

**APPLICATION OF
US UNION SQUARE DC 899 LLC, US UNION SQUARE DC 901 LLC, AND US UNION
SQUARE DC 999 LLC
FOR DESIGN REVIEW OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES ON NORTH CAPITOL
STREET**



**899, 901 AND 999 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
LOT 298 IN SQUARE 675**

I. Introduction

This application is submitted on behalf of US Union Square DC 899 LLC, US Union Square DC 901 LLC, and US Union Square DC 999 LLC (collectively, the “**Applicant**”) for Zoning Commission design review and approval of new construction along North Capitol Street. The property is comprised of Lot 298 (which encompasses Assessment and Taxation (“**A&T**”) Lots 853, 854, and 855) in Square 675 (collectively, the “**Property**”). The Property is comprised of approximately 137,579 square feet of land area and is located in the D-5 Zone District and the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area.

The Property is currently improved with two office buildings — 899 and 999 North Capitol Street, NE — with an open plaza between the two buildings. The Applicant is proposing to renovate the existing office buildings and construct ground-level retail expansions of both buildings, and to develop a mixed-use building with lodging use and ground-floor retail uses to occupy a portion of the existing plaza (collectively, the “**Project**”). The proposed renovations, expansions, and new mixed-use hotel building further the goals of the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area.

The Applicant submits this application pursuant to Subtitle I § 617.7 of the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations, which requires Zoning Commission design review of new buildings and exterior renovations on properties with frontage on designated portions of North Capitol Street, including on the east side of North Capitol Street between H and K Streets, where the Property is located.

The Property is located in the NoMa neighborhood, two blocks north of Union Station. The Project will serve to reenergize and activate this portion of the North Capitol Street corridor with new retail uses, a dynamic and carefully designed new hotel building, and reinvigorated open plaza spaces, providing both an engaging gathering point and pedestrian-friendly environment to accommodate and encourage foot-traffic through this part of NoMa.

II. Jurisdiction of the Zoning Commission

The Zoning Commission has jurisdiction to grant approval of the proposed development pursuant to Subtitle I §§ 617.7 and 701.1 of the Zoning Regulations.

III. North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area

The objective of the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area is to ensure the preservation of the historically important axial view of the Capitol Dome. 11-I DCMR § 617.1.

IV. Description of Property

The Property consists of three A&T lots (Lots 853, 854, and 855) sharing a single record lot (Lot 298) in Square 675 located on the east side of North Capitol Street between H and K Streets. The Property is in the NoMa neighborhood of Ward 6. The Property consists of approximately 137,579 square feet of land area and is located in the D-5 Zone District and within the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area. The Property is located two blocks north of Union Station and is directly across North Capitol Street from Gonzaga College High School. The

Property is currently improved with commercial office buildings constructed in the early 1970s: 899 North Capitol Street, NE (the “**899 North Capitol Building**”) at the southern portion of the Property (Lot 855) and 999 North Capitol Street, NE (the “**999 North Capitol Building**”) on the northern portion (Lot 853). The middle portion of the Property (Lot 854) is currently improved with a sunken open plaza. Images of the Property and the surrounding area are included in pages 7 and 10–13 of Exhibit F.

V. Description of Project

The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property in two phases.

Phase I will consist of renovating the existing office buildings and constructing ground-level expansions to those buildings along North Capitol Street and K Street. Currently, the existing buildings are set back approximately 15 feet, three (3) inches from the property line along North Capitol Street and approximately 14 feet, eleven (11) inches from the property line along K Street. In addition, the first floor of the 899 North Capitol Building drops below street level a distance ranging between approximately six feet and six (6) feet, six (6) inches; similarly, the first floor of the 999 North Capitol Building drops below street level a distance ranging between approximately three (3) feet, ten (10) inches and five (5) feet, four (4) inches. This condition essentially creates a moat or dugout along the buildings’ street frontages. The proposed ground-floor additions to both the 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building will pull the building facades forward to the property line and create more engaging street-level entrances along North Capitol Street and K Street. The ground-floor expansion and renovation of the 999 North Capitol Building will also include space for a new double-height ground floor retail use, which is significantly lacking along this stretch of North Capitol Street. The 899 North Capitol Building currently has approximately 314,350 square feet of gross floor area (“**GFA**”), and the Project will result in a net increase of approximately 1,167 square feet for a total of approximately 315,517 square feet of GFA in the 899 North Capitol Building.¹ The 999 North Capitol Building currently has approximately 316,518 square feet of GFA, and the Project will result in a net increase of approximately 507 square feet for a total of approximately 317,025 square feet of GFA.² The heights of these existing structures will not change.

Phase II of the Project will consist of developing a new signature hotel building occupying a portion of the existing open plaza, with an address of 901 North Capitol Street, NE (the “**901 North Capitol Building**”). The new 901 North Capitol Building will have a height of seven (7) stories and approximately 85 feet, plus a twelve (12)-foot mechanical penthouse, achieving a height similar to that of the existing office buildings on either side to the north and south, which have a height of 91 feet, eight (8) inches and 87 feet, eight (8) inches, respectively. The 901 North Capitol Building will include approximately 88,380 square feet of GFA devoted

¹ The area of the proposed addition to the 899 North Capitol Building consists of approximately 2,563 square feet of GFA. However, the Project will reduce existing GFA by removing existing slab, resulting in a lower net increase in GFA.

