

WORKSESSION

Design Review Board Case #2019-0001

WMATA Building - Block 15 / 2395 Mill Road

Application	General Data	
Project Name: 2395 Mill Road – Block 15 Location: 2395 Mill Road Applicant: WMATA c/o McGuireWoods LLP	DRB Date:	April 25, 2019
	Site Area:	3.116 acres (135,737 sf)
	Zone:	OCM(100) & UT to CDD#2
	Proposed Use:	Office
	Gross Floor Area:	394,745 sf
<p>Purpose of Application: DRB preliminary review of a 13-story office building with surface and above grade parking on a vacant lot north of the existing Hoffman Town Center, tentatively scheduled for public hearings in June and July 2019.</p>		
<p>Staff Reviewers: Robert M. Kerns, AICP robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov Thomas H. Canfield, AIA tom.canfield@alexandriava.gov Dirk H. Geratz, AICP dirk.geratz@alexandriava.gov Abigail Harwell abigail.harwell@alexandriava.gov</p>		
<p>DRB WORK SESSION, APRIL 25, 2019:</p> <p>The Board discussed the concept for the building and site design and offered the following comments for the applicant to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the 360 degree visibility of the building from roadways, walkways, railways and surrounding buildings. • A future second building on the site was a concern. The Board advised careful consideration of the design and siting of the proposed office building, and that short- and long-term landscape designs be explored. Street-level renderings should be provided in the next submission. • Further consider site circulation around the plaza and main entrance. • Provide a massing model of the site to include the proposed project and adjacent future buildings. • Carefully consider window and façade treatments since they would need to address both the proposed above-grade parking levels and potential future conversion to office use. • The Board expressed the importance a high quality building and a statement of WMATA, offering the nearby AlexRenew headquarters as a similar example. 		

- Environmental issues were discussed, including natural light, and consider rooftop utilization and potential amenities.

The project is on a fast track and Staff expects that further design development with the DRB will be a condition of Council approval. The Board encouraged the architect and applicant to work with staff and the Board on a regular basis to make sure the design is kept on track and pushed forward.

There was one comment from the public at the end of the meeting. Stephen Koenig, a member of the Planning Commission, asked about the potential of the proposed project being designed as a zero net energy building. A representative of WMATA stated that they were not interested, and Mr. Koenig requested that this be highly considered with the impacts of climate change and influence WMATA's operations can have on these impacts.

Block 15 – DRB Work Session

Background

The applicant, Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA), represented by McGuire Woods LLP, is requesting Design Review Board (DRB) review and comment on a new 374,000 square foot office building located at 2395 Mill Road (Eisenhower East – Block 15). Since the development proposes to be included into the Eisenhower East Coordinated Development District (CDD), they are seeking input from the DRB on the massing, siting and layout of the proposed building. An architect has not yet been acquired for the project, so the façade treatment is still being designed and will be brought back for consideration at a future DRB meeting.

Proposal

The property is currently zoned OCM (100) (Office Commercial Medium 100) and UT (Utilities and transportation), and the request includes a rezoning to CDD #2 for inclusion into the Eisenhower Avenue CDD. The proposed building has a net 379,539 square feet building area, including 97,462 square feet of parking. The first four levels consist mostly of parking, with a lobby, conference area, and loading dock provided on the first floor. The remaining nine levels consist of office space. In addition to a mechanical penthouse, the applicant is proposing a green roof area of approximately 21,000 square feet with an accessible roof terrace area. A 31 space surface parking lot is proposed in area where the applicant has stated they anticipate future development, though no details regarding the scope or size have been provided.

Form and Facade

The applicant has provided a narrative of their design on Sheet A.007 of the architectural plans submitted. In summary, the design consists of a four-story podium that projects out from the façade of connected nine-story towers, with a 154'-6" proposed total height. Staff has asked that the orientation of the building or façade be amended to allow for views north east towards the Masonic Temple from the intersection of Mill Road and Mandeville Lane. The applicant has indicated this is not possible, as any changes to the façade could affect the interior program that is needed for the office and parking structure.

