

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2010 FEB 26 AM 11:46

Memorandum

TO: Jamison L. Weinbaum, Director
DC Office of Zoning

FROM: Karina Ricks *mfx FOR*
District Department of Transportation

DATE: February 26, 2010

SUBJECT: BZA # 18037 (Application of Dix Street Corridor Revitalization Partners LLC)
400-414 Eastern Avenue, N.E.

APPLICATION

Dix Street Corridor Revitalization Partners LLC (the 'Applicant') pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3104.1 and 3103.2, is seeking a special exception under subsection 353.1, and for the construction of more than one structure on one record lot under subsection 2516.1, and for variance relief from the number of parking spaces required under subsection 2101.1, from the size of parking spaces required under subsection 2115.1, from the number of contiguous compact parking spaces required under subsection 2115.4, from the parking area requirements under subsection 2115.10, and from the building lot control requirements under subsection 2516.4, to allow the renovation and construction of residential buildings for a new multi-family housing development in the R-5-A and C-2-A Districts at premises 400-414 Eastern Avenue, N.E., 405 - 407 Dix Street, N.E., and 61st Street, N.E. (Lots 2, 17, 18, 19, 28, 800, and 806, in Square 5260).

2000 14TH Street, N.W., 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20009
202 671-2730, Fax: 202 671-0617

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18037
EXHIBIT NO. 31

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18037
EXHIBIT NO. 31

RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) recommends conditional support of the Applicant's request for an area variance and special exceptions for the property located at 400-414 Eastern Avenue, N.E. The proposed fifty-seven parking spaces for the project raise a number of concerns that DDOT wishes to address. The Applicant has shown no Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan for the project.

DDOT ANALYSIS

The Applicant has not submitted a transportation impact study.

The Applicant is credited with requesting a reduction in parking for the site. However, it is apparent the Applicant has not factored the location of the development site in relation to the WMATA Capitol Heights rail station located approximately ½ mile away. The WMATA U series bus line has a bus stop located adjacent to the development site. The proposed minor parking reduction, from the Zoning requirement, does not satisfy DDOT's policy for the transit oriented development (TOD). The proposed fifty-seven parking spaces are excessive. The cost of private vehicle ownership and maintenance, to the future residents, will play a significant role in the number of utilized parking spaces. To DDOT's knowledge, the Applicant has not inquired whether a car sharing company may locate a vehicle on the site. One car sharing vehicle may satisfy the demand of up to fifteen households for vehicle use.

*Putting shared-cars in and around TODs could relieve many households from owning a second car or a vehicle altogether, which would result in not only considerably lower trip generation rates, but considerably less parking demand as well. **

The Applicant should be responsible to develop and provide a site specific transportation management plan (TMP). DDOT requests the TDM measures shall include the following:

- A one-time, complimentary WMATA SmartTrip card with metro fare media of \$35 for new residents upon move-in.
- A one-time membership fee subsidy in a car sharing service (i.e. Zipcar) for each residential unit.
- Provide bicycle parking which equals 10% of vehicle parking and adequate bicycle storage facilities for all residents.

* Cervero, R. (2003). Are TOD's Over-Parked? UC Transportation Center Research-Policy Briefs. Retrieved February 25, 2010 from <http://www.uctc.net/research/briefs-pb-2009-01.shtml>

While meeting with DDOT, the Applicant showed plans that may include vehicle access from Eastern Avenue through a curb cut. The vehicle access for trash removal has not been finalized based on DDOT's review. DDOT prefers to see the trash trucks use the alley that has access from Eastern Avenue. This is a safer turning maneuver for the large vehicles that oftentimes impede traffic flow and present safety concerns. DDOT reserves the right to refuse any public space permits associated with this application.

During the November 23, 2009 meeting, DDOT recommended the Applicant construct the alley using permeable pavement that will aid with reducing the quantity of surface runoff. However, the Applicant has demonstrated it is using traditional materials for the alley. The alley is an important element of the site since it allows transportation to access vehicle parking for residents. The alley shall remain publicly accessible once the project has been completed. The Applicant should be responsible to provide internal pedestrian paths, including handicap accessible ramps (ADA), connecting Eastern Avenue and Dix Street.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

DDOT supports the Applicant's proposal with the conditions as previously noted. The conditions include the following:

- Forty or less parking spaces to accompany the sixty residential units.
- A DDOT approved site specific TMP that will assist new residents with transportation choices.
- A safe means for trash removal vehicles to access the site.