² Similar to Footnote 1, above, the area of the proposed addition to the 999 North Capitol Building consists of approximately 4,417 square feet of GFA, but because the Project will reduce existing GFA by removing existing slab, the net increase in GFA is lower.

to lodging use and approximately 7,695 square feet of GFA on the first and second floor devoted to retail use.

Record Lot 298 currently has a total of approximately 4.59 FAR across the two existing office buildings; after completion of the Project, the Property will have a total of approximately 5.29 FAR, well within the maximum FAR permitted as a matter of right for non-residential uses in the D-5 zone, which is the maximum FAR achievable on the site (with the purchase of density credits).

Both phases of the Project have been carefully designed to acknowledge and integrate into the surrounding context, and each component of the Project has been thoughtfully planned with the goal of reactivating the site. The proposed ground-floor expansions of the 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building — including the new retail space proposed for the latter — will establish a much stronger connection to the pedestrian environment than currently exists at the site. The new 901 North Capitol Building will further enhance this theme, with two new levels of street-fronting retail space, while also preserving significant portions of the existing open plaza space to the north and south of the new structure. The 901 North Capitol Building has been carefully positioned and configured both to draw pedestrian activity into the new north and south plazas, creating several distinct gathering spaces within the plazas, and to accommodate and encourage the existing pedestrian through-traffic that the existing courtyard already allows. This unique pedestrian experience, as shown on pages L10–L26 of Exhibit F, will include several seating areas and a covered loggia at the ground level of the 901 North Capitol Building, connecting the new north and south plazas running through the site. Most importantly, the Project will augment, and encourage the use of, the east/west pedestrian connection from Union Station, both as a Metro station and train transit hub, to North Capitol Street. Throughout the site, exterior spaces will be carefully landscaped and be well served by a thoughtful lighting plan, crowned by the double-height jewel box entrance on the north side of the 901 North Capitol Building, which will be illuminated at night, infusing the plaza with a warm, welcoming glow.

Likewise, the façade designs and material selections for the Project have been curated to harmonize with the existing context along the corridor. The proposed design for the Project began with the Applicant team conducting a careful study of the surrounding neighborhood context. Notably, the surrounding vicinity along North Capitol Street is characterized by the presence of unique red-brick buildings punctuating the viewshed on either side of the street, including the Government Printing Office buildings (between G and H Streets, NW), the Gonzaga College High School campus and St. Aloysius Church (across the street from the Property between I and K Streets), the 800 North Capitol Street, NW building, the Saint Phillips Baptist Church building (immediately north of the Property at the northeast corner of K Street), and Mt. Airy Baptist Church (at the intersection of L and North Capitol Streets).

The new 901 North Capitol Building will integrate this character with a red-brick façade, filling in the gap currently created by the existing courtyard and clearly referencing the character of the existing fabric. The 901 North Capitol Building follows a classical brick building hierarchy with a two (2)-story rusticated brick base, a three (3)-story middle, and a two (2)-story top, each accentuated by cornice bands. The building also takes advantage of a highly repetitive rhythm often found in turn-of-the-century brick industrial buildings, breaking this rhythm at

critical points to draw attention and create visual interest. Though the majority of the building is a red brick in keeping with other contextual buildings along North Capitol Street, steel and glass are used throughout the first two levels of the building, likewise as a nod to turn-of-the-century use of materials, but also to introduce an additional layer of detail and allow for transparency between the street and plazas and the interior spaces, promoting the activation of these spaces through shared activities. The use of murals and natural wood within the loggia (covered plaza connection) is meant to enliven the space, create a unique character for the space, and soften the space.

The selected masonry materiality of the Project will be extended to the ground-floor additions to the existing buildings, while transitioning the color and tone of the brick to provide a complement to the crimson-toned new building. The masonry additions on the existing buildings represent a deliberate departure from the existing buildings' cold and impersonal precast facades, instead employing a more inviting and pedestrian-friendly brick that better integrates our buildings with the surrounding neighborhood aesthetic, while still complementing the existing coloration. The brick base of each building will fit comfortably into the surrounding urban environment, providing a bridge between the pedestrian realm and the more formal, precast façade of the existing structures — drawing from, and adding to, the color variation along the nearby blocks. Welcoming pedestrians to interface with the new retail and office entrances, the new brick aesthetic is intended to take cues from the surrounding neighborhood and temper the more austere precast in favor of a more textured and pedestrian-friendly approach. The bumpout color direction was selected to avoid mimicry and overreliance on one particular color approach. In addition, the brick base of both buildings intentionally creates a horizontality that unites the streetscape. The building is crafted to feel intentionally dynamic — with the new bumpouts stepping outside of the more formal and simpler lines of the existing precast buildings and towards the street. The Applicant's design intent of the existing building bumpouts is to reflect the compelling success of other examples of renovations in D.C. and elsewhere where creating a differentiated brick base has created a meaningful design contrast to existing building fabric while bringing a new energy to a structure and its streetscape. Examples of such bumpouts, including masonry bumpouts on existing precast buildings, are included on pages i–iv of [Exhibit F](#). In each case, the base brickwork creates a more personable urban environment that is both compelling and inviting at the pedestrian scale, while providing a strong base through differentiated materials. The brick of the ground-floor additions will be accented with black metal trim.

