

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: December 8, 2015

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 19140** – 412 V Street, NE

APPLICATION

Marty Youmans (the “Applicant”) requests a parking variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements to allow a public hall with an accessory restaurant, bar/cocktail lounge in the C-M-2 District at premises 412 V Street, NE (Square 3621, Lot 44). Zoning requires 12 parking spaces, the proposed project provides three zoning required parking, and the Applicant proposes providing an additional 19 parking spaces in public space.

DDOT FINDINGS IN BRIEF

The District Department of Transportation (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.

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. DDOT finds:

- An on-street parking utilization study was not completed as requested by DDOT;
- Public space permits must be obtained to allow a curb cut to off-street parking and parking in public space;
- A sidewalk in front of the site is necessary to allow safe pedestrian access along V Street and 5th Street; and
- The public space should be restored to include a curb and gutter, street tree zone (which includes street trees, planting strip, streetlights, and short-term inverted-U shaped bike racks), sidewalk, and landscaping behind the sidewalk closest to the property line.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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CASE NO. 19140

RECOMMENDATIONS

Without a parking occupancy study, DDOT cannot yet support the variance proposed. DDOT may not object to the level of parking variance sought contingent upon the proposal documenting conditions fully. In addition, DDOT has concerns regarding the design of the public space that could lead to the denial of a public space permit. DDOT recommends the following:

- A parking utilization study should be completed following the appropriate Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) scoping process; and
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) may be needed depending on the results of the parking utilization study. Commitment to an appropriate TDM program will lead to lower levels of auto use and less need for vehicular parking.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the proposed development and action and these recommendations, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- The Applicant must apply for a public space permit for all changes to public space or rental of parking in public space;
- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, bike parking, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

DDOT guidance suggests that a comprehensive transportation analysis be completed if various thresholds for added traffic are met, which could signify the potential for impacts to the surrounding street network, or based on a reduction in zoning required parking. Based on this project's zoning action, a vehicle parking utilization study is necessary to assess the impact on the on-street parking and is consistent with the scale of the action. The Applicant did not coordinate on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR, which would lay out the parameters of the study. Initially, the Zoning Administrator classified the relief sought as a special exception, which did not warrant a parking utilization study. However, on November 18th, the Zoning Administrator reassessed the application and classified the zoning relief as a parking variance, which warrants a parking utilization study so that DDOT can assess the impacts of the variance for the BZA.

Site Access

The Applicant proposes three off-street parking spaces through a curb cut on V Street and an additional 19 parking spaces in public space on V Street and 5th Street (see Figure 1), accessed either by extending the curb cut or driving over the curb.

In correspondence, the Applicant noted two small curb cuts to now bricked up garage doors; those curb cuts initially granted loading access into the building where there was a parking space, not to the entirety of the public space. When the private parking spaces or loading facilities ceased to exist, those curb cuts expired and ought to have been closed with a curb and gutter. A public space permit is required for a curb cut to access those three spaces since the existing curb cut is expired. Even if the Applicant intends to renovate the site so that garage access exists off of V Street, DDOT would not support access to the proposed three off-street parking spaces because vehicular access should be from the public alley.

The Applicant must apply for a permit for parking in public space, which will require approval by the Public Space Committee (PSC). DDOT does not support parking in public space. While parking in public space may have existed at the site during its previous use, these were not likely legal uses.

