

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: *JL for* Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation
DATE: September 8, 2017
SUBJECT: **Public Hearing Report for ZC #17-13**
 1542 - 1550 1st Street SW (Square 656, Lots 54 and 813)
 Design Review Under the Capitol Gateway Overlay

I. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This application proposes a new mixed-use building in Square 656, Lots 54 and 813. Square 656, Lot 813 was the subject of a previous Zoning Commission Design Review Case (ZC Case No. 16-01). The Office of Planning (OP) supports the requested loading variance relief, and can fully support the design review application pending the following:

- Confirmation that the building meets the District projection regulations (12 A § 3202) and other relevant public space regulations;
- Examination and refinement of the north and east building facades;
- Provision of a color and materials board;
- Completion of the IZ chart;
- Examination of whether the green features of the building can be enhanced and provision of a LEED checklist; and
- Confirmation that the long-term bike parking meets the requirements of 11 C § 805.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location	1550 1 st Street, SW (Square 656, Lots 54 and 813) Ward 6, ANC 6D
Applicant	United Planning Organization Community Development Corporation (UPO CDC); REBJ, Inc., a subsidiary of T.M. Associates, Inc.; and DBT Development Group, LLC
Zoning	CG-4 (Medium- to high-density mixed-use development)
Site Area	9,138 square feet (0.21 acres)
Proposed Development	10-story, mixed-use building with approximately 76 units (67,320 square feet) and 3,804 square feet of ground-floor retail, general or financial service, office, and/or eating and drinking establishment uses 71,124 square feet of Gross Floor Area (7.78 FAR)

Relief	<p>Pursuant to 11 DCMR K § 512.7, the following relief is requested in order to develop as proposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variance from loading requirements (C § 901.1, one 30-foot loading berth, one 100 square foot loading platform, and one 20-foot service/delivery space required; no loading proposed).
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III. SITE, AREA AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located on the northeast side of 1st and Q Streets, SW. To the north is the High Road Middle School, a two-story charter school, 1530 1st Street, SW. Further to the north are low to moderate density garden style apartments. Across 1st Street are rowhouses, and rowhouses also occupy most of the frontage of the unit block of Q Street between Half and 1st Streets, SW. There is an alley in the square, but not adjacent to the subject site. The remainder of the neighborhood is a mix of apartment and rowhouse uses, as well as industrial uses, primarily to the south of this site. The new Pepco Buzzard Point Substation is to the southwest of the subject property. The DC United soccer stadium is under construction just over a block south of the subject property, and Fort McNair is one block to the west. All immediately adjacent properties are zoned CG-4, while properties further to the north are zoned R-4. The site is about six tenths of a mile from the Half Street Navy Yard metro entrance and about seven tenths of a mile from the Waterfront metro.



The proposed development would consist of a 76 unit, 10-story mixed-use building. The development would be 100% affordable with 16 units reserved for households with incomes not exceeding 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and the 60 remaining units reserved for households with incomes not exceeding 50% AMI. In addition to the proposed neighborhood-serving ground floor retail, UPO CDC would provide wrap around services to building residents. The residents of the 16 units reserved for households with incomes not exceeding 30% AMI would be referred through the District’s Coordinated Entry System and would receive Permanent Supportive Housing Services and on-site case management services. Other on-site programs and services would include a summer food program for youth, social events, informational speakers, computer classes, and financial classes.

Parking and long term bike storage would be provided in one below grade parking level that would be accessed via a ramp from Q Street, SW. The ground floor would feature retail space that could accommodate up to three retail tenants with entries facing on 1st Street, SW. The residential entry and lobby would be accessible from Q Street, SW. The ground floor also would include residential leasing and service space, as well as amenity space for the building residents. Each floor would have eight units, including five 1BR, two 2BRs, and one 4BR unit. The building would feature a habitable penthouse with four units (one studio and three 1BR). The Applicant would meet the Penthouse Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) requirement on-site, but should complete, for the record, the following IZ chart prior to the public hearing.

Residential Unit Type	GFA / Percentage of Total	Units	Income Type**	Affordable Control Period	Affordable Unit Type***	Notes
Total						
Market Rate						
IZ*						
Affordable/Non IZ**						

* *If more than one IZ income level is being provided add separate lines for each income type. If IZ exemption will be sought, enter that notation in notes field.*

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Bike racks are proposed to be placed in public space. The Applicant should consider moving the bikeshare station so that it does not block the building entry on Q Street, SW. The Applicant states that it would be improving the sidewalks in conformance with DDOT’s Buzzard Point street design guidelines; however, some non-standard treatment of public space is proposed, including the special paving at the retail entries on 1st Street, SW. The Applicant should continue to refine the public space improvements through the Public Space Committee process. Residents would have access to an outdoor amenity area in the landscaped courtyard at the rear of the building.

