

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 
Associate Director

DATE: January 7, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case No.18688 - 1348-1356 Florida Avenue, NE

APPLICATION

Lock 7 Development LLC (the "Applicant"), pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3103.2, seeks a variance from the height requirements under section 770, a variance from the floor area ratio requirements under section 771, and a variance from the off-street parking requirements under subsection 2101.1, to allow a mixed-use residential and ground floor retail development in the C-2-A District at premises 1348-1356 Florida Avenue, N.E. (Square 4068, Lots 116, 144, 145, 146, and 147). The proposed mixed-use development will be comprised of approximately 49 residential units, 1,200 square feet of ground floor retail, and 8 off-street parking spaces in lieu of the 25 required spaces for the residential component of the development program.

SUMMARY

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District's transportation network. This memorandum addresses the variance from off-street parking requirements. Based on a multi-administration review, DDOT finds:

- A robust network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development;
- The Applicant is proposing a level of long-term bicycle parking above the level required by District law;
- During DDOT's public space permitting process, the Applicant will be required to provide at least 3 short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- The demand for private vehicle ownership and vehicle parking is expected to be minimal;
- A robust on-street parking inventory was performed for the weekday period but not the weekend period. On-street parking in the vicinity appears sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking on weekdays. On-street parking may be sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking during the weekend overnight period;

- The Applicant is proposing a sufficient Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to encourage the use of non-auto transportation modes; and
- The Applicant is proposing a partial Residential Permit Parking (RPP) restriction, which is not an enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

Accordingly, DDOT has no objection to the variance request with the condition that the Applicant implement their proposed TDM plan.

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 and ultimately, discourage single occupancy vehicle trips.

As part of the transportation impact assessment, DDOT requests that Applicants evaluate the impacts to the pedestrian, transit, and roadway system resulting from the proposed action. 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.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Automobile ownership is expected to be minimal, while transit, walking, and bicycling are expected to be the primary modes of transportation for this development. The Applicant's field observations and inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facilities (i.e., sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes) were not performed according to DDOT direction. The Applicant's pedestrian facility study area was limited to the facilities immediately adjacent to the subject site. While these facilities were found to be up to current standards, the adequacy of pedestrian connections to transit stops/stations is unknown. However, the neighborhood context suggests that pedestrian connections are in place. The Applicant may be required to perform further field observations during the public space permitting process to determine if any pedestrian improvements are necessary.

The site is in close proximity to several bicycle lanes and is located about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from three existing Capital Bikeshare stations. 14th Street and 15th Street contain bike lanes in both the north and south directions, while nearby K Street and I Street provide low-volume east-west connections. The Applicant proposes at least 30 bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle storage room, which exceeds the current District regulations¹ requiring one bicycle space for every three residential units. Additionally, at least 3 short-term bicycle parking spaces should be provided in the public space at the retail and residential entrances. The final design of the bicycle racks, including amount and location, will be addressed in the public space permitting process

Transit Services

DDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority have partnered to provide extensive

¹ Section 8 of the Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007, effective February 2, 2008 (D.C. Law 17-103; D.C. Official Code § 50-1641.07) (2012 Supp.) and Mayor's Order 2011-149, dated September 6, 2011.

public transit service in the District. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes with minimal infrastructure investment.

The Applicant evaluated the adequacy of the bus service along the routes that serve the subject area. The site is currently served by 9 bus routes within close walking distance; headways for each of the routes range from 6 to about 20 minutes on weekdays. The nearest Metrobus stop is located a block to the west of the site on Florida Avenue, with numerous additional bus stops within 3-4 blocks from the site. The frequency of each of these routes provides adequate bus service to the site and the site is located near the H Street streetcar line.

DDOT finds that the proposed development will be served adequately with the existing bus routes and future streetcar line, which will facilitate a car-lite lifestyle.

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, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, composition of nearby land-uses, and the demographic composition of the potential residents/patrons.

Zoning requires 25 parking spaces for the residential component and no parking spaces for the retail component. In order to address the parking supply for the proposed development, and to document the on-street parking inventory/occupancy in the local area, the Applicant conducted a parking survey, which included an inventory of available on-street parking spaces and a parking occupancy count.

The Applicant's analysis of weekday on-street parking included the following blocks in the study area as seen in Figure 1: Block Face Map. Based on the Applicant's report, there are a total of 125 parking spaces in the study area during the weekday period, of which 47 are subject to Residential Permit

Parking (RPP) restrictions and the remaining 78 are unrestricted spaces as seen in Figure 2.

