



**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** Stephen Cochran, Development Review Specialist  
JLS  
Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation  
**DATE:** November 29, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Report on Zoning Commission Case No. 21-12– Design Review for 850 South Capitol Street, S.E. – Square 695

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## I. OP RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends the Zoning Commission **approve:**

- the design review application for the proposed development at 850 South Capitol Street, SE in Square 695, as amended to October 19, 2021 (Exhibits 3 and 13-15C);
- the area variance from the Subtitle I § 616.7(f)'s requirement for a 15-foot setback from the South Capitol Street property line.

The design meets the criteria specified in the following sections of the Zoning Regulations:

- Subtitle I §616 for buildings within the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area of the downtown zones
- Subtitle I Chapter 7 design review criteria for the downtown zones
- Subtitle X Chapter 9's general special exception review criteria
- Subtitle X § 1001.1 Area Variance from Subtitle I 616.7(f), setback regulation.

This recommendation is contingent on approval of the following Condition:

Proposed Signage and Ornament: To maintain the primacy of the view of the U.S. Capitol, there should be no signage above the third floor on the southern, western or northern building faces, nor any illuminated ornament, including lighting of or from the northwest "tower" architectural embellishment.

OP has requested that the applicant provide the following additional information or responses by the hearing:

- Illustrations of the appearance of the western face of building – particularly at the ground level - before the planned reconfiguration of South Capitol Street and the elimination of the on-ramp from South Capitol Street to I-695. Submitted illustrations show the appearance after the elimination of the ramp and the redesign of South Capitol Street.

Since the timeframe for these improvements has not been fixed, it is important to know what the building will look like in its near-term context.

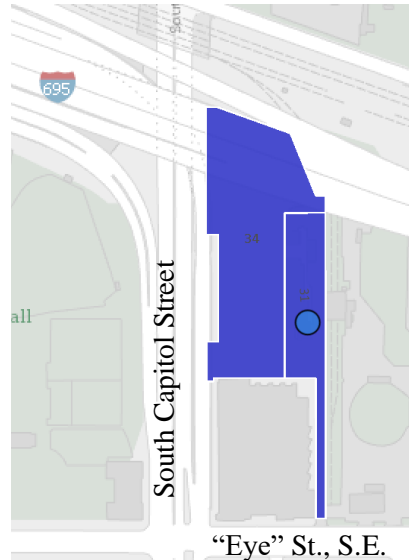
- Consideration of design enhancements to:
  - The portion of the south wall that faces a residential courtyard on the property to the South (See the evaluation of C § 901.2 (a)'s criterion in Section IV.C. of this report);
  - The portion of the east wall adjacent to the Capitol Power Plant coal yard, to enhance its appearance from westbound I-695; and to
  - The pedestrian experience on South Capitol Street.
  
- The square footage of any green roof area.

## II. SUMMARY OF APPLICATION AND PROPOSALS

<b>Applicant:</b>	VNO South Capitol LLC and Three Lots in Square 649 LLC.
<b>Address:</b>	850 South Capitol Street, S.E.
<b>Legal Description:</b>	Square 695 Lots 31 and 34
<b>Boundaries:</b>	The site boundaries are irregular (Figure 1, below). The parcel consists of two contiguous parts. There is a northern section bounded on the west by South Capitol Street, an I-695 on-ramp and a 24-foot-wide District-owned property with easements. There are highway-related easements on the west and north. The northern boundary is underneath an I-695 overpass of South Capitol Street and generally follow the northern edge of I-695, at which point it joins the site's eastern boundary, which follows the property line shared with the property to the east. To this northern section is attached a 285-foot long, 20-foot-wide pipestem or dogleg that joins the property to Eye Street on the south.
<b>Site's Current Use:</b>	Lot 34 on the west side is generally undeveloped but is occasionally used for temporary storage or parking at its northern end. Lot 31 on the east side is paved and had, until recently contained a one-story car wash structure entered from Eye Street.
<b>Adjacent Development:</b>	North: The I-695 overpass. South: The 130-foot Novell apartment building at the corner of South Capitol and Eye Streets, S.E West: South Capitol Street and I-695 ramps. East: The U.S. Capitol coal yard and open storage areas.
<b>Neighborhood Context:</b>	I-695 and railroad tracks generally separate the site from any context to the north. Except for the Capitol Power Plant coal yard to the east, development to the south and east is relatively recent high-rise apartment and office construction comprising the

northeast corner of what is sometimes referred to as the Capitol Riverfront.

