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Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2022 3:27 PM
To: Tom Burr (tom.burr@flournoydev.com); Foster, Ryan; Ivan.Wu@timmons.com; Jon.Murray@timmons.com; Paul.Large@timmons.com; Steve Schmidt; Jennifer Mullen; Andrew Condlin
Cc: Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR; Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR; Caley Crawford; zoning@museumdistrict.org; Addison, Andreas D. - City Council; Addison, Andreas D. - City Council; Brown, Whitney H. - City Council Office
Subject: 3600 Grove Avenue - Initial MDA Zoning Committee Feedback

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Hello all,

Thank you for your time and for presenting to the Museum District Association Zoning & Land Use Committee last week. We appreciate the proactive engagement and your willingness for feedback.

We appreciate that the proposed project will provide much needed housing within our beautiful, sought-after neighborhood. We also appreciate the attention to parking, bike and walkability and your goal of honoring the recommendations set forth in Richmond 300.

We do, however, have concerns about the development style, intensity, motor vehicle access to the property and the project's impacts on and in-relation to future development along Thompson. I am including some of these concerns below.

As you have stated, according to Richmond 300, this parcel is deemed *Community Mixed-Use*. Specific recommendations under this *Future Land Use* category state:

1. Development Style: The building size, density, and zoning districts for these areas may vary significantly depending on historical densities and neighborhood characteristics. Future development should generally complement existing context.
2. Intensity: Buildings generally ranging from two to six stories, based on street widths and depending on the historic context and stepping down in height adjacent to residential areas, as necessary. New buildings that are taller than historical buildings should step back from the build to line after matching the height of the predominant cornice line of the block.

INTENSITY/ HEIGHT

With the narrow width of Thompson along this block as well as the existing neighborhood characteristics (single-story commercial building across the street and two-story single and multi-family homes at the corner), we feel strongly that six stories is too tall for this location. There is nothing of this magnitude in the Museum District and Richmond 300 clearly states that future development should complement existing context. While the recommendation for

Community Mixed-Use does include a MAX of six stories - this is to be dependent upon street width and "stepping down" in height adjacent to residential areas. Going from six to two stories is not stepping down and as previously stated, the narrow width of Thompson cannot accommodate the max of six-stories. **Four-stories is more inline** with the recommendations laid out in R300. We also strongly recommend that the building match the typical Museum District setbacks and step back any portion of the building above 35' (the Museum District's maximum building height) at a 45-degree angular plane where adjacent to the Design Overlay District (or the R300 Neighborhood Mixed-Use region, essentially all along Thompson) to reduce the overwhelming massing.

DESIGN

Additionally, the architectural style of the proposed building does not complement the existing context as recommended in the R300. As currently presented, it is a complete departure from the Design Overlay District that it directly borders. There are many different traditional architectural multi-family precedents within the Museum District itself as well as converted institutional buildings of a larger scale to draw from. The contemporary design might have a place in more recently redeveloped industrial zones of Richmond but is clearly out of place in the traditional Museum District neighborhood.

ACCESS

The density concerns us even more due to only having vehicular access on two sides to this property. A development of this size should have vehicular access on all sides. Similarly, we feel it will be safer and more accessible if there were to be a large loading zone turn-off lane along the length of Thompson to accommodate pick-ups (rideshare, guests, etc.) and deliveries (amazon, ups, doordash etc.) to not impede the single southbound lane.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

As an Association, we feel it is important to look at new development in the context of the surrounding areas and how they will fit in with our vision for updated design overlay guidelines. The Thompson corridor is ripe for development and we support that - as long as it is responsible and complementary development. This block could accommodate **a four-story** development while still complementing adjacent context, adding valuable housing inventory and creating an enlivened and engaging environment.

As the first major redevelopment project along Thompson in some time, we also need to be thoughtful of the precedents it will set that will impact future development along this important thoroughfare. Just in the past few years, our Association has been made aware of potential major redevelopment projects on residential and commercial parcels directly south of this project, the parcels abutting Thompson by the post office. Additionally, the older apartment building complex to this project's northeast may also be the subject of redevelopment in the coming years. All of those future projects will look to this project as a starting point for meeting community needs for design, density and traffic/pedestrian impacts. We are looking forward to the new energy, residents and amenities these new developments will bring, but it's important they blend into the fabric of the neighborhood. The Museum District benefits from its grid street pattern and extensive sidewalks. They help define the character of the neighborhood and ensure the safe circulation of vehicles and pedestrians. Intensive new development along Thompson requires a full examination of traffic and pedestrian impacts along the entire length of the street. The development of this parcel and the traffic and walkability implications should not be reviewed in a silo.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns in more detail. We also look forward to the public meeting you offered to host with neighbors and residents of the Museum District.

Best,
Karen

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Karen Headley
MDA Zoning & Land Use Committee Chair
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