

MRP RHODE ISLAND AVENUE INVESTORS LLC, B & R
ASSOCIATES LP, SANDROCK LP



APPLICATION TO THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING COMMISSION FOR
FIRST STAGE AND CONSOLIDATED REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF A
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
Square 3629, Lots 7, 813 and 814

JULY 14, 2015

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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EXHIBITS

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PREFACE

This statement and the attached documents support the application of MRP Rhode Island Avenue Investors, LLC (“**MRP**”) to the Zoning Commission for the Consolidated and First-Stage review and approval of a Planned Unit Development. The Subject Property consists of approximately 13 acres of land, and is formally designated as: Square 3629, Lots 7, 813 and 814 (the “**Subject Property**”). The Subject Property is currently the site of Rhode Island Center, a strip shopping mall located along Rhode Island Avenue. The shopping center is comprised of a series of one-story retailers and a surface parking lot. The shopping center has frontage on both Rhode Island Avenue and Fourth Street NE and is bounded by 4th Street to the west, Rhode Island Avenue to the south, the Metrorail tracks and the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the east and the Edgewood Terrace apartments to the north.

This is an application for First-Stage Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) approval for five phases of development and consolidated PUD approval for one phase of development. This application is not inconsistent with the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan, D.C. Law 16-300, 10 DCMR (Planning and Development) § 100 *et seq.* (2006) (the “**Comprehensive Plan**”), and it furthers numerous goals and policies of the District of Columbia. Submitted in support of this application are completed application forms, a notice of intent to file a PUD (with property owner list and certification of mailing), architectural drawings, plans, and elevations, and a map depicting the Zoning District for the properties impacted by these applications and the surrounding area. As set forth below, this statement and the attached documents meet the filing requirements for a Consolidated and First-Stage Planned Unit Development application under Chapter 24 of the District of Columbia Zoning Regulations.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Subject Property is an underutilized strip shopping center that is improved with thirteen one-story retailers set back from Rhode Island Avenue, a two-story shopping mall, and a self-storage warehouse with frontage along Rhode Island Avenue. The shopping center is anchored by Save-A-Lot, Big Lots, and Forman Mills. The center was initially developed in 1984, when there had been a dearth of retail opportunities in this part of Ward 5 and it has remained largely unchanged since that time. The design of the shopping center is a product of the times in which it was built: it is auto-centric, set back from the street and does not interact with the greater community; it does not facilitate connections within the community but rather isolates itself, creating a barrier between the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the pedestrian path to the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail Station.

The shopping center is located on the north side of Rhode Island Avenue from the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrostation. This station connects this neighborhood with other areas of the city creating easy access for nearby residents to other parts of DC, as well as making the community for others more accessible. Nevertheless, the shopping center was not constructed so as to highlight the Metrorail or take advantage of the ease of access it provides. Rather, the significant grade of the center and its extensive set back from Rhode Island Avenue all but requires one to drive to the site. It does not encourage pedestrian traffic and it does not harness the benefits of being proximately located to a Metrorail station. The Applicant views the project proposed herein as an opportunity to integrate the site into the community and to utilize the momentum the Metrorail and the Metropolitan Branch Trail have to offer. The project will anchor the north side of Rhode Island Avenue with a strong residential presence with

functional retail space that will serve neighborhood residents and ultimately establish this locale as a destination in and of itself.

Planning policies and Ward 5 have changed dramatically since this center was first constructed and the Applicant now seeks approval for six phases of development on the Subject Property. The Applicant seeks approval for the first phase of development as a consolidated PUD and First Stage approval for the remaining five phases of development. This project will transform an underutilized property into a project that will contribute to the growth and success of the Rhode Island Avenue Corridor.

B. Summary of Requested Action

The Applicant hereby submits an application to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia (“**Commission**”) for the First-Stage review and approval of a Planned Unit Development (“**PUD**”) and consolidated review and approval of a PUD for the Subject Property. The Subject Property consists of approximately 13 acres of land, and is formally designated as: Square 3629, Lots 7, 813 and 814 (the “**Subject Property**”). The consolidated PUD is located in the eastern portion of Lot 7 while the First Stage PUD applications are applicable to phases proposed for the remainder of Lot 7, as well as Lots 813 and 814. The Subject Property is currently the site of a strip shopping center located at the intersection of 4th Street NE and Rhode Island Avenue NE.

The Applicant will raze the existing shopping center and extend the existing street grid east through the site. The project will establish six new blocks along the extended private streetscape, which will consist of residential use with ground floor retail. The project will provide housing and an important link with the Metrorail and the MBT; it exemplifies true transit-oriented development.

The overall project will include seven residential buildings for a total of approximately 1,557,650 square feet of residential space and approximately 1,555 units. The project will include a mix of unit types from studios to three-bedrooms. Eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be dedicated to affordable housing, which will be distributed throughout each phase of development. Each block will provide ground floor retail, which will help anchor and support the residential units provided.

The context and topographical features of the Subject Property make it an appropriate site for greater height along the Rhode Island Avenue Corridor. The Applicant is proposing maximum heights of 90 feet for each of its phases. The proposed height is entirely appropriate given the project's proximity to the Metrorail. Due to the 40 foot grade difference from north to south on the Property, additional height beyond what is permitted as a matter-of-right is necessary in order to establish a presence at this location.

The Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") of the individual blocks ranges from approximately 2.4 to a maximum of 4.91. The total FAR of the project is 3.61, exclusive of the private street grid. The streets will be maintained as private roadways but will function as public rights of way. They will be crucial in providing internal access to the residential buildings but also in providing access through the site to the Metrorail and the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

The existing strip commercial shopping center along Rhode Island Avenue, NE is located in the C-3-A Zone District. The Subject Property is located in the Medium Density Residential land use and Mixed-Use, Moderate Density Commercial land use categories on the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. The Subject Property is located within the boundaries of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E.

C. The Applicant

MRP Rhode Island Avenue Investors LLC offers exceptional experience combined with a creative, entrepreneurial approach to the business of real estate. Its integrated skills and knowledge of the Washington metropolitan market enable MRP to identify opportunities and guide the development process effectively, yielding consistent value and superior results. MRP works closely with its investment partners and project teams to deliver properties that set new standards in this dynamic market. Its professionals embrace bold opportunities with a discerning eye—exploring true potential to realize optimal investment value for our partners.

MRP knows that great ideas in real estate require careful thought and a meticulous course of action. Its strategies are built around critical benchmarks throughout the life of a project—from the earliest acquisition and pre-development phases through final marketing and leasing. At every key step, it assesses and refines its approach—ensuring that it takes advantage of the most resourceful and productive strategies from start to finish.

MRP is recognized for the superior quality of its residential work. MRP is currently moving forward with its Riverfront project in the Capital Gateway Overlay and it recently delivered a portion of its Washington Gateway project.

Both B&R and Sandrock have owned their respective parcels since 1984. B&R developed the strip mall currently on its property while Sandrock operates the self storage located on its property.

II. THE PROPOSED PUD PROJECT

A. Description of the Subject Property and Surrounding Area

As noted above, the Subject Property includes just over 13 acres and is improved with a strip shopping center and surface parking lot. The Subject Property has frontage on both 4th

Street and Rhode Island Avenue, yet the bulk of the site is set back from street frontage. The Subject Property is defined by a significant grade change from south to north. There is a 40 foot grade difference between its frontage on Rhode Island Avenue and the northeast corner of the Subject Property. There are a series of retail uses as well as a church that are not included in the PUD that stand between the Subject Property and Rhode Island Avenue. To the west of the Property are a series of low-scale commercial establishments lining 4th Street, as well as low-scale residential rowhouses; to the north of the Property is an eleven-story apartment house that stands approximately 110 feet tall; to the east of the Property are railroad tracks that separate the Property from a series of low-scale commercial, industrial and residential uses; finally, to the south of the Property are low-scale industrial and commercial uses on the south side of Rhode Island Avenue. The Property is located across Rhode Island Avenue from the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail station and is immediately adjacent to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. It is also located along the G8, D8 and P6 bus lines.

B. Project Description

The Project consists of six blocks, seven buildings, and six phases, all of which will include a residential and retail component. The first phase of development will be a consolidated PUD and will include the two eastern blocks of development: Blocks 1A and 1B. These blocks represent the first phase of development since they provide the key link to the Rhode Island Avenue Metrorail Station. The two blocks are immediately adjacent to the pedestrian bridge that provides access to the station and will serve as the eastern gateway to the project. The link to Metrorail is crucial to the success of this project; accordingly, the Applicant will begin development with the eastern edge of the site, working in concert with the natural fluidity of the site and building on the momentum created by the Metrorail Station. This corner is also the natural choice for establishing a presence as it creates a link to the existing Rhode Island Row

and the Brentwood Shopping Center located on the south side of Rhode Island Avenue, both of which have already established this area as a shopping destination.

Given that the area has a light industrial underlying layer that brings character to this neighborhood, the Applicant decided to embrace this identifying characteristic to make this project unique. In order to create a “sense of place”, the project will take advantage of the features that are rooted in the memory of the neighborhood. Each building will have its own story to tell but they would all work together to sculpt the public domain. The new buildings will pay homage to the industrial era that helped shape this neighborhood while generating an architectural vocabulary unique to this project.

Block 1A will be located in the northeast corner of the site; it will not have street frontage on any public rights of way. Rather, it will front on the internal roadway network established by this project. It will have a 2.32 FAR and will include approximately 212 units. Eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be dedicated to affordable units, including two and three bedroom units. A .09 FAR will be dedicated to retail use. The Applicant seeks flexibility to convert approximately .20 FAR of residential use to retail use along the eastern portion of the building in the event there is demand for retail in this location. The building will be nine stories in height, or 90 feet, as measured from the finished grade at the front of the building. Loading and parking will both be provided on-site. One 40 foot loading berth will be provided with access from the private drive. Approximately 141 parking spaces will be provided in a below-grade garage. The garage will include a below-grade link to the Block 1B garage, which will provide an additional 222 parking spaces.

