

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia, Board of Zoning Adjustment

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

DATE: March 5, 2013

SUBJECT: BZA Case #18516, 1105 1st Street, NE

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APPLICATION

FP Peisēus 53-713 LLC (the "Applicant"), pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3104.1 and 3103.2, is seeking a special exception from the roof structure requirements under section 770.6(b); a variance from the loading requirements under subsection 2201.1; and a variance from the court requirements under section 776, for a mixed use project with office, retail and residential in the C-3-C District at premises 1005 1st Street, N.E. (Square 713, Lot 53).

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of a project on the District's transportation network. This memorandum relates only to the variance request from loading requirements, and does not address the other variance or special exception. Per current zoning regulations, the proposed development program is required to have eight loading berths (three berths for 55' trucks and five berths for 30' trucks) and 4 cargo/delivery service areas. The Applicant is requesting relief from loading by proposing only two (2) 30' loading berths, while meeting all other loading requirements. The Applicant's request for relief is based on the amount of space needed to accommodate the zoning-required loading as well as the overcapacity of loading bays that would result by adhering to the zoning requirements. Based on a multi-administration review, DDOT has no objection to the requested loading variance. The below-grade loading arrangement is entirely on-site and requires no back-up maneuvers across public space.

DDOT has several concerns with the Applicant's intended use of public space to support the proposed project that will be addressed during the public space permitting process, but could affect the design of the project as currently proposed:

- Utility vaults are currently proposed in the 1st Street public space, and DDOT would prefer these vaults be located along the L Street frontage in private space.

- The Applicant has proposed two-way access control for passenger vehicles at the 1st Street driveway. Due to the location of this driveway and the potential for multi-modal conflicts, DDOT will require further analysis before a determination can be made about vehicular access.

The Applicant is strongly encouraged to coordinate with DDOT prior to applying for public space permits.

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 that impacts from new developments are manageable within, and take advantage of, the District's multimodal transportation network.

Methodology

As part of the transportation impact assessment, DDOT requests that applicants evaluate the impacts to the pedestrian, transit, and roadway networks resulting from the development. Accordingly, an applicant is expected to show the existing conditions for each transportation mode affected, the proposed impact on the respective network and any proposed mitigations, along with the effects of the mitigations on *other* travel modes. A Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) should be performed according to DDOT direction. The evaluation should consider guidance from relevant documents including guidance on the public realm, the pedestrian system, the bicycle system, as well as neighborhood based studies. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR. An evaluation of the basic elements and assumptions of the Applicant's CTR follows.

Site Access

The following figure shows proposed site access for delivery trucks only, but passenger vehicles and bicyclists are proposed to utilize the same garage driveways.



Figure 1: Proposed Site Layout and Access.

As shown in Figure 1, the Applicant is proposing two site access points. Passenger vehicles are proposed to have full access control and ingress/egress privileges at both driveway locations. In addition, the Applicant is proposing using these same driveways for truck and delivery access, with the following conditions:

- All truck/delivery vehicles in excess of 20 feet in length enter from 1st Street and exits the site at L Street; and
- 55-foot delivery trucks can only turn left into the site and exit left out from the site.

In addition, long-term bike parking is located on the P1 garage level and is accessed via the same driveway entrances as the passenger vehicles. Pedestrian access to the retail office and residential components of the site is via ground floor doorways that open up to the 1st Street and L Street sidewalks.

The Applicant's proposed driveway location along 1st Street, NE is at the southern boundary of the property. This location places the proposed driveway adjacent to an existing driveway for the property located immediately to the south. This proposed location is not in compliance with DDOT's driveway standards per the District's *Design and Engineering Manual*¹ (DEM). The Applicant is intending to install a pedestrian refuge between the proposed driveway and that of the adjacent parcel. DDOT notes that, for this particular site, in order to have a single continuous retail frontage along 1st Street, a driveway location at one end of the site is ideal. A driveway location on the Applicant's site that is compliant with DDOT's driveway standards, per the DEM, would result in a non-continuous retail frontage or an underutilized street façade, that would break up the natural continuous pedestrian activity along 1st Street. Due to these constraints and broader goals for the NoMa area, DDOT may provide relief from

¹ The DEM requires driveways along adjacent properties to be located a minimum of 32 feet apart.

the DEM standards, however the driveway standards are primarily intended to address safety for all users, and this driveway location may require changes to site access from what is currently proposed by the Applicant. In particular, the Applicant's intended use of the 1st Street driveway for both ingress and egress of passenger vehicles may cause conflicts with multi-modal traffic on 1st Street. This issue is further addressed in the *Parking* section of this report. The Applicant is encouraged to coordinate with DDOT early in the public space permitting process in order to mitigate safety concerns related to the proposed relief from the DEM's driveway standards.