- Ward, ANC:** Ward 6; ANC 6D (proposed building) and ANC 6B (area under I-695)
- Zone:** D-5 (high-density commercial or residential)
- Property Size:** 118, 364 square feet



**Figure 1. Site Location**

### III. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The building would contain 725,380 square feet, with an FAR of 6.13. The FAR would be relatively low for a site in a high-density zone particularly because of constraints imposed by the freeway above the northern portion of the site. These include the need to keep a building 15 feet back from the southern edge of the freeway, and restrictions on erecting structures under the freeway overpass.

The building would rise 130 feet in 13 floors from a building height measuring point at Eye Street, S.E. There would be approximately 520 residential units, with amenity space on the ground floor and roof. All units would be market rate. No retail space is planned. There would be elevator lobbies at the northwest and southwest corners of the building.

Parking: 272 vehicle parking spaces would be provided on three enclosed above-ground levels, covered by a landscaped roof within a closed court. All motorized vehicles would enter the northeast corner of the property from an existing or slightly re-aligned curb-cut on South Capitol Street, at the northern end of the site, off of that street's north-bound lanes<sup>1</sup>. All vehicles parking inside the building would exit to the south via the 285' x 20' dogleg connecting to Eye Street.

Loading and Delivery: For delivery vehicles and drop-offs there would be a turn-around partially under the freeway that would enable those vehicles to exit via north-bound South Capitol Street.

<sup>1</sup> The DDOT Public Space Committee granted concept approval to the proposed curb cuts On October 28, 2021.

Loading docks would be on the north side of the building's first floor. The long-term bike room would be in the southeast corner of the building, with its principal entrance and exit being the 20-foot-wide dogleg off Eye Street, S.E. The dogleg would be striped to enable a pedestrian back entrance, an exit lane for vehicle parking, and a bike access route.

Subject to approval from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the area to the north of the building, under or immediately adjacent to I-695, is proposed to be used for vehicle turn-around, with a short-term parking area, and a dog park that would be completely under the freeway (Exhibit 20B).

The building would be generally rectangular, but its north side would follow the angle of I-695, at a 15-foot setback from the road deck.

There would be a three-story base containing residential amenity space and parking and 10 residential stories above. The base would be dark brick on the sides facing roadways, with large areas of glass on the first floor of the South Capitol Street side, giving views into the lobbies and residential amenity space. This façade would be embellished with two abstract metal "speed lines" between the first and second levels, and the applicant has stated there will be interior artwork that will be visible to pedestrians on South Capitol Street. Behind this area the rest of the first floor would be devoted to vehicle and bicycle parking, and loading.

There would be openings on the north side for doors, the garage entrance and loading docks.

The second and third levels, which would be devoted entirely to parking, are designed to appear as if one story tall and would be faced in dark brick with translucent glass punched windows on the west and north sides and dark masonry and metal panels on the east side. Two closed courts would begin at the fourth level, with inner-facing apartments at the fourth floor facing onto a landscaped roof covering the parking.

Atop the parking and amenity base would be 10 residential stories organized around two interior courts. On South Capitol Street the residential portion's façade would start at the same setback from the South Capitol Street centerline as the Novell apartment building to the south and would rise straight to the 12<sup>th</sup> story, after which there would be required upper-level setbacks. As the façade moves north, there would be four step-backs from the building line of the base. Each step-back would be four bays wide and each would step back progressively farther, so that by the northernmost step-back the building would rise to 130 feet without needing an upper-level setback to comply with sub-area regulations. (See Exhibit 15A1, page 13).

