

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. 18940** – 1371-1375 H Street NE

APPLICATION

H Street Legacy, LLC (the “Applicant”) requests a parking variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements as well as variance for the roof structure setback to allow the construction of a six-story 27 unit multifamily residential building with ground floor retail in the C-3-A District at premises 1371-1375 H Street NE (Square 1027, Lot 848) (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;
- No vehicular parking is proposed onsite;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability on-street to accommodate expected vehicles from this Site;
- At least 42 long-term bicycle parking spots (35 more than required) will be provided along with a bicycle repair facility;
- Loading for the building will be conducted at one of the nearest available approved loading locations, with trash pickup via nearby Linden Court; and
- The Applicant proposes a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to further promote the use of non-auto travel options.

The Site’s access to bus and streetcar transit, proximity to Capital Bikeshare stations, 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 ample provided bicycle storage,

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia

nearby available vehicular 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:

- 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;
- All utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property; and
- Streetcar is in the testing stage in this corridor, which could impact construction and staging activities. Construction and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) should be closely coordinated with DDOT.

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 location is shown in *Figure 1*.



Figure 1. Proposed Location (Source: Applicant)

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building is not providing vehicular parking spaces, however is required by zoning regulation to provide 14; one for every two residential units.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects 12 auto-based trips originating in the AM and 13 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 unused nearby street parking, with at least 47 spaces available. Additionally, three carsharing locations can be found nearby.

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. As agreed to during the scoping process, the Applicant anticipates an approximately 50% non-auto estimated mode split for building residents or retail customers. The development is located fronting Metrobus routes and the H/Benning streetcar line. Per the Applicant, the Site is well served by Metrobus by way of routes X1/X3, X8-9 and B2.

As aforementioned, an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is available surrounding the Site, and two Capital Bikeshare stations are located nearby. The Applicant is proposing provision of 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces within the building for residents, with an additional 12 long-term spaces for visitors to the residences, which provides more than the necessary one bicycle parking space per three residential units, and an additional four short-term bicycle parking spaces exist in front of the building. The proposed bicycle room will be located at street level and come complete with a bicycle repair facility. This is a significant investment in bicycle facilities for a project of this size, and a commitment worth lauding. 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 or an approved loading location. Here, however, the Site does not have access to an alley.

While not part of this zoning action, a workable loading concept was provided to show this building can be later permitted as part of the public space permitting process. The Applicant has shared a robust

loading plan, which will accommodate well the most common service/delivery/moving trucks anticipated.

The plan as outlined by the Applicant will include:

- *“Trash* – The applicant proposes to engage one of the private hauling services currently working in Square 1027 for trash removal. KMG Hauling, for instance, currently services Rock & Roll Hotel and H Street Country Club from the rear alley (Linden Court) on the project block. Based on the size of the residential component of the building and trash room, daily pickup (Monday through Friday) of three 96 gallon cans is projected (2 for trash, 1 for recycling). KMG Hauling would pick-up during the day (the least disruptive time) and wheel the three cans to the north-south mid-block alley (Linden Court) and use it to connect to the main part of the alley and their truck. This would be coordinated with the pick-up for Rock & Roll Hotel and other businesses to minimize new visits by trash trucks to the neighborhood. The commercial component of the project will also be encouraged to use KMG Hauling or another existing trash vendor.
- *Parcel and Other Deliveries* - Parcel loading and other commercial deliveries will occur on 13th Street or other approved loading zones as illustrated in DDOT’s H Street NE Corridor: Loading Zones Map. Parcel vehicles may also park in available metered parking spaces on 14th Street or H Street (in accordance with District parking policies and restrictions).
- *Residential Move-ins* – Residents will be required to obtain a permit for a temporary loading zone. Temporary loading could occur at one of the metered parking spaces on 14th Street (between H Street and Maryland Avenue). Residential move-ins would be required to occur Monday through Friday 9:30AM to 4PM or on weekends.”

This plan is appropriate for the building, considering the Site constraints. DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT’s standards for loading, the details of which will be addressed further, as necessary, as part of the permitting process for this property.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following elements amongst their TDM measures:

- Restrict the project from being included as RPP eligible
- Provide, as a one-time incentive, each initial purchaser a bicycle helmet (27 helmets)
- Install a Transit Screen in the lobby to keep residents and visitors informed regarding available transportation choices and provide real-time transportation updates
- Offer a five-year Capital Bikeshare and Car share membership for the initial condo residents
- Provide a convenient-accessible bicycle room for both residential and visitor storage
- Post all TDM commitments on-line for a one-year period. The source will also include links to CommuterConnections.com, goDCgo.com, WMATA Metrobus routes, DC Bicycle maps, and other useful information in support of car-free urban living.

These TDM measures, if implemented as planned, will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, and several could be considered best practices. However, DDOT observes 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. DDOT is supportive of the Applicant’s proposed measures, and believes these elements will be very effective.

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.

SZ:rw