


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: March 3, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18905 – 1216-1226 9th Street NW

APPLICATION

Jemal's 9th Street Gang of 3, 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 reconstruction of a commercial property for retail (12,836 SF proposed) and office (7,062 SF proposed) use in the C-2-A District at premises 1216-1226 9th Street NW (Square 368, Lot 174) (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:

- A robust network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development, with a relatively minor increase in vehicular trips;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability on-street to accommodate vehicles from this Site;
- At least four courtyard bicycle parking spots and four short-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed. However, these spots will not meet long-term requirements. DDOT seeks provision of at least six long-term (covered and secure) bicycle parking spaces and ten short-term bicycle parking spaces to service the anticipated uses in this project;
- Loading and trash pickup for the building will be conducted at the rear of the building via the alley network; and
- The Applicant proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to further promote the use of non-auto travel options, but within which DDOT suggests additional bicycle parking.

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 these, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, DDOT has no objections to the requested variance.

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, alleys, 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 accommodations within and 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, as covered long-term bicycle parking will be expected.

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*.

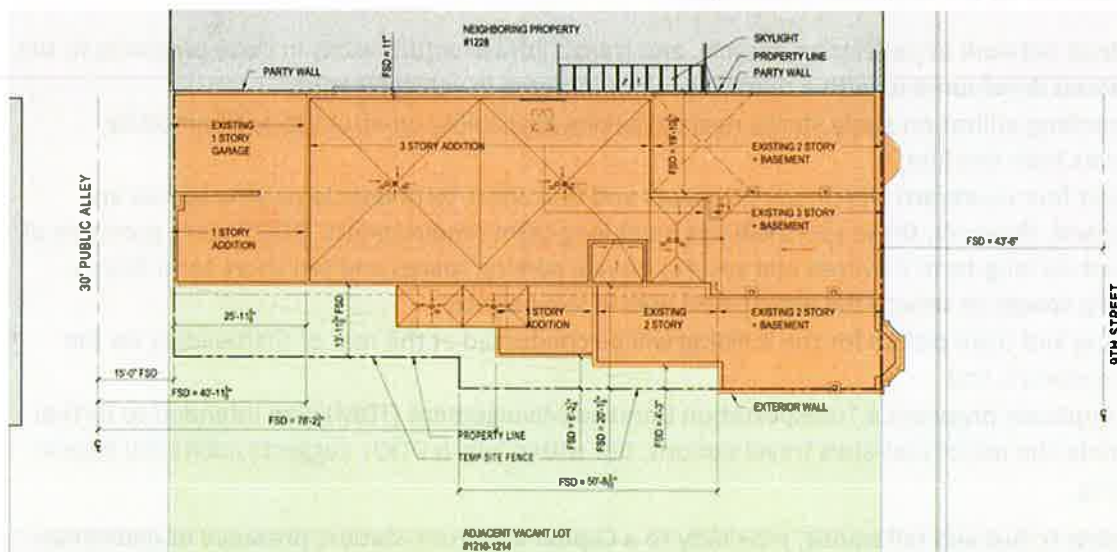


Figure 1. Proposed Site Plan (Source: Applicant)

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building is not providing vehicular parking spaces, however is required by zoning regulation to provide 21. The project proposed includes both a retail component, with a restaurant usage anticipated at the rear along the alley, and office space.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects four auto-based trips originating in the AM and nine 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 (shown in *Figure 2*) was provided, and this analysis shows unused nearby street parking at a minimum of 22 spaces. Furthermore, the Applicant also notes an abundance of nearby parking garages where parking might be available located largely south of the site, surrounding Mount Vernon Park.



Figure 2. Parking Study Area and Parking Restrictions (Source: Applicant)

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.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Users without autos are expected to utilize the robust transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure available to this development. As agreed to during the scoping process, based on the abundance of such infrastructure, past surveys of users for similar establishments, and mode splits of similar locations, the Applicant anticipates an 80% non-auto estimated mode split for building occupants or customers. The development is located in close proximity to Metrobus and Metrorail transportation. The Mount Vernon Metro station, with green and yellow lines, is located just over one block from the Site and the area is served by several buses, including 64, G8, 79, 70, and the Georgetown-Union Station Circulator.

As aforementioned, an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is available surrounding the Site, and also a Capital Bikeshare station is located near the intersection of M Street and 7th Street. The Applicant is proposing provision of four bicycle parking spaces within the courtyard. However, these spaces should be covered to be considered long-term spaces. The Applicant has also committed to install four short-term bicycle parking spaces in the areas surrounding the building. 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, the Applicant proposes all loading and trash pickup to occur within the alley at the rear of this building.

While not part of this zoning action, a workable loading concept was provided. The Applicant has shown the alley area will accommodate a 30' box truck, with a turning maneuver exhibit provided on March 3, 2015, which is the most common service/delivery/moving truck anticipated. Therefore, most loading can be accommodated via the alley. Loading requiring larger trucks will require a permit for on-street loading.

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:

- Four short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- Provision of a TransitScreen displaying real-time transportation schedules; and
- A marketing program highlighting transportation alternatives.

An additional measure proposed, valet parking, is not a TDM, and will not help mitigate vehicular trips to and from the site and must go through public space permitting to be implemented. As such, DDOT finds the other proposed TDM elements lacking.

DDOT suggests provision of at least six long-term (covered and secure) bicycle parking spaces and ten short-term bicycle parking spaces to serve the expected high bicycle usage possible for the planned retail components if they include a gym and restaurant.

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.

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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