

ZC Case No. 15-27
300 Morse Street, NE (Square 3587, Lots 805, 814 and 817)

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan
Economic Development and Employment Opportunities

Policy ED-1.1.5: Use of Large Sites

Plan strategically for the District’s remaining large development sites to ensure that their economic development potential is fully realized. These sites should be viewed as assets that can be used to revitalize neighborhoods and diversify the District economy over the long term. Sites with Metrorail access, planned light rail access, and highway access should be viewed as opportunities for new jobs and not exclusively as housing sites. 703.13

The project is consistent with this policy since it takes advantage of a large development site (almost eight acres) to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood and diversify the District economy. The project includes retail and office uses, in addition to housing, which will create opportunities for significant job growth near the NoMA Metrorail station.

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. 707.6

The project is consistent with this policy since it incorporates a large, first-class office building into the development site, which will accommodate and support a wide variety of office industries.

Policy ED-2.2.3: Neighborhood Shopping

Create additional shopping opportunities in Washington’s neighborhood commercial districts to better meet the demand for basic goods and services. Reuse of vacant buildings in these districts should be encouraged, along with appropriately-scaled retail infill development on vacant and underutilized sites. Promote the creation of locally-owned, non-chain establishments because of their role in creating unique shopping experiences. 708.7

The project is consistent with this policy because it creates significant new shopping and retail opportunities on a large, underutilized site. The proposed retail will serve the redeveloping area to help meet the demand for basic goods and services in the Florida Avenue Market neighborhood. Moreover, the project’s retail will include space for locally-owned, non-chain “maker” industries, in furtherance of this policy’s goal of creating unique shopping experiences.

Policy ED-3.1.3: Commercial District Associations

Encourage business improvement districts, merchant associations, Main Street organizations, and other commercial associations that enhance economic development and commercial revitalization efforts, particularly in underserved and/or rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods. 713.7

The project is consistent with this policy since the Applicant will establish a Property Management Company that will enhance revitalization efforts by maintaining the streetscape and public parks and plazas, and developing and hosting events and programs within those public spaces. Doing so will ensure that the PUD Site is kept in good condition and utilized by the public to its full potential. In addition, the Applicant will contribute \$25,000 to the formation of a market-wide BID.

Policy ED-3.2.2: Small Business Incubators

Provide low-cost rental space (“incubators”) for small, home-grown businesses and start-up companies, particularly companies that are responsive to technological and economic innovation in the marketplace. A variety of spaces should be considered for business incubators, including vacant storefronts and surplus public buildings. 714.7

The project is consistent with this policy because it will feature both temporary and permanent business incubator space that will accommodate small, local, start-up businesses devoted to the creation of goods and services. These “maker spaces” will be marketed at 10% less rent than the average base rent charged for leased retail space across the PUD Site at the time that each maker space is leased. Moreover, the Applicant will retain a retail broker with experience marketing to and securing a variety of tenant types, including makers.

Policy LU-1.3.1: Station Areas as Neighborhood Centers

Encourage the development of Metro stations as anchors for economic and civic development in locations that currently lack adequate neighborhood shopping opportunities and employment. The establishment and growth of mixed use centers at Metrorail stations should be supported as a way to reduce automobile congestion, improve air quality, increase jobs, provide a range of retail goods and services, reduce reliance on the automobile, enhance neighborhood stability, create a stronger sense of place, provide civic gathering places, and capitalize on the development and public transportation opportunities which the stations provide. 306.1

The project is consistent with this policy since it will support a large mix of uses adjacent to the NoMa Metrorail station. These uses include retail, employment, civic gathering spaces, housing, and others, all developed in a manner that will reduce reliance on the automobile and provide easy, multi-modal access to jobs.

Policy T-1.3.1: Transit-Accessible Employment

Work closely with the federal government and suburban jurisdictions to support transit-oriented and transit-accessible employment throughout the region. This would maximize the use of major

transit investments such as Metrorail, and enhance the efficiency of the regional transportation system. 405.11

The project is consistent with this policy since it will provide significant new jobs on a site that is transit-oriented and transit accessible, being located adjacent to a Metrorail station, and within close walking distance of multiple Metrobus routes, carshare locations, and Capital Bikeshare stations.