The podium appears to have a ground level of glass that fronts Mill Road, a recessed two-story glass lobby with vestibule, and what appears to be space for a usable terrace area for the fifth-floor office space. The rest of the building façade is a combination of continuous ribbon windows or architectural louvered screens. Based upon the floor plans, the punched windows proposed for the parking levels appears consistent to treatment for the rest of the building and future conversion of these levels to interior space would require minimal exterior modification.

Site Access

The applicant is currently requesting three points of access to the property from the public right of way. One curb cut is proposed on the east side of the building that will provide a driveway to the loading bays and the parking structure. A second curb cut is proposed at the intersection of Mill Road and Mandeville Lane that will provide the driveway access to the front of the building and the main entrance. Finally, a third curb cut on the western side of the lot is planned for a driveway that allows additional access to the proposed surface parking lot. As the main entrance driveway already provides this access, and T&ES discourages more than two curb cuts, staff recommends the third driveway and associated curb cut be removed.

Parking

The site proposes 232 spaces, which includes a 31 space surface parking lot and six surface spaces at the end of the eastern driveway. A minimum of 75 spaces are required for an office use within an enhanced transit area, with a maximum allowable of 446 spaces. Given the the amount of parking provided within the proposed building (195 spaces) and the site's proximity to a Metro station, staff believes the proposed surface parking lot and spaces are excessive and could be removed or significantly reduced. With reduction of surface parking, this could increase the amount of landscaping on the property. Currently the only access to the building's structured parking is from the eastern driveway, which includes a two-bay loading area and the additional six spaces of surface parking. There is a security kiosk near the driveway entrance, that according to the applicant cannot be relocated due to existing easements. Staff has asked about the feasibility of relocating the security kiosk in order to provide a public access easement for the driveway area that would allow future access to the adjoining City-owned lot.

Entry plaza and landscaping

A large entry plaza is shown on the west and south sides of the building, with precast pavers proposed as a pedestrian surface and driveway material. There is additional plaza area with proposed scored concrete just north of the entry plaza. The delineation between the pedestrian walkway and the driveway aisles is proposed to be separated by bollards, which appear to squeeze the pedestrian walkway between the building main entrance and surface parking area. Minimal landscaping or public amenities are shown adjacent to the main entrance, with landscaping limited to the front of the property or around the surface parking lot. A pedestrian sidewalk has been provided along the south side of the surface parking lot to provide access to the plaza area.

Eisenhower East Design Guidelines

As the proposed project is requesting inclusion into CDD#2, the project will need to comply with all of the Design Guidelines that currently exist for Eisenhower East. While the Design Guidelines are currently being reviewed and discussed by the City for an update in the near future, staff