The building is composed by the interactions of three parts; a body, the structure and a hinge element. The body, a sequence of heavy dark masonry piers with a warehouse feel,

marches along the train tracks as one would expect, but suddenly it bends into the site creating a funnel that draws one in to the site from metro as well as attention as one passes by the trail. The masonry body serves as a sound attenuator from the train tracks. At the same time it anchors the building to the ground and with its texture creates a scalable relationship with pedestrians. With the technology of the industrial era, the structure was an omnipresent denominator. In this case the structure reveals itself past and in between the masonry. The structure is characterized as “the bare bones” of the building. This minimalistic treatment of glass and structure represents underlying geometry that generates the façade. And finally “the hinge element” that it is purposely located at the bend of the building and as a multitask signifier. This element is raised from the ground to provide transparency for the public functions of the building as well as an announcer of the main entrance and beacon like expression in the roof line. Also this element is carved out at the top to allow outdoor activities while interacting visually with the surroundings.

Block 1B will be located on the southeast corner of the Subject Property and have frontage directly on Rhode Island Avenue. It will include approximately 133 residential units and eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be reserved for households with an annual income of 80%. Approximately 1.3 FAR will be reserved for retail uses; the Applicant requests flexibility to convert up to .3 FAR of residential use to retail use once retail demand is established at this location. The Applicant has had productive conversations with a gym about using the retail space directly along Rhode Island Avenue. The gym would be open to the public and would be an amenity to the community, which does not currently have a neighborhood gym that is easily accessible by residents. The gym will line Rhode Island Avenue, creating a retail presence immediately along the sidewalk. It will also screen portions of the garage that are not

below grade so that they are not visible from the roadway. The building will be 90 feet tall, as measured from Rhode Island Avenue.

The geometry of the building is clearly the result of the exterior conditions where this building is being placed. The building site is bounded by Rhode Island Avenue, the main road entrance, the central open space and the trail. The building bends and rotates to define the edge of the public domain and at the same time create opportunities to articulate the facade. As we approach the site from Rhode Island Avenue the building presents a stone base that reminds of the architecture of the “train related” structures of the another era, but with a contemporary combination of glass and metal. This very distinctive vernacular allows the future tenant to have his own identity and at the same time creates a strong foundation for the building. Atop of this stone plinth, three corner buildings reside. With simple lines, dark metal frame-like “superstructures” with embedded windows, shape those corners buildings. These frame structures work as point of reference for orientation around the site as well as ambassadors for the project to the city as you approach the site from all directions. In between these corner elements there is a masonry fabric that knits the building together. Again the heavy masonry helps with sound attenuation from the train track but also brings a residential “punch openings” type texture to the composition. The articulation and combination of a secondary brick creates a rhythmic pattern in the façade that simulates the use of different window sizes as you would expect in a residential building. To crown the vertical composition the “superstructure” appears above the heavy brick façade bringing lightness to the top floor and relating it to the articulation of the corner.

Block 2 is located immediately west of Block 1A. Along with its southern counterpart, Block 6, it will establish the retail stronghold on the site as it will line the interior roadway with

retail uses, creating a pedestrian-friendly experience through the site that links the MBT and Metrorail with 4th Street. The Applicant is seeking Stage I PUD approval for Blocks 2-6; accordingly, it only seeks approval for the massing, site plan and uses for these phases. To that end, the Applicant is proposing a 3.88 residential FAR and .21 FAR of retail use; the Applicant seeks flexibility to increase the amount of retail FAR to .4 should there be a retail demand for such density. Eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be reserved for affordable housing. Like Block 1A, Block 2 will not have frontage on a public right-of-way; accordingly, its 90 foot height is measured from the finished grade at the front of the building. Approximately 457 parking spaces will be provided for the 332 units and retail spaces. The parking will be accessed from an interior drive, along with two proposed 40 foot loading berths.

Block 3 will include approximately 355 residential units for a total residential FAR of 2.96. This phase will include a .76 FAR of retail uses. Eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be reserved for affordable housing. This phase will incorporate a full-service grocery store, which will be a significant convenience for the residents of the Project and the adjacent neighborhood. While many will still drive to the grocery store, it will be located within easy walking distance and accessible to thousands of residents. It is conveniently located on the western edge of the Project so that it easily accessible to those in the greater community, as well as those within the Project itself. The design of the Project encourages pedestrian activity while still accommodating those who will drive. The grocery store will be full service and will include fresh produce, dairy and meat goods. Approximately 677 parking spaces will be provided on-site, along with three loading berths at 55 feet and one at 40 feet. The loading berths will all be located along the northern edge of the building to avoid any pedestrian or vehicular conflicts with the interior roadway. Block 3 has frontage on 4th Street. It is oriented to have a major

presence on 4th and to attract those who are driving or walking by. The building will measure its 90 foot height from 4th Street.

Block 4 also has frontage along 4th Street and given its limited street frontage, the proposed retail will correspond to the grocery store to its north. Block 4 will have a 3.88 residential FAR and .48 retail FAR. It will include 143 residential units and include 98 parking spaces. Eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be reserved as affordable housing. The building will be 90 feet tall, as measured from 4th Street.