As shown on pages L1–L9 and L11–L26 of [Exhibit F](#), the Project will include significant landscaping and hardscaping components to update the exterior improvements around the 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building, which will be implemented across the Project's two phases. The proposed work will include updates around the two existing buildings during Phase I, including an interim condition that incorporates updates and improvements to the existing courtyard until development of the 901 North Capitol Building begins. Following this interim period, Phase II will encompass significant updates to the two plazas resulting from construction of the new hotel building, including further enhancements to the landscaping and hardscaping on the Property.

The Applicant and design team will continue to coordinate with the Office of Planning staff to ensure that the proposed materials, façade expression, and other details such as plantings result in a successful design for the Project.

The Project will provide 610 below-grade parking spaces for the Property³ and the existing below-grade five (5) loading berths and three (3) service/delivery spaces.⁴ In addition, the Project will increase the amount of bicycle parking on site from 72 long-term and 18 short-term spaces to 188 long-term and 22 short-term spaces.⁵

In light of the timeline necessary to execute the Project's two separate phases, both covered by this application, the Applicant requests that any approval be made valid for a period of seven (7) years after the effective date of the Zoning Commission's final order for the application in order to ensure sufficient time to carry out both phases of the Project.

VI. The Applicant Satisfies the Burden of Proof for Zoning Commission Review of Buildings, Structures, and Exterior Renovations Facing Designated Segments of North Capitol Street.

Pursuant to Subtitle I § 701.2 of the Zoning Regulations, the Applicant must demonstrate that the application satisfies the specifically delineated requirements of the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area. The Applicant must also satisfy the Design Review requirements set forth in Subtitle X, Section 604.

A. The Applicant Satisfies the Standards for Zoning Commission Review Under the Design Review Regulations for the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area.

The Applicant satisfies the North Capitol Street Corridor Design Review standards as follows.

1. The Project will achieve the objectives of the sub-area, as set forth in Subtitle I, Chapter 6. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(a)(1))

The Project will achieve the objective of the North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area to ensure the preservation of the historically important axial view of the Capitol Dome, as set forth in Subtitle I § 617.1. The Project will maintain the current height of the existing 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building, and the new 901 North Capitol Building will be constructed to a slightly lower height than these buildings — 85 feet compared to 87 feet, eight (8) inches for the 899 North Capitol Building and 91 feet, eight (8) inches for the 999 North Capitol Building. The ground-floor expansions proposed for the existing office

³ The Property currently provides 591 parking spaces across the two existing office buildings. No additional parking is required for D-zoned properties east of 20th Street NW. 11-I DCMR § 212.1.

⁴ Since the Project will increase the existing GFA on the Property by less than 25%, no additional loading facilities are required. 11-C DCMR §§ 901.5(b) and 901.6.

⁵ All existing and proposed parking, loading, and long-term bicycle parking for the three buildings will be maintained in the existing below-grade garage levels of the 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building. Minimum parking, loading, and bicycle parking requirements are calculated collectively on a record-lot basis across the entire Record Lot 298.

buildings will elevate the pedestrian experience along North Capitol Street without infringing on the viewshed crowned by the Capitol Dome to the south, as shown in the view analysis included in pages 19–22 and A06–A10 of Exhibit F.

2. The Project will be in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(a)(2)).

The Project utilizes high-quality materials that are consistent with, and draw directly upon, the material expression and character of the existing development along North Capitol Street. The brick proposed for the new 901 North Capitol Building and ground-floor additions of the existing office buildings will maintain the rhythm of the unique existing brick buildings punctuating the North Capitol Street corridor. As noted above, the proposed height of 85 feet for the new 901 North Capitol Building is consistent with (and slightly less than) the height of the existing office buildings on the Property. The new retail and lodging uses will contribute to the existing diverse mix of uses along North Capitol Street, which includes government and private office buildings, Gonzaga College High School, multifamily residential buildings, and houses of worship.

3. The Project will minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(a)(3))

The proposed design promotes a safe and efficient pedestrian experience, and represents a substantial improvement upon the existing conditions for pedestrians. The Project will maintain the existing parking and loading access located at the southwest corner of the site off North Capitol Street and at the northeast corner off of K Street, and the Applicant does not propose any new or additional curb cuts. At the same time, the Project will elevate the pedestrian experience along the public streets by bringing ground-floor uses forward to the lot line and raising entrances to this space up to the street level. Further, the Project will include two plazas on the Property — to the north and south of the new 901 North Capitol Building — that will continue to accommodate the regular foot traffic that currently occurs on the site and will introduce new spaces for seating, gathering, and recreation within the plazas. The spaces will be carefully designed with ample landscaping and exterior lighting features that will make the plazas a warm and welcoming space throughout the day and evening.

4. The proposed building will minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(a)(4))

The elevations and renderings included in pages 19–34, A04–A10, and A16–A19 of Exhibit F depict the proposed building facades for the proposed additions and new hotel building. The Project will utilize high quality materials with a careful mix of brick tones and black metal trim accents. The ground-floor expansion facades will match the rhythm of the existing buildings' column formation and draw upon the traditional forms of the other historic brick buildings along this portion of North Capitol Street.