DDOT believes the BZA should consider those conditions and include them in the order if the case is approved.

MK:jj

ARE TODS OVER-PARKED?

Robert Cervero, Arlie Adkins, and Cathleen Sullivan, University of California, Berkeley

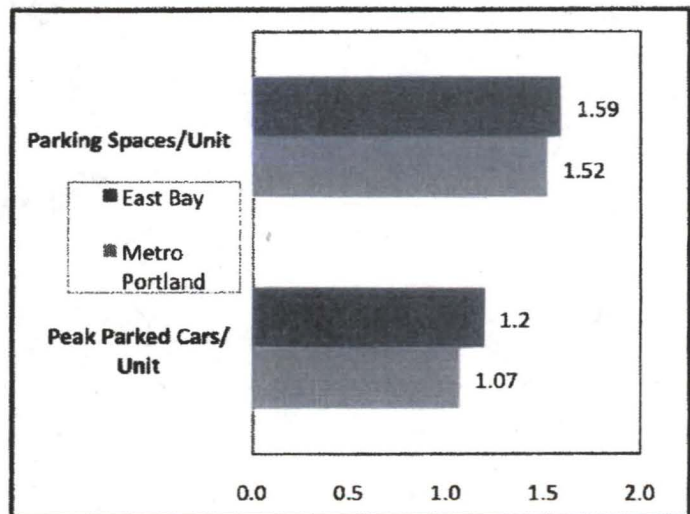
ISSUE

Many apartment projects near urban rail stations, critics charge, are “over-parked” – more parking is provided than needed. This can drive up the cost of housing, consume valuable land near transit, and impose environmental costs such as water pollution from enlarged impervious surfaces.

Part of the blame for oversupply of parking in TODs (transit-oriented developments) could be the reliance on parking generation figures from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). ITE standards assume that car ownership levels and parking demands are no different in traditional suburban settings than in neighborhoods that are served by rail transit. Yet some studies suggest that those drawn to living near urban rail stops do so for lifestyle reasons, prompting many not only to ride transit more often but also to get rid of a car.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

To study this issue, we surveyed 31 multi-family housing projects near suburban rail stations in the East Bay of San Francisco-Oakland and Metro Portland, Oregon. As the figure shows, TOD parking supply exceeded peak demand (midnight to 6AM) by 25% in the East Bay and 30% in Metro Portland. Peak demand, however, was not too different from ITE’s standard of 1.2 spaces/unit. Yet vehicle trip generation rates for some projects were well below ITE standards, suggesting many surveyed residents still owned cars but used them less because of nearby rail services.



Our research also showed that size and distance matter. In general, peak parking levels were highest for large-scale apartment projects with generous amounts of parking per unit and that were farthest from the nearest station. For every 1000 feet walking distance that a project lies from a station, we estimated, peak parking increased by 0.7 cars per dwelling unit. Case study work also showed that apartments served by retail shops, that enjoyed direct access to station platforms, and whose shortest walking path was not too circuitous tended to have lower peak parking levels.



Left: Quatama apartments enjoy direct connection to Portland's MAX station; Right: An apartment with high parking demand also suffers from a circuitous shortest path (red line) relative to straight-line distance from the project's center to the Fremont BART station. (black line).

NATIONAL SURVEY

We also surveyed professional planners from 80 U.S. municipalities with rail stations to see if their communities adjusted parking ordinances to account for transit's proximity. 35% of rail-served cities allowed lower off-street parking rates for parcels near transit, ranging from 10% to 60% fewer spaces. Also, 37% of respondents felt that their city's minimum off-street parking requirements were too high for housing near rail stops. However, 85% felt that local elected officials would strongly oppose efforts to eliminate minimum parking requirements even if a project is near a rail station.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Just as land-use environments vary throughout suburban America, so should parking policies. Parking ordinances should be more flexible for projects situated near rail stops. Based on our research, for example, developers of relatively dense apartments with adjoining retail shops and short, direct walking connections to rail stations should have the option of supplying fewer parking spaces than the norm. Flexibility might also take the form of unbundling the cost of parking from the cost of renting housing or providing residents with the option of choosing transit eco-passes rather than paying for an on-site space. And in light of the fact that TOD residents were found to commute by transit proportionately more than they shed cars or reduced parking, car-sharing should be provided in as many rail-served neighborhoods as possible. Putting shared-cars in and around TODs could relieve many households from owning a second car or a vehicle altogether, which would result in not only considerably lower trip generation rates, but considerably less parking demand as well.

