

**FROM THE DESK OF COMMISSIONER KATHY HENDERSON  
5D COURT WATCH COORDINATOR**



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Commissioner Kathy Henderson  
5D Court Watch Coordinator *KH*

**RE:** Case 24-11

**DATE:** October 20, 2025

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In accordance with the Zoning Commission's request for written testimony, prior to the closing of the record, I submit the following comments:

1. I served eleven terms as an effective and award-winning advisory neighborhood commissioner in Ward 5, and as the chairperson of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 5D; near the subject project site. I have also served as a member of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board and I am pleased to have voted to designate the Alexander Crummell School in Ivy City as an historic site. All of Ivy City has historic value.
2. I greatly appreciate the excellent work Douglas Development Corporation has done to revitalize Ivy City, which had been overlooked until their Hecht Warehouse and expanded retail project breathed new life into this community. Douglas Development Corporation has been an excellent development partner our city can count on to deliver quality and viable projects throughout the District of Columbia. Douglas Development Corporation singlehandedly revitalized Ivy City and I believe their project designated as Case 24-11, will absolutely revitalize the Bladensburg Rd, New York Avenue and Montana Avenue project site. All of their projects represent excellent design principles and consideration for the context of our nation's capital and they have an exceptional record of community engagement.
3. I appreciate the opportunity to urge the Zoning Commission to vote to approve the Applicant's request to rezone a portion of the MU-5B site to PDR-1, which is consistent with the District's Comprehensive Plan; the Applicant's request is also consistent with

legislation passed by the D.C Council. to specifically address inclusion of PDR-1 zones. The Applicant's request to rezone 208, 478 feet of the total 397,745 site to allow additional uses such as a glass blowing and ceramics and or coffee processing is an appropriate way to revitalize and market the site for sustained viability. The remaining 183,267 square feet may certainly be used to include a housing component, as stipulated by the MU-5B designation. The project site has lain fallow for well over a decade and this project represents an excellent opportunity to positively activate this site. Positive business activity at the site is a positive opportunity for the community and our city as a whole. I walk to Home Depot, along Montana Avenue, Bladensburg Rd and I look forward to the inclusion of the new sidewalk infrastructure and green space included in the Applicant's project design.

4. I believe the Applicant's original brick design lends an elegant and historic nod to nearby Ivy City and the overall surrounding context of buildings and homes that are born of quintessential DC federal style design. However, I have no objection to the Applicant's more modern and current design that includes an expanse of glass; I recommend that the Applicant ensure that the glass element does not contribute to or otherwise give rise to bird strikes. Care for the environment and ecosystem as a whole is the modern way to approach all development projects.
5. Reviewing Title 11, Subtitle J, 100.1 provides a very transparent directive for PDR-1 uses, underscoring community benefits and protections for the public, as codified by DC law. "Heavy commercial and light manufacturing uses and development activities employing large numbers of people and requiring some heavy machinery under controls that minimizes any adverse effect on the other nearby more restrictive zones." Section (c) "allows compatible office and retail uses and development..." The project will increase employment opportunities for the public, business activity for the Applicant and additional tax revenue for the city, positively transforming a dormant space for all to enjoy. The \$145,000.00 community benefits package is appropriate.
6. The Office of Planning's (OP) recommendation of approval for the Applicant's project and The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), along with ANC 5C and the Arboretum Civic Association's approval is well-reasoned and appropriate; the Applicant has presented a strong case for approval of their project and I am happy to join in supporting the Douglas Development Corporation's offer to deliver another excellent project to our city. Thank you for including my oral and written testimony in the official record of Case 24-11.