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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe *sz*
Associate Director, PPSA
District Department of Transportation

DATE: February 20, 2013

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18503 & 18505 – Metro Village – 7051-7053 Spring Place N.W.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18505

EXHIBIT NO. 29

APPLICATIONS

Keystar Spring Place LLC and Anabel Pestana (the "Applicant") have requested a variance to reduce the number of required parking spaces and the size of the loading facilities for both subject properties. Two separate cases have been established to process these requests. The two subject applications, one for an 87-unit rental building and the other for a 64-unit rental building, have been combined in our analysis and review as one proposed project under this report.

DDOT did not receive all of the required analysis and information as had been agreed upon during the transportation scoping phase in a timely manner for our review. Many transportation materials requested and agreed upon in late December were only submitted on Saturday February 9th, 2013, 6 business days before our report submission deadline. In effort to provide a thorough review of the material provided, DDOT is submitting this report late.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the impact of the proposed project on the District's transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. After a thorough review of the analysis submitted by the Applicant, DDOT concludes:

- The project does not have an accessible pedestrian route to and from the proposed project connecting to the existing pedestrian network infrastructure on Blair Road or Cedar Street;

- The parking inventory analysis did not meet DDOT standards and was insufficient for our review and verification. DDOT is concerned that parking demand from the project might further reduce parking availability to the residents of Chestnut Street, if future residents are allowed to enter the Residential Parking Program (RPP); and
- 30 foot trucks will require advanced and expert maneuvering in order to avoid reverse loading movements in public space.

DDOT is actively working with the Applicant to address these concerns and believes the following conditions should be required for approval:

- The Applicant shall extend its proposed multi-use trail for the entire length of Spring Place from Chestnut along its property to facilitate pedestrian access to its site;
- The Applicant shall, in cooperation with DDOT, complete a full engineering design and obtain all necessary easements and agreements from the adjacent property owners to allow for the construction of a multi-use trail from Spring Place to Cedar Street, which has been identified as the main pedestrian desire line to the site;
- The Applicant shall install a “Do Not Block The Intersection” sign per DDOT standards for the south bound direction on Blair Road;
- The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies described in the Applicant’s TIS shall be amended to require the proposed TDM measures be provided to all new residents rather than just the initial set of residents;
- A minimum of 75 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces be located within the two buildings;
- A minimum of 3 inverted U-style bicycle racks be installed at each main building entrance;
- The Applicant shall redesign the building and loading area to accommodate loading movements without the need for multiple turns; and
- The Applicant shall create and implement a loading management instruction plan for tenants that addresses scheduling and safety concerns related to truck movements in public space.

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 of transportation are adequate to accommodate new travel demand while discouraging single occupancy vehicle trips. The following analysis evaluates the Applicant’s Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to determine its accuracy and consistency with the District’s vision and goals for its transportation network.

Changes in Land Use Context

Spring Place N.W. currently functions as a named alley without sidewalks and has a limited right-of-way of 25 feet in width. Currently, pedestrian and bicycle traffic is low, but the proposed development projects that at least 50% of its residents will not rely on automobile use. Per the projected trip generation rates, 44 persons in the AM peak hour and 51 persons during the PM peak hour alone will access the site via foot, bicycle, and transit. At least 30% of residents will use the Takoma Metro Station and likely walk from the station via an identified pedestrian shortcut through a dirt path in between the rail tracks and an existing apartment building for faster access to the site.

Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/supply of parking spaces. However in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking such as the availability of nearby high-quality public transit. With the site in close proximity to such transit, DDOT expects a low need for on-site parking.

DDOT had requested the Applicant complete a parking occupancy study of Chestnut Street, in order to establish the current parking demand and availability. The inventory analysis did not meet DDOT standards and was insufficient for our review and verification. The Applicant suggested that there was limited curbside parking availability, but the study did not provide a robust review of conditions. In the absence of this data, DDOT is concerned that parking demand from the project might further reduce parking availability to the residents of Chestnut Street if future residents are allowed to enter the Residential Parking Program (RPP).