The design proposes a contemporary façade that would not be out of character with the surrounding neighborhood, including the Pepco Substation, DC United Stadium, and proposed mixed-use buildings to the south. The 1st Street and Q Street, SW façades would be a combination of brick, fiber cement panel, and metal panel, while the party walls are proposed to be a combination of EIFS and fiber cement panel. The brick from the upper stories would be carried down to the ground level and would be accented with a wood siding detail to frame the retail and residential

lobby.¹ OP notes that the 10th floor bay projection on the west façade exceeds the maximum single permitted projection by six inches.

The north and east facades border property that could ultimately be redeveloped at a greater height and density than exists today. The Applicant has proposed a combination of EIFS and fiber cement panels, in an attempt to provide variety and interest on building facades that could be highly visible for the foreseeable future.² Additional information is required to understand how the variety of panels of would interact to create a visually acceptable façade that provides for depth, interest, and durability. While the sides of this building could eventually be covered with development on adjacent lots, it is not known if or when that could occur. OP encourages the applicant to again examine alternative design options for the party walls, such as building stepbacks or articulation and the inclusion of at-risk windows, so that the exposed surface can present the most pleasing possible view.

IV. ZONING

The subject site is zoned CG-4 (Capitol Gateway / Commercial Residential). The CG-4 zone is intended to, “permit medium- to high-density mixed-use development with a balance of uses conducive to a higher quality of life and environment for residents, businesses, employees, and institutions; encourage provision of active pedestrian-oriented streets with active ground floor uses, particularly along specified primary streets; and promote pedestrian safety by separating pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns.” (K § 504.1)

The building’s parameters are described in the table below.

Item	Requirement	Proposed ³	Relief
Lot Area	n/a	9,138 sf	Conforming
Lot Width	n/a	89’ 8”	Conforming
Height K § 504.3	90’ 100’ (IZ)	100’	Conforming
FAR K § 504.4	8.2 3.0 Non Res.	7.7 0.5 Non Res.	Conforming
Open Space § 633	10% of lot area (300 sf)	10% 300 sf (12.5’ x 24’)	Conforming
Lot Occ. K § 504.6	75% 80% (IZ)	77%	Conforming
Rear Yard K § 504.8	2 in. / ft. of height Min. of 5’ (16’8”)	31’ 2”	Conforming
Side Yard K § 504.9	None required, if prov. 2”/1’ height, 5’ min.	None provided	Conforming
Open Court K § 504.10	4”/1’ height, 10’ min. 2x the sq. of the req. width, 350 sf min.	33’ 4”	Conforming

¹ Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 19A4, Sheets A-39 and A-40, dated August 23, 2017.

² Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 19A3, Sheets A-31 and A-32, dated August 23, 2017.

³ Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 5A1, Sheet A-01, dated June 19, 2017.

Item	Requirement	Proposed ³	Relief
Parking C § 701	Res. 1 per 3 units Ret. 1.33per 1,000 sf in excess of 3,000 sf	Res. 15 spaces ⁴ Ret. 1 space	Conforming
Bicycle Parking C § 802	Res. Long Term 1 sp./3 du = 26 sp. Res. Short Term 1 sp./20 du = 4 sp. Ret. Long Term 1 sp./10,000 sf = NA Ret. Short Term 1 sp./3,500 sf = 1 sp.	Res. Long Term 28 sp. Res. Short Term 10 sp. Ret. Long Term NA Ret. Short Term 4 sp.	Conforming
Loading C § 901	1 30' berth 1 100 sf platform 1 20' service del. space	None	Requested

The proposal as designed requires relief as noted below.

1. Variance from Loading (C § 901)

The application proposes no loading for the project, where the CG-4 zone would require one 30-foot loading berth, one 100 square foot loading platform, and one 20-foot service/delivery space for the residential portion of the project. No retail loading would be required. The subject property has no alley access that would allow for loading from the rear of the building. Providing the required loading from First or Q Streets, SW would disrupt the streetscape and severely impair the ability to provide ground floor commercial, residential lobby, leasing office, and amenity space.⁵ It is also extremely unlikely that the Public Space Committee would approve a second curb cut for the subject property. The subject site has a combination of exceptional conditions that would prevent compliance with the loading requirements. The Applicant has proposed an on-street loading management scheme and associated loading management plan, which should minimize any adverse impacts on the surrounding community.⁶ OP, therefore, has no objection to the requested loading variance relief.