Blocks 5 and 6 maximize their frontage along the interior roadway, but have limited frontage on Rhode Island Avenue as they wrap around the existing church located on Rhode Island. The retail in these blocks will be centered along the interior roadway and residential uses will be provided above. Block 5 will include approximately 303 residential units, will be 90 feet in height and will include 313 parking spaces in a below grade garage. Block 6 will include 78 residential units and 84 parking spaces. Loading will be shared between both blocks. Block 5 will have a 4.53 residential FAR and .4 retail FAR, while Block 6 will have a 2.65 residential FAR and a .32 retail FAR.

Central to the planning of the project is the creation of an engaging and exciting public realm that focuses on developing streets that extend the city grid and that are highly activated, human scaled and pedestrian oriented. The project's framework is established by a tree-lined Main Street with retail frontages, outdoor dining and residential lobbies that helps create a vibrant and activated spine that runs through the project. Along its length, the Main Street includes a collection of small public spaces and plazas that further enrich the public realm. The Main Street also includes a dedicated off-street bicycle lane that also activates the street

experience. The Plan incorporates a fully integrated bicycle network that connects two major existing routes: The Metropolitan Branch Trail and the 4th Street bicycle lanes.

The Main Street culminates at an urban plaza that engages directly with the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail Station pedestrian access bridge. The plaza is activated with outdoor dining, an interactive water feature, and public art. It will serve as a community gathering space for events and performances. In addition, a portion of Main Street will be developed using similar special treatments including distinctive paving, curb-less edges, landscape features, and outdoor dining spaces. Together, the plaza and street offer a significant space for larger public gatherings and events. Highly activated by local residents, visitors and commuters alike; the plaza will become a destination with easy access to the greater D.C. community.

The project has a commitment to environmentally sustainable initiatives to help transform a predominantly paved site. These include bio-filtration systems, Silva cells to promote tree health, storm water harvesting, green roofs, and the use of native species.

C. Development Data

The First Phase of the development, which seeks approval of a consolidated PUD, will have a FAR of 2.4 for Block 1A and 3.4 for Block 1B. Each building will be 90 feet in height. The proposed FAR and heights of the buildings proposed for Phases 2-6 are presented in the required chart on Sheet .10 of Exhibit A.

The C-3-A Zone District permits a maximum FAR of 4.8 as a matter-of-right, with a maximum of 2.5 FAR of non-residential uses; a C-3-A PUD allows a maximum FAR of 4.5,

with a cap on non-residential uses at 3.0 FAR.¹ The matter-of-right height permitted in the C-3-A Zone District is 65 feet, whereas a height of 90 feet is permitted through the PUD process.

D. Flexibility Under the PUD Guidelines

The PUD process was created to allow greater flexibility in planning and design than is possible under conventional zoning procedures. The PUD regulations specifically allow the Zoning Commission to approve any zoning relief that would otherwise require the approval of the BZA.

Under Section 2407.10, a First-Stage PUD is normally valid for a period of one year. The Applicant is requesting flexibility from this requirement. The project is going to be constructed in six phases, the first phase being the only phase that seeks approval of a consolidated PUD. The remaining phases seek approval of a First Stage PUD. The Applicant requests that any PUD approval include the following phasing language:

The Second Stage PUD approved by the Zoning Commission shall be valid for a period of two years from the effective date of this order. Within such time an application must be filed for a building permit for the Phase 1A building. Construction of the Phase 1A building approved herein must begin within three years of the effective date of this order. Within one year of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the Phase 1A building, an application must be filed for the building permit for the Phase 1B building. Construction of the Phase 1B building approved herein must begin within one year after the issuance of the building permit. Within three years of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the Phase 1B building, a Second Stage PUD application must be filed for Phases 2-6.

In light of the phasing required in undertaking such a large development, the Applicant also seeks flexibility to allow interim uses on Phases 2-6 that would otherwise be permitted in the C-3-A Zone District. Section 2408.16 precludes matter-of-right development on the Property once the PUD covenant is recorded. The Applicant asks that the Commission grant it the flexibility to utilize the land in Phases 2-6 so that it does not lay dormant as the Second Stage applications

¹ The C-3-A zone is a rare zone where more density is permitted as a matter-of-right with the density afforded by the inclusionary zoning program than is allowed through the PUD process. The Applicant seeks a PUD for this project to secure the additional height the PUD process affords.

are filed. The Applicant is envisioning temporary uses such as a farmers market, passive recreation space and low scale retail. It wants to ensure that the Property is activated throughout the construction of the Project and that no portion of the Property detracts from the community. The Property is currently located in the C-3-A Zone District; accordingly, anything the Applicant would construct in the interim would otherwise be permitted as a matter-of-right on this site but for the PUD.

This PUD will include over 1,500 residential units over the 13 acres of land at the Rhode Island Avenue Metrorail Station; accordingly, it believes the proposed phasing language is appropriate and it believes it is in the best interest of the community, as well as the future success of the PUD site, to allow interim uses on the Property.

The Applicant seeks flexibility from the loading requirements of Section 2201, which requires 55 foot berths for the Project; however, the Applicant is primarily providing 40 foot berths. The Applicant will supplement the record with a transportation analysis that confirms that there will be no adverse impact from use of the 40 foot berths in place of the 55 foot berths.

