

May 19, 2021

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ANC Commissioner Support for Approval of Z.C. #20-27, Consolidated PUD and related Zoning Map Amendment from MU-4 to MU-6

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 support the Zoning Commission’s approval of the application of High Street Development, Inc. (“the Applicant”), for a consolidated planned unit development (“PUD”) and related zoning map amendments (“the Application”). I am submitting these comments as an individual ANC Commissioner and not as a representative of Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 6E (“ANC 6E”), although ANC 6E previously submitted a letter of support in this case on January 6, 2021.¹

The location of the proposed PUD and map amendment lies within the jurisdictional boundaries of SMD 6E02. The Applicant worked closely and openly with the ANC 6E and affected neighbors throughout the application process to produce a design that is sensitive to the community context and will meet the needs of current and future residents. The Applicant offers relocation assistance during construction and reduced rent post-completion to the barbershop currently located on Lot 194, ensuring that a small, locally owned business can continue to service our community for years to come. The Application also creates new retail space along 7th Street NW, which will increase foot traffic on that corner and contribute to the vibrancy of the neighborhood.

Through conversations with affected neighbors and at neighborhood meetings regarding the Project, I have heard nothing but support for the Project. The neighbors I have spoken to are comfortable with the design, including the massing on Marion Street NW, and are eager to welcome new neighbors to a lot that has sat vacant for decades. The broad community support for this project is further demonstrated through the five letters of support from affected neighbors that have been submitted into this docket to date.

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 the neighborhood. The community supports the opportunity to fill this gap through this development.

¹ Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6E, “Re: Letter of support for the Z.C. Case No. 20-27, High Street Development, Inc., Square 445. Lots 191-194, 800, 821, and 822.”, submitted January 6, 2021.

The proposed PUD will create a mixed-use building with 223 units of housing, including 29 units of affordable (50%-60% MFI) and deeply affordable units (30% MFI), in an area with exceptional transit connection, proximity to job centers, and access to recreation and 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 Capital 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 and a modal shift away from private automobiles for commuting trips. Additionally, creating affordable units in a transit-rich and service-rich location ensures equitable access to opportunity for all residents.

In response to feedback from the Office of Planning and this ANC Commissioner, the Applicant has increased the project's LEED certification target from LEED Silver to LEED Gold and incorporated innovative vertical solar arrays into the roof design. These changes further enhance the sustainability and environmental stewardship of this development.

For all these reasons, I strongly recommend that the Zoning Commission approve this Application.

Sincerely,
Alex Lopez
Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
Single Member District 6E02
(202) 455-6301