The west, north and part of the east facades of floors 4 – 13 would be a grid of grey brick, 1 bay wide and varying from two to four stories tall. These would be inset with glass, dark metal and aggregate panels, with inset balconies not projecting beyond the line of the masonry grid. The set-back upper stories would drop the grid and be all glass and metal. The east side of the building would be fully finished for the first five bays starting from the north but, for its southern three-quarter, would contain large expanses of pre-cast panels filling a grid pattern similar to other facades and punctuated by narrow vertical windows providing light for building corridors. Until and if there is future development on the site of the Capitol coal facility, this lesser-detailed façade would be visible from west-bound traffic on I-695. (See Exhibit 15A2 for materials illustrations).

The south façade would be built to the southern property line. The first 64 feet east of South Capitol Street would be built to the property-line wall of the Novell Apartments to the south.

The remainder would face the 15'1" deep court on the north side of the Novell. That façade's design would be similar to the east façade, with a grid, precast panels and narrow vertical strips of windows would provide light to building corridors. The potential impact of the subject building is discussed later in this report

Atop the northwestern corner of the applicant's proposed building the masonry and glass façade would rise approximately 10 feet beyond the roof line to form a tower as an architectural embellishment (Exhibit 15A2, page 1 and 2). The two-story penthouse would be appropriately set back on all sides of the building. The first level of the penthouse would contain residential amenity space adjacent to terraces, and mechanicals. The second level would be only for mechanicals. Other than glass for the amenity spaces, the penthouse would be clad with dark metal panels.

The proposed street-level landscaping is intended to be consistent with standards DDOT is developing for this portion of South Capitol Street, and with existing DDOT standards for Eye Street. OP has suggested the applicant work with DDOT to consider including additional plantings or artwork, particularly given the difficult pedestrian environment adjacent to the I-695 overpass.

The project would be designed to achieve LEED Gold v.4 (Exhibit 15, page 5).

#### **IV. EVALUATION**

A design review application in a downtown zone sub-area is not required to undergo as extensive a review as what is required for a PUD or for a project in a zone such as the Capital Gateway. The review is specifically exempted from the design review process in Subtitle X, Chapter 6 by X §601.1, and does not require a review of the project's relationship to the Comprehensive Plan. The first three sub-sections evaluate the proposal against the required criteria. The fourth sub-section evaluates the variance request.

##### **A. Conformance with Subtitle I §616 for Buildings in the M and South Capitol Street Sub-Area of the Downtown Zones**

###### *§ 616 M AND SOUTH CAPITOL STREETS SUB-AREA*

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

The proposed building is within the sub-area. It does not intrude on the South Capitol Street axis and the minor façade step-backs may serve to open-up and enhance the view of the Capitol. The materials facing public areas would be of a high quality and the scale of the brick grid would establish a somewhat monumental presence consistent with the importance of South Capitol Street.

The building's density is at the lower range of what is considered high-density due to constraints on development of the western and northern sides of the property. While the

building would have only one use, this residential development would likely contribute to the viability of other types of development on South Capitol Street and in the general Capitol Riverfront and Navy Yard areas.

In the abstract it would seem desirable to have retail use on a portion of the ground floor, more realistically the impact of the I-695 overpass makes this section of South Capitol Street somewhat unfriendly for pedestrians and may inhibit retail success in the location. Accordingly, OP has encouraged the applicant to enliven and improve the pedestrian environment with enhanced landscaping along South Capitol Street and by installing artwork at the ground level, either on the building or inside the building but easily visible by passers-by. The applicant has stated it will comply with this request and will provide additional information at the hearing.

*§ 616.2 The general location of the M and South Capitol Streets Sub-Area is the D-5 zoned property with frontage on either side of the designated tertiary street segments of South Capitol Street corridor north of M Street, as indicated with the green lines in Figure I § 616 ... including all or parts of Squares 640, 641, 643E, 644, 646, 648 649, ...*

The property is within the sub-area, in Square 695

*§ 616.4 The uses for a building with frontage on a designated primary street segment is governed by Subtitle I § 601.*

The proposal complies. The site is not on a primary or secondary street segment.