5. The proposed building will minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(a)(5))

The existing buildings were previously certified LEED silver, and the Applicant intends to recertify them accordingly. The Applicant is pursuing LEED certification for the new construction at 901 North Capitol Street. The Project's "green" features include sustainable landscaping and plantings throughout the Project plazas and a proposed rooftop bee colony that will help support the District's bee population and the important role it plays in the city's ecology. In addition, the Project will include comprehensive updates to the existing 899 North Capitol Building and 999 North Capitol Building that will result in the buildings being more sustainable than the original 1970s structures. These updates include: a full glazing replacement for both buildings; full LED lighting replacement in the two-level garages for both buildings as well as for exterior lighting; replacement of existing constant volume garage ventilation system with variable ventilation to mitigate energy consumption; refurbished chiller and cooling towers as part of a comprehensive MEP improvement plan; a full building management system upgrade to more efficiently manage building controls for the building's HVAC; and a complete restroom improvement initiative that will reduce water usage by implementing touchless fixtures and automatic toilet flushers and sensor-controlled lighting to minimize excess energy consumption.

6. The building or structure incorporates massing, materials, and buildings and streetscape landscaping to further the design and development of properties in a manner that is sensitive to the establishment of North Capitol Street as a monumental civic boulevard. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(b)(1))

As described above, the proposed ground-floor expansions and new hotel building are designed to enhance and elevate this portion of the North Capitol Street corridor, building upon the pattern of significant and unique brick buildings on alternating sides of the street and reinvigorating the pedestrian experience adjacent to the Property and within the proposed plazas onsite. This revitalization will create a new neighborhood gathering point and support pedestrian ambulation and enjoyment, as befitting the importance of North Capitol Street as a prime thoroughfare and monumental viewshed in the city.

7. The building incorporates massing, location of access to parking and loading, and location of service areas to recognize the proximate residential neighborhood use and context, as applicable. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(b)(2))

As described above, the Project utilizes its form and materiality in order to respond to and assimilate with the neighborhood surrounding the development, relying on a brick expression in recognition of the existing unique brick structures punctuating North Capitol Street. Parking and loading access, as noted above, will be maintained at their current locations, with one access along North Capitol Street and one off of K Street. Tucked away at the southwest and northeast corners of the Property, the two parking and loading access points will remain deferential to the pedestrian foot traffic along both streets. In addition, both the proposed ground-floor office

additions and the new hotel building will further emphasize, promote, and prioritize pedestrian activity in the public space abutting the Property and within the Project's two proposed plazas.

8. The application shall include a view analysis that assesses openness of views and vistas around, including views toward the Capitol Dome and other federal monumental buildings. (11-I DCMR § 701.2(b)(3))

As depicted in pages 19–22 and A06–A10 of Exhibit F, the Project substantially improves the pedestrian experience along this portion of North Capitol Street without detracting from the view of the Capitol or other federal monumental buildings. Indeed, by enhancing the street-level experience adjacent to the Property, the Project will support greater enjoyment of and appreciation for said views.

B. The Applicant Satisfies the Standards for Zoning Commission Design Review Under the Design Review Regulations.

The Applicant satisfies the general Design Review standards as follows.

1. The Proposed Project Will Not Be Inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. (11-X DCMR § 604.5)

The purposes of the Comprehensive Plan are to a) define the requirements and aspirations of District residents, and accordingly influence social, economic and physical development; b) guide executive and legislative decisions and matters affecting the District and its citizens; c) promote economic growth in jobs for District residents; d) guide private and public development in order to achieve District and community goals; e) maintain and enhance the natural and architectural assets of the District; and f) assist in conservation, stabilization and improvement of each neighborhood and community in the District (DC Code Section 1-245(b)).

The Project advances these purposes by furthering the social, economic, and physical development of the District by revitalizing this portion of the significant North Capitol Street corridor with a substantially improved pedestrian environment, public open plaza space, and a new hotel building that will fill in an existing gap in the development along this corridor.

a. Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map designates the Property as appropriate for high density commercial uses. The proposed development, with an overall FAR of 5.29 FAR and a height of 85 feet for the new hotel building is consistent with this designation (and indeed well within the maximum development envelope supported by the high density commercial designation).

b. Land Use Element

Broadly, the Land Use Element cites the importance of transit-oriented developments and the importance of strengthening the Central Washington with a varied mix of uses. The Project is consistent with the following policies from the Land Use Element:

Policy LU-1.2.1: Sustaining a Strong District Center: Provide for the continued vitality of Central Washington as a thriving business, government, retail, financial, hospitality, cultural, and residential center. Promote continued reinvestment in central District buildings, infrastructure, and public spaces; continued preservation and restoration of historic resources; and continued efforts to create safe, attractive, and pedestrian-friendly environments.

Policy LU-1.2.3: Appropriate Uses in the CEA: Uses of land within the CEA should reflect the area's national importance, its historic and cultural significance, and its role as the center of the metropolitan region. Federal siting guidelines and District zoning regulations should promote the use of this area with high-value land uses that enhance its image as the seat of the national government and the center of Washington, DC and that make the most efficient possible use of its transportation facilities. An improved balance in the mix of uses will help to achieve Washington, DC's aspiration for an even larger living downtown.