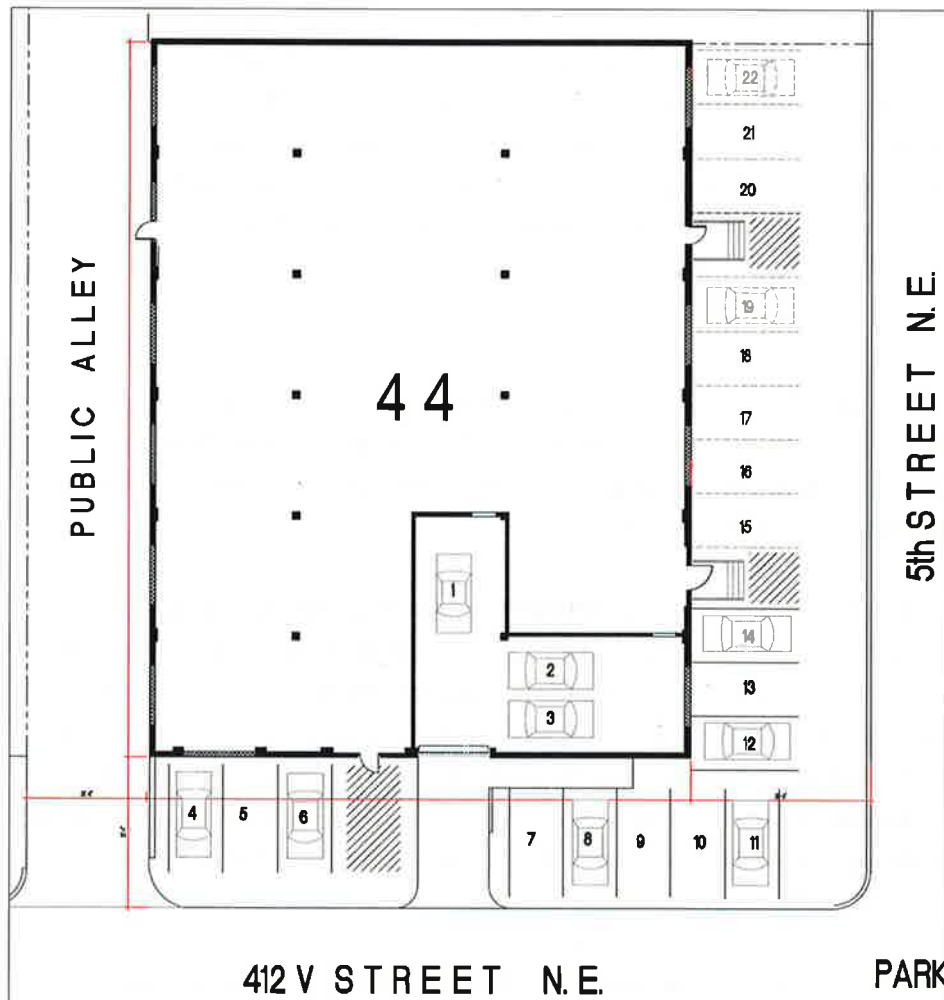


Figure 1. Proposed Site Plan (Source: Applicant)

Off Street Vehicle Parking

The proposed building requires 12 on-site parking spaces. Due to the site design, the Applicant requests relief from the zoning requirement. Generally, DDOT has no objection to reduced parking provision if documentation as to where parking could occur, close proximity to transit, provided bicycle storage, and the overall available transportation network suggests an appropriate split between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. This information has not been provided. Without further information, DDOT cannot ascertain whether the action results in impacts to on-street parking conditions. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) may be needed depending on the results of the parking utilization study. Commitment to an appropriate TDM program will lead to lower levels of auto use and less need for vehicular parking.

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.

DDOT expects the Applicant to design and build the streetscape surrounding the property to current DDOT standards. 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. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process. Final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process.

DDOT notes the importance of adequate sidewalks along the perimeter of the site to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle activity. The proposed use as a public hall with a restaurant and bar/cocktail lounge is expected to have high pedestrian activity; therefore, a robust sidewalk network is necessary for safe, pedestrian access at this site, just as it is necessary throughout the District. The public space in front of the site should not have an extended curb cut and parking; instead, it should have a curb and gutter, street tree zone (which includes street trees, planting strip, streetlights, and short-term inverted-U shaped bike racks), sidewalk, and landscaping behind the sidewalk closest to the property line. On V Street, a curb and gutter should be installed, the sidewalk should be six feet in width, and the street tree zone should be four feet in width, which will match the streetscape in front of the Carlos Rosario Public Charter School to the east of the site. On 5th Street, the streetscape should match the property to the north of the site at the corner of 5th and W Street, which is also a six foot sidewalk with curb and gutter and four foot tree zone. The changes to public space will bring your site into compliance with public space regulations, which is required whenever there is a change in land use.