

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

★ ★ ★



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

MEMORANDUM

To: Jerrily R. Kress, Director
Office of Zoning

ATTN: Beverly Bailey, Board of Zoning Adjustment

From: Ken Laden
Associate Director, TPPA

Date: November 20, 2006

Subject: BZA Case No. 17521
601-645 H Street, N.E. – Variance Special Exception

2006 NOV 21 AM 11:22

DC OFFICE OF ZONING

RECEIVED

Note: Due to the short time frame provided for analysis of the Traffic Impact Study, DDOT reserves the right to expand and modify comments in this report.

The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application and other materials for the subject site. DDOT finds the impacts to the surrounding traffic network acceptable subject to the following conditions, described in further detail in the body of the report.

1. Reduction in parking spaces provided on-site
2. Maintenance of one-way operations on 7th Street, southbound
3. One right-in, right-out access point to site garage off H Street
4. Closure of curb cuts to existing surface parking lots on H Street
5. Development of and Commitment to a Transportation Demand Management Plan

PROJECT SUMMARY

The applicant, 601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC, seeks variance relief from §772 of the Zoning Regulations to permit more than the required lot occupancy and a special exception under §1320.4 for construction of a new building on a lot that has six-thousand square feet or more of land area in the H Street Northeast Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District with a modification of the fourteen foot clear floor-to-ceiling height on the ground floor

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17521
EXHIBIT NO. 98

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.17521
EXHIBIT NO.98

level, in order to permit the construction of a mixed-use residential and commercial building at premises 601-645 H Street, N.E., Square 859, Lot 177.

The project site is located on the south side of H Street, between 6th and 7th Streets, in the northeast section of Washington, D.C. The site is split-zoned C-2-C and C-2-A, and improved with a one-story, 27,537 S.F. former grocery store that now is used as an office building. This building is flanked by two five-story office buildings with a combined total of 168,778 S.F. Vehicular access to an existing surface parking lot is provided by two driveways on H Street and by a public alley network with driveways on 6th, 7th, and G Streets.

601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC, proposes to demolish the existing 27,537 S.F. office building and replace it with a new building that will contain 5,179 S.F. of ground floor retail space, 30,394 S.F. of second floor office space, and 240 residential apartment units. 601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC also proposes to convert 8,297 S.F. of space in the ground floor of two existing office buildings that will remain from office to retail space. In sum, this proposal would add 13,476 S.F. of retail space, reduce office space by 5,440 S.F. and add 240 residential apartments to the subject site.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Wells & Associates, LLC, prepared a **traffic impact study** on behalf of the applicant, 601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC. Based on the analysis of several traffic options, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) recommends the following: 1). The proposed project should include a Right-In and Right-Out curb cut at H Street; 2). 7th street should remain one-way, southbound, with a Right-in and Right-out curb cut; 3). A separate northbound left turn lane should be added to 6th Street at H Street; and 4). Signal timings at the H Street intersections with 6th, 7th and 8th Streets should be optimized.

The applicant proposed converting the northern end of 7th Street into a 2-way street, in order to alleviate increased vehicular traffic on local roads by providing vehicles exiting the site onto 7th Street with direct access to H Street via a left-out option. DDOT traffic engineers, however, do not support a partial 2-way conversion of 7th Street for several reasons: 1). At only 30 feet, the existing width of 7th street does not comply with city codes required for 2 way streets with on-street traffic on both sides of street; 2). There is a lack of precedent for mid-way conversion of a one way street into 2 directions; 3). Because of the loading dock's configuration, delivery trucks must back up into dock, which requires pulling into secondary lane. Should this lane be converted to north bound, the delivery trucks would be pulling into oncoming traffic, which is dangerous. In order to alleviate increased vehicular traffic from the proposed site onto local roads, such as G Street, DDOT recommends one right-in, right-out access point from H street.

DDOT also has serious concerns about the number of parking spaces in the proposed **parking facilities**. The proposed site is zoned under both C-2-A and C-2-C. Based on these regulations, the proposed mixed-use building requires 206 parking spaces. The

applicant proposes, however, that a three-level, underground parking garage with 487 total spaces serve the proposed project and replace the existing 162 spaces (47 underground and 115 surface parking spaces). Of the 487 proposed spaces, 265 would be reserved for residential uses and 222 would be reserved for office and retail uses. DDOT objects to the number of proposed spaces on the grounds that the total is greater than the project demand or need, and undermines the Department's goal of promoting public transportation on a corridor receiving a substantial investment in transit. We would recommend a maximum of 240 residential spaces and approximately 150 spaces for commercial and retail use. Claiming a high percentage of trip reductions due to transit while providing an excessive amount of parking is contradictory.

Based on previous discussions with the Applicant, DDOT is comfortable with the proposed loading facilities off 7th Street, though recommends widening the alley opening as much as possible up to 25 feet. Chapter 22 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations* specifies that within the underlying C-2-A and C-2-C zones, one 20-foot deep loading berth for service/delivery requirements and one 55-foot deep loading berth for residential uses are required. Within the underlying C-2-C zone, office buildings with 20,000 to 50,000 S.F. require one 30-foot deep loading berth, and one 20-foot service/delivery loading space.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

In order to mitigate an anticipated increase in vehicular traffic along H Street and local roads, DDOT recommends that BZA require the applicant, 601-645 H Street Ventures, LLC, to develop a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program for the 601-645 H Street, N.E., mixed-use Project. ***Both the high transit trip reductions assumed in the traffic impact analysis and residents' concerns about spill over traffic into the neighborhood indicate a need for a strong TDM plan.***

TDM involves the establishment of various measures to influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length, in order to achieve maximally efficient use of transportation facilities.

Recommended TDM strategies include:

1. Provide bicycle parking, storage facilities, and shower facilities;
2. Provide preferred carpool and vanpool parking;
3. Provide designated carshare parking spaces and on-site vehicles;
4. Provide a one-time membership fee subsidy in a car sharing plan of \$35 per residential unit;
5. Provide website hotlinks to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on developer and property management websites;
6. Provide an on-site business center to residents with access to copier, fax, and internet services;

7. Provide complimentary SmartTrip cards with \$20 Metro fare media per person to residential lessees upon move-in, and complimentary \$60Metro fare media to tenants' employees at initial occupancy;
8. Designate a member of building management as a point of contact who is responsible for coordinating and implementing TDM obligations; and
9. Distribute TDM information and brochures via lobby kiosks, welcome packets and bulletin boards.