

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: May 10, 2016

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19250 – 920-922 H Street NE

APPLICATION

920 H LLC (the “Applicant”) requests a parking variance pursuant to the off-street parking space requirements as well as variance for lot occupancy requirements to allow the construction of a four-story ten unit multifamily residential building with ground floor retail in the HS-R/C-2-A District at premises 920-922 H Street NE (Square 933, Lots 57 and 803) (the “Site”).

SUMMARY OF DDOT FINDINGS

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the impact of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- An appropriate network of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure exists in close proximity to the proposed development;
- Two compact vehicular parking spaces are proposed onsite;
- The parking utilization study shows nearby parking availability on-street to accommodate expected vehicles from this Site;
- Nine long-term bicycle parking spots will be provided at the Site;
- Loading for the building will be conducted from a loading zone on 9th Street NE; and
- The Applicant proposes an appropriate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan intended to further promote the use of non-auto travel options.

The Site’s access to bus and streetcar transit, proximity to Capital Bikeshare stations, presence of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the subject area, along with the commitment to a TDM program will lead to low levels of auto ownership and use. Considering the provided bicycle storage, nearby available vehicular parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips, DDOT finds the Applicant’s request for variance appropriate.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the proposed development and action, and following standard procedures and practice, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built or maintained to DDOT standards;
- All proposed utility vaults are expected to be accommodated on private property; and
- Streetcar is in operation in this corridor, which could impact construction and staging activities. Construction and Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) should be closely coordinated with DDOT.

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.

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. A Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) should be performed according to DDOT direction. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for transportation documentation that is consistent with the scale of this action. An outline of this project's impacts follows below. The proposed Site is shown in *Figure 1*.

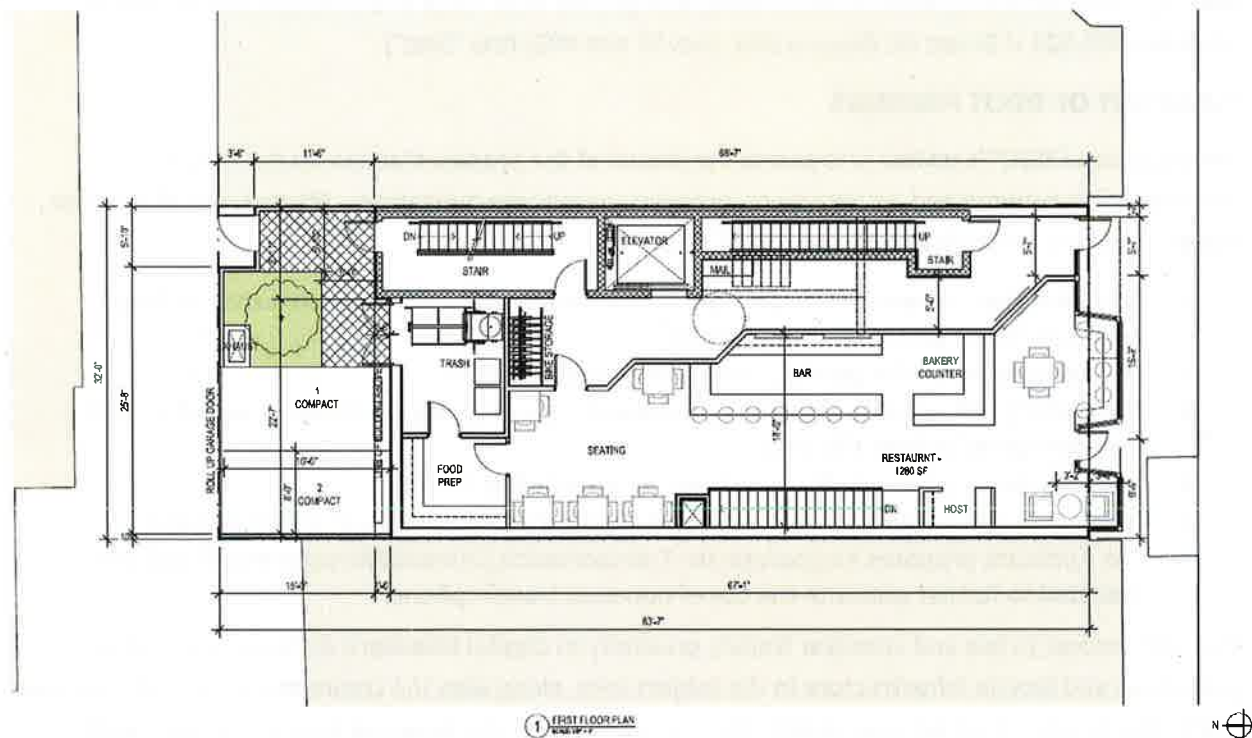


Figure 1. Proposed First Floor Site Plan (Source: Applicant)

