Columbia  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW – Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Letter in Support of Design Review Application  
5 M Street, SW  
Z.C. Case No. 20-14**

Chairman Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission:

On behalf of the Capitol Riverfront Business Improvement District (“BID”), I write this letter to strongly support the proposed development located at the northwest corner of M and South Capitol Streets (5 M Street, SW – ZC Case No. 20-14). The Capitol Riverfront BID provides place management and services that assist in creating a neighborhood that is clean, safe, accessible, and vibrant. The BID actively collaborates and forms partnerships to achieve the vision for the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood and supports the ongoing development of the community. Accordingly, we often partner with our property owners and stakeholders on new development projects in or adjacent to our neighborhood. These partnerships take many forms – marketing and promoting the project, working as a nonprofit “broker” to assist in retail, office tenant or residential attraction efforts, or supporting a well-designed project when being reviewed by DC public agencies.

We as BIDs do not speak to zoning changes per se, but rather speak in support of the positive merits a project can bring to the neighborhood or our adjacencies in terms of good building design, a compatible mix of uses, the provision new open spaces, and urban design qualities.

The Applicant, one of our BID’s property owners and active developers, proposes to develop 5 M Street, SW, with a new development comprised of residential, office and retail/service uses. These types of uses will significantly enhance and serve the surrounding community, particularly given the increasing residential demand and the need for new housing in the District. Moreover, the ground floor retail and service uses will serve the community and fill a void at this intersection that is presently underutilized. I have also reviewed the proposed development plans and believe that the architectural design, massing, and density will enhance the South Capitol Street corridor and establish the site as an important gateway location between Southeast and Southwest neighborhoods.

The South Capitol Street corridor is quickly emerging as a special place due to the beautifully designed new Frederick Douglas Bridge and two new memorial ellipses. It is important that new private buildings along this corridor also exhibit high quality design and contribute to the sense of

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an urban “street wall” that is part of the approach to the U.S. Capitol complex from the south. The 5 M Street, SW project does this and more:

- It is a strong architectural response to an important corner of the South Capitol/M Street intersection. As such it will “hold the corner” and create a building that enframes the intersection;
- The building facades create an interplay of receding and planes and voids that are visually interesting to the eye;
- The overall site plan creates continuous street facades on South Capitol and M Street, SW and only allows curb cuts for vehicle access on Half and L Streets, SW.
- The proposed mix of uses will enhance the corridor by including more residential along this urban corridor, as well as ground floor retail that further animates the corner and supports the surrounding employee and residential populations. I think an alternative also includes office as a possible use.

Based on the foregoing, and on behalf of the Capitol Riverfront BID, I submit this letter in strong support for the Design Review request and urge the Commission to approve the application for 5 M Street, SW.

Sincerely,



Michael Stevens, AICP  
President  
Capitol Riverfront BID