2. Other Flexibility

The Applicant has requested the following flexibility:

1. To vary the location and design of all interior components, including partitions, structural slabs, doors, hallways, columns, stairways, atria and mechanical rooms, provided that the variations do not change the exterior configuration of the building;
2. To vary the final selection of the exterior materials within the color ranges and material types as proposed, based on availability at the time of construction;
3. To increase the final number of residential units by no more than 10% above the total number approved to respond to program demand, or to decrease the final number of residential units within the approved gross floor area in order to accommodate demand for larger units;

⁴ Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 19A2, Sheet A-28, dated August 23, 2017.

⁵ Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 19A4, Sheets A-44 and A-45, dated August 23, 2017.

⁶ Information provided by Applicant, Exhibit 17A, Pages 12-13, dated August 17, 2017.

4. To vary the location, attributes and general design of the streetscape elements incorporated in the project to comply with the requirements of and the approval by the DDOT Public Space Division;
5. To make refinements to the garage configuration, including layout, parking spaces and other elements, so long as the number of parking spaces provided is at least the minimum number of spaces required by the Zoning Regulations;
6. To make refinements to exterior materials, details and dimensions, including belt courses, sills, bases, cornices, railings, roof, skylight, architectural embellishments and trim, venting, window mullions and spacing, or any other changes to comply with the District of Columbia Building Code or that are necessary to obtain a final building permit or any other applicable approvals;
7. To locate retail entrances in accordance with the needs of the retail tenants; and to vary the facades as necessary within the general design parameters proposed for the project; and to vary the types of uses designated as “retail” use on the Plans to include the following use categories: office, retail, services, general, services financial, and eating and drinking establishments; and
8. To vary the font, message, logo, and color of the proposed signage, provided that the maximum overall dimensions and signage materials no not change from those shown on the approved Plans.

Although OP has raised questions about some of the material choices, OP is not opposed to these requests for flexibility.

V. CRITERIA OF THE CAPITOL GATEWAY ZONE

The Capitol Gateway zone lists several objectives and provides specific criteria for the Zoning Commission review of proposed developments. The following is OP’s analysis of these standards as applied to the application.

500.1 The purposes of the Capitol Gateway (CG) zones (CG-1 through CG-7) are to:

- (a) Assure development of the area with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, and a suitable height, bulk, and design of buildings, as generally indicated in the Comprehensive Plan and recommended by planning studies of the area;*

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map shows that a Medium Density Residential use would be appropriate for this property. The Policy Map designates this property as a Neighborhood Enhancement Area. The Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Area Element calls for new mixed use neighborhoods on vacant or underutilized waterfront sites with a substantial amount of new housing and commercial space that reaches household of all incomes, types, sizes, and needs (Policy AW-1.1.2: New Waterfront Neighborhoods). The proposed mixed-use building featuring 67,320 square feet of gross floor area dedicated to residential use for households with incomes not exceeding 50% AMI, as well as 3,804 square feet of gross floor area devoted to neighborhood-serving commercial uses should achieve this goal. The building would measure 100 feet in height with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 7.78 – a height and bulk permitted as a matter of right in the CG-4 zone.

The Buzzard Point Vision Framework + Design Review Guide’s Design Principles call for:

- Bold architecture;
- Resilient urbanism and materials;
- First floors that shape memorable places;
- Responsive massing and transitions between larger new buildings and existing streets lined with row houses; and
- Outdoor spaces for life.

OP encourages the Applicant to consider the material choices for the proposed project to ensure they are enduring and promote a high-quality streetscape. The Applicant also should endeavor to soften the transitions between the proposed building and adjoining two-story row dwellings.

- (b) *Encourage a variety of support and visitor-related uses, such as retail, service, entertainment, cultural, and hotel uses;*

The Applicant is proposing the inclusion of 3,804 square feet of ground floor neighborhood-serving retail that could be leased to a commercial use including a retail, general service, financial service, or an eating and drinking establishment.

- (c) *Allow for continuation of existing industrial uses, which are important economic assets to the city, during the extended period projected for redevelopment;*

Lot 813 is vacant and Lot 54 is improved with a one-story commercial building and surface parking. The proposed development would not result in the discontinuation of an existing industrial use.

- (d) *Provide for a reduced height and bulk of buildings along the Anacostia riverfront in the interest of ensuring views over and around waterfront buildings, and provide for continuous public open space along the waterfront with frequent public access points;*

The property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 1st and Q Streets, SW and does not directly abut the Anacostia riverfront. The proposed building should not negatively impact views or public access to the waterfront.