Policy LU-1.2.4: Urban Mixed-Use Neighborhoods: Encourage new Central City mixed use neighborhoods combining high-density residential, office, retail, cultural, and open space uses in the following areas:

- Mount Vernon Triangle;
- NoMA
- Downtown East and Pennsylvania Avenue;
- Buzzard Point/National Park/Audi Field;
- Near Southeast/Navy Yard;
- Capitol Crossing (neighborhood between Capitol Hill and Gallery Place);
- Union Station air rights; and
- Near Southwest/Wharf/L'Enfant Plaza Metro Areas

The location of these areas is shown in the Central Washington, Downtown, East, and Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Area Elements. Land use regulations and design standards for these areas should require that they are developed as attractive pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, with high-quality architecture and public spaces. Housing, including affordable housing, is particularly encouraged and should be a vital component of the future land use mix.

Policy LU-1.4.5: Development Along Corridors: Encourage growth and development along major corridors, particularly priority transit and multimodal corridors. Plan and design development adjacent to Metrorail stations to respect the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods while balancing against the District's broader need for housing.

Policy LU-1.5.1: Infill Development: Encourage infill development on vacant land within Washington, DC, particularly in areas where there are vacant lots that

create gaps in the urban fabric and detract from the character of a commercial or residential street. Such development should complement the established character of the area and should not create sharp changes in the physical development pattern.

Policy LU-2.4.5: Encouraging Nodal Development: Discourage auto-oriented commercial strip development and instead encourage pedestrian-oriented nodes of commercial development at key locations along major corridors. Zoning and design standards should ensure that the height, mass, and scale of development within nodes respects the integrity and character of surrounding residential areas and does not unreasonably impact them.

Policy LU-2.4.6: Scale and Design of New Commercial Uses: Develop new uses within commercial districts at a height, mass, scale, and design that is appropriate for a growing, densifying Washington, DC, with surrounding areas.

The Project will serve to strengthen and elevate the North Capitol Street corridor and surrounding NoMa/Union Station neighborhood by establishing a stronger connection between the Property and the public realm, creating new energetic public spaces in the proposed plazas to support pedestrian activity, and adding to the mix of uses in the area with the introduction of the new hotel building. The Project represents a thoughtful, balanced approach to infill development that will leverage the untapped potential of the existing open plaza space, while reserving and enhancing plaza space available to pedestrians and ensuring that the office building additions and new hotel building are in character with the existing development along North Capitol Street. The Project addresses an open gap along the North Capitol streetscape with an engaging and appropriately-sized commercial development.

c. Transportation Element

Similar to the Land Use Element above, the Transportation Element cites the importance of transit-oriented development and transit-accessible employment, while also focusing on the importance of integrating pedestrian resources into development. The proposed development is consistent with several policies in the Transportation Element:

Policy T-1.1.4: Transit-Oriented Development: Support transit-oriented development by investing in pedestrian-oriented transportation improvements at or around transit stations, major bus corridors, and transfer points. Encourage development projects to build or upgrade the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure leading to the nearest transit stop to create last-mile connections. Pedestrian movements and safety should be prioritized around transit stations.

Policy T-1.3.1: Transit-Accessible Employment: Support more efficient use of the region's transit infrastructure with land use strategies that encourage employment locations near underused transit stations. Work closely with the federal government and suburban jurisdictions to support transit-oriented and transit-accessible employment throughout the region. This would expand the use of major transit investments such as Metrorail.

Policy T-2.3.1: Better Integration of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning: Integrate bicycle and pedestrian planning and safety considerations more fully into the planning and design of District roads, transit facilities, public buildings, and parks such that residents of each of the District’s wards have access to high-quality bicycling and pedestrian facilities..

Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network: Develop, maintain, and improve pedestrian facilities. Improve the District’s sidewalk system to form a safe and accessible network that links residents across the city.

The Project furthers the goals of the Transportation Element by supporting transit-accessible employment opportunities, with revitalization of the existing office buildings and development of the new hotel building on a site only two blocks north of Union Station. The Project also enhances the pedestrian experience along North Capitol Street, reinforcing the overall connectivity of the neighborhood, and creates new well-designed plaza spaces to support foot-traffic by and through the Property and provide new pedestrian gathering points. Overall, the Project advances the Comprehensive Plan’s transportation objectives to support and encourage all modes of transportation and, in particular, pedestrian facilities and public transit.

d. Economic Development

The Project promotes the objectives of the Economic Development Element by introducing new retail and hospitality uses to this site in the Central Washington and supporting the city’s office market with the renovation and enhancement of the existing assets on the Property.

Policy ED-1.1.2: Economic Linkages: Leverage the potential of core industries to provide new employment opportunities, particularly the growth of businesses that supply essential goods and services to the government, universities, hospitals, law firms, hotels, nonprofits, and other major employers in the District.

Policy ED-1.1.3: Diversification: Diversify the District’s economy by targeting fields with the greatest potential for growth, including the impact economy, smart cities and civic solutions, professional services innovation, hospitality innovation, security technology, and data science and analytics. Established industries with significant growth potential include retail, international business infrastructure, and building construction.

Policy ED-1.1.45: Competitive Edge: Maintain and enhance the District’s competitive edge relative to the metropolitan Washington, DC region and U.S. markets in fields such as federal government, professional services, health care, postsecondary education, media and communications, and hospitality and tourism. Enhancing the District’s competitive edge may require continued government support and performance-based incentives for economic development programs; government participation in local economic development projects and initiatives; strengthened capacity among local economic development organizations, community development corporations, and workforce

development groups; and well-maintained business fundamentals, including transportation access.