Roadway Capacity and Operations

The Applicant did not conduct a capacity analysis for the project because the proposed development program is by-right. DDOT acknowledges that the development program is allowed under the existing zoning and land use regulations, however, the proposed project is anticipated to have a significant impact on the roadway network and that changes to signal timing, travel lane designations, or intersection geometry may be required to accommodate the increased demand. Accordingly, DDOT may ask the Applicant to conduct a roadway capacity analysis for the surrounding area as part of their Public Space permits and/or DDOT's review of the Environmental Impact Statement Form.

Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

The District of Columbia is committed to enhancing the walk-ability and bike-ability of the city by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian and bike infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT generally expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including pedestrian and bicycle trips.

The Applicant is proposing 113 bike parking spaces inside the below-grade parking structure. In addition, the Applicant is proposing to include public bike parking spaces, though no discrete number is proffered. Given the presence of ground floor retail, as well existing and planned bike infrastructure abutting the site, substantial short-term parking needs are expected. The Applicant is encouraged to coordinate with DDOT during the Public Space Permitting process to accommodate the short-term bike parking needs related to the retail component of the site.

The site also sits at a key location for the District's bike infrastructure. The off-road segment of the Metropolitan Branch Trail currently terminates at L Street. 1st Street is currently beginning construction with a two-way protected bicycle lane (or cycletrack) on the east side of the street that will link trail users to NoMa, Union Station, and beyond. Maintaining a high-quality pedestrian and bicycle design to allow through traffic is an important consideration in the design of and access to public space surrounding the site.

Loading and Curbside Management

Per current zoning regulations, the proposed development program is required to have 8 loading berths (3 for 55' trucks and 5 for 30' trucks) and 4 cargo/delivery service areas. The Applicant is requesting relief from the loading by proposing three (3) 55' loading berths and two (2) 30' loading berths and four (4) cargo/delivery service areas. The Applicant's request for relief is based largely on both the amount of space needed to accommodate the zoning-required loading as well as the overcapacity of loading that would result, based on adhering to the zoning requirements. Based on a multi-administration review, DDOT has no objection to the requested loading variance. DDOT agrees with the Applicant's plan for loading to occur on-site in a below-grade facility, requiring no back-up maneuvers across public space.

Proposed Loading Routes

The Applicant is intending that all delivery trucks in excess of 30 feet enter the site from 1st Street and exit onto L Street. Further, 55' truck would only enter the site from *southbound* 1st Street and exit the site onto *westbound* L Street in order to accommodate these vehicles' large turning maneuvers. As shown in the Applicant's turn template, 55' trucks exiting the site onto L Street sweep a very wide path that may require the need for parking restrictions during loading times in order to accommodate the turning maneuvers. The Applicant is encouraged to coordinate with DDOT on issues related to accommodating egress of 55' trucks from the site. Finally, based on the available curb-to-curb roadway width typically found in the Site's vicinity, the Applicant will be required to show, during the public space permitting process, how 55' trucks execute turning maneuvers at all intersections between the site and the nearest DDOT-designated truck routes.

Proposed Loading Management Plan

The Applicant has estimated approximately 36 deliveries per day to the site, six of which will be on 55' trucks. The Applicant has estimated that most of the 55' delivery trucks will be during the early morning hours and has proposed that an on-site loading manager schedule these trucks, such that they can be accommodated in the three on-site loading bays. In addition, the Applicant has proposed the following elements of a loading management plan:

