

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 20, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18902 – 2620 Bowen Rd. SE

APPLICATION

Neighborhood Development Company on behalf of Frost-Labulé LLC (the “Applicant”) requests a parking variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements as well as variance for Floor Area Ratio (FAR) allowance to allow the construction of a 41 residential unit apartment building in the R-5-A District at premises 2620 Bowen Rd. SE (Square 5869, Lot 0083) (the “Site”).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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:

- An appropriate network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development, and which the Applicant will improve by constructing sidewalk adjacent to their property;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability both on-street and at nearby developments;
- Loading and moves for the building will be conducted on-site; and
- The Applicant proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to further promote the use of non-auto travel options.

The Site’s access to bus and rail transit, proximity to a Capital Bikeshare station, presence of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the subject area, along with the commitment to a TDM program will lead to low levels of auto ownership and use. Considering the provided bicycle storage, nearby available parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, DDOT finds the Applicant’s request for variance appropriate.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the proposed development and action, and in following standard procedures and practice, 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;
- All utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property; and
- Greater specificity is expected as to the design of the long-term bicycle parking.

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 transportation documentation that is consistent with the scale of this action. An outline of this project's impacts follows below. The proposed Site plan is shown in *Figure 1*.

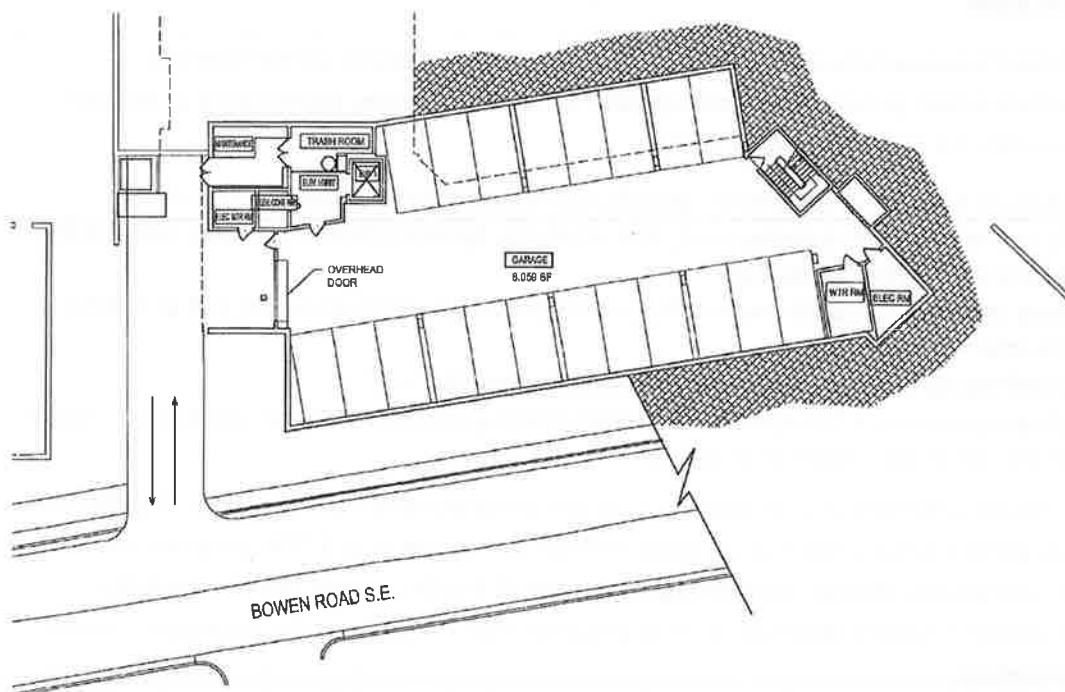


Figure 1. Proposed First Floor Building Layout (Source: Applicant)

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building is providing 20 parking spaces, however is required by zoning regulation to provide 41; one for each residential unit. Due to the triangular Site, vertical topography, and cost of providing a second level of parking, the development as designed requests a waiver from the requirement for onsite vehicular parking.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects seven auto-based trips originating in the AM and ten in the PM peak hour, illustrating the relatively low amount of parking turnover anticipated on a day-to-day basis. Existing parking utilization information for an appropriate parking study area was provided, and this analysis shows an abundance of unused nearby street parking. Furthermore, the Applicant also notes nearby lots where parking might be available, at Howard Hill Apartments (7 vacant spaces) and Oxford Manor Apartments (83 vacant spaces).

Generally, DDOT has no objection to reduced parking provision if documentation as to where parking could occur is made and if the overall available transportation network supports an appropriate split between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. Thus, DDOT finds appropriate the lack of parking provision in this area due to the close proximity to transit, provided bicycle storage, nearby available parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips. Further, the Applicant has proposed appropriate TDM measures, which will further alleviate parking needs.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Residents without autos will utilize the transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure available to this development. The Applicant anticipates a 40% non-auto estimated mode split for building residents. The development is located in close proximity to Metrobus and Metrorail transportation. Per the Applicant, the Anacostia Metro station is located 0.40 miles from the Site and the area is served by several buses, including 94, A, W8, and U2.

An adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is available surrounding the Site, and a Capital Bikeshare station is located at the Anacostia Metro station. The Applicant is proposing provision of 20 long-term bicycle parking spaces within the building, which provides more than the necessary one bicycle parking space per three residential units, and has committed to install four short-term bicycle parking spaces within the public space surrounding the building. Additionally, the existing sidewalk adjacent to the Site is of inadequate width, and the Applicant has agreed to widen it to the appropriate six feet. Full accommodation details (infrastructure provided and its design) for bicycles as well as pedestrians will be coordinated during 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 mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT standards require 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. Here, however, the Site does not have access to an alley. The Site is accessed via a driveway entrance, as shown in *Figure 1*.

While not part of this zoning action, a workable loading concept is expected to show this building can be later permitted as part of the public space permitting process. The Applicant has shown the driveway

and garage entrance area will accommodate a 23' box truck, which is the most common service/delivery/moving truck anticipated. Therefore, it appears most loading can be accommodated on-site. Loading via larger trucks will require a permit for on-street loading and unloading.

DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading, the detailed design of which will be addressed as part of the permitting process for this property.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following elements amongst their TDM measures:

- Six additional long-term bicycle parking spaces;
- Four short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- Provision of a lobby monitor displaying real-time Metro schedules;
- A tenant welcome package detailing transportation alternatives; and
- Display of these transportation details on the project's webpage.

These TDM measures, if implemented as planned, will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation. Additionally, the Applicant is proposing to provide added sidewalk, which will mitigate pedestrian impacts at the building. The proposed TDM elements match the scope of impacts at this development, and DDOT finds appropriate the TDM measures outlined.

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. As noted, the Applicant proposes to do so with the sidewalk at this Site.

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 the 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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