512 ZONING COMMISSION REVIEW OF BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND USES (CG)

512.1 *The provisions of this section apply to properties:*

- (a) *Within the CG-5 zone;*
- (b) *Abutting M Street, S.E.;*
- (c) *Located within Squares 700 or 701;*
- (d) *Abutting South Capitol Street, other than renovation or replacement of an existing row dwelling within Squares 653 or 655; or for a minor addition not exceeding fifty percent (50%) of the gross floor area of the original row dwelling structure;*
- (e) ***Within Squares 601, 656, or 657; or***

- (f) *Which are the recipient of density through the combined lot provisions of Subtitle K § 505.3(d).*

The subject property is located in Square 656.

512.2 *With respect to those properties described in Subtitle K § 512.1, all proposed uses, buildings, and structures, or any proposed exterior renovation to any existing buildings or structures that would result in an alteration of the exterior design, shall be subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission in accordance with the following provisions.*

The Applicant is proposing a new mixed-use building that is subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission.

512.3 *In addition to proving that the proposed use, building, or structure meets the standards set forth in Subtitle X and the relevant provisions of this chapter, an applicant requesting approval under this section shall prove that the proposed building or structure, including the sitting, architectural design, site plan, landscaping, sidewalk treatment, and operation, will:*

- (a) *Help achieve the objectives of the Capital Gateway defined in Subtitle K § 500.1,*

The project would help achieve the objectives of the CG zone. The project would add residential units in an area where none exist today along with ground floor commercial. The building height and bulk would be appropriate to its surroundings, and not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The residential use would complement the existing nearby rowhouses and apartments and the neighborhood-serving retail would benefit the Buzzard Point community. The goal of the CG zones of achieving a high level of design could be attained through the contemporary motif employed on the building, but the applicant should examine other ways to dress the sides of the building rather than the current proposal, which presents a flat wall to the observer, and could be visible for several years.

- (b) *Help achieve the desired use mix, with the identified preferred uses specifically being residential, hotel or inn, cultural, entertainment, retail, or service uses;*

The proposal would provide a mixed-use project, which is encouraged in the CG zone and would add residents on a property that is currently underutilized.

- (c) *Be in context with the surrounding neighborhood and street patterns;*

While the proposed project, at 10 stories and 7.78 FAR, would exceed the height and bulk of surrounding properties, the zoning and Comprehensive Plan anticipate medium to high density development in this area. The Applicant should continue to refine the treatment of the east façade to ensure a sympathetic transition between the proposed building and the adjacent two-story row dwellings.

- (d) *Minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians;*

The project would minimize conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. The Applicant proposes to eliminate the curb cuts on 1st Street, SW and proposes to reduce the number of curb cuts on Q

Street, SW to one. The Applicant has requested a variance from the required loading; therefore, a second curb cut would not be required.

The Applicant has committed to TDM measures and proposes to install a Capital Bikeshare station in the public space adjacent to the property and would provide 10 short-term bicycle parking spaces in the public space. Long-term bicycle parking would be provided in the below grade parking garage level. The Applicant should confirm that the long-term bike parking meets the requirements of Subtitle C § 805. With the installation of bike share, external bike racks, and an internal bike storage room, the design would encourage biking as a mode of travel.

(e) Minimize unarticulated blank walls adjacent to public spaces through facade articulation; and

The building façade facing 1st Street would have a contemporary character not inappropriate for the neighborhood surroundings. The mix of brick, glass, and metal and fiber cement panel is generally an appropriate material palate for the streetscape. The proposed landscaping would also provide visual interest for the property. However, the north and east party walls would be visible from public space, possibly for many years. The applicant should examine ways to enhance the appearance of those party walls.

(f) Minimize impact on the environment, as demonstrated through the provision of an evaluation of the proposal against LEED certification standards.

The Applicant states that environmental sustainability and stormwater management would be improved through the use of LEED Silver (v.4) and a green roof system. The Applicant should provide a copy of the LEED checklist. The Applicant should also continue to work with DOEE to find ways to enhance the green features of the building through such measures as rooftop solar panels.

512.7 The Zoning Commission may hear and decide any additional requests for special exception or variance relief needed for the subject property. Such requests shall be advertised, heard, and decided together with the application for Zoning Commission review and approval.

As described in this report, the design of the project would require relief from the loading requirements, which is supported by OP and DDOT.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 6D submitted a letter dated July 11, 2017 indicating that the ANC would take an official vote at its first fall meeting on September 11, 2017 (Exhibit 14).