


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Benjamin Bardin
Director
District of Columbia Office of Zoning

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe 
Associate Director

DATE: February 4, 2014

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18671 – Takoma Park Square 3357 – 6923 Maple Street and 6919-6926 Willow Street N.W.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 17672
EXHIBIT NO. 93

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APPLICATION

Jemal's TP Land LLC ("the Applicant"), seeks approval pursuant to 11 DCMR §3129.7 for a modification of plans previously approved under BZA Application No. 17679 for a special exceptions under sections 353 and 2516, and under section 411 regarding roof structures; a variance from the parking requirements under Section 2100; and variance from the loading requirements under section 2201 to allow for two multiple dwellings (each containing 50 units) in the R-5-A District at premises 6923-6953 Maple Street, N.W. and 6916-6926 Maple Street, N.W. (Square 3357, Lots 26, 27, 28, 29, 40, 808, 811, 814, 815, 818, 819, 820, 825, 840 and 843).

SUMMARY

In 2008, the Applicant was approved to develop two residential buildings with a total of 76 dwellings units and 76 surface parking spaces. The current modification request would increase the approved dwelling units to 100 and the surface parking spaces to 92. In addition, the Applicants seeks loading relief to provide a 30' loading dock for each building instead of the zoning required 50' loading dock.

The purpose of the District of Transportation (DDOT) review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District's transportation network. This memorandum addresses the potential impacts of the zoning actions, specifically variances from off-street parking and loading requirements. Based on our review, DDOT finds:

- A robust transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development;
- A sidewalk gap exists along Willow Street;
- The Applicant is proposing long-term bicycle parking above the level required by District law;
- On-street parking in the vicinity appears sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking on weekdays; and
- Loading activity will be adequately served by the proposed loading dock.

DDOT concludes that potential impacts of the variance request on the transportation network are minimal, thus DDOT has no objection to the variance requests.

TRANSPORTATION 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 and ultimately, discourage single occupancy vehicle trips.

As part of the transportation impact assessment, DDOT requests that Applicants evaluate the impacts to the pedestrian, transit, and roadway system resulting from the proposed action. 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.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The Applicant did not include a pedestrian facility study area, but As noted above, a sidewalk gap exists on Willow Street, which seems to be addressed in the proposed site plan submitted by the Applicant.

The site is approximately 1,000 feet from a Capital Bikeshare station. The Applicant proposes 48 bicycle parking spaces in a secure bicycle room in each building, which exceeds the current District regulations¹ requiring one bicycle space for every three residential units. Additionally, at least 3 short-term bicycle parking racks should be provided in the public space at each residential main entrance. The final design of the bicycle racks, including amount and location, will be addressed in the public space permitting process

Transit Services

DDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District. DDOT’s vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes with minimal infrastructure investment.

The site is approximately 900 feet from the Takoma Metro station and various Metrobus stops served by 16 bus routes. DDOT finds that the proposed development is well served by transit options with the existing bus routes and Metro station.

¹ Section 8 of the Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007, effective February 2, 2008 (D.C. Law 17-103; D.C. Official Code § 50-1641.07) (2012 Supp.) and Mayor’s Order 2011-149, dated September 6, 2011.

Vehicle 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, composition of nearby land-uses, and the demographic composition of the potential residents/patrons.

Zoning requires 100 parking spaces for the proposed 100 dwelling units. In order to address the parking supply for the proposed development and to document the on-street parking inventory/occupancy in the local area, the Applicant conducted a parking survey, which included an inventory of available on-street parking spaces and a parking occupancy count.

The Applicant’s analysis of weekday on-street parking included the following blocks in the study area as seen in Figure 1: Block Face Map. Based on the Applicant’s report, there are a total of 186 parking spaces in the study area, of which 83 are subject to Residential Permit Parking (RPP) restrictions, 90 are metered spaces, and the remaining 15 are unrestricted spaces as seen in Figure 2.

