WELLS + ASSOCIATES

MEMORANDUM

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To: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

From: Jami L. Milanovich, P.E.

Copy: Stephan Rodiger, Redbrick
Jonathan Rogers, DDOT

Re: Columbian Quarter at Poplar Point
Zoning Commission Case No.: 16-29

Date: December 18, 2017

At the public hearing for the above-referenced case on December 4, 2017, Commissioner May requested additional information regarding the traffic impact associated with the removal of the I-295 southbound off-ramp at Howard Road, which is proposed to be removed in conjunction with DDOT's South Capitol Street Improvement Project. In response to his inquiry, Wells + Associates has looked in detail at the existing and projected volumes on Howard Road in the vicinity of the I-295 off-ramp.

Figure 1 illustrates the traffic volumes on two different segments of Howard Road. The first segment is located between Suitland Parkway and the Anacostia Metro Station parking garage. As shown on Figure 1, eastbound traffic volumes are projected to increase by 20 percent during the AM peak hour and by 183 percent during the PM peak hour as the result of the South Capitol Street Improvement Project.[1] The increase in eastbound traffic volumes on this segment results from the fact that traffic exiting I-295 south will exit onto Suitland Parkway in the future rather than Howard Road. A portion of that rerouted traffic will be rerouted westbound on Suitland Parkway and then eastbound on Howard Road. It should be noted that this section of Howard Road is significantly under capacity (i.e. the volume-to-capacity ratio is just 0.22) and, therefore, can accommodate substantial increases in traffic.

Westbound traffic on this segment of Howard Road is projected to decrease by 28 percent during the AM peak hour and by 17 percent during the PM peak hour. This reduction is directly related to the removal of traffic exiting I-295 southbound from Howard Road.

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[1] The traffic forecasts with the South Capitol Street Improvement Project also include increases in traffic associated with the anticipated future land use in the Poplar Point area.

The second roadway segment shown on Figure 1 is located between the Anacostia Metro Station parking garage and Firth Sterling Avenue. On this segment, eastbound traffic volumes are projected to decrease by 55 percent during the AM peak hour and by 54 percent during the PM peak hour. This reduction is directly related to the removal of traffic exiting I-295 southbound from Howard Road.

Westbound traffic on this segment of Howard Road is projected to increase by 53 percent during the AM peak hour and by 168 percent during the PM peak hour. The increase in eastbound traffic volumes on this segment results from the fact that traffic exiting I-295 south will exit onto Suitland Parkway rather than Howard Road. A portion of that rerouted traffic will be rerouted eastbound on Suitland Parkway and then westbound on Howard Road.

As a result of these changes, the removal of the traffic signal at the I-295 SB off-ramp does alleviate a source of delay on Howard Road that results from the traffic signal, which is exacerbated as a result of the close spacing between the signal at the off-ramp and the signal at the Anacostia Metro station entrance (the current spacing is just 100 feet).

The rerouting of traffic associated with the removal of the I-295 SB does increase the traffic volumes through the Suitland Parkway/Howard Road intersection. As a result of that increase, the Applicant has agreed to install a traffic signal at that intersection. In addition to better facilitating vehicular traffic at the intersection, signalization of that intersection also will help facilitate pedestrian crossings at the intersection. While the volume of pedestrians at the intersection currently is minimal, it is expected to increase with the redevelopment of the area.

The Applicant also has proposed changes to the signal phasing at the Firth Sterling Avenue/Howard Road intersection to better accommodate the changes in traffic volumes at that intersection.

In addition to the question raised by Commissioner May, we also would like to take this opportunity to respond to traffic-related issues raised by Mr. Chris Otten during his testimony at the hearing. First, Mr. Otten raised a concern about the "overwhelming impact on transitways." The Metro Station Access and Capacity Study (WMATA 2008) evaluated potential growth at the various stations within the Metro system through 2030. The growth was based on projected increases in both households and jobs. The area surrounding the Anacostia Metro Station was projected to experience an increase of 74.1 percent in households and 11.1 percent in jobs by 2030. WMATA projected these increases would result in a 38.9 percent increase in ridership at the station. Despite these projected increases, the study found that no vertical transportation or faregate capacity improvements were needed through 2030

at the Anacostia Metro Station. The study did identify the potential need for sidewalk and pedestrian crossing improvements (one of two stations in the core identified with such potential station access issues). The improvements proposed by the Applicant help address this issue. Specifically, the Applicant has proposed the following:

- A new separated pedestrian/bicycle path adjacent to the vehicular access to the station parking facility. This new path will help facilitate pedestrian and bike traffic to/from Howard Road and will complete a gap in the existing sidewalk network (the existing sidewalk stops less than 300' from Howard Road).
- Modification of the existing traffic signal at the Howard Road/Metro Station Access to provide signalized pedestrian crossings across Howard Road and across the Metro Station driveway.

Mr. Otten also stated that no amount of traffic signals and stop signs will mitigate the sheer volume of traffic anticipated by the cumulative developments in the area. In order to evaluate each development objectively, DDOT established a procedure by which each development is evaluated to determine its impact. DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual sets forth specific criteria that define what constitutes an impact. Once the impacts have been identified, recommendations to mitigate the impacts must be proposed. Accordingly, W+A conducted a comprehensive traffic study (Exhibit 17 of the record) to identify the traffic impacts associated with the proposed project and recommended a set of improvements to mitigate those impacts. In this particular case, the improvement plan includes installation of two new traffic signals; modification of signal phasing at two other traffic signals to provide improved signal capacity; installation of a new turn lane at one intersection; and implement a robust Transportation Demand Management Plan to encourage non-auto modes of transportation and reduce vehicular traffic. The Applicant also has agreed to undertake monitoring studies upon completion of the project to ensure the anticipated vehicle reductions are achieved.

