



**DOWNTOWN
MINNEAPOLIS
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

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November 17, 2018

Hilary Dvorak, Principal City Planner
City of Minneapolis CPED
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Sherman Associates – Portland and Washington Avenues Mixed-Use project with MFD Station

Dear Hilary:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association regarding Sherman Associates Portland and Washington Avenues Mixed Use project. Representatives from Sherman Associates and ESG Architects have presented the project to the DMNA Land Use Committee on September 4 and again on November 13.

At the meeting on November 13, Bob Loken from ESG Architects presented an updated site plan that reflects feedback received from the Land Use Committee and the Committee of the Whole. Loken summarized the components of the project, which include a 282-unit, 22-story market rate apartment building with 220 parking stalls and two levels of below grade parking; and 6,000 square feet of retail space. There is also a smaller six-story, a 90-unit affordable apartment building with 312 parking spaces that will be open to the public. Finally, the project relocates the existing Minneapolis Fire Department Station 1 from the corner of 3rd Avenue and Portland Avenue to 3rd Avenue and 5th Avenue. Loken also reviewed the architectural features and proposed building materials. Each component of the project has a complementary but distinctively different design.

After reviewing the site plan and building design, landscape architect Jesse Symynkywicz from Damon Farbor went over the public realm improvements. He described the plant palette, including the type of trees and the perennial plants. The overall design complements that of the surrounding area. He stated that they intend to carry the existing Portland Avenue bike lane through the development, however, they hope to reduce the size of the buffer that runs parallel to the bike lane in order to expand the interior greenspace next to the sidewalk. He highlighted the public space at the corner of Portland and Washington Avenues and indicated that they will promote active uses in this location. They would like to include a Nice Ride Bike Rack on Washington Avenue. There will also be a dog run within the site.

Finally, Andrew Bollig from Sherman Associates provided information on the housing unit mix and the rents. There were a number of questions about the reasons for keeping the market-rate and affordable units in separate buildings. Bollig explained that it relates to construction costs. When asked about financing, he indicated that Sherman Associates has almost completely secured funding for the project, and that they anticipate closing on the property in early 2019 with construction starting in the spring.

After some questions and discussion, the Land Use Committee recommended providing a letter of support for Sherman Associates Portland and Washington Avenues Mixed-Use project with the MFD Station. The committee stressed the importance of designing a building that has a distinctive skyline profile to complement the existing skyline view from the East and North. They want Sherman Associates to pay particular attention to the architectural lighting at the top of the building. Additionally, the committee continues to have a strong interest in the public realm and wants to see the developer meet or exceed the guidelines established in the Downtown Public Realm Framework and those established for the Washington Avenue reconstruction. The DMNA Board reviewed and supported the Land Use Committee's recommendation at their meeting on November 19.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at christie@thedmna.org, or 320-583-4573.

Kind regards,

Christie Rock Hantge
DMNA Neighborhood Coordinator

CC: Andrew Bollig, Sherman Associates
Bob Loken, ESG Architects
Council Member Steve Fletcher
Joe Tamburino, DMNA Board Chair
Kevin Frazell, DMNA Land Use Committee Chair