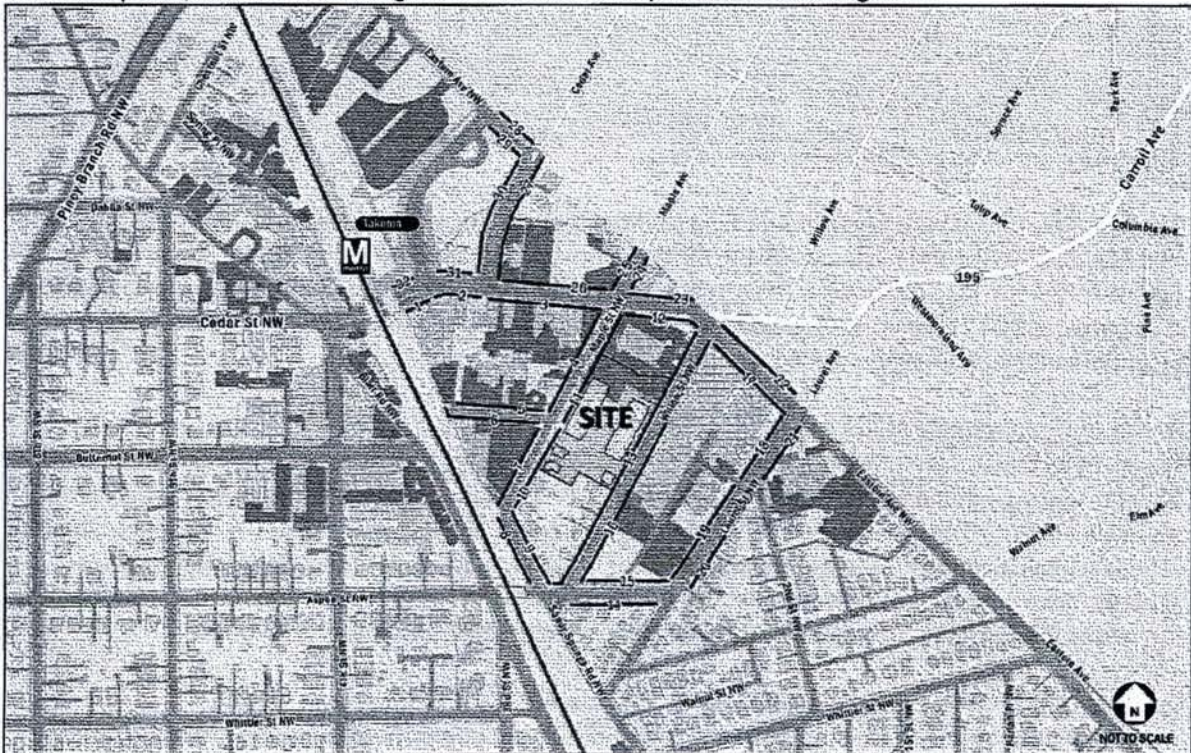


Figure 1 On-Street Block Face Map (Grove/Slade)

