

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 *for*
Associate Director

DATE: June 17, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18785 - 1326 Florida Avenue, NE

APPLICATION

Ditto Residential LLC (the "Applicant"), pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3103.2, seeks a variance from the off-street parking requirements under subsection 2101.1, to allow the construction of a new four story plus cellar 45 unit residential building in the C-2-A District at premises 1326 Florida Avenue, N.E. (Square 4068, Lot 835). The Applicant proposes 16 parking spaces in lieu of the 23 that are required.

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. 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 demand for private vehicle ownership and vehicle parking is expected to be minimal;
- The Applicant is proposing a level of bicycle parking that slightly exceeds the level required by District law. During DDOT's public space permitting process, the Applicant will be required to provide at least 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- The site is not currently in the District's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) system;
- A robust on-street parking inventory was performed for the weekday and weekend peak periods. On-street parking in the vicinity appears sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking on weekdays and weekends; and
- The Applicant's proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan is a good basis for promoting non-auto travel, but needs to be strengthened to further minimize the demand for parking.

DDOT has no objection to the requested variance for parking with the following conditions:

- Limit non-auto incentives to one-year Capital Bikeshare or carshare memberships to all new tenants for a period of 5 years; and

- Provide a transportation information screen in the lobby that would show real time arrival / availability for nearby trains, buses, carshare, and bikeshare;

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.

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 Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR that is consistent with the scale of the action.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Automobile ownership is expected to be minimal, while transit, walking, and bicycling are expected to be the predominant modes of transportation for this development. Based on the Applicant's field observations and inventory of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities (i.e., sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes), the study area intersections and roadway network provide excellent pedestrian and cycling connections to nearby land uses and transit facilities. The Applicant's analysis did not specify if any of the pedestrian facilities immediately adjacent to the site are substandard. The Applicant will be expected to bring all adjacent pedestrian facilities up to current standards.

North-south bicycle lanes are provided on 14th Street and 15th, while nearby G Street and I Street provide low-volume east-west connections. The site is also nearby north-south bicycle lanes on 4th Street and 5th Street and the Metropolitan Branch Trail. The site is within ¼ miles of three Capital Bikeshare stations, with the closest location about 800 feet away at the northeast corner of 12th Street and H Street NE.

The Applicant is proposing at least 18 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces on-site, which meets the current District regulations¹ requiring one bicycle space for every three residential units. The Applicant is expected to provide at least 4-short term bicycle parking spaces in the public space. The exact location of short-term bicycle parking spaces will be determined during the public space permitting process.

Transit Services

DDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority have partnered to provide extensive 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 during peak hours on weekdays. The closest Metrobus stop is located adjacent to the site at the intersection of Florida Ave and Trinidad Avenue, with numerous

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.

additional bus stops within 3-4 blocks from the site. The frequency of each of these routes provides excellent bus service to the site. Additionally, the site is located approximately 500 feet from an H Street streetcar line stop.

DDOT finds that the proposed development will be well served by transit, thus facilitating transit use and minimizing demand for vehicle parking.

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.

The Applicant proposes to provide 16 vehicle parking spaces in lieu of the 23 required spaces. 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.

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. The parking study included an inventory of available on-street parking spaces and a parking occupancy count. The site is not currently in the District's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) system;

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.