Policy ED-2.1.1: Office Growth: Plan for an office sector that will continue to accommodate government agencies and growth in 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 the adjoining office centers, including NoMa, Capitol Riverfront, Buzzard Point, St. Elizabeths, and Poplar Point.

Policy ED-2.1.5: Infill and Renovation: Support the continued growth of the office sector through infill and renovation within established commercial districts to more efficiently use available space while providing additional opportunities for new space.

Policy ED-2.3.21: Growing the Hospitality Industry: Develop an increasingly robust tourism and convention industry, which is underpinned by a broad base of arts, entertainment, restaurant, lodging, cultural and government services. Strive to increase: (a) the total number of visitors to the District, (b) the number of visitors staying in the District; (c) longer visitor stays in the District. Promote the District not only as the preferred base for exploring Washington, DC's attractions, but also the preferred overnight base for visiting regional attractions.

Policy ED-2.3.4: Lodging and Accommodation: Support the development of a diverse range of hotel types, serving travelers with varying needs, tastes, and budgets. New hotels should be encouraged both within Central Washington and in outlying commercial areas of the District, particularly in areas that are underserved by hotels.

The Project furthers the above policies by renovating and enhancing the existing office buildings on the Property and introducing new commercial uses to the site and to the area. The new proposed ground-floor retail uses and hotel building will contribute to the mix of uses in along this portion of North Capitol Street and build upon the District's existing tourism and hospitality industry. The renovation of the existing office buildings will serve to bolster the office market in the city overall and in the NoMa neighborhood in particular. With a balance of uses that is appropriate for the surrounding development context for a site so centrally located, the Project will further the District's economic development goals.

e. Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element describes the essential relationship between a property's location within the urban fabric including along certain boulevards and vistas and a building's design. The Project furthers several of the Urban Design Element policies including:

Policy UD-1.1.2: Preeminent View Corridors: Reinforce the prominent role of views as a defining feature of the District's character through careful planning of streetscapes and public parks to preserve and frame views of existing landmarks and significant structures and through consideration of the various types of view corridors when designing and planning public projects and streetscapes. Such

views could include, preeminent views of nationally symbolic architecture, important views of nationally or locally significant civic structures, landmarks, and parks and open spaces.

Policy UD-1.2.4: Significant View Protection: Recognize and protect significant views within the District, particularly characteristic views of landmarks, and views from important vantage points. Recognize the importance of views to the quality of life in the District and the identity of Washington, DC and its neighborhoods.

Policy UD-1.4.1: Thoroughfares and Urban Form: Use Washington, DC's major thoroughfares to reinforce the form and identity of the District, connect its neighborhoods, and improve its aesthetic and visual character through purposeful landscaping, tree planting, and streetscape design. Special attention should be placed on how public space, building restriction areas, and buildings along them contribute to each thoroughfare's character.

Policy UD-1.4.3: Thoroughfare Vistas and View Corridors: Protect picturesque views and view corridors along avenues, parkways, and other major corridors, particularly along streets that terminate, connect, and frame important neighborhood and national institutions, memorials, and parks. Vistas along such streets should be accentuated by street trees and include distinct facades of high architectural quality along well-defined street walls and, if appropriate, maintain a parklike character.

Policy UD-1.4.4: Priority Avenues and Gateway Corridors: Focus the District's avenue and gateway corridor design improvements on historically important or symbolic streets including 16th Street, Rhode Island Avenue, North Capitol Street, Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and New York Avenue. Support federal efforts to preserve Constitution and Independence Avenues as major boulevards.

Policy UD-2.2.1: Neighborhood Character and Identity: Strengthen the visual qualities of Washington, DC's neighborhoods as infill development and building renovations occur by encouraging the use of high-quality and high performance architectural designs.

Policy UD-2.2.74: Infill Development: New construction, infill development, redevelopment, and renovations to existing buildings should respond to and complement the defining visual and spatial qualities of the surrounding neighborhood, particularly regarding building roof lines, setbacks, and landscaping. Avoid overpowering contrasts of scale and height as infill development occurs.

Policy UD-2.2.6: Preservation of Neighborhood Open Space: Infill development should respect and improve the integrity of neighborhood open spaces and public areas. Buildings should be designed to minimize the loss of sunlight and

maximize the usability of neighborhood parks and plazas. Buildings adjacent to parks or natural areas should orient their entrances or other community-serving functions toward these shared resources.

The Property's location along North Capitol Street underscores its visual importance as a frame of the U.S. Capitol. Both the office building expansions and the new proposed hotel building have been carefully designed to respect and elevate the view corridor facing the Capitol Dome and to relate directly to the existing development along North Capitol Street. In particular, the brick tones chosen for the ground-floor additions and hotel building echo the existing historic brick buildings that establish a pattern along either side of North Capitol Street, and these brick expressions will create a warmer, more welcoming presence that relates more to the pedestrian level as compared to the existing conditions.

f. Central Washington Area Element

The Property is located within the Central Washington Area Element, one of the ten area elements contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The Project is consistent with the following policies of the Area Element:

Promoting Mixed-Use Development: Expand the mix of land uses in Central Washington to attract a broader variety of activities and sustain the area as the hub of the metropolitan area. Central Washington should be strengthened as a dynamic employment center, a high-quality regional retail center, an internationally renowned cultural center, a world-class visitor and convention destination, a vibrant urban neighborhood, and the focus of the regional transportation network. New office and retail space, hotels, arts and entertainment uses, housing, and open space should be encouraged through strategic incentives and preservation so that the area remains attractive, exciting, and economically productive.

