

To: DC Zoning Commission
Submitted by email

From: Richard Layman, 216 Quackenbos St. NW, Washington, DC 20011
Also affiliated with the Citizens Planning Coalition

Re: ZC case 06-14D: Mid-Atlantic Realty Partners, LLC, PUD Modification,
100 Florida Ave. NE (Sq. 35874, Lots 820, 7003, 7005 & 7007) - Ward 5

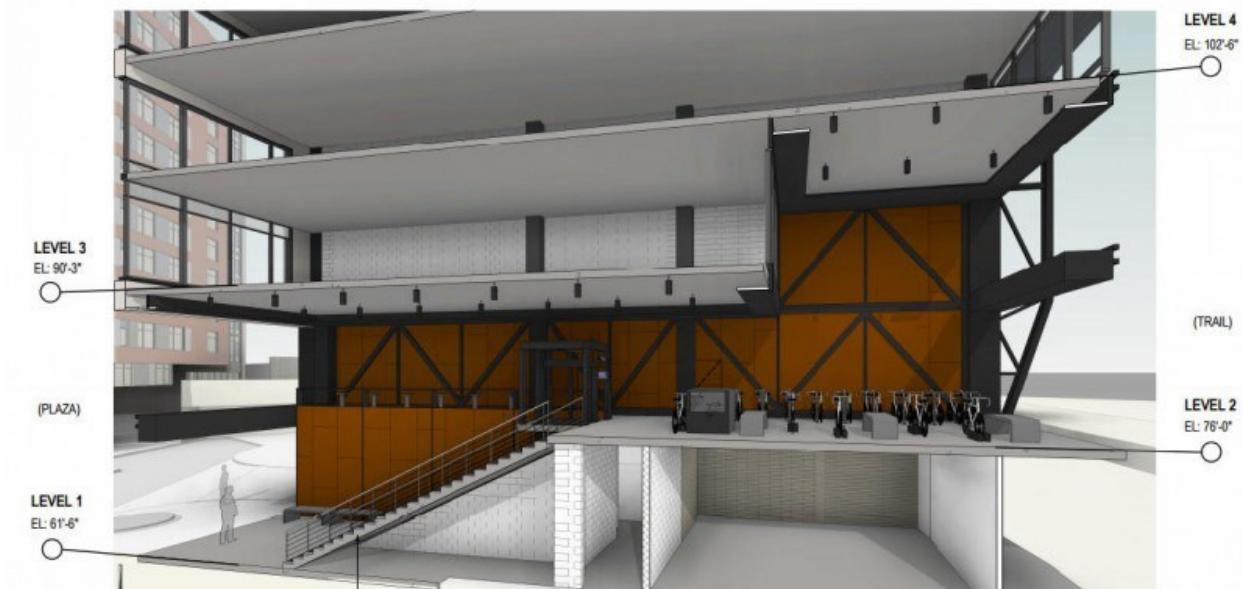
Date: 1/19/2017

Below are comments related to the above-cited case, specifically concerning the bicycle facilities to be incorporated into the project, which is located adjacent to the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

These comments are being cc'd to Jim Sebastian, Supervisory Transportation Planning (sustainable mobility), DC Department of Transportation.

While in general the proposed accommodations are superlative and go far beyond that which are provided in any other DC building thus far, they are not perfect, and it is recommended that the Zoning Commission give more specific guidance concerning these matters.

Trail lobby rendering



Bike trough/gutter. The proposal includes a "bike gutter," installed in the middle of the stairwell. DC has not developed adequate guidance concerning such facilities and the proposed installation represents best practice atypical of DC. For example the bike gutters installed at the Carlos Rosario school adjacent to the MBT and the bike gutter

installed by WMATA connecting Rhode Island Avenue to the station site are sub-standard.

The developer should be commended for proposing to install a best practice bike gutter facility as part of the project.

Hours of Operation. The developers do not commit to 24-hour access to the facility, which will provide access to and from the above-ground Metropolitan Branch Trail to the street grade of Florida Avenue, serving both pedestrians and bicyclists.

They will install security gates, comparable to those used by WMATA at Metrorail Stations, to prevent access to the facility outside of operating hours. Note that the stairwell connecting the MBT to the NoMA Metrorail station, adjacent to the Courtyard Inn motel facility opposite the site does provide 24-hour access. (I don't know if the elevator is closed outside of Metrorail hours of operation.)