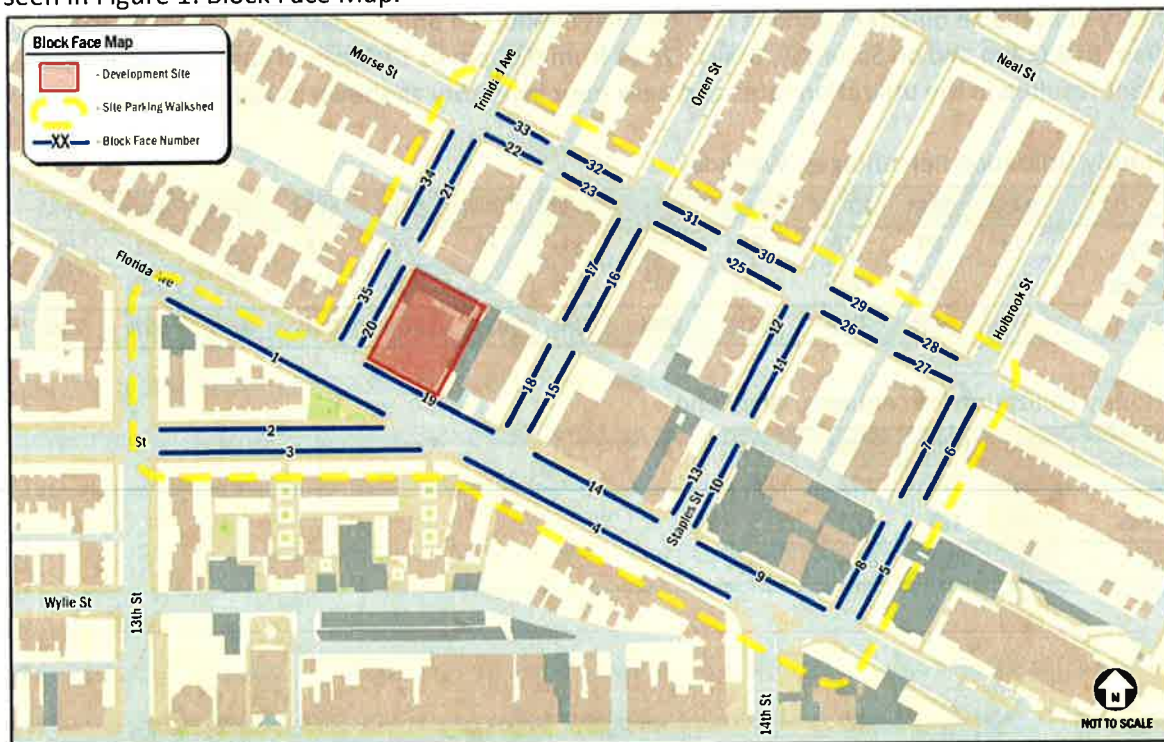


Figure 1 On-Street Block Face Map (Grove/Slade)

Based on the Applicant's report, there are a total of 127 parking spaces in the study area during the weekday period, of which 47 are subject to Residential Permit Parking (RPP) restrictions and the remaining 80 are unrestricted spaces as seen in Figure 2.