*§ 616.5 The uses for a building with frontage on a designated tertiary street segment are governed by the zone district.*

The proposal complies. The western side of the property faces a tertiary street segment, where there are no special use regulations and where there are no modifications to dimensional regulations that are not otherwise modified by the sub-area regulations.

*§ 616.6 A building with frontage on the designated primary street segments of M Street, S.E. shall:*

The criteria are not applicable as the site is not on M Street, S.E., or a designated primary street.

*§ 616.7 The streetwall on the eastern and western sides of South Capitol Street shall be set back for its entire height and frontage not less than fifteen feet (15 ft.), from the property line adjacent to South Capitol Street...*

(a)–(c) apply only to buildings on the west side of South Capitol Street and this property is on the eastern side.

*(d) Any portion of a building that exceeds one hundred ten feet (110 ft.) in height shall provide an additional one-to-one (1:1) setback from the building line along South Capitol Street;*

The design complies by combining setbacks to the southern portion of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13th floors with a series of step backs to entire sections of floors 4 – 13 moving north along South Capitol Street, and with step-ups in the building height as the setbacks enable the building to rise cleanly to 130’ while still complying with the upper-level setback requirement. Its upper levels would align with the Novell apartments to the south. (See Exhibit 15A1, pages 22-27).

*(e) There shall be no openings in building frontages adjacent to South Capitol Street that provide entrances or exits for vehicular parking or loading;*

The building design would have no openings for parking or loading. It would utilize an existing curb cut on South Capitol Street to enable access to parking and loading on the north side of the building, facing the area underneath the freeway overpass.

*(f) A minimum of sixty percent (75%) of the street-wall on the east side of South Capitol Street shall be constructed on the setback line.*

The applicant has requested a variance from this requirement. This is evaluated below in Section IV. D.

Section (g) applies only to buildings on the west side of South Capitol Street.

*§ 616.8 All proposed buildings and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in an alteration of the exterior designs facing the street segments in the sub-area shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the provisions in Subtitle I, Chapter 7.*

See the section immediately below.

## **B. Conformance with Subtitle I § Chapter 7 Design Review Requirements for Certain Locations in the Downtown Zones**

Sections 701.1 and 701.2 require the “uses, site plans [and] buildings” to be reviewed by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provision in Chapter 7.

*§ 701.2 (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 design of the building, its uses and the public space improvements help achieve the objectives of preserving the axial view of the Capitol dome and furthering the development of a high-density mixed-use corridor.

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

The design would not change surrounding street patterns. The massing and materials are congruent with other recent buildings constructed along South Capitol Street and in the Capitol Riverfront.

*(3) Minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians;*

The applicant has attempted to minimize the potential for such conflicts by designing a one-way South Capitol Street to Eye Street circulation system for vehicles using the parking garage. The applicant has stated it would be impractical and undesirable to have all parking, loading, deliveries, bicycles and pedestrians-using-shortcuts to enter and exit via the 20-foot wide by 185-foot-long portion of the property off of Eye Street. The applicant's Comprehensive Transportation Report (Exhibits 13 – 13A3) has been reviewed by DDOT, which will be submitting a separate report.

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

There would be no blank walls adjacent to public spaces.

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

The applicant has modified its proposal since the original filing. It now intends to design the building to be able to achieve a LEED Gold v4 level.

*§ 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.*

See Section IV.C, and IV. D below.

**C. Conformance with Special Exception Review Standards of Subtitle X § 901.2**

The standards are that in the judgment of the Zoning Commission the application:

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

As described above, the design and uses would be in harmony with the zoning regulations and maps for the D-5 zone and the M and South Capitol Street Sub-Area.

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

The proposed project should not tend to have an adverse impact on properties to the west, north or east. The property to the south is developed with the Novell apartment building. Portions of the Novell's north face are built to the property line and have at-risk windows. Significant sections of the Novell have units with windows set-back only 15'1" from the property line and with balconies projecting into that setback.