- Designation of a loading dock manager to coordinate with vendors and tenants to schedule deliveries.
- All tenants will be required to schedule deliveries that utilize the loading dock – defined here as any loading operation conducted using a truck 20' in length or larger. If a grocery store is included as the anchor retail tenant, the grocery store will designate their own loading manager to coordinate with the building's dock manager.
- The dock manager will schedule deliveries such that the dock's capacity is not exceeded. In the event that an unscheduled delivery vehicle arrives while the dock is full, that driver will be directed to return at a later time when a berth will be available so as to not impede the drive aisle that passes in front of the loading dock.
- The dock manager will monitor inbound and outbound truck maneuvers and will ensure that trucks accessing the loading dock do not block vehicular traffic from using the garage driveways except during those times when a truck is actively entering or exiting a loading berth.
- The loading dock will be open seven days a week. The potential overlap of service vehicle traffic with parking garage traffic will be monitored during peak periods and management measures will be taken if necessary to reduce conflicts between truck and vehicular movements.
- Trucks using the loading dock will not be allowed to idle and must follow all District guidelines for heavy vehicle operation including but not limited to DCMR 20 – Chapter 9, Section 900 (Engine Idling), the regulations set forth in DDOT's Freight Management and Commercial Vehicle Operations document, and the primary access routes listed in the DDOT Truck and Bus Route System.
- The dock manager will be responsible for disseminating suggested truck routing maps to the building's tenants and to drivers from delivery services that frequently utilize the Storey Park loading dock. The dock manager will also distribute flyers materials as DDOT's Freight Management and Commercial Vehicle Operations document to drivers as needed to encourage compliance with idling laws. The dock manager will post these documents in a prominent location within the service area.

DDOT is in agreement with both the intentions and the details of the above loading plan.

Passenger Vehicle 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 high quality transit, frequency of transit service, and proximity to transit.

The Applicant is proposing 569 parking spaces in a below grade garage, accessible from 1st Street and L Street. Based on parking ratios typical of urban areas, the overall amount parking may appear reasonable. However, the peak parking demand for the office component (weekday) and the peak demand for the retail/grocery component (weekend) do not overlap, indicating a strong potential for shared parking. Accordingly, DDOT believes the Applicant is likely over-parked. Given the sensitive nature of the surrounding roadway network's capacity, if visitors are induced to drive, due to an ample parking supply, then the roadway transportation network may become compromised. DDOT encourages the Applicant to consider aggressive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that take advantage of the existing multimodal travel options in place in order to minimize potential impacts of this level of parking provision.

As discussed previously, the Applicant is proposing two-way passenger vehicle access to the below-grade parking garage from 1st Street and from L Street. While two egress points would aid in the faster dispersion of traffic, there are substantial drawbacks toward allowing passenger vehicle egress on 1st Street. Both pedestrian and bike traffic across the driveway entrance is expected to be very heavy – particularly in the evening commuting period that coincides with the exiting of the proposed office tenants. The site itself is expected to generate 506 AM peak hour pedestrians and 842 PM peak hour pedestrians². In addition, the site is adjacent to a two-way cycle track, currently under construction, that crosses the proposed driveway location along 1st Street. This increase in pedestrian and bike exposure is in addition to the large number of pedestrians and bicyclists that currently utilize 1st Street. Further, DDOT expects that 1st Street will accommodate substantially more pedestrian and bike traffic than L Street (particularly in the vicinity of the driveways). Accordingly, in the interest of reducing pedestrian-vehicle and bike-vehicle conflicts, DDOT will require additional analysis to understand operational issues and may require that the 1st Street driveway be ingress-only for both trucks *and* passenger vehicles, while the L Street driveway is two-way for passenger vehicles and egress-only for delivery trucks.

Streetscape and the 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. As part of this process, 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 circulating around it. The DDOT Public Realm Design Manual will serve as the main public realm reference for the Applicant, as well as the NoMa Streetscape Design Standards.

² The AM/PM peak hour numbers represent the predicted site generated trips for walker, bicyclists, and pedestrians walking to transit stops, as shown in Table 3 of the Applicant's February 25, 2013 *Traffic Statement*.

The Applicant is proposing the installation of utility vaults in the 1st Street sidewalk area. DDOT generally requires that utility vaults are installed in private space whenever possible. This need is greatest when the public space is expected to have a high level of pedestrian activity in conjunction with other competing needs – street furniture, tree pits, café space, bike racks, wayfinding signage, etc. In prior planning efforts, 1st Street NE has been viewed as NoMa’s “main street” and the focus of retail and pedestrian activity. Installation of the utility vaults in *private* space would help provide for an attractive pedestrian-friendly environment along the 1st Street frontage. DDOT encourages the Applicant to continue to work with the agency to determine the appropriate location and design of vaults to mitigate potential impacts.

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