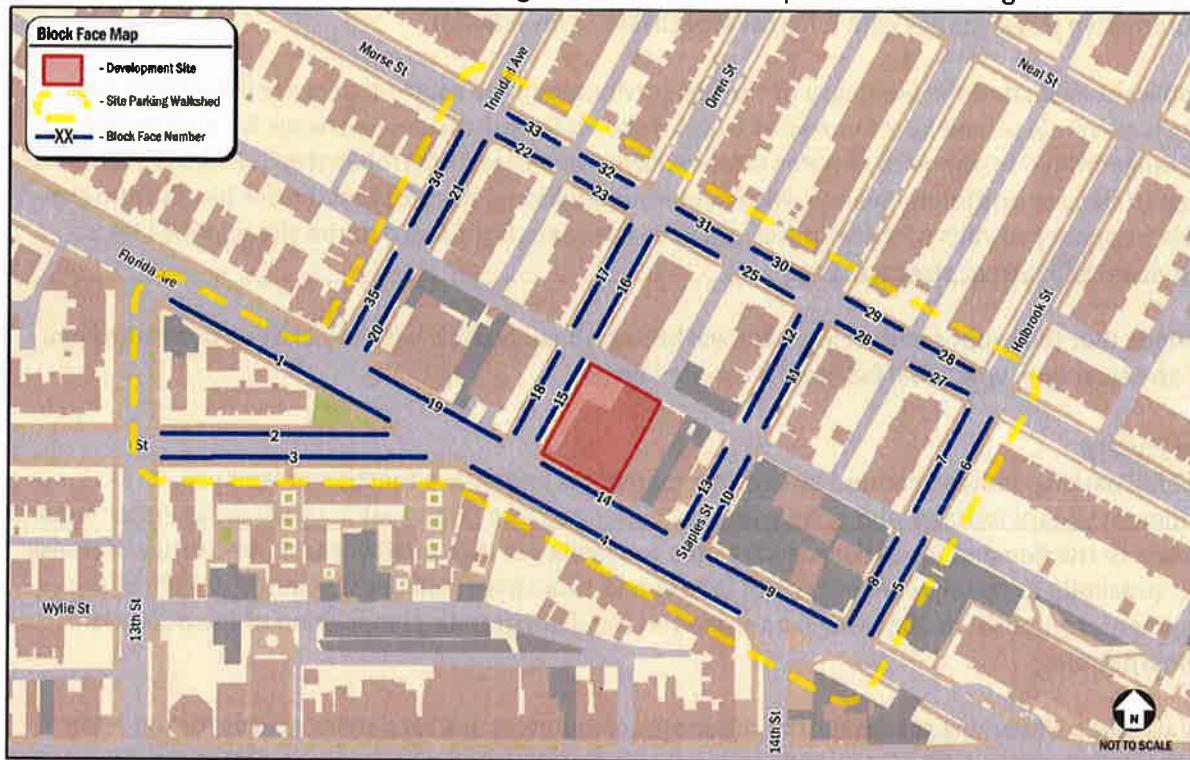


Figure 1 On-Street Block Face Map (Gorove/Slade)