Relief is required from Section 2517, which allows more than one principal building on a single record lot. The Applicant seeks flexibility from Section 2517.1 as the Property is located within 25 feet of the residential district immediately to its north and from Section 2517.3, which requires front and rear yards. The Applicant is extending the street grid in an effort to establish an urban setting within the project site; setting the buildings back from the interior roadway will undermine these efforts.

Relief is required from the roof structures as many of the buildings will have more than one roof structure. Given the size of the buildings, additional means of egress are required, which requires the provision of stairways that access the roof, exceeding the maximum limit of

one roof structure per building. The Applicant also seeks relief from the setback requirements for the penthouse on Building 1A, which is not set back from the northern courtyard.

III. PLANNING ANALYSIS

A. Introduction

Through the PUD process, the Applicant will create a mixed-use community of for-sale and rental residential units on an underutilized site at a prominent transit node.

B. Zoning Impact

The Applicant is not seeking a zoning map amendment in connection with this case. The C-3-A zone district is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. Should the land use designation for the Property be modified in a future iteration of the Future Land Use Map, the Applicant is prepared to study the appropriateness of additional height or density at this site and modify any First-Stage approvals as necessary. The PUD process is the appropriate process for the entitlement of this Project as it allows the Applicant to introduce development at the Subject Property that is thoroughly vetted and allows for full community contribution. The Project site consists of 13 acres of land and will be a significant part of the Rhode Island Avenue corridor, thus it is important that the community be involved in the entitlement process.

IV. EVALUATION STANDARDS

Section 2403 of the Zoning Regulations provides the standards for evaluating a PUD application. A First-Stage PUD involves a general review of a site's suitability for use as a PUD; the appropriateness, character, scale, mixture of uses, and design of the uses proposed; and the compatibility of the proposed development with city-wide, ward and area plans of the District of Columbia, and other goals of the PUD process. (See Section 2402.2(a)) Accordingly, Phases 2-6

should be reviewed against this standard. A consolidated PUD, however, should also include more details with respect to the proposed design and materials of the building, as well as outline the specific impacts of the proposed project. In evaluating a PUD application, the Commission is required to “judge, balance, and reconcile the relative value of the project amenities and public benefits offered, the degree of development incentives requested, and any potential adverse effects according to the specific circumstances of the case” (See Section 2403.8). In order to approve a PUD application, the Commission must find that the impact of the project on the surrounding area is either favorable, capable of being mitigated, or acceptable given the quality of the public benefits in the project. (See Section 2403.3.)

A. Public Benefits and Project Amenities

Section 2403.9 provides categories of public benefits and project amenities for review by the Zoning Commission. The objective of the PUD process is to encourage high quality development that provides public benefits and project amenities by allowing applicants greater flexibility in planning and design than may be possible under matter-of-right zoning.

1. Housing and Affordable Housing

Pursuant to Section 2403.9(f) of the Zoning Regulations, the PUD guidelines state that the production of housing and affordable housing is a public benefit that the PUD process is designed to encourage. This project provides for the creation of approximately 1,555 residential units on the Property; eight percent of the residential gross floor area will be reserved for affordable housing. In Phase One, the affordable units will include two and three bedroom units. The affordable units will also share the same finishes as the market-rate units, despite the fact that it is not required under the inclusionary zoning regulations.

2. Urban Design, Architecture, Landscaping, or Creation of Open Spaces

Section 2403.9(a) lists urban design and the creation of open spaces as categories of public benefits and project amenities for a PUD. As shown in the materials included in Exhibit A, the Project exhibits all of the characteristics of exemplary urban design and the creation of exemplary open spaces. The site plan for this project was created after thoughtful consideration of the Property's context: an underutilized site adjacent to a Metrorail station, amid a stretch of underutilized retail and adjacent to a variety of residential uses. In addition to the adjacent uses, the site plan of the Project addresses and responds to the physical challenges of the site in that there is a significant grade difference from north to south, the entire east side of the Project borders the Metrorail tracks and the southern part of the Property borders a major thoroughfare. The massing of Phases 1-6 responds to these challenges: by providing additional height at the site, the Applicant is able to provide more housing and retail opportunities at a key transit location; it is able to provide a sense of place despite the grade differential on the Property and it provides a scale that does not overshadow existing residential uses but does not get overshadowed itself by adjacent retail, quasi-industrial and transportation uses. The design of Phase 1 incorporates materials that respond and reflect the surrounding context of the building.

Another key feature of the site plan is the extension of the street grid through the PUD site. This breaks down the scale of the Project Site and integrates it into the greater neighborhood. It also allows for greater accessibility of the pedestrian bridge to the Metrorail Station, as well as the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The Applicant is also proposing a public plaza at the eastern end of the site that will serve as a passive recreation area for the public and is conveniently located adjacent to the MBT, the pedestrian bridge to the Metrorail and Phase I of development. The plaza will be landscaped and will attract residents to interact with one another and socialize.