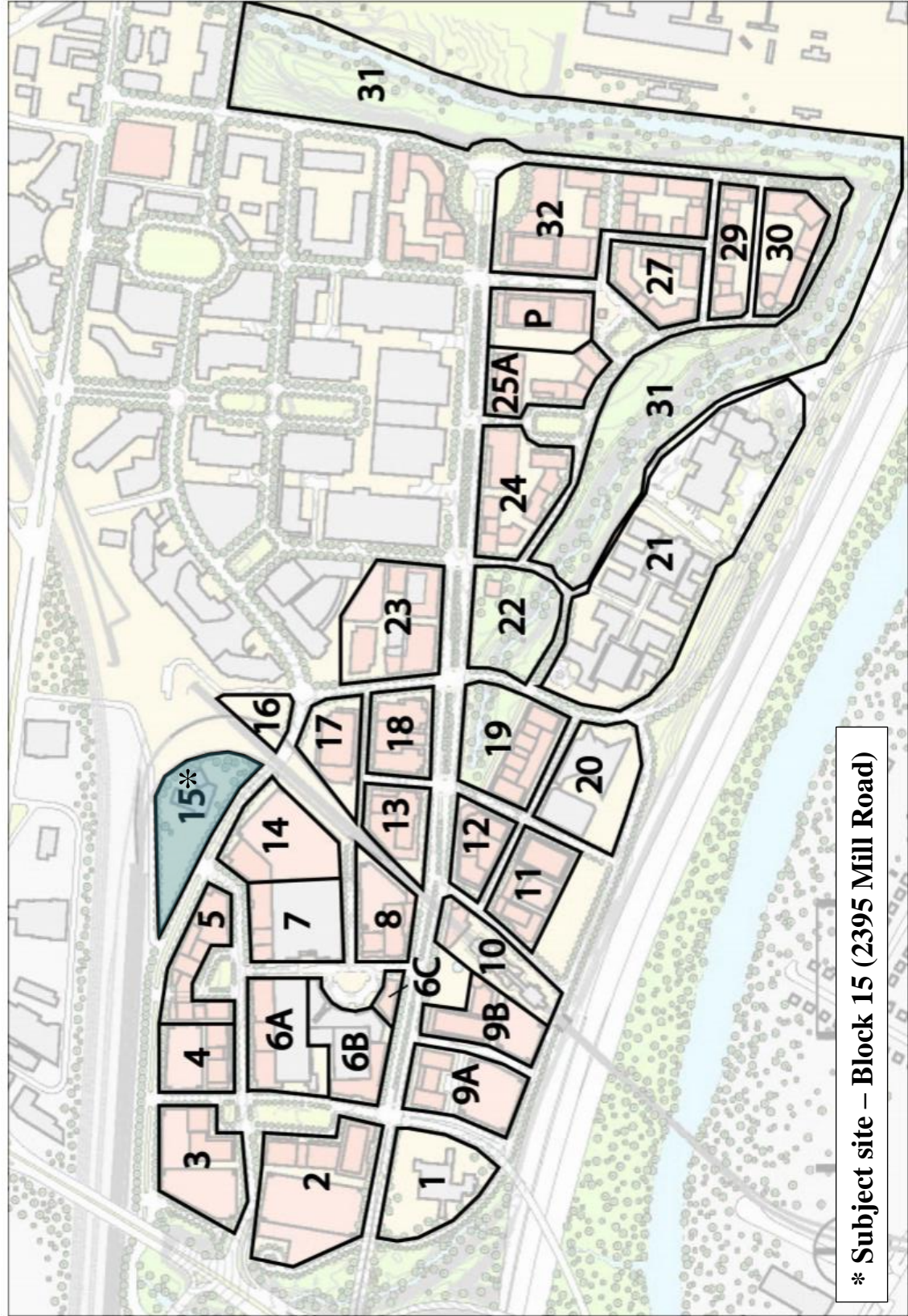
believes the proposed project could blend with the existing developments that have already occurred within this area and could provide an improvement to the goals of the district.

Because this meeting is the first work session for this project, the applicant is encouraged to bring as much of the following as possible: precedent images of possible/proposed building form and skin typologies; electronic or physical study models showing approaches to massing and relationship to surrounding structures both existing and proposed; as well as renderings and freehand drawings that explore the above issues. Circulating as much of this material as possible in advance of the meeting would be helpful.

Discussion Items for April 25, 2019 DRB Hearing:

1. Design and functional analysis of the proposed WMATA office building plans, dated April, 2019
 - a. Building orientation, massing, and placement
 - b. Location of site access, circulation, and shared access
 - c. Screening requirements for above-ground parking
 - d. Convertibility considerations for above-ground parking under new buildings
 - e. Building entrances, walkways and plazas
2. Design Review Board guidance for future submission(s)
 - a. Architectural material and building skin thoughts
 - b. Site design guidance
 - c. Required submission materials for subsequent DRB meetings

Eisenhower East / Carlyle Blocks



* Subject site – Block 15 (2395 Mill Road)

Block 15 – Sketch of Ideas



Ideas:

1. Elimination of 3rd (westernmost) curb cut.
2. Reduction in size of visitor lot, along with pavers and considerably increased landscaping.
3. Combination of lobby, visitor and main parking access at end of Mandeville Lane.
4. Suggestion to provide agreement for shared [service] access to future EE 15B site.