The hours they say that they will commit to are from 6 am to midnight. These hours do not necessarily comport with the hours that the Metrorail station is open.

Because the facility will be a key element of the sustainable mobility network in NoMA, and will complement the transit facilities, specifically the NoMA Metrorail station, it should be considered a primary "vertical transportation facility" linking the MBT to Florida Avenue and should be open on a schedule that complements and supports use of the Metrorail Station.

To be congruent with Metrorail use, the facility should be open for at least 15 to 30 minutes before the station opens and after it closes.

And the hours should be adjusted as the Metrorail operating schedule is adjusted. For example, for the next two years the system will be closing at midnight, but after this period, the system will operate til 2 am/3 am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Therefore it is recommended that the Zoning Commission specify language concerning operating hours of this facility that are longer than currently proposed, based on the operating schedule of the Metrorail system, including facilitating access before the station opens and after it closes.

Display of maps and information. Unfortunately, DC does not have a sub-city transportation wayfinding and information system comparable to that of Arlington County, although WMATA Metrorail and Metrobus map products, DC Circulator map products, and Capital Bikeshare map products, and the DDOT bicycle map provide some of this information.

Arlington County Transportation Map, Shirlington – Photo 1, attached
The Blairs bicycle station and map, Silver Spring – Photo 2, attached

Walmart New Jersey Avenue TDM map – Photo 3, attached

The developer should provide more detailed specifics about what they intend to provide. What should be provided at a minimum is (1) the general DC bike map as a large poster, updated as the DC map is updated and (2) an area bicycle facilities map, comparable to that produced for Capital Bikeshare stations, overlaid with bus transit information (in other words the map should be a composite of the WMATA bus map and the Capital Bikeshare map).

The alternative transportation wayfinding signage developed by Walmart for the New Jersey Avenue NW store is a model that the developer should be encouraged to use, as well as that used in The Blairs development in Silver Spring.

I do not know if the property employs an information display comparable with transit and other sustainable mobility access information, such as displays produced by TransitScreen or the Redmon Group. Such a display should be included in the bike lobby.

TransitScreen display, Silver Spring Civic Center – Photo 4, attached

Air Pump. The submission does not detail what type of air pump will be provided. Generally there are hydraulic pumps operated by hand/foot and electric-compressor based pumps. Increasingly, hydraulic air pumps are being installed in public places around the DC metropolitan area, but most installations are not the products recommended for high-traffic public space use. Therefore they fail. This is the case with most of the air pumps installed by the NoMA BID as well as the DC Department of General Services.

Because the facility will be part of a larger, monitored building complex, it is recommended that an electric-compressor based air pump be installed. (This is typical of subway stations in Stockholm.)

Cycle Pump, Stockholm – Photo 5, attached

Repair Stand. The submission documents said a repair facility might be included but did not commit. At the minimum, a bike repair stand should be included, especially since a vending machine, which presumably will be stocked with patch kits and related items, will be placed in the facility.

The Zoning Commission should specify the inclusion of bike repair facilities in this project.

Murals/Public Art versus a blank (orange) wall. Elsewhere on the site, the developer has “installed murals” (on the embankment wall on the New York Avenue side of the property, featuring a bird (“Chirp”) and enlarged music posters African-

American artists (sadly, it doesn't appear as if that mural acknowledged gigs played at the nearby Uline Arena/Washington Coliseum).

The rendering of the facility shows blank walls painted orange, on the back wall of the facility.

Rather than being satisfied with a blank wall, the developer should be encouraged to include sustainable mobility related public art in the facility, perhaps on the back wall, to complement its highly visible "lobby" and location on the Metropolitan Branch Trail and adjacent to the Union Station railyard, which features Amtrak, MARC, and VRE passenger trains, alongside the Red Line subway tracks.

Ideally, a mural could show various sustainable modes – passenger trains, subway, bus, biking, walking, car sharing, bike sharing, taxis, and delivery.

