

February 8, 2021

RE: Recommendation that Z.C. #20-27, Consolidated PUD and related Zoning Map Amendment from MU-4 to MU-6, Be Setdown for Public Hearing

Chairperson Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission:

As the elected Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner representing Single Member District 6E02 (“SMD 6E02”), I am writing to recommend that the application of High Street Development, Inc. (“the Applicant”), for a consolidated planned unit development (“PUD”) and related zoning map amendments be setdown for public hearing. I am submitting these comments as an individual ANC Commissioner and not as a representative of ANC 6E.

The location of the proposed PUD and map amendment lies within the boundaries of SMD 6E02. The Applicant has shared plan revisions that I interpret as responsive to Zoning Commission feedback provided at the January 28, 2021, Zoning Commission meeting. The Applicants has additionally committed to earnest negotiation with ANC 6E to create a community benefits proffer commensurate with the zoning relief sought in this case.

In a letter dated January 6, 2021, ANC 6E provided its initial support for the proposed PUD and map amendment. Although ANC’s vote on this matter preceded my tenure as an ANC Commissioner, I also supported the initial application, including the proposed massing on Marion Street NW, and believe that the application is worthy of setdown for a public hearing under DCMR Title 11-Z, Chapter 400.11. I look forward to continued engagement with the Applicant to revise the application and community benefits proffer to strengthen the value of the project for the community and future residents.

The location of the proposed PUD, on P Street NW between 7th Street NW and Marion Street NW, has been empty and underutilized since the previous building was destroyed in the 1968 Uprisings. While the neighboring blocks on 7th Street NW have transformed into a thriving mixed-use and mixed-density corridor, the corner of 7th Street NW and P Street NW remains a stark hole in the fabric of neighborhood. The community supports the opportunity to fill this gap through this development

The proposed PUD will create 230 units of housing, including affordable and deeply affordable units, in an area with exceptional transit connection and access to essential services. The proposal supports the Mayor’s goal of creating 36,000 units of housing and 12,000 units of affordable housing by 2035. The Applicant commits to exceeding IZ unit production and complies with affordability covenants encumbering Lots 191 and 821. These commitments are difficult to achieve without the density afforded through the PUD process.

Residents of this development will be less dependent on private cars because the location is transit-rich and proximate to recreation and essential services. The development is within 0.5 miles of two metro stations, adjacent to two bus lines (70 and G2), one block from a Capitol Bikeshare station, and adjacent to an existing bike lane on 7th Street NW and a proposed protected bike lane on 6th Street NW. Residents will also have access to the Giant Food at the O Street Market and the Kennedy Recreation

Center—both across the street from the development—further reducing the need for residents to use private vehicles to access essential services. Building density in a transit-rich location is essential for meeting the District’s aggressive goals for transportation sector decarbonization. Additionally, creating affordable units in a transit-rich and service-rich location ensures equitable access to opportunity.

In response to feedback from the Zoning Commission, the Applicant has revised its plans to reduce massing on Marion Street side. Although massing on Marion Street was not a concern for the ANC or for this Commissioner, I believe the revisions are consistent with Zoning Commission recommendations. The Applicant has also communicated that they will increase their LEED certification target from LEED Silver to LEED Gold, which I support. Finally, the Applicant will increase the solar PV coverage, including consideration for vertical solar arrays.

For these reasons, I recommend that the Zoning Commission setdown this case for public hearing.

Sincerely,
Alex Lopez
Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
Single Member District 6E02
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