

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: June 30, 2015

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 19026** – 1300 H Street, NE

APPLICATION

1300 H Street NE, LLC (the “Applicant”) requests a variance from the off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1, and special exceptions from the roof structures requirements under §§ 411.5 and 770.6, the HS-A Overlay requirements under § 1320.4(f), and the HS Overlay Design and Special Exception requirements under §§ 1324.10 and 1325.1, to construct a new four-story, mixed-use building with 6,614 square feet of ground floor retail, 36 residential dwelling units, and eight parking spaces in the HS-A/C-2-A District at premises 1300 H Street, NE (Square 1026, Lots 97 and 103).

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;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability on-street to accommodate expected vehicles from this site;
- Vehicular trip generation is expected to be low;
- 27 long-term bicycle parking spots, 13 more than required, will be provided, along with an on-site bicycle repair facility;
- Site plans do not include the existing 26-dock Capital Bikeshare station adjacent to the site;
- The Applicant intends to restrict residents from obtaining Residential Parking Permits (RPP); 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 bicycle storage, nearby available vehicular parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested variance and special exceptions. In order to clarify the proposed non-auto transportation incentives, DDOT requests modifying the TDM measure to the following:

- Provide one of the following non-auto transportation incentives annually for the first five years that the building is open for each new residential tenant. If the building is developed as a rental building, the incentive shall be provided to all lessees. If the building is developed as a condominium, the Applicant or homeowners' association shall offer each new purchaser of a unit the incentive annually:
 - \$100 SmartTrip Card;
 - Annual Capital Bikeshare membership; or
 - Annual car share membership.

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;
- The location of the existing Capital Bikeshare station will be coordinated during the public space permitting process. DDOT expects the bikeshare station to remain on 13th Street adjacent to the site without impacts to street trees and the pedestrian clear path;
- All utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property; and
- Streetcar is soon to open 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*.