The Applicant's proposed mitigation plan was reviewed extensively by DDOT and was modified based on input from DDOT. As outlined at the hearing, all of DDOT's requests were incorporated into the mitigation plan, with one minor exception: the Applicant proposed to provide all residents over the age of 16 either an annual Capital Bikeshare membership or an annual carshare membership (in lieu of proving both).

Throughout the course of the project, the Applicant team met with DDOT six times to discuss the methodology and procedures for the study, the proposed mitigation strategy, and coordination with DDOT's South Capitol Street Improvement Project. DDOT thoroughly reviewed the impacts of the project, as evidenced by their 23-page report (Exhibit 23 of the record). Based on this thorough review, DDOT offered a finding of "No Objection" subject to the conditions discussed at the hearing (note that

DDOT's standard practice is to provide an opinion of "objection" or "no objection" rather than a recommendation to support or not support an application).

In closing, both W+A and DDOT thoroughly evaluated the traffic impacts of the project and determined that the proposed mitigation plan is adequate to mitigate the traffic impacts of the project. Mr. Otten offered no such detailed analysis to support his assertion.

I trust the information contained herein is sufficient to address your remaining questions or concerns related to the traffic impacts of the subject project. Please do not hesitate to contact me at jlmilanovich@wellsandassociates.com or (703) 917-6620 should you have any additional questions or require additional information.

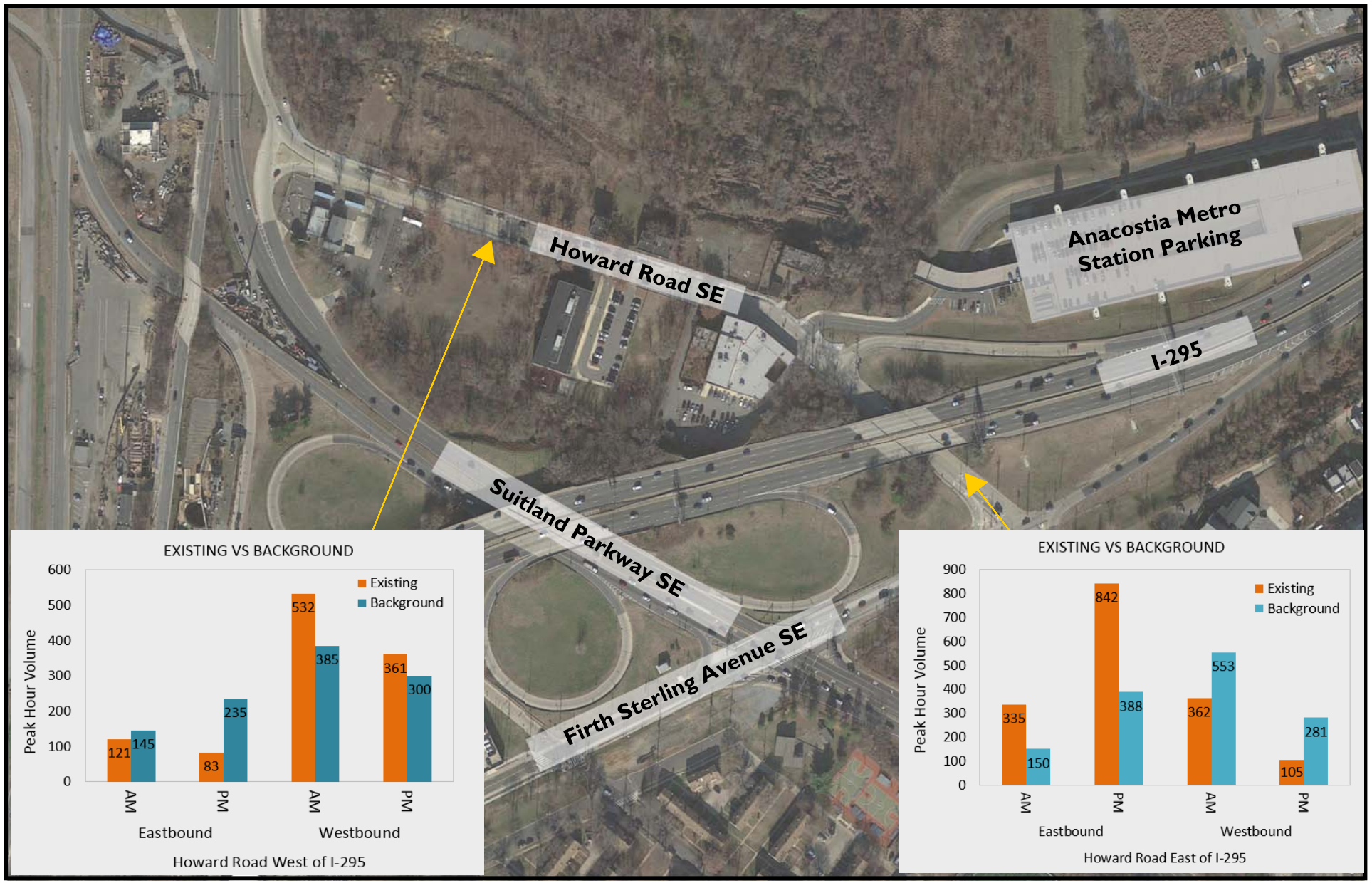

Figure 1
Existing Volume Vs Background Volume
Howard Road

NORTH

Columbian Quarter At Poplar Point
Washington, DC