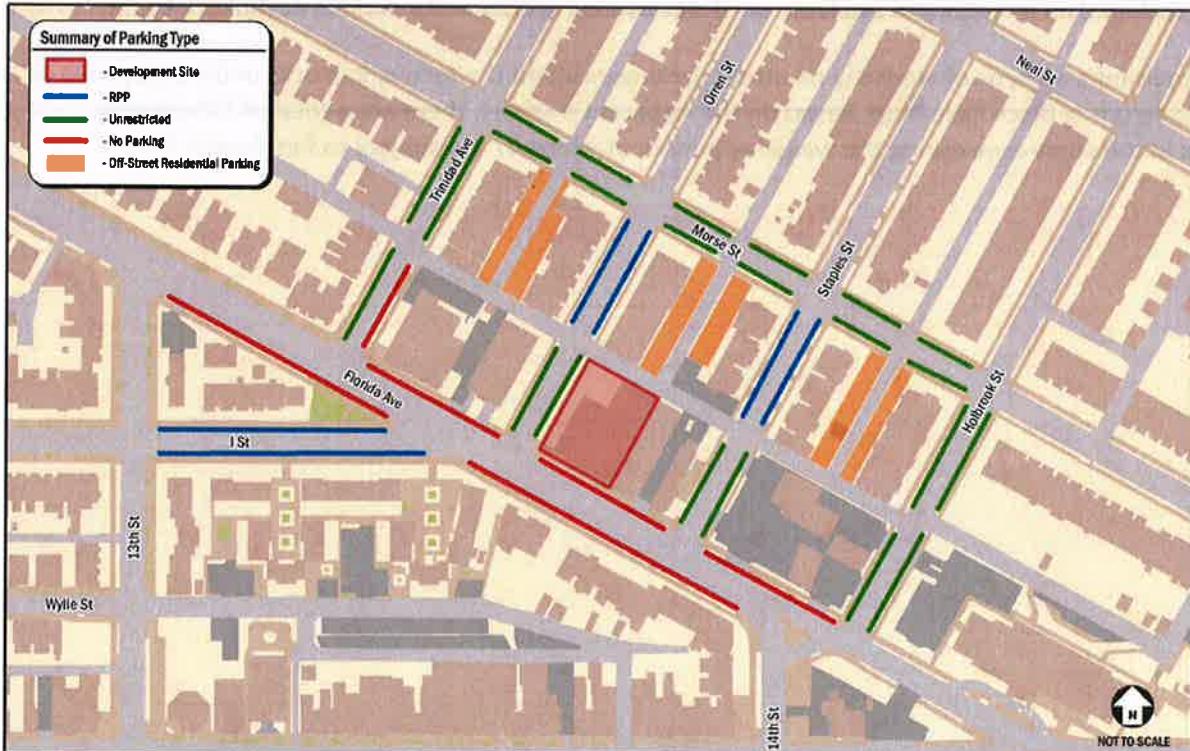


Figure 2 Summary of Parking Type (Source: Gorove/Slade)

The inventory of available on-street parking facilities was conducted on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 from 8:00am to 8:00pm. A survey conducted by the Applicant resulted in the utilization rates and peak hour inventory as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Hourly Utilization Percentages

	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM
Occupancy	73	69	76	80	75	81	76	70	68	66	81	89
Total Spaces	127	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
Utilization	57%	55%	61%	64%	60%	65%	61%	56%	54%	53%	65%	71%

Table 2: Hourly Utilization Percentages, Adjacent Streets

Space Type	Spaces Available		Peak Period	
	Weekday Peak (7-8 PM)		Occupancy	Utilization
RPP	47		45	96%
Unrestricted	78		44	56%
All On-Street Spaces	125		89	71%

Based on the survey results, as presented in Table 1, it can be observed that the parking space supply in the vicinity is at approximately 53 to 71 percent of its capacity during the weekday period. The peak hour, between 7:00pm and 8:00pm, features high usage of RPP parking spaces, but availability remains among the unrestricted spaces. DDOT agrees that on-street parking in the vicinity appears sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking on weekdays.

As previously noted, the Applicant submitted a CTR that was not scoped according to DDOT direction. Given the subject site's proximity to the H Street corridor with its focus on weekend and nightlife activity, DDOT would have required weekend overnight counts. While a robust parking inventory for the weekend overnight period was not performed, the level of on-street parking is likely sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking. Additionally, the proposed parking provision is generally consistent with other new developments in walkable, transit-rich areas. These types of developments take advantage of the District's multimodal transportation options and typically generate few vehicle trips and low demand for vehicle parking.

Transportation Demand Management

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires applicants to produce a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. 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 public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

The Applicant proposes utilizing the following TDM strategies:

- Designate a Transportation Management Coordinator (TMC) to provide transportation information to residents. The TMC will prepare a package of information for residents identifying the available alternative modes of transportation and other supportive programs.
- Provide a transportation information screen in the lobby that would show real time arrival / availability for nearby trains, buses, carshare, and bikeshare.

- Offer the first occupant of each residential unit with a \$100 car sharing membership, a \$150 Capital Bikeshare Membership, or a \$200 SmartTrip card.
- Include links to CommuterConnections.org and goDCgo.com on the property management website.
- Provide at least 30 secure bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle storage room.

The Applicant also proposes a partial RPP restriction that would restrict 17 units from applying for RPP. It is highly unlikely that a partial restriction is enforceable by relevant District agencies, and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

DDOT agrees that the Applicant's other proposed TDM measures are sufficiently robust to encourage the use on non-auto transportation modes.

Loading and Curbside Management

The Applicant has proposed to utilize the existing 10-foot alley to the west of the site for the parking garage access. This proposal is consistent with DDOT's approach to site access.

Zoning does not require on-site loading facilities for either the residential or retail portions of the proposed development. Emergency No Parking permits from DDOT are available if necessary to facilitate loading needs associated with the proposed development.

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 and 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 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 Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space.

DDOT is currently undertaking the Florida Avenue Multimodal Study to determine potential improvements to the Florida Avenue corridor from New York Avenue to H Street/Benning Road. The study will evaluate safety, streetscape, and operational enhancements to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists while ensuring all users have safe access within and through the corridor. The changes proposed in the study may impact the Applicant's public space design. During the public space permitting process, the Applicant's public space plans will be evaluated for consistency with DDOT standards and the recommendations from the study.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has no objection to the variance requests with the condition that the Applicant implement their proposed TDM plan.

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