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building is providing two vehicular parking spaces, however is required by zoning regulation to provide ten for the residential and retail uses.

The projected trip generation for the Site expects three auto-based trips originating in the AM and six in the PM peak hour, illustrating the low amount of parking turnover anticipated on a day-to-day basis. Existing parking utilization information for an appropriate parking study area was provided, and this analysis shows unused nearby street parking, with at least 94 spaces available within the study area. Additionally, four carsharing locations can be found nearby.

Generally, DDOT has no objection to reduced parking provision if documentation as to where parking could occur is made and if the overall available transportation network supports an appropriate split between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. Thus, DDOT finds appropriate the lack of parking provision in this area due to the close proximity to transit, provided bicycle storage, nearby available parking, and the overall relatively minor increase in vehicular trips. Further, the Applicant has proposed appropriate TDM measures, which will further alleviate parking needs. DDOT does not object to these spaces being compact.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Residents without autos will utilize the transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure available to this development. As agreed to during the scoping process, the Applicant anticipates an approximately 50% non-auto estimated mode split for building residents or 80% for retail customers. The development is located fronting Metrobus routes and the H/Benning streetcar line. Per the Applicant, the Site is well served by Metrobus by way of routes 90, 92, D3, D4, D8, X1, X2, X3, X8, and X9.

As aforementioned, an adequate pedestrian and bicycle network is available surrounding the Site, and a Capital Bikeshare station is located nearby. The Applicant is proposing provision of nine long-term bicycle parking spaces within the building for residents, which provides the necessary long-term bicycle parking spaces. Two additional short-term bicycle parking spaces should be added in front of the building. The proposed bicycle room will be located at street level. Full accommodation details (infrastructure provided and its design) for bicycles as well as pedestrians will be coordinated further during the public space permitting process.

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT standards require that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through an alley network or an approved loading location. Here, however, the Site does not propose loading space off the alley.

Zoning regulations do not have a loading requirement for this development, and so loading is not part of this zoning action. However, a workable loading concept is necessary to show this building can be later permitted as part of the public space permitting process. While H Street has a parking lane, streetcar service at this location does not allow for loading activities to occur as the parking lane is too narrow to allow truck parking without interference with streetcar operations.

The Applicant anticipates using an existing loading zone on 9th Street. While this plan will accommodate most of the loading anticipated, it will require trucks to move through the neighborhood to access this location and retail deliveries will require goods movement along the sidewalks between the loading zone and the retail entrances. These loading operations are not optimal, but are acceptable considering the constraints caused by the streetcar, and it is anticipated that trash collection will occur in the rear alley.

DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading, the details of which will be addressed further, as necessary, as part of the permitting process for this property.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant proposes the following TDM measures:

- Resident Permit Parking (RPP) Restrictions
 - Tenants of the development will be prohibited from obtaining RPP permits from the District Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- On-Site Transportation Information
 - A TransitScreen will be installed in the residential lobby to keep residents and visitors informed on all available transportation choices and provide real-time transportation updates.
- Transportation Incentives
 - To help encourage non-auto transportation uses, the Applicant will provide the first occupant of each residential unit with a Capital Bikeshare membership or car sharing membership to further alleviate the reliance on personal vehicles.

These TDM measures, if implemented as planned, will encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation. However, DDOT observes the Applicant is proposing a Residential Permit Parking (RPP) restriction, which is not a strictly enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome. DDOT is supportive of the Applicant's proposed measures, and believes these elements will be effective.

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.

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. As such, all public space shall be designed and constructed to DDOT standards.

DDOT's lack of objection or discussion of other public space elements as part of the zoning variance should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. Final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process.

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