

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe *8-21*
Associate Director, PPSA
District Department of Transportation

DATE: April 27, 2012

SUBJECT: BZA Case#18344 (Application of Application of JBG/New York Avenue Hotel, LLC)
33 New York Avenue, N.E.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18344
EXHIBIT NO. 27

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APPLICATION

JBG/New York Avenue Hotel, LLC (the "Applicant"), pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3104.1 and 3103.2, is seeking a variance from the parking requirements under section 2101.1, a variance from the compact car parking space provisions under sections 2115.2 and 2115.4, and a special exception from the roof structure requirements under sections 411 and 770.6, to permit the development of a hotel in the C-3-C District at premises 33 New York Avenue, N.E. (Square 671, Lot 27).

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT's following comments pertain solely to the Applicant's request for a variance from the parking requirements of section 2101.1 and its effects on the transportation network. The Applicant is proposing a 200 hotel/residential building, with 1300 SF of meeting space, for the referenced site. Pursuant to 11 DCMR S2101.1, the Applicant is required to install 54 off-street parking spaces for the project. Per the completed filing, the Applicant is requesting a variance from all on-site parking, with the intention of utilizing valet service and off-site lots to accommodate any short term or long term parking needs. The site is well-served by public transportation, with the New York Ave Metro, Capital Bikeshare, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and several WMATA bus routes all located within a two block radius. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that the majority of trips generated by the site will be non-vehicular. Therefore, DDOT recommends approval of the Applicant's request for variance from the stated off-street parking requirement.

The Applicant has also proposed a layby for N Street to accommodate taxis, shuttles, valet, etc. A layby may not be in the long-term interest of the City's needs for accommodating multiple competing transportation demands on the area. The Applicant is encouraged to work with DDOT before and during the Public Space permitting process to come to a solution for the design of public space adjacent to the property that satisfies their drop-off\valet needs as well as the requirements of DDOT to accommodate all travel modes in a safe manner.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Roadway Capacity

The Applicant provided vehicle trip generation data for three hotels that will have valet-only parking similar to that proposed by the Applicant. The Applicant further looked at the respective distance between the three hotels and the nearest Metro Station. These data were used to interpolate a vehicle trip generation rate for their proposed hotel. The predicted peak hour vehicle trip generation, as shown in the table below, is 20 inbound trips in the AM; 20 outbound trips in the AM; 22 inbound trips in the PM; and 21 outbound trips in the PM.

TRIP TYPE	AM PEAK HOUR			PM PEAK HOUR		
	Inbound	Outbound	Total	Inbound	Outbound	Total
Trip Generation based on Field Calibrated Rates ¹	20	20	40	22	21	43
Trip Generation based on ITE Equations/Rates ²	59	38	97	63	55	118
Non-auto Mode Split (trips)	39	18	57	41	34	75
Non-auto Mode Split (%)	66%	47%	59%	65%	62%	64%

¹ Inbound and outbound distributions for the AM and PM peak hour determined to be average of inbound and outbound distributions for the three similar hotel sites.

² Inbound and outbound distributions for the AM and PM peak hours from ITE *Trip Generation*, 8th Edition.

As the above table shows, the predicted trip generation represents an approximate 60% reduction in vehicle trips from typical ITE trip generation rates that have been compiled solely from suburban car-oriented developments. Though DDOT would like to have seen more than three hotels evaluated, these proposed vehicle trip generation rates are approximately in-line with similar-sized projects in similar locations.

Site Access and Loading

The Applicant has worked extensively with DDOT regarding concerns over limiting site access from New York Ave. Because of the Applicant's parking variance request, no vehicle site access is required. Parking will be curb-side valet-only from N Street and will occur off-site.

DDOT strives to accommodate vehicle loading in a reasonable and safe manner while at the same time preserving traffic flow and safety. The completed filing shows loading for delivery and trash via N Street,

NE. In addition, the filing shows that delivery/loading vehicles will be required to back in from N Street. DDOT prefers turn around movements in private space but understands that the small size of the site and its odd shape make turning around in private space overly burdensome. Given the very low vehicle and pedestrian volume on this segment of N Street, in conjunction with an infrequent delivery schedule, DDOT is in general agreement with the proposed loading scheme.

Parking

The overall parking demand created by a development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage and price/supply of parking spaces. Per Zoning, the Applicant is required to include 54 on-site parking spaces. As noted by the Applicant in their filing, the site's small size and shape restrict the amount of spaces that can be accommodated per parking level, making structured below grade parking prohibitively expensive in order to accommodate the number of spaces required by zoning. Further, DDOT indicated to the Applicant its position on allowing parking vaults under public space as well as access from New York Ave. Based on the above constraints, the Applicant is requesting a variance to have zero parking spaces on-site. DDOT support the Applicant's request for a variance for reduced parking, as close proximity to alternative transportation modes - including the New York Ave Metro Station less than ¼ mile away - make public transportation to and from the site easy and convenient. The Applicant plans on using nearby public parking garages and surface lots for valet parking of visitors that arrive by vehicle. As noted by the Applicant, there are 20 public parking lots within a 4 block radius of the site.

Per zoning, the Applicant is required to install bike parking spaces in an amount not less than 5% of the required vehicle parking spaces. The Applicant has committed to install 10 indoor spaces, as opposed to the required 3 spaces, per zoning. The bike storage area is for employees and visitors. DDOT commends the Applicant for acknowledging the site's proximity to the Metropolitan Branch Trail by providing more than the minimum required bike parking spaces to support alternative transportation modes.