3. Site Planning, and Efficient and Economical Land Uses

Pursuant to Section 2403.9(b) of the Zoning Regulations, “site planning, and efficient and economical land utilization” are public benefits and project amenities to be evaluated by the Zoning Commission. This Project will create a cohesiveness along Rhode Island Avenue that does not currently exist. Rhode Island Avenue is defined by a series of underutilized retail sites and strip shopping centers that don’t contribute to the character of the community. The Project will make an effort to rectify the underwhelming presence along Rhode Island Avenue by integrating a thoughtfully designed and scaled project. The site plan will introduce a new street grid, which will create six new development blocks that incorporate public spaces and buildings that are of an appropriate scale. This Project seamlessly integrates 1,555 residential units into the fabric of an existing neighborhood without disrupting or redefining the community but by enhancing it. Each block will be designed individually as the Applicant returns to the Commission for Second Stage approvals for phases 2-6, and the proposed phasing will allow the community to grow organically. The Project will also include retail uses in each phase of development, which will help anchor the site amid the other retail uses along Rhode Island Avenue. The proposed retail, such as the grocery store and the gym, will serve residents while the other retail will entice individuals visiting the retail on the south side of Rhode Island to cross to the north side.

In connection with the effective and safe vehicular and pedestrian access outlined below, the Applicant is foregoing additional development by extending the street grid through the Property. The Applicant believes that the success of the site plan relies heavily on opening the Property up and breaking down its scale so that it relates to the existing community.

4. Effective and Safe Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

The Zoning Regulations, pursuant to Section 2403.9(c), state that “effective and safe vehicular and pedestrian access” can be considered public benefits and project amenities. The expected pedestrian and vehicular circulation associated with this project has been carefully and thoroughly studied by the Applicant. By extending the street grid, the Applicant is creating a safer vehicular and pedestrian experience for those traversing the site. The extended street grid helps create clarity and predictability, which is safer for both drivers and pedestrians. The Applicant attempts to remove any vehicular conflicts by removing all parking and loading access from the main internal drive and locating all entrances from private alleyways. Finally, the Applicant is proposing to improve the Metropolitan Branch Trail along the eastern edge of its site and will encourage biking among its residents.

5. Environmental Benefits

The project has a commitment to environmentally sustainable initiatives to help transform a predominantly paved site. These include bio-filtration systems, Silva cells to promote tree health, storm water harvesting, green roofs, and the use of native species.

6. Uses of Special Value

According to Section 2403.9(i), “uses of special value to the neighborhood or the District of Columbia as a whole” are deemed to be public benefits and project amenities. The project will provide the following benefits and amenities to the general public:

- 1) **Neighborhood-serving retail:** The project incorporates both a gym and a grocery store, which provide convenience for the community and amenities that are not otherwise readily available. The Applicant is actively pursuing a pharmacy for the site, as well as local retailers.

- 2) **Street grid:** The site plan extends the street grid with the use of private property. Though this area will remain private, it must be excluded from the FAR calculations for the project, which requires the Applicant to forego additional density on-site.
- 3) **Transportation subsidy:** The Applicant will provide a SmarTrip card, Zip Car membership, or Bikeshare membership to each residential unit in Blocks 1A and 1B for a period of 2 years.
- 4) **Transit Screen:** A transit screen will be provided in the lobbies of both Buildings 1A and 1B.
- 5) **Bike room:** The Applicant will provide a bike room in Building 1A. The room will be open to residents of Blocks 1A and 1B and include tools and space for bike repairs.
- 6) **LEED certification:** Buildings 1A and 1B will be certified at LEED Silver.
- 7) **MBT improvements:** The Applicant will improve and landscape the MBT as depicted in the plans in connection with the development of Blocks 1A and 1B.
- 8) **Public spaces:** The project will include a number of public spaces, including the public plaza located at the eastern edge of the site.
- 9) **Public art:** The Applicant will preserve the art on the retaining walls on the northern edge of the site.
- 10) **Employment Program:** The Applicant will take part in an employment program that will utilize District residents in the construction of the project.

7. Comprehensive Plan

According to Section 2403.9(j), public benefits and project amenities include “other ways in which the proposed planned unit development substantially advances the major themes and other policies and objectives of any of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.” As described

in greater detail in Section V, the PUD is consistent with and furthers many additional elements and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

8. Public Benefits of the Project

Sections 2403.12 and 2403.13 require the Applicant to show how the public benefits offered are superior in quality and quantity to typical development of the type proposed. This PUD project will include many, if not all, of the attributes of PUD projects that have been recently approved by the Zoning Commission, including:

- exemplary/superior urban design;
- creation of large open and green spaces; and
- significant public infrastructure improvements.

V. COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The District's Comprehensive Plan includes guiding principles, city wide elements which establish policies for the development of the District of Columbia as a whole and Area elements which highlight the policies of specific areas within the District. The proposed First-Stage PUD and Zoning Map Amendment application is consistent with and fosters numerous policies enumerated in the Guiding Principles, the citywide Elements and the Upper Northeast area element of the District's Comprehensive Plan.