Policy CW-1.1.2: Central Washington Office Growth: Retain Central Washington as the premier office location in the greater Washington region. Office development should generally be guided eastward from its current area of concentration. Capitalize on the strong demand for office space in Downtown East, along North and South Capitol Streets, and in the vicinity of the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metro station. A range of office space should be planned to meet the needs of high-end, mid-range, and low-end office space users, and this space should also include modern workspace concepts such as shared workspaces, membership offices, rental conference rooms, and virtual offices.

Policy CW-1.1.11: Reinforcing Central Washington's Characteristic Design Features: Reinforce the physical qualities that set Central Washington apart from all other major American city centers. Balance the symbolic monumentality of the national civic center with a respectful, but distinct and impressive, expression of local life. Blend historic, traditional, and contemporary architecture to express the vitality of a diverse and growing District that is as proud of its neighborhood amenities, architectural heritage, and character as it is of its position as the seat of the national government.

Policy CW-1.1.1716: Making Central Washington’s Streets More Pedestrian Friendly: Enhance Central Washington’s pedestrian network and improve pedestrian safety. This should be achieved through such measures as:

- Improving certain streets for pedestrian use;
- Providing safe and accessible pedestrian waiting space on the widest thoroughfares;
- Maintaining sufficiently wide sidewalks and regulating sidewalk obstructions;
- Restricting curb cuts and parking garage access along major streets;
- Providing safe and accessible pedestrian detours at construction sites;
- Encouraging sidewalk widening within private development; and
- Enforcing traffic and parking laws, such as no parking zones. 1608.

Policy CW-1.1.20: Design Character: Create a more coherent design character for Central Washington by improving the physical linkages among the Monumental Core, the business sub-districts on the perimeter of the National Mall, and the expanding mixed-use areas east and southeast of downtown. Urban design strategies should focus on making the entire area more walkable, discouraging monolithic architecture, improving signage and streetscape features, and adding new land uses that make the area more lively, interesting, and dynamic.

Policy CW-1.1.23: Architectural Excellence: Promote excellence in the design of downtown buildings and landscapes. Particular attention should be focused on ground floor levels, with greater architectural details used to improve visual image.

Policy CW-2.8.1: NoMa Land Use Mix: Promote NoMa’s development as an active mixed-use neighborhood that includes residential, office, hotel, commercial, creative, arts, maker, light industrial, and ground floor retail uses. A diverse mix of housing, serving a range of household types and incomes, should be accommodated.

The Project presents precisely the type of development the Area Element anticipates for Central Washington. The Project will introduce a mix of uses with new retail and lodging uses alongside the existing and newly enhanced office uses. The Project’s design will build upon and be in context with the character of the existing development along North Capitol Street and in the surrounding NoMa area. The proposed ground-floor retail and plazas will greatly enhance the pedestrian environment, providing a welcoming environment and unique and interesting gathering points for area residents and employees, visitors, and passersby. The Project represents an important achievement in the broader effort to enhance and elevate the North Capitol Street corridor.

2. **Street frontages are designed to be safe, comfortable, and encourage pedestrian activity, including: (1) Multiple pedestrian entrances for large developments; (2) Direct driveway or garage access to the street is discouraged; (3) Commercial ground floors contain active uses with clear, inviting windows; (4) Blank facades are prevented or minimized; and (5) Wide sidewalks are provided. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(a))**

The Project will greatly enhance the pedestrian environment in and around the Property and will ensure these areas are safe and comfortable for all pedestrians. The Project will include multiple ground-floor entrances — and, importantly, bring the entrances of the existing office buildings up to street level and forward to the property line in order to better relate to the adjacent public space. The Project will maintain the existing garage entrances at their current, least intrusive locations at the northeast corner of the Property off K Street and at the southwest corner off North Capitol Street. The Project will include active ground-floor retail uses, and the facades of the ground-floor office additions and the new hotel building have been designed to incorporate texture and vibrancy, with no blank facades.

- 3. Public gathering spaces and open spaces are encouraged, especially in the following situations: (1) Where neighborhood open space is lacking; (2) Near transit stations or hubs; and (3) When they can enhance existing parks and the waterfront. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(b))**

The Project includes two plazas incorporated between the three structures, with the plazas directly connected by an open-air covered loggia at the ground level of the hotel building. These plazas will create multiple distinct publicly accessible spaces for gathering and relaxation, with each cove within the plazas having a different, unique character and feel and encouraging different types of pedestrian and social interactions. Further, the pedestrian east/west connection that is heavily utilized today — from Union Station to North Capitol — will be further enhanced and supported through the detailed hardscaping and landscaping improvements of the Project in particular.