Currently, on-street parking is available only on the south side of the unit block of N Street, NE. No on-street parking exists on the north side of the block.

Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

As noted by the Applicant, two Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) stations are located within a 4 block radius of the site. In addition to the proposed 10 secure bike storage spaces, the Applicant is proposing four additional bike racks in the public space along New York Ave. DDOT notes that access to the Metropolitan Branch Trail is less than ¼ mile from the site, proving safe direct bike access to Union Station and points beyond. DDOT recommends that public space bike racks also be placed along N Street, as this segment provides direct access to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, while New York Avenue does not. The Applicant must coordinate with DDOT to ensure that any bike racks placed in the public space are designed and installed according to current DDOT standards.

Primary pedestrian entrance to the site will be via N Street, with an additional pedestrian entrance on New York Ave. The main pedestrian entrance coincides with the N Street drop-off/valet location. In addition, the Applicant has located the pedestrian entrance such that visitors who walk to and from the Metro station do *not* have to cross the loading/trash driveways. DDOT agrees with this approach as it reduces potential conflict points between pedestrians and vehicles. The site has frontage on the north side of N Street, NE, but currently no sidewalk exists along any portion of the north side of the unit block

of N Street between North Capitol Street to 1st Street, NE. Sidewalk exists on the south side of N Street, NE between North Capitol Street and the New York Ave Metro. DDOT requires the Applicant to rebuild the public space along the site frontage to DDOT standards. DDOT encourages the Applicant to coordinate with other property owners along the unit block of N Street, NE, to build continuous, consistent sidewalks on the North side of N Street along the entire block.

Transit

The site is served by the New York Ave Metro station about ¼ mile away. In addition, there are 7 nearby stops that serve 5 WMATA bus routes. DDOT agrees with the Applicant that the site is very well served by public transit, allowing for the opportunity for a substantial non-vehicle mode split, provided Applicant incorporates proper Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies.

Safety

The Applicant has removed vehicle access from the site (except for loading). This eliminates virtually all pedestrian/vehicle conflicts along the sidewalk. In addition, the lack of vehicle driveways also removes potential conflicts points between vehicles on New York Ave and those trying to enter and exit the site.

Streetscape and Public Realm

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb & gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

The Applicant must work closely with DDOT and OP to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards, and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulate around it. The *DDOT Public Realm Design Manual* will serve as the main public realm reference for the Applicant. DDOT staff are available to provide additional guidance. While the Applicant is not required to upgrade sidewalk for the entire north side of N Street, coordination with other property owners along the unit block of N Street, and with DDOT, is strongly encouraged to produce a seamless sidewalk network of continuous width.

Though no vaults are specifically noted in the zoning application nor are approvals requested, DDOT notes that its policy is to not allow utility vaults in public space, particularly in any area that may see substantial pedestrian activity.

The Applicant is proposing a layby for taxi, drop-off, and valet service on N Street, NE. Because N Street is currently narrower than a standard local collector, a layby would restrict the available sidewalk width and streetscaping on the north side of N Street, where currently no sidewalk, streetscaping or on-street parking exists. The Applicant is strongly encouraged to work with DDOT before and during the Public Space permitting process to come to a solution that satisfies their curbside drop-off/valet requirements as well as the need for DDOT to accommodate multiple travel modes in a safe manner.

DDOT notes that visitors to the hotel who drive route from westbound New York Ave will have a circuitous route to reach the drop-off location on N Street, NE. The Applicant is encouraged to coordinate with DDOT in order to provide suitable wayfinding signage along New York Ave and the NoMa neighborhood to facilitate vehicle access to their site.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In order to facilitate the elimination of all parking, DDOT encourages the Applicant to promote the availability of all of the nearby transit services to visitors and employees, including WMATA bus, Metro and CaBi, in addition to the Metropolitan Branch Trail and ZipCar drop-off, both two blocks from the site. Examples of ways to promote public transit to hotel visitors include: providing links and maps on the Hotel's reservation website; providing a lobby kiosk with all available public transport options; and providing a real-time display of metro/bus arrival times to include the availability of CaBi bikes at nearby docking stations.

For employees, the Applicant has offered to provide a SmartTrip card or one year CaBi membership. DDOT encourages the Applicant to provide both a preloaded smart trip card to new employees as well as one-year membership to CaBi. Further, Applicant can enter into the SmartBenefits program, which allows employees to the option of purchasing vouchers for public transit on a pre-tax basis.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Per the completed filing, the Applicant is requesting a variance from all on-site parking, with the intention of utilizing valet service and off-site lots to accommodate any short term or long term parking needs. The site is well-served by public transportation, with the New York Ave Metro, Capital Bikeshare, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and several WMATA bus routes all located within a two block radius. Accordingly, it is reasonable to expect that the majority of trips generated by the site will be non-vehicular. Therefore, DDOT recommends approval of the Applicant's request for variance from the stated off-street parking requirement contingent on implementing a successful valet parking program and implementation of appropriate TDM measures.

The Applicant has also proposed a layby for N Street to accommodate taxis, shuttles, valet, etc. A layby may not be in the long-term interest of the City's needs for accommodating multiple competing transportation demands on the area. The Applicant is encouraged to work with DDOT before and during the Public Space permitting process to come to a solution for the design of public space adjacent to the property that satisfies their drop-off\valet needs as well as the requirements of DDOT to accommodate all travel modes in a safe manner.

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