GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lloyd Jordan
Chairperson
DC Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe
Associate Director, PPSA
District Department of Transportation

DATE: June 29, 2012

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 18375 – 710 Florida Avenue, NW (Square 416, Lot 31)**

APPLICATION

Pursuant to *DCMR Title 11 – Zoning, §3103.2* and *§3103.2.*, the applicant seeks variances from the rear yard requirements of *§774;* lot occupancy requirements of *§772;* off-street parking requirements of *§2201;* loading requirements of *§2201; and special exceptions from the street-wall requirements listed under §1903.3;* and the roof structure requirements of *§770.6,* to allow development of a six-story, mixed-use residential building with ground floor retail/service uses in the Arts/C-2-B District at premises 710 Florida Avenue, N.W. *(Square 416, Lot 31).*

OVERVIEW

The applicant seeks to construct two separate, 6-story mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail /service uses and residential units above to be constructed in two phases. This application is for the first building in the program located on the southeast corner of Eight Street and Florida Avenue, NW. The second phase of the project, 810 Florida Avenue, NW

is located on the southeast corner of Ninth Street and Florida Avenue, NW. 810 Florida Avenue, NW is being reviewed as BZA No. 18397 and is scheduled for a public hearing on September 18, 2012. This memorandum focuses on the transportation impacts of the current BZA application.

Street-Wall Requirements

The applicant is proposing a six-foot (6 ft.) setback from the property line along the Florida Avenue frontage to increase the substandard current conditions of the sidewalk and tree space as the distance from the face-of-curb to the property line is only eight feet (8 ft.) wide with a four-foot (4 ft.) wide sidewalk and a four-foot (4 ft.) wide tree space. The setback will allow the applicant to install a six-foot (6 ft.) wide continuous tree space along the curb with an approximately 10-foot clear sidewalk width, in conformance with the standards outlined in the *DDOT Design and Engineering Manual* and the *Public Realm Design Manual* jointly published by DDOT and the *District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP).*

Parking

The project is required to provide a total of 41 parking spaces; eight (8) parking spaces for the retail use and 32 for the residential portion of the project. The applicant seeks approval to provide only 29 spaces strictly for residential use. The Transportation Impact Study, provided as an attachment to the Prehearing Statement, analyzed the parking demands of the site and identified various modes of transportation in the vicinity of the site that will reduce automobile trips including two Metrorail Stations, several major Metro Bus routes, and several Capital Bikeshare Stations.

Loading Variance

The retail/ service use is required to have one 100 sq. ft. loading platform. The residential use is required to provide one 55 ft. deep loading berth, one 200 sq. ft. platform and one 20 ft. deep loading space. The applicant is proposing to eliminate the 55 ft. deep berth and share the one 30 ft. deep loading berth between the residential and retail uses. In addition the applicant seeks to eliminate the 100 ft. retail platform and share the 200 sq. ft. platform between the residential and retail uses. The 55 ft. deep berth is required if a tractor trailer is accessing the site however, the 30 ft. deep berth should be sufficient for both uses if the property management staff develops a loading management plan.

RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined, based on the information provided, there will be an impact to the transportation system. On Page No. 20 of the Pre-Hearing Statement, the *Applicant* commits to installing either a *Capital Bikeshare* station or a new traffic signal at the intersection of Eight Street and Florida Avenue, NW as a public improvement. DDOT supports the installation of the traffic signal.

DDOT has no objection to the variances and special exceptions sought by the applicant provided the applicant continues to coordinate with DDOT on public space improvements including the installation of the traffic signal at the intersection of Eight Street and Florida Avenue, NW. DDOT also recommends the applicant consider providing a one-time, complimentary SmartTrip Card plus $100 of Metro fare for each retail employee in addition to the other TDM commitments.

TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

Overview

DDOT held two PDRM meetings with the applicant to review the public space impacts of the combined projects. The first PDRM was held on April 5th, 2012 and the applicant was provided comments from DDOT staff. The second PDRM was held on May 17, 2012 to review updated site plans.

Roadway Capacity and Operations

DDOT held a scoping meeting with the applicant's traffic consultant on April 18, 2012. DDOT staff reviewed and edited the scope and it was finalized on May 2, 2012. The TIS report was submitted to DDOT on May 25, 2012. DDOT staff reviewed the TIS and prepared a Transportation Analysis. (Attachment)

Safety

The intersection of Eight Street and Florida Avenue, NW currently operates at an LOS-F and there was recently a fatal accident at the location. The stop-controlled intersection is located along a heavily traveled segment of Florida Avenue that has signalized intersections at most of the other cross streets. This intersection is sub-standard with no traffic controls from east-west traffic and Stop-Signs for north – south traffic and may not meet FHWA safety standards. The proposed development in conjunction with future development to the north is expected to increase pedestrian crossings at this location.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The applicant is providing a total of 36 bicycle spaces in the garage exceeding the minimum number of 33 spaces required by the Zoning Regulations. The bicycle spaces are placed in a secure area of the lower level of the parking garage. The project will also install six (6) bicycle racks within the sidewalk area of Florida Avenue, NW.

Transit Services

The site is located within walking distance of both the U Street Metro Station on the Green line and the Shaw/Howard University Metrorail Station on the Red Line. The area is well served by major Metro bus lines that run along Florida Avenue and 7th Street/Georgia Avenue, NW.

Site Access and Loading

The residential lobby is located on Eighth Street, NW as well as three of the four retail entrances. Vehicular access will be provided by a proposed new driveway curb-cut on 8th Street that will serve both the parking and loading needs of the project. The driveway has been designed to allow loading vehicles to maneuver on private space.

