

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe
Associate Director 

DATE: November 3, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19089 – 8 P Street, N.W. (Square 688, Lot 14)

APPLICATION

Pursuant to 11 DCMR §§3103 Nezam Yousefi (the “Applicant”) seeks variances from the off-street parking requirements listed under §§2201.1 to allow construction of a new five-story mixed use building with 13 dwelling units and ground-floor retail at premises 8 P Street, N.W. (Square 688, Lot 14)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

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 an extensive, 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;
- Residents are likely to heavily utilize non-automobile modes of travel, reducing the need for auto ownership;
- The Applicant is required to provide a total of 4 vehicular parking spaces at a ratio of one space per every four dwelling units;
- The narrow width of the site and lack of public alley access in the rear prevents the Applicant from providing the required vehicular parking spaces onsite;
- The project will contain 13 long-term bicycle parking spaces; and
- The Applicant’s proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan is sufficiently robust to ensure low vehicle usage.

The site's proximity to the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metro Station, extensive bus service, bicycle facilities, and quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, along with the establishment of a robust TDM program will lead to low levels of auto ownership and use. As such, DDOT has no objection to the requested variance with the following condition:

- Install a minimum of one short-term bicycle rack in public space in front of the site.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Depending on the scale of the development project and requested zoning relief, DDOT requires applicants to complete a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) in order to determine the project's impact on the overall 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 CTR should be performed according to DDOT direction. DDOT reviewed the Applicant's scoping form and determined a CTR was not required.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The main building entrance is on P Street for the midblock development. The vicinity has an excellent sidewalk network with striped crosswalks at all intersections. Signalized intersections in the vicinity of the site have countdown signals to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings. The neighborhood is considered a "walking paradise" by WalkScore.com with a walkability score of 87 and most daily errands do not require a car. (Attachment)

The area has adequate bicycle facilities including dedicated bicycle lanes on First Place, N.E and the elevated portion of the Metropolitan Branch Trail that links Union Station with Silver Spring, MD. There are four existing Capital Bikeshare stations in the area located at Eckington Place and Q Street, N.E; First Street and M Street, N.E; North Capitol Street and G Street, N.E; and Florida Avenue and R Street, N.W. The area is identified as a "bikers paradise" according to WalkScore.com with excellent bike lanes and generally flat terrain with an overall bike score of 94.

The project is required to provide a minimum of 5 long-term bicycle parking spaces at a ratio of one parking space for every three dwelling units. The project will contain 13 long-term bicycle parking spaces, one for each dwelling unit. Short-term bicycle racks should be installed in the front of the project to serve the retail use and visitors.

Mass Transit

The area is well served by transit facilities and WalkScore provides the neighborhood a transit-score of 75, an excellent rating, with most trips accessible by transit modes. The site is located 0.40 miles (7 minute walk) from the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metro Station on the Red Metrorail line. In addition several Metrobus routes operate in the vicinity of the site including the 80, 90/92, P6 and X3 lines.

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 and other characteristics of the potential residents.

The apartment use is required to provide one vehicular parking space for every four dwelling units or a minimum of four parking spaces. The Applicant is unable to provide any vehicular parking onsite given the Lot configuration and lack of public alley access to the rear. The site measures 25 ft. in width and does not provide adequate space to accommodate a driveway, drive aisles and standard or compact parking spaces.

Car-Sharing Services

The District is served by three car sharing companies; Zipcar, Enterprise CarShare and Car-2-Go. Zipcar and Enterprise CarShare use reserved parking spaces to manage vehicle fleets. Car-2-Go allows on-demand access to vehicles with cars available to be picked up and returned to any authorized parking space in the service area. Car-2-Go has a onetime application fee of \$35 and hourly and daily rates.

Enterprise Car-Share has a one-time application fee of \$25 and enrollment fees ranging between \$25 and \$40 depending on the rate plan. The service provides three different rate plans based on user preference with options to pay by the mile, per hour or monthly. Enterprise Car-Share has several locations in the vicinity of the project site including six reserved spaces in a surface parking lot at 66 New York Avenue, N.E. one block to the southeast and a second location with two vehicles at the intersection of Eckington Place and Harry Thomas Way, N.E. approximately two blocks away to the northeast.

ZipCar has similar options as Enterprise Car-share with a nonrefundable \$25 one-time application fee and three different rate plans based on user preference. Members are charged per hour and pay a \$70 yearly fee, \$7 or \$10 monthly enrollment fee. There are several ZipCar locations within two blocks of the project site including three vehicles in a parking lot at 66 New York Avenue, N.E., two vehicles at 100 Florida Avenue, N.E., one vehicle at 151 Q Street, N.E., and two vehicles in the Harris Teeter parking garage located at 1201 First Street, N.E.

Loading

The site is not required to provide loading facilities and will use the curbside space on P Street to serve the site. DDOT recommends the Applicant schedule trash and recycling during off-peak periods to minimize impacts to traffic circulation. Residential move-in/move-outs should be done on-street with a moving truck permit.

TDM Program

The Applicant has committed to the following TDM measures;

- Provision of either one annual bike-share membership, annual car-share membership or one Metro Smartcard with \$200 of fare for each initial lease upon tenant move-in for a period of five years after building opening;
- The project will contain 13 long-term bicycle parking spaces at a ratio of one space per dwelling unit;
- A TransitScreen will be installed in the residential lobby to provide real-time transportation updates on mass transit, bicycle and car-sharing services;
- Instructions will be provided to residents and retail employees on available sources or real-time transit information and how to access transportation updates via multiple mediums; AND

- A package of printed materials detailing alternative transportation options will be provided to residents upon move-in, and for retail employees upon request, including information on bicycling, transit and walking options with website links to Commuter Connections and goDCgo.

The TDM program is robust and will encourage alternative travel modes.

Public Space

DDOT's lack of objection to the zoning variances should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. 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 line. An existing curb-cut on P Street will be closed and the Applicant is expected to install the standard streetscape for the location including brick sidewalk paving, new curb and gutter, new tree box, a minimum of one short-term bicycle rack and other appropriate features within the public right-of-way bordering the site.

If new electrical utility vaults are required to service the building, they are expected to be located on private property or within the public parking area behind the sidewalk with a landscape buffer to separate the vaults from the main pedestrian pathway. In addition the proposed bay-window projections require DDOT approval and a public space permit. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

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