


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: October 29, 2014

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 18847** – 3619 Georgia Avenue NW

APPLICATION

The Warrenton Group (the “Applicant”) requests a parking variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements to allow the construction of a new six-story plus cellar mixed use building with 27 residential units and retail space in the C-3-A/GA District at premises 3619 Georgia Avenue NW (Square 3032, Lot 803) at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Princeton Place (the “Site”).

RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the impact of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- A robust network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development;
- While the on-street parking utilization study does show limited nearby parking availability, Site-generated vehicular trips will not be able to use these spaces for long-term parking;
- One nearby building has parking availability;
- Residents are likely to heavily utilize non-automobile modes of travel;
- The Applicant proposes a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to further promote the use of non-auto travel options;
- Loading for the building will be conducted on-street due to no available alley access;

The Site’s access to excellent bus and rail transit, proximity to Capital Bikeshare stations, quality of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the subject area, along with the commitment to a strong TDM program will lead to low levels of auto ownership and use. As such, DDOT supports the requested relief with the following additional or modified TDM conditions:

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- Install at least six short-term bicycle parking spaces in public space.
- Extension of the Capital Bikeshare and carsharing membership amenity to at least 10 years. If the lease duration is shorter than one year, the memberships in the bikeshare and car share program may be reduced to match the duration of the lease.
- Provision for preloaded \$10 SmarTrip cards for all new building residents who do not have them within the same timeframe as the membership amenity is offered.
- Provision of at least five bicycle helmets for distribution to new residents.
- Provision of a bicycle repair facility (a basic fix-it station with tools and air pump securely attached to a stand that includes all the tools necessary to perform basic repairs and maintenance, from changing a flat to adjusting brakes and derailleurs) within or adjacent to the long-term bicycle storage area.
- RPP eligibility restricted within the condominium association documents in addition to the provisions outlined.
- Specification on who the TDM Leader will be, what their overall role will include, and how it will be conducted, including serving as a liaison for residents seeking transportation and/or parking options at or near the building.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the proposed development and action, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- A loading management plan, as part of the public space permitting process. DDOT expects all loading facilities to meet DDOT standards, which includes no back-in movements across public space;
- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards. Careful attention should be paid to pedestrian and bicycle connections along the Site's perimeter and adjacent infrastructure;
- The projections and doors opening to public space must be removed;
- All utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property;
- Greater specificity as to the design of the long-term bicycle parking;
- A curbside management plan, including the assignment of the loading zone and metered spaces, if required; and
- A streetcar is currently planned for this corridor, which could impact loading and other development elements, which should be coordinated as needed.

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.

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. An outline of this project's impacts follows below.

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 noted that most crosswalks and curb ramps in the immediate vicinity meet DDOT standards, and will meet DDOT requirements for the pedestrian space adjacent to their property. No deficient facilities were identified for which mitigation is necessary. The sidewalk width is generally adequate, however some portions do fall below DDOT guidelines due to existing tree boxes, which reduce the pedestrian passage width. All adjacent sidewalks will be expected to be reconstructed to meet current standards, and the Great Streets Middle Georgia Avenue streetscape standards, which include permeable pavers within the planting strip.

Bicycle facilities also appear adequate for the development. The Applicant is proposing nine long-term bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle room, which meets the current District regulations requiring one bicycle space for every three residential units. Further, a Capital Bikeshare facility exists near the Site at Georgia Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue, which will serve some bicycling needs.

Transit Facilities

DDOT and Washington Metropolitan Area 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 development is located less than ¼ mile from the Georgia Ave./Petworth Metro station, and several major bus routes also operate near the Site. Mode splits provided by the traffic consultant project that over 50% of residents will utilize transit. The transit network available to this Site support a mode share at this level, and will more than adequately service the building's residents.