The RPP program was established in the 1970's to protect neighborhoods and ensure residents could find parking on their blocks. The RPP program limits on-street parking to participating residents living on designated blocks, and parking is limited to two hours during the hours of operation for those vehicles without the appropriate zone RPP sticker. Currently, the 7000 block of Spring Place is not part of the RPP system, but this does not preclude future residents to petition to be included in the system.

According to current District Zoning Regulations, the proposed development would require a total of 75 parking spaces and the Applicant is requesting a variance to allow only 39 spaces. The Applicant has proposed TDM measures to minimize the need for vehicle parking. These measures include a one time Metro fare card, and car share and bike share memberships. DDOT believes these measures should be extended to all future residents instead of only initial tenants. These TDM measures will continue to support the parking reduction for the lifetime of the project. DDOT believes the variance, if granted, will generate minimal impacts provided the Applicant implements their proposed TDM measures supporting tenant non-automobile reliance.

Site Access and Loading

According to District Zoning Regulations, two 55-foot deep berths, a single 20-foot service/delivery space, and two 100-SF loading platforms are required for the proposed development. The Applicant has requested relief to provide one 30-foot loading berth, a 20-foot service/delivery space, and one 100-SF loading platform. In the TIS, the Applicant stated that all deliveries will be made by 30-foot trucks or smaller.

30 foot trucks will require advanced and expert maneuvering in order to avoid reverse loading movements in public space at the intersection of the alley and Spring Place, where cyclists and pedestrians will be traversing. In particular, loading for Building 2 will require drivers to successfully complete a 3 point turn without damaging the building. This is not an acceptable condition since move-in and move-out activities are not always completed by a professional driver. Therefore, DDOT recommends that the Applicant work with DDOT to make any building design changes to the loading area to better accommodate the outbound Building 2 loading movement and develop a loading management plan to educate tenants on the expected truck turning movements and scheduling procedures to minimize and mitigate this condition.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The Applicant proposes a minimum of 40 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces within their site in their TIS. At a recent ANC 4B meeting held on February 5th, 2013, the Applicant agreed to the ANC resolution for at least 100 bicycle parking spaces. These secured bicycle parking spaces should be easily accessible and visible to users. DDOT recommends that at least 75 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces be located within the two buildings and supports the increase of spaces to 100. In addition, DDOT recommends that a minimum of 3 inverted U-style bicycle racks be installed at each main building entrance for short-term bicycle parking.

As proposed, the project does not have an accessible pedestrian route to and from the proposed project connecting to the existing pedestrian network infrastructure on Blair Road or Cedar Street. Pedestrian access to and demand on Spring Place is expected to increase dramatically due to the project. Today, pedestrians do not have an ADA or DDOT compliant sidewalk to use from Blair Road to the site. As demonstrated by the trip generation analysis and reduced vehicle parking, the majority of residents are expected to use non-automotive modes to access the site. The demonstrated pedestrian desire line, which is the shortest route to the Metro Station, is through an existing dirt path connecting Spring Place to Cedar Street that is not located on District right-of-way. This dirt path has been identified in previous DDOT studies as a possible Metropolitan Branch Trail alignment, but is not owned by DDOT.

In order to support the projected trip generation that heavily relies on pedestrian access to the site versus auto dependence, the Applicant needs to provide an accessible pedestrian route to the adjacent streets. Without such access, residents do not have an adequate option to access the site. Disabled residents and those not comfortable using a dirt path in undesirable conditions during the evening or in inclement weather have to walk up Blair Road and use a substandard sidewalk on Chestnut Street. DDOT requests that the Applicant, in cooperation with DDOT, complete a full engineering design and obtain all necessary easements and agreements from the adjacent property owners to allow for the construction of a multi-use trail from Spring Place to Cedar Street, which has been identified as the main pedestrian desire line to the site. In addition, DDOT requests that the Applicant extend its proposed multi-use trail for the entire length of Spring Place from Chestnut Street along its property to facilitate pedestrian access to its site. Further coordination during our permitting process will be necessary to ensure designed pedestrian facilities meet current DDOT standards.