The Project serves the goals of several of the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as follows:

a. Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map designates the Property as appropriate for medium density residential and moderate density commercial uses. The proposed development, with an overall FAR of 3.61 for the mixed-use project is consistent with this designation.

b. Land Use Element

The Plan cites the importance of transit-oriented developments and the importance of mixed-use development on large sites. The Project is consistent with the following:

Policy LU-1.3.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations: Concentrate redevelopment efforts on those Metrorail station areas which offer the greatest opportunities for infill development and growth, particularly stations in areas with weak market demand, or with large amounts of vacant or poorly utilized land in the vicinity of the station entrance. Ensure that development above and around such stations emphasizes land uses and building forms which minimize the necessity of automobile use and maximize transit ridership while reflecting the design capacity of each station and respecting the character and needs of the surrounding areas.

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-2.4.10: Use of Public Space within Commercial Centers: Carefully manage the use of sidewalks and other public spaces within commercial districts to avoid pedestrian obstructions and to provide an attractive and accessible environment for shoppers. Where feasible, the development of outdoor sidewalks cafes, flower stands, and similar uses which “animate” the street should be encouraged. Conversely, the enclosure of outdoor sidewalk space with permanent structures should generally be discouraged.

The Project will vitalize an underutilized parcel of land along Rhode Island Avenue at the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail Station. The Property can currently be defined as an “auto-oriented strip shopping center” and the proposed project will transform this shopping

center into mixed-use center that marries residential and retail uses along a high-transit corridor, complete with Metrorail and the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Internal roadways will be introduced to the site that will break up the massiveness of the Property and create walkable retail nodes for pedestrians and an opportunity to activate ground floor retail space. The Project proposes additional height at a Metrorail Station and also facilitates use of the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

c. Transportation Element

The proposed development is consistent with several transportation policies:

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.

Policy T-1.2.3: Discouraging Auto-Oriented Uses: Discourage certain uses, like “drive-through” businesses or stores with large surface parking lots, along key boulevards and pedestrian streets, and minimize the number of curb cuts in new developments. Curb cuts and multiple vehicle access points break-up the sidewalk, reduce pedestrian safety, and detract from pedestrian-oriented retail and residential areas.

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.

Policy T-2.3.2: Bicycle Network: Provide and maintain a safe, direct, and comprehensive bicycle network connecting neighborhoods, employment locations, public facilities, transit stations, parks and other key destinations. Eliminate system gaps to provide continuous bicycle facilities.

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

Policy T-2.4.2: Pedestrian Safety: Improve safety and security at key pedestrian nodes throughout the city. Use a variety of techniques to improve pedestrian safety, including textured or clearly marked and raised pedestrian crossings, pedestrian-actuated signal push buttons, and pedestrian count-down signals.

The Project strengthens the link between land use and transportation ; it is strategically located across from the Rhode Island Metrorail and adjacent to the MBT, as well as along a major transportation and bus corridor. The Project’s proximity to public transportation makes it a prime location for additional height and residential uses. The Project design also encourages bicycling and walking, as it improves the MBT and incorporates sidewalks through the site.

d. Environmental Protection Element

The PUD promotes several goals of the Environmental Protection Element:

Policy E-1.1.3: Landscaping: Encourage the use of landscaping to beautify the city, enhance streets and public spaces, reduce stormwater runoff, and create a stronger sense of character and identity.

Policy E-3.1.1: Maximizing Permeable Surfaces: Encourage the use of permeable materials for parking lots, driveways, walkways, and other paved surfaces as a way to absorb stormwater and reduce urban runoff.

Policy E-4.2.3: Control of Urban Runoff: Continue to implement water pollution control and “best management practice” measures aimed at slowing urban runoff and reducing pollution, including the flow of sediment and nutrients into streams, rivers, and wetlands.

e. Urban Design Element

The Project furthers several of the goals of the urban design element:

Policy UD-1.4.1: Avenues/Boulevards and Urban Form: Use Washington’s major avenues/boulevards as a way to reinforce the form and identity of the city, connect its

neighborhoods, and improve its aesthetic and visual character. Focus improvement efforts on avenues/ boulevards in emerging neighborhoods, particularly those that provide important gateways or view corridors within the city.

Policy UD-2.2.3: Neighborhood Centers: Undertake strategic and coordinated efforts to create neighborhood centers, civic buildings, and shopping places that reinforce community identity.

Policy UD-2.2.7: Infill Development: Regardless of neighborhood identity, avoid overpowering contrasts of scale, height and density as infill development occurs.

Policy UD-2.2.8: Large Site Development: Ensure that new developments on parcels that are larger than the prevailing neighborhood lot size are carefully integrated with adjacent sites. Structures on such parcels should be broken into smaller, more varied forms, particularly where the prevailing street frontage is characterized by small, older buildings with varying facades.

Policy UD-3.1.8: Neighborhood Public Space: Provide urban squares, public plazas, and similar areas that stimulate vibrant pedestrian street life and provide a focus for community activities. Encourage the “activation” of such spaces through the design of adjacent structures; for example, through the location of shop entrances, window displays, awnings, and outdoor dining areas.

The PUD transforms an underutilized site and makes it a contributing part of the community. The proposed project is consistent with the scale of surrounding development, it absorbs and diminishes some of the challenging aspects of being located along a busy corridor as well as adjacent to railroad tracks and it makes these features attributes of the site rather than detriments.

f. Housing Element

The PUD is providing residential housing and is consistent with the Housing Element.