With the applicant's proposed building being constructed to its lot's southern boundary, on each of the Novell's 13 floors one at-risk window would be blocked and the windows and projecting balconies in four other units would face a substantially blank wall 15'1" away.

While recognizing that this impact would be due primarily to the Novell's previous design choices, OP encourages the applicant to consider enhancing the design of its south wall to lessen the visual impact on north facing units in the Novell apartment building.

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

This has been evaluated above

#### **D. Evaluation of Variance Request**

The applicant has asked for variance relief from Subtitle I § 616.7's requirement that at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the street-wall on the east side of South Capitol Street shall be constructed on the setback line that § 616.7 sets at 15 feet from the property line adjacent to South Capitol Street. The applicant has demonstrated that the project meets the tests for granting a variance from this requirement.

##### Exceptional Condition

The western line is irregular, with ownership of property east of South Capitol Street and the I-695 on-ramp alternating between the applicant and, for the 24-foot-wide Lot 805, the District of Columbia. There are also District easements encumbering the western side of the applicant's property to the north and south of Lot 805.

##### Practical Difficulty

The above-noted conditions make it infeasible to construct 75% of the building wall to within the required 15 feet of the western property line adjacent to South Capitol Street. Nine feet is the closest the western face of the building could get to the setback line without intruding on District property or violating easement restrictions.

##### No Substantial Detriment to the Public Good or the Zoning Regulations

The proposed 24-foot setback from South Capitol Street would respect the intent of the sub-area's objective of ensuring preservation of the historically important axial view of the Capitol Dome. The setback depth would align with the approximately 24-foot setback of the Novell apartments to the south for all of the three-floor base. While floors 4 – 10 would set back progressively farther from south to north, the alignment at the south end, where it would abut the Novell apartments, would establish a uniform frame for the Capitol Dome when viewed

from the south. There would be no projections into this frame from the sections of the proposed building to the north.

### **E. Additional Evaluation Comments**

The D-5 zone, like most downtown zones, does not have an Inclusionary Zoning requirement. The zone is mapped over areas just outside the boundaries of the pre-ZR16 Downtown zone boundaries. In these areas the zoning regulations enabled the construction of taller and denser buildings through the purchase of development rights that had been generated by residential construction in specific areas of the central portion of Downtown.

Without increases in the overall housing supply the imbalance between supply and demand will drive up housing prices in a way that creates challenges for many residents, particularly low-income residents based on the conclusions of a recent research report on the effect of market-rate development on neighborhood rents<sup>2</sup>. With respect to the applicant's proposed development, expanding the supply of housing by 520 units would deliver over 6% of the 7960-unit overall housing goal established for the Lower Anacostia Waterfront and Near Southwest Planning Area in the 2019 Housing Equity Report. That should, in and of itself, contribute to moderating the upward pressures on the price of renting or owning nearby housing.

### **F. ANC COMMENTS**

ANC 6D had not submitted comments to the file at the time OP completed this report.

### **G. OTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At the time OP completed this report, the file contained no letters or information filed by members of the public.

### **H. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCY COMMENTS**

The District Department of Transportation will be submitting a report under separate cover. Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) staff has provided OP with comments on the application. These are attached to this OP report.

Attachment: DOEE staff comments

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<sup>2</sup> Research Roundup: The Effect of Market-Rate Development on Neighborhood Rents. (UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Studies).

## ATTACHMENT

### DOEE Development Review Comments on ZC 21-12: 850 South Capitol Street SE (Square 695)

DOEE recognizes and appreciates the applicant's recent commitment to certify the project at the LEED for Homes v4 Gold level. The following recommendations are intended to encourage the applicant to incorporate sustainable design and construction strategies that will yield higher LEED scores and minimize the project's impact on the environment.

Many of these strategies can be financed with no upfront cost through [DC PACE](#). The [DC Green Bank](#) and the [DC Sustainable Energy Utility](#) (DCSEU) also offer innovative financial products and technical assistance to help projects gain access to capital. To learn about project-specific financing options, contact Crystal McDonald at [cmcdonald1@dcseu.com](mailto:cmcdonald1@dcseu.com) or complete the [Custom Rebate Form](#).