Parking

The applicant is seeking approval to eliminate the retail parking component (8 spaces) and provide only 29 of the required 32 residential parking spaces.

Streetscape/Public Realm

The applicant is providing a 6 ft. wide setback from the property line along Florida Avenue to widen the usable space from 8 to 16 ft. providing enough room to install the standard streetscape treatment of a 6 ft. wide continuous tree space and a 10 ft. wide sidewalk. The proposed new Pepco vaults are placed in a landscaped area near the driveway entrance.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The applicant has committed to a number of TDM measures in the Pre-Hearing Statement that comply with the DDOT expectations for a project of the size including providing secure bicycle parking; unbundling the parking costs from the cost of a lease or purchase; identifying a TDM Leader; providing an on-site business center for residents; installing a transportation information kiosk in the residential lobby; and hosting a transportation mobility fair six months after the construction of both residential projects.

SUMMARY

The applicant has committed to mitigate the impacts of the project through TDM measures and public space improvements including a new traffic signal.

ATTACHMENT

Transportation Analysis

DDOT is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, constructing safer streets and providing outstanding access to goods and services. As one means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure alternative modes are adequate to accommodate new travel demand while discouraging single occupancy vehicle trips.

Roadway Capacity and Operations

DDOT aims to provide a safe and efficient roadway network that provides for the timely movement of people, goods and services. In the CTR, the Applicant provided the existing vehicle counts, queue lengths, and intersection Level of Service for a previously agreed upon study area. To these existing conditions, the Applicant added approved background developments that may impact the study area as well as a regional annual growth to the existing arterials in order to forecast a future year background condition. Finally, to this background condition, the Applicant added forecasted trips generated to and from the proposed development via the local road network. DDOT is in general agreement with this approach to analyzing the effect of the Site on the local roadways.

Study Area

Per DDOT's request, the Applicant looked at intersections adjacent to the Site that are relevant to its potential impact on safety and operations. These intersections are immediately adjacent to the site and also include those subsequent intersections radially outward from the site that have the greatest potential to see moderate to significant increases in vehicle delay. The following intersections were evaluated by the Applicant per DDOT's request:

- Florida Ave & Georgia Ave
- 7th Street & T Street, NW
- 8th Street & T Street, NW
- 9th Street & T Street, NW
- Florida Ave & 8th Street
- Florida Ave & 9th Street
- Florida Ave & T Street, NW

DDOT acknowledges that not all affected intersections are included in the study area and there will be intersections outside of the study area which realize new trips. However, DDOT expects minimal to no increase in delay outside the study area as a result of the proposed project.

Mode Split and Trip Generation

The development program for the Site includes 257 residential units and 32,000 ft^2 of ground floor retail divide among two buildings that front Florida Ave between 9th and 7th Streets. To develop trip generation impacts from the Site, the Applicant utilized standard ITE trip generation rates for *Apartment* and *Shopping Center*, for the residential and retail portions, respectively. Due to suburban nature of the ITE trip generation Manual, the Applicant assumed trip reductions for alternative travel modes that totaled a 65% vehicle trip reduction for walking/biking/walking-to-transit for both the retail and residential portions of the development program.

This reduction was based on the *WMATA Ridership Survey* which attempts to correlate mode split with the distance from a Site to the nearest Metro Station. In addition, the Applicant utilized the *2009 American Commuter Survey* in conjunction with existing traffic patterns and the surrounding land use.

DDOT is in general agreement with this approach for trip generation and the trip reduction assumptions. The overall trip generation, by mode, is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Trip Generation, by mode

Mode	AM		PM	
	IN	OUT	IN	OUT
Transit	39	61	123	106
Pedestrian	19	33	65	55
Bike	6	14	23	17
Vehicle	32	50	104	86

In determining future impacts, the Applicant distributed the Site's generated trips along the roadway network in a manner that is generally consistent with existing patterns.

Analysis and Level of Service

The Applicant conducted a Level of Service (LOS) analysis utilizing the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) software imbedded in Synchro, per DDOT's practice, at the study area intersections. The analysis was conducted for the weekday AM and PM peak hours. The LOS analysis was conducted for the existing conditions and were compared to the following development scenarios:

- 2015 no-build scenario – including all background development and DDOT transportation improvements
- 2015 build-out scenarios.

In reviewing the 2015 no-build scenario, the Applicant assumed a 1.6% annual growth rate in vehicular traffic between 2012 and 2015, as well as incorporating *Progression Place* – a mixed use development near the Howard/Shaw Metro – as background development.

The analysis shows that most intersections and approaches currently operate at an LOS of E or better. Only westbound Florida Ave at 7th Street operates at an LOS F. In the no-build 2015 scenario, this approach gets demonstrably worse, with average vehicle delay increasing from 95 seconds to 143 seconds. This approach further degrades with the Applicant's development, with the average delay increasing to 168 seconds. With this increase, the Applicant's development pushes the overall intersection into an LOS F scenario.

The Applicant's study also concluded that the northbound approach of 8th Street at Florida *improves* from an LOS F scenario with the inclusion of the background development and the proposed Site development. However, DDOT believes this to be a coding quirk in the software utilized to determine LOS. It is expected that intersection, and the approach in question, will further degrade in the background scenario and in the 2015 build-out scenario.

In addition, the Applicant reviewed 95% queue length changes from the background no-build scenario to the build-out scenario. This review showed only very minimal changes in queue lengths due to the Applicant's development.

To alleviate the delay and LOS degradation, the Applicant has suggested signal re-timing at Georgia and Florida Ave. DDOT is in agreement that signal timing will likely be necessary, and will make adjustments to the coordinated network as needed.