Roadway Network, Capacity, and Operations

DDOT reviewed the Applicant's transportation analysis and found that the two major intersections within the study area at Blair Road and Cedar Street/4th St and Blair Road and Piney Branch Road are currently over capacity. Under the worst case scenario, the proposed project will have a slight impact on the two above mentioned intersections. The parking reduction will assist in discouraging automobile reliance by its residents and further facilitation of non-automobile usage is encouraged through the proposed TDM strategies and pedestrian access.

Safety

DDOT policy requires that Applicants conduct safety analyses to demonstrate that specific land developments will not create or exacerbate new or existing safety issues for all modes of travel.

Based on the crash rate calculations, one of the five study intersections rates is above DDOT's accepted crash rate criteria of 1.0 per Million Entering Vehicles (MEV). The intersection of Chestnut Street and Spring Place has a crash rate of 1.11 MEV.

In general, higher crash rates per MEV do not necessarily identify specific crash patterns and corrective actions to alleviate any problems. Crash rates typically indicate that comprehensive safety analyses using traffic engineering tools and methodologies need to be undertaken at locations with rates greater than 1.0 (or any other established criteria). As noted by the TIS, one accident involved a parking maneuver and the other a fixed object. DDOT expects that with better signage and improved parking restriction signage on Spring Place that this issue can be ameliorated.

As noted in the TIS, there are sight distance constraints for vehicles exiting Chestnut and turning left onto Blair Road due to an existing utility pole and vegetation. In addition, queuing along Blair Road further exacerbates the level of difficulty for access on and off Chestnut Street. As proposed by the Applicant, DDOT supports the recommendation for the installation of a "Do Not Block the Intersection" sign by the Applicant for the south bound direction on Blair Road.

Transit Services

DDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District. DDOT's vision is to leverage these investments to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

As noted by the Applicant, the Site is adjacent to the Takoma Park Metro station, but does not have an accessible pedestrian route from the project to the station. In order to provide an accessible route that meets DDOT and ADA standards, the Applicant in cooperation with DDOT, shall complete a full engineering design and obtain all necessary easements and agreements from the adjacent property owners to allow for the construction of a multi-use trail from Spring Place to Cedar Street, which has been identified as the main pedestrian desire line to the site.

Streetscape and Public Realm

In accordance 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 and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

All signage, lighting, and other streetscape elements will need to be permitted through DDOT's public space permitting process. DDOT expects trees to be planted within the site and that any tree larger than 55 inches in circumference will be identified and appropriately permitted for any necessary removal.

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 the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs

to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

According to the TIS, the Applicant proposes the following TDM measures:

- Identify a Resident Transportation Coordinator for the site,
- Install a minimum of 40 long-term secure bicycle parking with the site,
- Provide a one-time Capital Bike share annual membership to initial tenants,
- Provide a one-time Car share membership to initial tenants,
- Provide a one-time \$50.00 transit fare card to initial tenants,
- Create a loading facility management to schedule move-in and move-outs, and
- Perform a monitoring study of their trip generation within two years after the issuance of Use and Occupancy permits.

In order to assure the long-term success of the project, DDOT recommends that the above measures be implemented and available to all new tenants rather than only initial tenants. Additionally, the Applicant should provide a minimum of 75 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces between the two buildings, and a minimum of 3 inverted U-style bicycle racks at each main building entrance.

Performance Monitoring & Measuring

DDOT recognizes the continuing impact that developments can have on the transportation network and local community, and therefore requires the Applicant to compose a performance monitoring plan. This plan should consist of the establishment of benchmark goals with regard to TDM measures, along with a commitment to increase TDM efforts should the Applicant fail to reach these goals.

The Applicant has proposed to perform a monitoring study within two years after the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy to determine the effectiveness of their TDM measures. DDOT recommends that the Applicant complete a trip generation study after the site is 80-90% occupied. If trip generation goals are not achieved, DDOT expects the Applicant to work with DDOT to modify their TDM plan until the goal is reached.

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