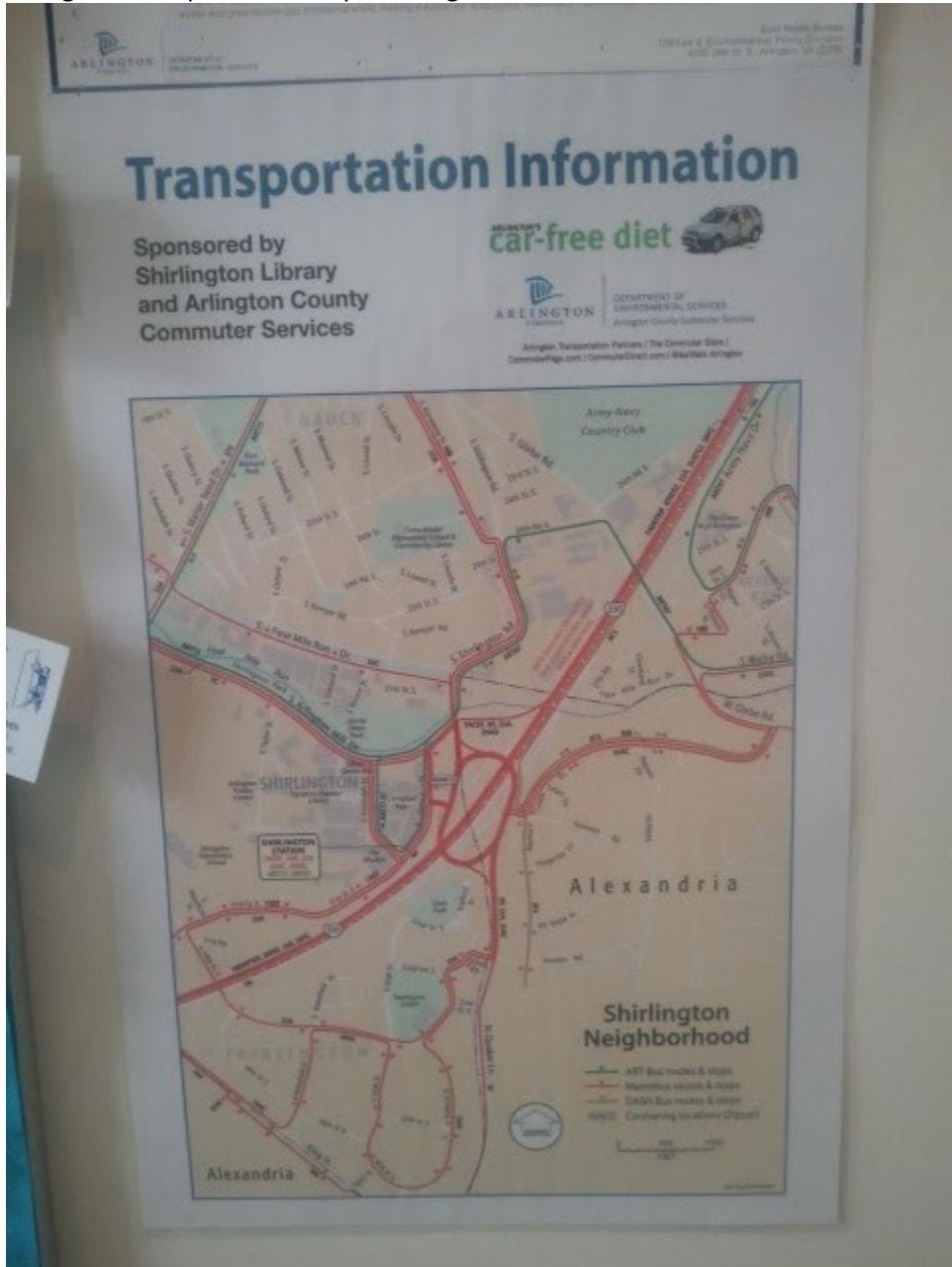
The Key Route Plaza mural in Oakland, California (Photo 6) is one example. But light art such as that by BillFitzGibbons' Light Rails project in Birmingham, Alabama (Photo 7), the "Wall of Lights (Photo 8), more artistic treatments (Photo 9) or other underpass public art treatments (Photo 10) show other alternatives.

Another suggestion would be to create a "Go by Bike" neon signage treatment, not unlike "Parking" related neon signage of old (Photo 11), or comparable to the Go by Train, Go by Streetcar, Go by Tram signage in Portland (Photo 12).

Conclusion. Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Photos

Arlington Transportation Map, Shirlington district



The Blairs Bicycle Station (note the map)



Walmart TDM wayfinding sign, New Jersey Avenue NW



TransitScreen transit information display, Silver Spring Civic Center



Cycle Pump, Stockholm



Key Route Plaza transit mural, Oakland, California



Bill FitzGibbons, Light Rails, Birmingham, Alabama



Wall of Lights, London Dots, Southwark



Drip painting mural



Parking related neon sign



Go by Tram sign, Portland