Consistency with the Florida Avenue Market Study

Summary of the FAMS Vision:

- **Function:** New residential, office, and retail uses create a vibrant mixed use destination that retains a revitalized wholesale/retail market.
- **Character:** A mix of densities ranging from moderate to medium to high density, designed in such a way to be integrated into surrounding development and community fabric.
- **Sense of Place:** An environment that is functional, safe, dynamic and appealing to the senses.
- **Allure:** A site that capitalizes on its unique assets and appeals to residents, office workers, market workers, visitors, and students.
- **Public Realm:** A vibrant public realm that creates user friendly spaces and active ground floor uses with common design elements and human scaled development and design.
- **Connectivity:** Streetscapes that promote improved vehicular circulation and traffic calming while enhancing pedestrian circulation and access and decreasing pedestrian and truck conflicts.
- **Sustainability:** Development that embraces site and system sustainability features including applicable requirements of the Green Buildings Act of 2006, LEED certification, and best practices in stormwater management. *See p. 53.*

The revitalized market area should feature a mix of land uses such as retail, office, and residential. To fulfill the public realm and sense of place vision for the Study Area, it is essential that street activating or pedestrian enlivening activities are featured in the ground floors of development or within the public space of key streets such as Sixth Street, Fifth Street, Morse Street, Florida Avenue, and Neal Place. These uses can take the form of retail spaces with vibrant facades and highly transparent storefronts or public realm activities such as plazas, vending stations, or outdoor cafes. *See p. 54.*

The project is consistent with these recommendations since it will provide new residential, office, and retail uses in a vibrant new mixed-use designation. The project's architecture, open spaces, and overall site plan will retain and improve the character of the Florida Avenue Market area, and will provide a mix of densities that are appropriate for the site and integrate well into the surrounding community. Importantly, the project includes significant new job opportunities, which will be located in a transit-rich and highly walkable and bikeable location, thus increasing access and enhancing sustainability. New streets and sidewalks created within and around the PUD Site will promote improved vehicular circulation by completing the street grid, avoid pedestrian conflicts by locating loading and parking in appropriate locations, and enhance

pedestrian circulation by providing wide sidewalks, ground floor retail, and pedestrian-oriented lighting and furnishings. Overall, the improvements proposed for the PUD site will significantly improve economic development in the Florida Avenue Market area and increase access to a variety of jobs and new employment opportunities.

Consistency with the Ward 5 Works Industrial Land Transformation Study

The Ward 5 Works study recognizes the demand for small and medium-sized PDR spaces and encourages the District to partner with local stakeholders to capitalize on the current economic trends to transform the industrial areas of Ward 5 into a hub of cutting-edge and sustainable PDR businesses. Key opportunities include the development of maker uses (described in the Plan as small-scale production activities that include both engineering-oriented pursuits and traditional crafts/trades); arts and creative uses; and green, sustainable businesses. *See* p. 3. The Plan's strategic recommendations span a wide range of policies, actions, and place-based investments, and include the goal of partnering with the private sector to support development of affordable space for PDR and new and emerging businesses with, a particular focus on arts uses and makers, media and communications, food industries and green, sustainable businesses. *See* p. 4.

Specific Policy Actions within the Plan include:

- Action 1.2: Partner with non-profits to support emerging industries including media, communications, food and arts/maker and businesses; and
- Action 2.2: Study existing PDR zones to preserve production and stimulate new maker spaces.

As stated above, the project includes temporary and permanent business incubator spaces that will accommodate and be dedicated exclusively to makers. These maker spaces will be reserved for small, local, start-up businesses devoted to the creation of goods and services, and will be marketed at 10% less rent than the average base rent charged for leased retail space across the PUD Site at the time that each maker space is leased. The Applicant will retain a retail broker with experience marketing to and securing a variety of tenant types, including makers.

The Applicant's proposal to provide the maker spaces at a subsidized rent is entirely consistent with the W5W Plan's recommendation to partner with the private sector to support development of affordable maker space to help create a hub of cutting-edge and sustainable local businesses.