

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: April 19, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA Case No.19230 – 4424 Georgia Avenue, NW

APPLICATION

4424 Georgia Ave, LLC (the “Applicant”), requests variances from rear yard requirements under § 774.1 and off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1 to allow construction of a mixed use building with seven dwelling units and 580 square feet of retail in the C-2-A District at premises 4424 Georgia Avenue, NW (Square 2917, Lot 37). The Applicant is requesting relief from four parking spaces that are required by zoning.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and 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. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The proposed site does not have alley access and no curb cuts are proposed to accommodate off-street parking;
- The surrounding street network has the capacity to meet parking demands generated from requested parking variance;
- The Applicant is proposing to restrict Residential Parking Permit (RPP) eligibility; and
- The Applicant’s proposed Transportation Demand Management Plan is not robust.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia

CASE NO.19230

DDOT has no objection to the requested variances and expects the Applicant to provide three long-term bicycle parking spaces in a secure location that is protected from the elements and easily accessible to residents per the District Code of Municipal Regulations (DCMR) § 18-1214.

Continued Coordination

The Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT outside of the Board of Zoning Adjustment process on the following matters:

- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks and lead walks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Site Design

Site design, which includes site access, loading, and public realm design, plays a critical role in determining a proposed action's impact on the District's infrastructure. While transportation impacts can change over time, the site design will remain constant throughout the lifespan of the proposed development, making site design a critical aspect of DDOT's development review process. Accordingly, new developments must provide a safe and welcoming pedestrian experience, enhance the public realm, and serve as positive additions to the community.

Site Access

The site is bounded by Allison Street to the north, Georgia Avenue to the east, and commercial properties to the south and west. The site does not have access to an alley and there are no curb cuts to accommodate off-street parking. Pedestrian access for retail is located on Georgia Avenue and pedestrian access for residential is located on Allison Street.

Off-Street 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, and proximity to transit.

As mentioned, the Applicant is seeking full relief from the four parking spaces that are required by zoning. The site fronts the 1100 block of Allison Street for residential and the 4400 block of Georgia Avenue for retail and both blocks are Residential Parking Permit (RPP) eligible. To determine if the streets surrounding the site have the capacity to meet parking demands generated by the requested variance, the Applicant performed a parking occupancy study on Tuesday April 7, 2016, during peak occupancy hours from 6:00pm to 9:00pm as determined by DDOT. The streets that were surveyed for analysis are:

- Buchanan Street – between Iowa Avenue and 9th Street;
- Allison Street – between Iowa Avenue and 9th Street;
- Webster Street – between Iowa Avenue and 9th Street;
- Iowa Avenue – between Buchanan Street and Webster Street;

- Georgia Avenue – between Buchanan Street and Webster Street; and
- 9th Street – between Buchanan Street and Webster Street.

The study showed that there are 320 available parking spaces. On average, 71% of the available parking spaces were occupied when peak occupancy was observed at 9:00pm. During the RPP restricted period (6pm), 68% of the available parking spaces were occupied.

	PM			
	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00
Occupancy	219	215	222	228
Total Spaces	320	320	320	320
Utilization	68%	67%	69%	71%

Figure 1: Peak Parking Occupancy (Source: Gorove/Slade)

	PM			
	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00
Occupancy	219	215	222	228
Total Spaces	320	320	320	320
Utilization	68%	67%	69%	71%

Figure 2: Peak Period Inventory and Occupancy Summary (Source Gorove/Slade)

In particular, on Allison Street, between Iowa Avenue and Georgia Avenue, 50% to 70% of available parking spaces were occupied and on Georgia Avenue, between Allison Street and Webster Street, 50% or less of available parking spaces were occupied.



Figure 3: Peak Period Street Occupancy (Source: Gorove/ Slade)

Given these conditions, the surrounding street network has the capacity to meet the parking demand generated by the requested variance.

DDOT observes the Applicant is proposing a RPP eligibility restriction, which is not a strictly enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

Transit Service

The District and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District of Columbia. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The site is served by the 70s high-frequency bus route that connects Silver Spring, MD and Chinatown, Washington, DC via Georgia Avenue/ 7th Street. In addition, the bus route connects to the Red Line at Silver Spring Metro Station and Chinatown Metro Station and to the Green and Yellow Lines at Georgia Ave-Petworth Metro Station, Archives Metro Station, and Chinatown Metro Station. The closest bus stop is located approximately 248 feet, roughly a one-minute walk, at Georgia Avenue and Webster Street.

Pedestrian Facilities

The District is committed to enhance the pedestrian accessibility by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including pedestrian trips. Walking is expected to be an important mode of transportation for this development.

Bicycle Facilities

The District is committed to enhancing bicycle access by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including bicycling trips.

To serve bicycling needs and per the District Code of Municipal Regulations (DCMR) § 18-1214, the Applicant is required to provide three long-term bicycle parking spaces in a secure hold that is protected from the elements and easily accessible to residents.

The closest Capital Bikeshare Station with 14 docks is located 0.3 miles from the site at 9th Street and Upshur Street.

Transportation Demand Management

DDOT requires the Applicant to produce a comprehensive Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to help mitigate an action's transportation impacts. 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 mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

The Applicant proposes the following TDM measures:

- Restrict future residents from RPP eligibility;
- Investigate the cost of installing a TransitScreen;
- Work with DDOT to determine the location of a future Capital Bikeshare Station;
- Stage construction and design to have limited parking and other negative impacts on the surrounding neighbors and structures; and
- Schedule and locate deliveries so as to not interfere or restrict parking on Allison Street.

These measures are not robust, and some should not be considered TDM measures such as investigating the cost of installing a TransitScreen and working with DDOT to determine the location of a future Capital Bikeshare station, since these are not actual commitments. DDOT recommends the Applicant provide the following TDM measure, but has not made it a condition of approval due to the expected impacts and zoning action:

- Offer an annual carsharing membership or an annual Capital Bikeshare membership for all new tenants for a period of five years.

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. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space.

This review pertains only to zoning issues and does not consider potential impacts to District owned public space. DDOT's lack of objection to these zoning variances should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. If any portion of the project has elements in the public space requiring approval, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. 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 the Public Realm Design Manual.

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