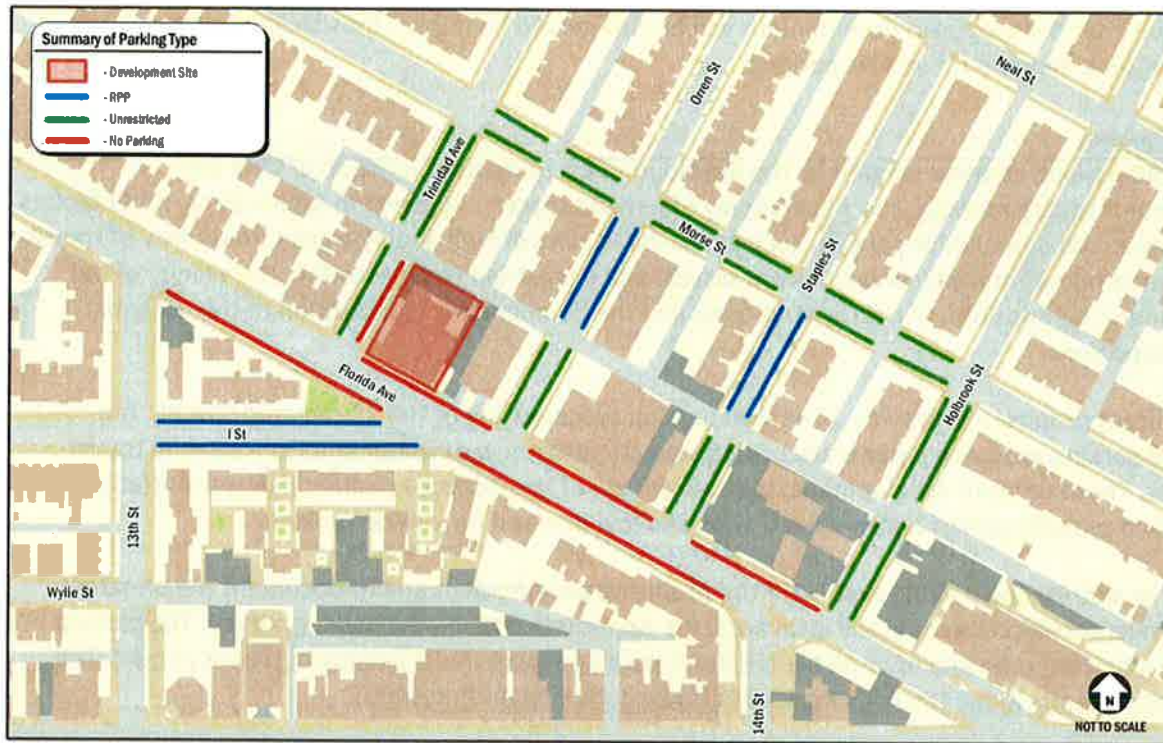


Figure 2 Summary of Parking Type (Source: Gorove/Slade)

The inventory of available on-street parking facilities was conducted on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 from 8:00am to 8:00pm and on Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 9:00pm to 12:00am. A survey conducted by the Applicant resulted in the utilization rates and peak hour inventory as shown in Tables 1 - 3.

Table 1: Hourly Utilization Percentages, Weekday

	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, Weekend

	9PM	10PM	11PM	12AM
Occupancy	110	106	107	99
Total Spaces	125	125	125	125
Utilization	88%	85%	86%	79%

Table 3: Peak Hour Inventory and Occupancy Summary

Space Type	Spaces Available	Weekday Peak Period (7-8 PM)		Weekend Peak Period (9-10 PM)	
		Occupancy	Utilization	Occupancy	Utilization
RPP	47	45	96%	46	98%
Unrestricted	78	44	56%	64	82%
All On-Street Spaces	125	89	71%	110	88%

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. Table 2 indicates that the parking space supply in the vicinity is at approximately 79 to 88 percent of its capacity during the weekend period.

The weekday and weekend peak hours feature very high usage of RPP parking spaces, but availability remains among the unrestricted spaces. Approximately 34 and 14 unrestricted parking spaces are available during the weekday and weekend periods, respectively. Accordingly, the level of on-street parking is likely sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking from the site.

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 on-site printed transportation information.
- Develop a marketing program that provides information about transportation alternatives and include links to CommuterConnections.org and goDCgo.com on the property management website.
- Offer the first lessee of each residential unit with a \$50 SmartTrip card, Capital Bikeshare membership, or carsharing membership.
- Provide at least 18 secure bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle storage room.

Although DDOT finds the Applicant's TDM measures are a good basis that would generally encourage use of alternative modes of transportation and reduce the demand for vehicle parking, the following items need to be addressed to strengthen the proposed program:

- Limit non-auto incentives to one-year Capital Bikeshare or carshare memberships to all new tenants for a period of 5 years. Year-long memberships to alternative transportation programs like bikesharing and carsharing are more effective than a one-time transit incentive at encouraging long-term non-auto transportation behavior.
- Provide a transportation information screen in the lobby that would show real time arrival / availability for nearby trains, buses, carshare, and bikeshare.

Loading and Curbside Management

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

Zoning does not require that the proposed project provide on-site loading facilities. The Applicant indicates that residents will be encouraged to direct residents to load from the alley or along Trinidad Avenue. DDOT does not support loading from the alley, as it may block other vehicles from using the alley. Emergency No Parking permits from DDOT are available to reserve curbside loading space along Trinidad Avenue to accommodate the site's loading needs, if necessary.

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.

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