

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lloyd Jordan
Chairperson
Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe 
Associate Director

DATE: November 25, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18866 – 1108 16th Street, NW

APPLICATION

Red A&W I, LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to 11 DCMR §3104.1 and 3103.2, is seeking a variance from the parking and court requirements and a special exception for an office addition to construct a mixed-use residential and commercial office building in the SP-2 District at premises 1108 16th Street, NW (Square 183, Lot 111). The proposed mixed-use development will be comprised of 17 residential units, 18,620 square feet of office space, and three parking spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

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 and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. This memorandum addresses the variance request to reduce the parking requirement. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- A robust network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure services the site;
- The proposed development will generate minimal new vehicle trips;
- Residents and office employees are likely to heavily utilize non-automobile modes of travel;
- There is an adequate supply of vehicle parking spaces in garages in the vicinity for residents and office employees who choose to own a vehicle or drive to the site; and
- An insufficient supply of long-term bicycle parking is proposed for the development to meet its proposed mode split.

Vehicle tip generation is expected to be low as a result of the site’s close proximity to three Metro stations, many Metrobus and Circulator routes, and Capital Bikeshare stations. As such, DDOT has no objection to the requested variance for parking relief with the following conditions:

- The Applicant should provide a minimum of 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces – six for residents and eight for office employees; and
- The Applicant should provide a minimum of two short-term bicycle parking racks (i.e., four spaces), the location of which will be addressed in the public space permitting process.

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.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Automobile use is expected to be minimal, while transit, walking, and bicycling are expected to be the predominant modes of transportation for this development. In general, the intersections and roadway network within a quarter-mile of the site provide adequate and functional facilities to promote connectivity between land uses and transit facilities.

The site is within close proximity of several cycle tracks, including 15th Street for north-south connectivity, L Street, which offers an exclusive eastbound L, and M Street, which offers an exclusive westbound lane west of Connecticut Avenue. The site is located within one-quarter of a mile of four existing Capitol Bikeshare stations for a total of 67 docking stations.

The Applicant is proposing six long-term bicycle parking spaces. It is unclear whether these bicycle parking spaces are intended solely for residents or also for employees of the proposed development. In order to meet the proposed non-auto mode split of 75% for residential units and 85% for office space, the Applicant should provide a minimum of 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces – six for residents and eight for office employees. These figures are based on one space for each three dwelling units and one space for each 2,500 square feet of office space.

In addition, the Applicant is proposing to include an undetermined number of short-term public bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant should provide a minimum of two short-term bicycle parking racks (i.e., four spaces), the location of which will be addressed in the public space permitting process. This figure is based on one rack (i.e., two spaces) for each 20 dwelling units and one rack for each 40,000 square feet of office space.

Transit Services

DDOT and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) 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 proximity of the subject site to three Metro stations and the adequacy of the bus service along the routes that serve the subject area. The proposed development will be located

two blocks from the Farragut North Metro Station and one-quarter mile from the Farragut West and McPherson Square Metro Stations. These three Metro stations provide access to four Metro lines (red, orange, blue, and silver).

The site is currently served by over 20 bus routes, including the Circulator Bus, and headways for each of the routes range from ten to 40 minutes. The nearest bus stop is located just south of the site at the intersection of 16th Street and L Street. The frequency of each of these routes provides adequate bus service to the site.

DDOT finds that the proposed development will be adequately served with the existing bus routes, as well as the three Metro stations and four Metro lines. These transit facilities in close proximity to the site will facilitate car-free living for residents and commuting by employees.

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, and the demographic composition of the potential residents/patrons.

Zoning requires 13 vehicle parking spaces, and the Applicant is seeking relief from 10 parking spaces. The three on-site parking spaces are intended for residential use.

In order to address the parking supply for the residential and retail portions of 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. No Residential Parking Permit (RPP) spaces were noted in the study area. Based on survey results, 70% of the unrestricted parking spaces were utilized during the morning peak period of 10:00 to 11:00 am, and 94% of the unrestricted parking spaces were utilized during the evening parking peak of 7:00 to 8:00 pm. The on-street parking restrictions in the vicinity of the site encourage short-term parking during the day and evening.

The location of the site Downtown, particularly in relation to transit and bikeshare facilities, will foster transit and bikeshare use by residents and employees. For employees who choose to drive to the site, 25 parking garages currently have available spaces within one-quarter mile of the site. For residents who choose to maintain a vehicle in the District and do not obtain one of the three on-site parking spaces, 12 parking garages currently have available spaces within one-quarter mile of the site for 24 hour residential use. Additionally, 30 car-sharing vehicles are available within a short walk of the site.

Given these conditions, the requested parking variance will not adversely impact the parking supply in the area.

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 the following TDM strategies:

- **Bicycle Amenities:** to provide six long-term parking spaces for employees and additional short-term spaces
- **Marketing Program:** brochures to include information of biking and transit facilities
- **Non-Vehicular Incentives:** the Applicant will provide either a one-year Capital Bikeshare or car sharing membership to first time residential occupants of the for-sale units.

DDOT finds the Applicant's TDM measures are a good basis that would generally encourage use of alternative modes of transportation. The Capital Bikeshare membership incentive will allow residents to utilize and explore a transportation system that provides quick access to nearby amenities. Long-term bicycle parking is insufficient for the size of the development and the proposed mode split, as previously described in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities section. Based on DDOT's evaluation of the proposed TDM program, the following are needed to strengthen the proposed program:

- The Applicant should provide a minimum of 14 long-term bicycle parking spaces – six for residents and eight for office employees; and
- The Applicant should provide a minimum of two short-term bicycle parking racks (i.e., four spaces), the location of which will be addressed in the public space permitting process.

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 modes 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 an alley network. Similarly, DDOT requires that no back-up maneuvers occur into an alley or from an alley onto a public street.

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 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 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.

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