- 4. New development respects the historic character of Washington's neighborhoods, including: (1) Developments near the District's major boulevards and public spaces should reinforce the existing urban form; (2) Infill development should respect, though need not imitate, the continuity of neighborhood architectural character; and (3) Development should respect and protect key landscape vistas and axial views of landmarks and important places. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(c))**

The Project takes as a fundamental guiding background design principle the Property's location along the North Capitol Street viewshed directed toward the Capitol Dome and the character and integrity of the unique existing built environment aesthetic along this corridor. The Project has been carefully designed to draw upon the warm brick language of the other existing brick buildings along North Capitol Street and to respect the views south towards the Capitol. The brick ground-floor additions to the existing office buildings will strengthen the relationship between those buildings and the public realm and create a warmer, more welcoming streetscape for pedestrians. Overall, the Project will respect and enhance the design quality along this important viewshed.

- 5. Buildings strive for attractive and inspired façade design, including: (1) Reinforce the pedestrian realm with elevated detailing and design of first (1st) and second (2nd) stories; and (2) Incorporate contextual**

and quality building materials and fenestration. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(d))

As shown in pages 19–29 and A04–A10 of the plans attached as Exhibit F, and as discussed in detail above, the Project represents a significant improvement of the pedestrian realm along North Capitol Street. The brick tones and curated façade designs of the ground-floor office and retail additions and new hotel building echo the character of the surrounding neighborhood and, in particular, the existing brick buildings along North Capitol Street.

6. Sites are designed with sustainable landscaping. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(e))

The Project includes sustainable landscaping, including the substantial landscaping incorporated into the plaza spaces, as shown on pages L11–L15 of Exhibit F. The Project team will continue to work with Office of Planning, DDOT, and DOEE staff to ensure that the final selection of plantings and landscaping achieve the Project’s goal to create a vibrant, sustainable pedestrian experience on and around the Property.

7. Sites are developed to promote connectivity both internally and with surrounding neighborhoods, including: (1) Pedestrian pathways through developments increase mobility and link neighborhoods to transit; (2) The development incorporates transit and bicycle facilities and amenities; (3) Streets, easements, and open spaces are designed to be safe and pedestrian friendly; (4) Large sites are integrated into the surrounding community through street and pedestrian connections; and (5) Waterfront development contains high quality trail and shoreline design as well as ensuring access and view corridors to the waterfront. (11-X DCMR § 604.7(f))

The Property and Project serve as a unique and important point of connectivity within the NoMa neighborhood. The existing courtyard on the Property hosts a significant degree of foot traffic in its current condition, with area residents and employees using the Property as a cut-through between North Capitol Street and First Street, NE when traveling to/from Union Station. The Project embraces the role the Property plays within the neighborhood pedestrian network and emphasizes porosity with the proposed plazas, which are themselves connected by the covered loggia at the ground level of the hotel building. The Project will enhance the existing pedestrian experience through the Property with the various distinct spaces created within the plazas, and the priority given paths of travel across the site underscores the careful consideration the Project design has given to the imminent proximity of Union Station to the south.

C. The Applicant Satisfies the Special Exception Requirements for Zoning Commission Review.

Pursuant to 11-X DCMR Section 604.6, the Zoning Commission must find that the Project meets the general special exception requirements of the Zoning Regulations. There is a two-pronged test to satisfy special exception review. An applicant must demonstrate that: (1) the project is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning

Maps; and (2) the project will not affect adversely the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. The Applicant meets these requirements as follows.

1. The Project Is in Harmony with the General Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps.

As made clear in the above discussions, the Project is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map applicable to the Property. Broadly, the D-5 Zone District permits a broad mix of commercial and other uses, including office and lodging uses. The Project has been designed to meet all applicable development standards. The Project is well within the 130-foot height limit and satisfies the required building height setbacks along North Capitol Street. Further, it is well below the maximum FAR in the zone, which permits the maximum FAR achievable on the site as a matter of right (with the purchase of density credits). Accordingly, the Project is fully consistent with the Property's zoning designation and development parameters.

2. The Project Will Not Affect Adversely the Use of Neighboring Property in Accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map.

The Project will maintain the scale and density of the surrounding buildings and will fit appropriately into that context. As noted above, the new hotel building will have a height of 85 feet, similar to (and slightly less than) the existing office buildings on the Property. Further, the North Capitol Street corridor, situated closely to Union Station, the Capitol, and Downtown, is an appropriate location for the new hotel use. The renovated office buildings, with their enhanced retail components, and the new hotel building, with its retail component, will contribute to the mix of uses in the surrounding area, which includes a variety of commercial and office uses, multifamily residential, and education uses, among others. Furthermore, the ground-floor retail uses proposed by the Project will enhance the pedestrian experience along the corridor and encourage a vibrant, activated streetfront along this important boulevard. Overall, the Project will be additive to the surrounding neighborhood's aesthetic and will not adversely affect the use of any neighboring property.

VII. Exhibits

The following exhibits are attached to this submission:

- Exhibit A:** Application Form
- Exhibit B:** Agent Authorization Letters
- Exhibit C:** Property Owner List
- Exhibit D:** Certificate of Notice
- Exhibit E:** Office of the Surveyor Plat

Exhibit F: Architectural Plans, Sections, Elevations, and Renderings/View Analyses;
Photographs of the Property

VIII. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant asks that the Commission approve this development per the D Zone North Capitol Street Corridor Sub-Area requirements for a building fronting on North Capitol Street. We look forward to presenting this application to the Commission at the public hearing on this matter and appreciate your time reviewing this application.

Respectfully,

_____/s/
Jeff C. Utz

_____/s/
Lawrence Ferris