Vehicle Parking

Per current zoning regulations, the proposed building requires 14 parking spaces for the 27 residential units and none for the 2,911 sf of retail proposed. The development proposal does not include any vehicle parking spaces and is intended to attract tenants that are unlikely to own cars. Specifically, the lease terms and other TDM measures in place will appeal to tenants who desire to live in neighborhoods where automobile ownership is not necessary and daily needs can be met with walking, bicycling, and transit.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects seven auto-based trips originating in the AM or PM peak hour, illustrating the relatively low amount of parking turnover anticipated on a day-to-day basis. The Applicant completed an extensive parking utilization study as part of their CTR and found some nearby street parking, as well as off-street parking, available. Specifically, 42 vacant spots were found at 9pm within the parking study area (See Figure 1 showing the parking study area). The Applicant is

proposing to restrict residents from the District's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) system, and all curbside parking in the vicinity is either metered or signed as RPP parking and is therefore unsuitable for long-term parking by the proposed project's future residents. While it is unlikely that tenants would own vehicles, the only remaining parking option within the parking study area is a nearby private parking garage, within the Park Place at Petworth building. The Applicant's analysis indicated that 49 full-time parking spaces are available in this facility. Another building located slightly further north also provides some additional spaces, but is not within the parking study area.



Figure 1. 3619 Georgia Ave. NW Parking Study Area

Given the RPP restrictions and limited off-street parking, the action's impact on the District's road network is expected to be insignificant. The project is expected to generate minimal vehicle trips from taxis, other ridesharing services, and carsharing. Thus, DDOT supports the lack of parking provision in this area due to the close proximity to transit, provided bicycle storage, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips. Further, the Applicant has proposed robust TDM measures, which will further alleviate parking needs.

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through the alley network.

Here, however, there is no alley access and the building footprint would not allow onsite loading without back-in maneuvers. Thus, access to the building for loading and unloading, deliveries, and trash pickup is an important consideration, and will be an important part of the public space permitting process. A loading management plan will be required.

Trash and loading service is proposed to occur adjacent to the proposed gated trash/service area just south of the building along Georgia. DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading, which will be addressed as part of the public space permitting process for this property. A curbside management plan showing the signing planned at this loading area and around the building, as well as the loading management plan will be required. Further, the potential for future streetcar operations in the area could be a concern for loading operations and will need further coordination.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following elements amongst their TDM measures:

- Provision that residential leases or homeowner covenants prohibit tenants from obtaining a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) and associated ongoing monitoring accordingly;
- Offer an annual Capital Bikeshare and car share membership for the initial term of the lease for new residents for the first five years the building is open or offer an annual Capital Bikeshare and car share membership for initial condo residents;
- Installation of a TransitScreen in the lobby to help inform residents of local available transportation choices;
- Provide each initial tenant a welcome package and information that promotes non-auto transportation; and
- Provision of the property manager as the project's TDM Leader to advertise and build awareness of programs to residents).

These TDM measures, if implemented as planned, will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation. However, some additional elements are requested. An additional element proposed as part of the Applicant TDM plan is long-term bicycle parking spaces, but these are required, and are thus not considered a TDM amenity and should not be listed as such. Further, the Applicant is proposing a Residential Permit Parking (RPP) restriction, which is not a strictly enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome. Therefore, while DDOT is generally

supportive of the Applicant's proposed measures, additional elements were coordinated with the Applicant, the inclusion of which DDOT would applaud. Accordingly, DDOT requests the following TDM commitments to add additional elements:

- Install at least six short-term bicycle parking spaces for public access. The exact location of short-term bicycle parking spaces will be determined during the public space permitting process.
- Extension of the Capital Bikeshare and carsharing membership amenity to at least 10 years. If the lease duration is shorter than one year, the memberships in the bikeshare and car share program may be reduced to match the duration of the lease.
- Provision for preloaded \$10 SmarTrip cards for all new building residents within the same timeframe as the membership amenity is offered.
- Provision of at least five bicycle helmets for distribution to new residents.
- Provision of a bicycle repair facility (a basic fix-it station with tools and air pump securely attached to a stand that includes all the tools necessary to perform basic repairs and maintenance, from changing a flat to adjusting brakes and derailleurs) within or adjacent to the long-term bicycle storage area.
- RPP eligibility restricted within the condominium association documents in addition to the provisions outlined.
- Specification on who the TDM Leader will be, what their overall role will include, and how it will be conducted, including serving as a liaison for residents seeking transportation and/or parking options at or near the building.

Streetscape and 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 gutters, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the Site. At this property, two existing curb cuts will be removed. Additionally, a building projection and doors opening into the public space on the preliminary plan are not acceptable.

The Applicant must work closely with DDOT and the Office of Planning 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 circulate around it. In conjunction with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. As such, all public space shall be designed and constructed to DDOT standards.

DDOT's lack of objection or discussion of other public space elements as part of this zoning variance should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. Final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process.

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