Policy H-1.1.1: Private Sector Support: Encourage the private sector to provide new housing to

meet the needs of present and future District residents at locations consistent with District land use policies and objectives.

Policy H-1.1.4: Mixed Use Development: Promote mixed use development, including housing, on commercially zoned land, particularly in neighborhood commercial centers, along Main Street mixed use corridors, and around appropriate Metrorail stations.

Policy H-1.1.5: Housing Quality: Require the design of affordable housing to meet the same high-quality architectural standards required of market-rate housing. Regardless of its affordability level, new or renovated housing should be indistinguishable from market rate housing in its exterior appearance and should address the need for open space and recreational amenities, and respect the design integrity of adjacent properties and the surrounding neighborhood.

The PUD is providing 1,555 residential units, some of which will be reserved as affordable for households with an annual income of 80% AMI. The affordable units will include two and three bedroom units in addition to the studios and one bedroom units. The residential buildings will be of a high quality design and will incorporate high quality materials. The provision of residential units at this site is significant given its history and the desire and District objective of introducing new residents.

g. Area Element

The Comprehensive Plan also contains ten area elements. The PUD Site is located in the “Upper Northeast” Area Element. The PUD is consistent with the following goals of the Area Element:

Policy UNE-1.1.3: Metro Station Development: Capitalize on the presence of the Metro stations at Rhode Island Avenue, Brookland/CUA, and Fort Totten, to provide new transit-oriented housing, community services, and jobs. New development around each of these three stations is

strongly supported. The District will coordinate with WMATA to ensure that the design, density, and type of housing or other proposed development at these stations is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods; respects community concerns and feedback; serves a variety of household incomes; and mitigates impacts on parking, traffic, and public services. Development shall comply with other provisions of the Comprehensive Plan regarding the compatibility of new land uses with established development, the provision of appropriate open space, and mitigation of impacts on traffic, parking, and public services.

Policy UNE-1.1.6: Neighborhood Shopping Improve neighborhood shopping areas throughout Upper Northeast. Continue to enhance 12th Street NE in Brookland as a walkable neighborhood shopping street and encourage similar pedestrian-oriented retail development along Rhode Island Avenue, Bladensburg Road, South Dakota Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, Florida Avenue, and Benning Road. New pedestrian-oriented retail activity also should be encouraged around the area's Metro stations. 2408.7

Policy UNE-1.1.7: Larger-Scale Retail Development Encourage additional community-serving retail development at the existing Brentwood Shopping Center (Home Depot-Giant), the Rhode Island Avenue Shopping Center (4th and Rhode Island NE), and Hechinger Mall. Encourage new large-scale retail development at Fort Lincoln. Design such development to complement, rather than compete with, the neighborhood-oriented business districts in the area.

Policy UNE-1.2.1: Streetscape Improvements Improve the visual quality of streets in Upper Northeast, especially along North Capitol Street, Rhode Island Avenue, Bladensburg Road, Eastern Avenue, Michigan Avenue, Maryland Avenue, Florida Avenue, and Benning Road. Landscaping, street tree planting, street lighting, and other improvements should make these streets more attractive community gateways.

Policy UNE-2.5.1: Rhode Island Avenue/Brentwood Metro Station Encourage the development of additional medium-to high-density mixed use development around the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station, particularly on the surface parking lots in the station vicinity.

Policy UNE-2.5.3: Pedestrian Improvements Enhance pedestrian connections between the neighborhoods around the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station and the station itself. This should include improvements to the “public realm” along Rhode Island Avenue, with safer pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other amenities that make the street more attractive. 2415.7 Metrorail near Rhode Island Avenue.

Policy UNE-2.5.4: Rhode Island Avenue Corridor Strengthen the Rhode Island Avenue corridor from 13th to 24th Street NE as a pedestrian-oriented mixed use district that better meets the needs of residents in the Brentwood, Brookland, Woodridge, and South Central neighborhoods. Infill development that combines ground floor retail and upper-story office and/or housing should be encouraged.

The PUD is converting an underutilized, auto-oriented site into a mixed-use development that will introduce over 1,500 residential units and retail space in Northeast DC at a major Metrorail Station. The Project leverages its location along major transit nodes: Metrorail, Rhode Island Avenue, and the MBT, to create a sense of place that appeals to people visiting and living on-site. The retail uses will activate the streetscape - not only Rhode Island Avenue, but also the internal roadway, which will help facilitate access to the MBT and the Metrorail Station.

VI. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant submits that the First-Stage and Consolidated PUD application meets the standards of Chapter 24 of the Zoning Regulations; they are consistent with the purposes and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Map; they will enhance


the health, welfare, safety and convenience of the citizens of the District of Columbia; they satisfy the requirements for approval of a First-Stage and consolidated PUD; they provide significant public benefits; and they advance important goals and policies of the District of Columbia. Therefore, the applications should be approved and adopted by the Zoning Commission. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Zoning Commission set down this project for a public hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

GOULSTON & STORRS



Allison Prince



Christine Roddy CR

7/14/15