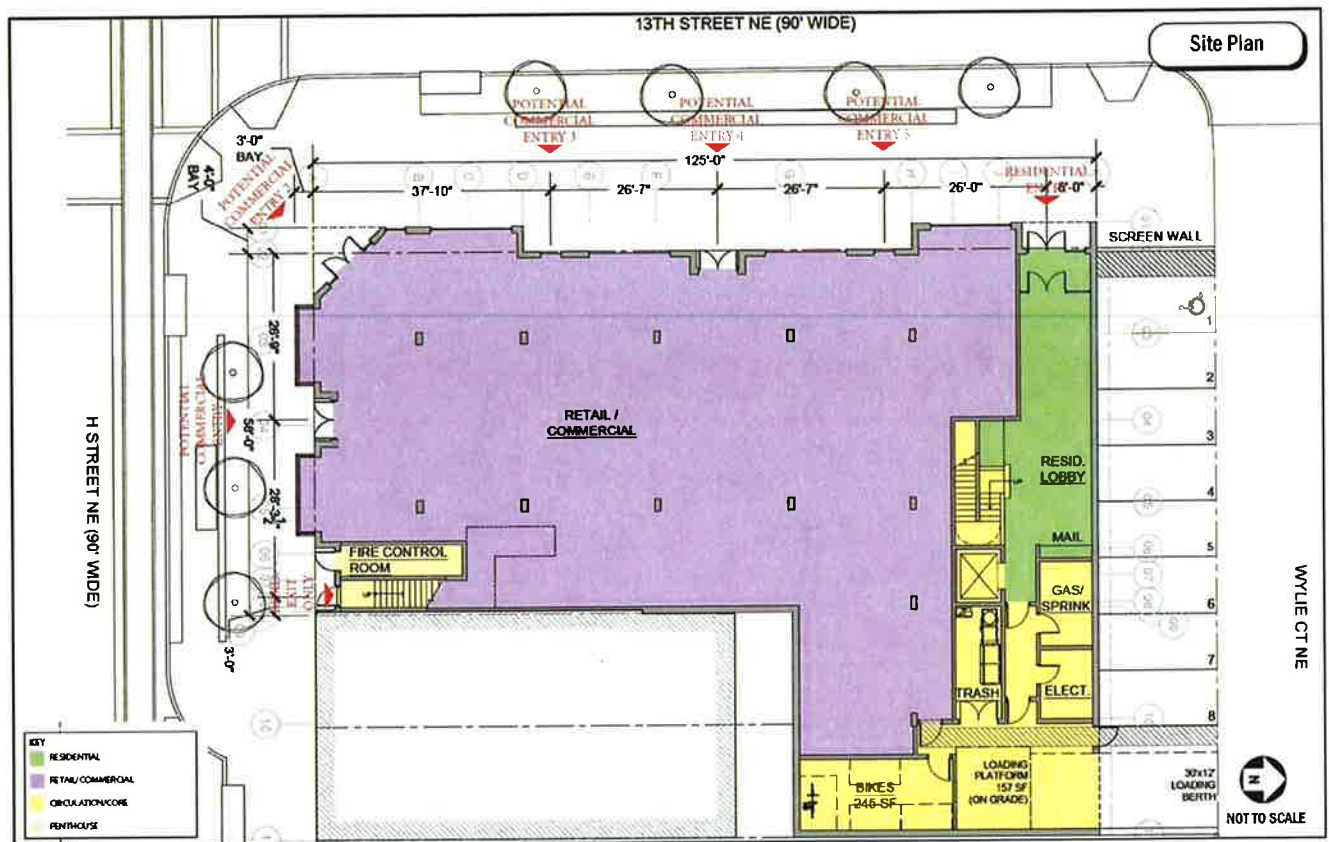


Figure 1 Site Design and Access (Source: Grove/Slade)

Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price and 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, and proximity to transit.

The proposed site includes eight surface parking spaces. Zoning requires the provision of 30 parking spaces, 18 spaces for residential use and 12 spaces for retail use. The projected trip generation for the site expects 11 auto-based trips originating in the AM and 17 in the PM peak hour, illustrating the relatively low amount of parking turnover. Parking occupancy data was collected on Thursday, May 28, 2015 and Friday, May 29, 2015 both from 4:00pm to 10:00pm, when parking demand is at its peak for the area. This analysis shows unused nearby street parking that would meet the proposed project's parking demand, with 97 spaces available during peak weekday demand (9:00 pm to 10:00 pm) and 43 spaces available during peak weekend demand (10:00 pm to 11:00 pm). While parking utilization is relatively high during both weekday and weekend peak parking demand periods (see Figures 2, 3, and 4), DDOT finds that the available parking spaces should accommodate the expected peak hour site generated vehicular trips. Additionally, three carsharing locations can be found nearby with a total of seven vehicles.



Figure 2 Parking Restrictions (Source: Grove/Slade)

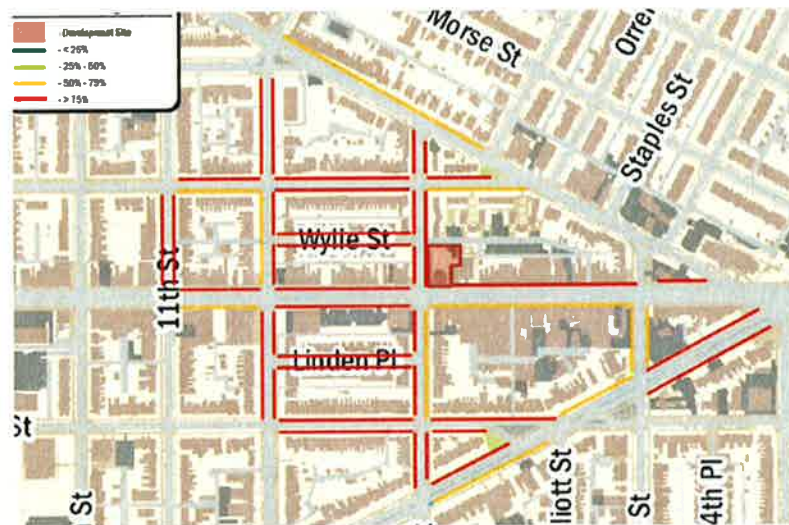


Figure 3 Weekday Parking Occupancy (Source: Grove/Slade)