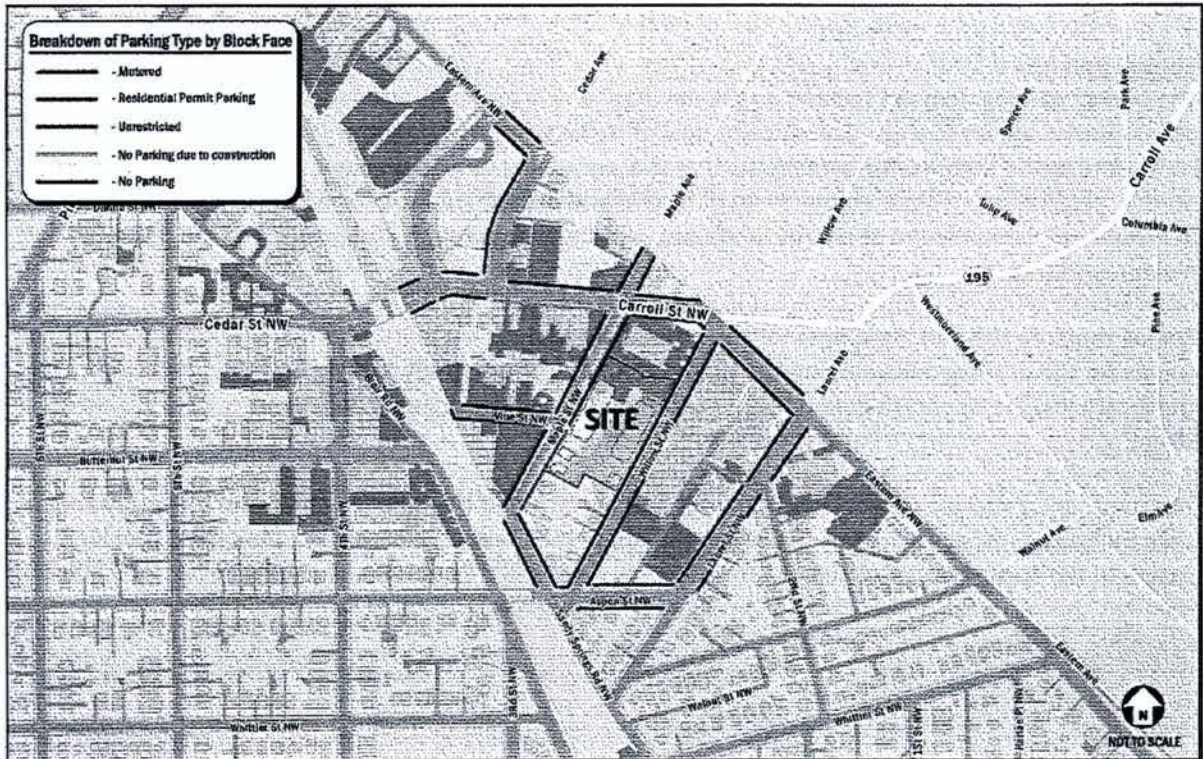


Figure 2 Summary of Parking Type (Source: Gorove/Slade)

The inventory of available on-street parking facilities was conducted on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 from 6:00 AM to 9:00 AM and from 4:00 PM to 9 PM. A survey conducted by the Applicant found that the highest utilization rate occurred at 8PM at a rate of 59%. This peak parking period had an occupancy of 110 spaces. DDOT agrees that on-street parking in the vicinity appears sufficient to accommodate potential spillover parking on weekdays.

Transportation Demand Management

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires applicants to produce a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services, and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

The Applicant proposes utilizing the following TDM strategies:

- Identify a TDM Leader (for planning, construction, and operations) and provide DDOT/Zoning Enforcement with annual TDM Leader contact updates;
- Provide an adequate amount of short-and long-term bicycle parking spaces, including a secure bike room within each building that can house up to 48 bicycles each (or 96 total bicycles);
- Unbundle parking costs from the cost of lease or purchase; and
- Provide website links to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on developer and property management websites. Provide at least 30 secure bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle storage room.

DDOT finds that the Applicant's proposed TDM measures are not as robust as is generally seen in other projects, but will suffice given the requested variance relief for 7 additional parking spaces.

Loading and Curbside Management

The proposed loading docks will be located on the northern end of each residential building and will be accessible from within the surface parking area. Zoning regulations require one 55' loading dock for each building, however, the development is proposing a 30' loading dock for each building. DDOT finds that this reduced loading dock size can sufficiently accommodate the daily needs of the proposed buildings. If needed, a larger moving truck can obtain a public space permit to load off of the public street.

Streetscape and the 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 gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site. As part of this process, the Applicant must work closely with DDOT 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 circulating around it.

DDOT expects the Applicant to provide a minimum 4' planting strip and 6' sidewalk on all sides of the project. DDOT expects trees to be planted within the site and in public space. Any trees larger than 55 inches in circumference on private property will need to be identified and appropriately permitted for any necessary removal. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has no objection to the variance request for a reduction in parking spaces and loading area.

SZ/ac