#### **Energy Performance and Electrification**

If the applicant is looking to increase their commitment to sustainability, some of the most significant gains would be in the areas of energy efficiency and maximization of on-site renewable energy, both of which are District priorities. Maximizing energy efficiency at the time of construction will more cost effectively assist in meeting [Building Energy Performance Standards](#) (BEPS) in the future. The BEPS program was established in Title III of the Clean Energy DC Omnibus Act of 2018. The Act states that starting in 2021, owners of buildings over 50,000 square feet that are below a specific energy performance threshold will be required to improve their energy efficiency over the next 5 years. Projects below the performance threshold will be able to choose between a performance pathway, which requires that they document a 20% reduction in energy usage over the 5-year compliance period, or a prescriptive list of required energy efficiency measures. The next BEPS will be established in 2027 and again every six years, and the compliance threshold will increase each cycle. New projects are encouraged to maximize energy efficiency during the initial design and construction in order to meet BEPS upon completion.

In line with the District's goal of carbon neutrality and the objectives of the Sustainable DC 2.0 and Clean Energy DC plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, DOEE encourages the applicant to design the building to be fully electric (i.e., eliminate the on-site combustion of fossil fuels). DOEE and DCRA are evaluating options to include building electrification requirements in future code updates. Building electrification involves powering all building appliances and systems (e.g., domestic hot water, heating equipment, cooking equipment) with electricity rather than fossil fuels (e.g., natural gas or fuel oil). Efficient electric systems reduce indoor air pollution caused by combustion equipment and can save on operating costs, especially when coupled with solar energy. All-electric buildings can also save on construction costs by avoiding the need to install gas piping. It's easier and more cost-effective for new construction to be designed with electric systems than it is to retrofit buildings later, so DOEE strongly encourages projects to evaluate electric options as part of their initial energy modeling exercises. For more information about building electrification in the District, visit [this resource page](#) created by the Building Innovation Hub.

DOEE encourages the project to provide electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and install make-ready infrastructure so that additional charging stations can be added at a later date. The [2017 DC Green Construction Code](#) provides some suggested thresholds for the provision of supply equipment and make-ready infrastructure. EV resources and information about available incentives are available at <https://doee.dc.gov/service/electric-vehicles-resources>.

### **Net-Zero Energy**

Clean Energy DC, the District's detailed plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, calls for net-zero energy (NZE) building codes by 2026. DOEE encourages the project to explore net-zero energy construction/certification ahead of this planned code requirement. An NZE building is a highly energy-efficient building that generates enough on-site, or procures acceptable offsite, renewable energy to meet or exceed the annual energy consumption of its operations. NZE buildings can benefit both owners and tenants through significantly lower operating costs, improved occupant comfort and improved indoor air quality. Under the [2017 District of Columbia Energy Conservation Code](#), projects can use Appendix Z as an alternative compliance pathway, which provides a working definition and guidance for NZE.

DOEE has published a *Net-Zero Energy Project Guide* and a *Multifamily Guide* to assist project teams with planning, designing, constructing and operating NZE buildings. These and other resources can be found at <https://doee.dc.gov/service/netzeroenergy>. If the applicant is interested in NZE construction, either on this project or future projects, DOEE can be of assistance. Please reach out to Connor Rattey (DOEE) at [connor.rattey@dc.gov](mailto:connor.rattey@dc.gov) for more information.

### **Solar**

DOEE encourages the applicant to incorporate solar energy generation into the project's design and recommends consulting with an expert from DCSEU to learn about custom rebate options and other financial incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.

Maximizing solar energy production will contribute to achieving the District's goals to rely on 100% renewable electricity by 2032 and increase local solar generation to 10% of total electricity by 2041. As a result of the District's commitments, there are many financial incentives to install solar. One way that the project can maximize solar energy production is to integrate solar photovoltaic arrays into green roofs. See the GAR and Stormwater Management section below for more details.