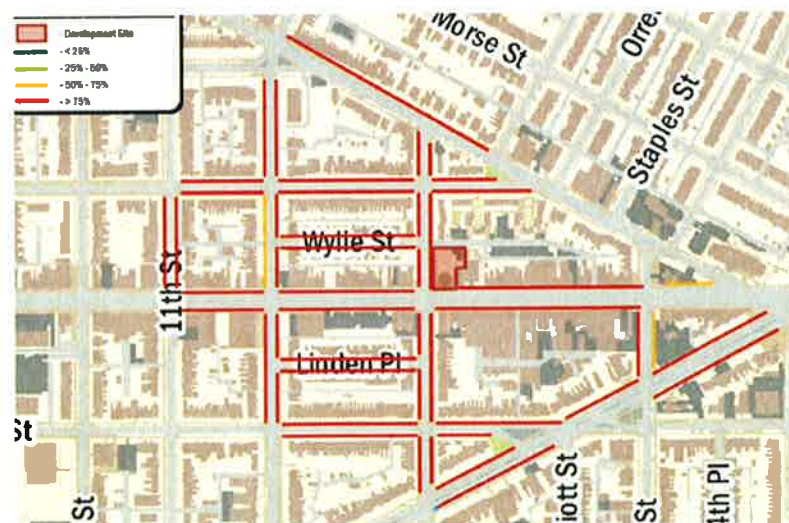


Figure 4 Weekend Parking Occupancy (Source: Grove/Slade)

The Applicant proposes restricting tenants through lease or condominium bylaws from obtaining Residential Parking Permits (RPP). However, such a restriction is not strictly enforceable by the District, and therefore, the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Residents without vehicles will utilize the transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure available to this development. As agreed to during the scoping process, the Applicant anticipates an approximately 52% non-auto estimated mode split for residents and 75% for retail customers. The development is located in close proximity to several Metrobus routes and the H Street/Benning Road Streetcar line. The site is well served by nine Metrobus lines, including X1/X3, X2, X8, X9, B2, D3, D4, and D8.

A robust pedestrian and bicycle network surrounds the site. Five Capital Bikeshare stations are located within 0.25 miles of the site, including one adjacent to the site with 26 bicycle docks, and have a total of 94 bicycle docks. The Applicant is proposing provision of 27 long-term secure bicycle parking spaces, which provides more than the required one bicycle parking space per three residential units and one bicycle parking per 3,500 square feet of retail (i.e., 14 spaces total). Four (4) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces will be requested during the public space permitting process. The proposed secure bicycle room and bicycle repair facility will be located at street level.

Site plans do not include the existing 26-dock Capital Bikeshare station adjacent to the site. The location of the existing bikeshare station will be coordinated during the public space permitting process. DDOT expects the bikeshare station to remain on 13th Street adjacent to the site and will not interfere with the clear pedestrian path nor require the removal of any street trees. DDOT does not support moving the station to another location because it is difficult to place a 26-dock station within the H Street Corridor, DDOT plans on expanding the bikeshare network, not removing or moving stations, and the existing station is located equidistant from two other stations. As such, DDOT anticipates that the commercial entrance on 13th may need to be moved to ensure the bikeshare station remains adjacent to the site.

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. The Applicant proposes a single 30 foot loading berth, which meets zoning requirements, and is accessed from a named alley, Wylie Court, to the north of the proposed development. No back-up maneuvers will occur in public space.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following TDM measures:

- Provide 13 spaces above the required number of long-term bicycle parking spaces and provide a bicycle repair facility in the secure long-term bicycle parking storage room;
- Provide one of the following non-auto transportation incentives to all residents, lease or purchase, for five years for the first lessee or owner of each residential unit:
 - \$100 SmartTrip Card;

- Annual Capital Bikeshare membership; or
- Annual car share membership;
- Provide information on carpool matching services; and
- Provide a non-auto transportation guide that will include comprehensive transportation information promoting walking, cycling, and transit and links to CommuterConnections.com, goDCgo.com.

These TDM measures, if implemented as planned, will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, and several could be considered best practices. The provision of a bicycle repair facility should include tools and air pump that are securely attached to a stand within the long-term bicycle storage room. In order to clarify the proposed non-auto transportation incentives, DDOT requests modifying the TDM measure to the following:

- Provide one of the following non-auto transportation incentives annually for the first five years that the building is open for each new residential tenant. If the building is developed as a rental building, the incentive shall be provided to all lessees. If the building is developed as a condominium, the Applicant or homeowners' association shall offer each new purchaser of a unit the incentive annually:
 - \$100 SmartTrip Card;
 - Annual Capital Bikeshare membership; or
 - Annual car share membership.

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.

As previously noted, the existing bikeshare station will be required to remain adjacent to the site on 13th Street. The bikeshare station's placement will not be permitted to interfere with the clear pedestrian path nor require the removal of any street trees.

DDOT's lack of objection or discussion of other public space elements as part of the zoning variance and special exceptions 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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