### **Climate Resilience**

In order to prepare for the impacts of climate change, including increased flooding and extreme heat, DOEE encourages the team to assess how climate change will affect the project and to incorporate resilient design strategies. As part of the [Climate Ready DC Plan](#), DOEE released [Resilient Design Guidelines](#) to assist project teams considering climate resilient design. Additional DOEE Climate Adaptation and Preparedness resources are available at <https://doee.dc.gov/climateready>.

LEED offers [Resilient Design pilot credits](#) that guide project teams through identifying climate risks and mitigation strategies. USGBC offers [RELi 2.0](#), a dedicated rating system for resilient design and construction.

## **Floodplain**

The proposed project is located in the Zone X (unshaded) flood hazard area, which is the area that will be inundated by a flood event having a 0.2-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This flood zone is also known as the "500-year floodplain." Currently, only the 100-year floodplain is regulated by the District's Flood Hazard Rules (Title 20 DCMR Chapter 31), but DOEE has proposed updates to the Flood Hazard Rules that would expand the regulatory jurisdiction to also include the 500-year floodplain. DOEE aims for the proposed updated Flood Hazard Rules to enter the formal rulemaking process in late 2021 or early 2022.

The proposed updated Flood Hazard Rules would require all dwelling units to be elevated above the regulatory Design Flood Elevation, which is estimated to be 13.2 feet NAVD88 at this site. (As DC's flood risk is projected to increase due to climate change, the developers may also wish to consider designing to one of the sea level rise-adjusted flood elevations listed in Section 2 of the [Resilient Design Guidelines](#)). Only nonresidential uses would be permitted below the DFE; such uses would need to be dry-floodproofed with flood shields and structural components resistant to flood loads in accordance with ASCE 24-14, [FEMA Technical Bulletin 3](#), and [FEMA Technical Bulletin 6](#). Additional guidance is available from FEMA's P-2037 manual ("[Flood Mitigation Measures for Multi-Family Buildings](#)"). Dry-floodproofing designs would need to be certified by a qualified design professional using FEMA Form 086-0-34 ([NFIP Floodproofing Certificate for Nonresidential Structures](#)). The proposed updated Flood Hazard Rules would also require an encroachment analysis certified by a Professional Engineer to indicate that any fill or structures associated with the project would not cause an increase in 100-year flood elevations.

Note that the updated Flood Hazard Rules are proposed to have a 180-day vesting and transition period. Additional exceptions are proposed to apply to projects that have reached certain design milestones or received conflicting approvals (such as a variance or special exception from the Board of Zoning Adjustment) prior to the effective date of the update. For details, see [Workshop #3 Presentation](#).

Further details on the proposed updated Flood Hazard Rules provisions and timeline are available at: <https://doee.dc.gov/publication/title-20-chapter-31-flood-hazard-rules>

## **Green Area Ratio and Stormwater Management**

DOEE acknowledges that the applicant is exceeding the 0.2 GAR requirement for the D-5 zone and that the proposed design exceeds the project's stormwater requirements and will allow the project to earn stormwater retention credits (SRCs), based on the applicant's preliminary calculations.

DOEE encourages the applicant to incorporate solar energy generation into the building's roof design, which can be accomplished without diminishing the project's GAR or stormwater requirement compliance. DOEE has issued guidance on how to successfully incorporate solar into green roofs on pages 41 & 42 of the [2020 Stormwater Management Guidebook](#).

DOEE further encourages the applicant to consider maximizing rooftop solar energy generation and meeting some of its stormwater requirement offsite by purchasing SRCs. SRCs purchased from the municipal separated storm sewer system (MS4) are more environmentally beneficial than those from the combined sewer system (CSS), which is where this project is located.

DOEE is prepared to meet with the project team to discuss stormwater opportunities on the project site. To set up a review meeting with the stormwater team at DOEE, please contact Ayende Thomas at [ayende.thomas@dc.gov](mailto:ayende.thomas@dc.gov).