

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.19267 – 1701 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

APPLICATION

1711 Rhode Island Owner LLC (the “Applicant”), seeks relief pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3103.2 and 3104.1, for variances from the off-street parking requirements under § 2101.1, the compact space percentage requirements under § 2115.2, the compact space grouping requirements under § 2115.4, and the minimum drive aisle width requirements under § 2117.5, and a special exception from the office use requirements under § 508.1, to renovate an existing building for use as offices in the DC/SP-1 District at premises 1711 Rhode Island Avenue, NW (Square 159, Lot 87). Zoning requires 57 parking spaces. The Applicant proposes 48 parking spaces and is requesting relief from nine zoning required parking spaces.

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:

- On-street vehicle parking occupancy was not conducted;
- Long-term on-street parking is not widely available within the vicinity of the site;
- Within ¼ mile of the site, 40 parking garages exist. Capacity of these garages has not been evaluated; and
- The Applicant’s Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan is not sufficient robust.

DDOT has no objection to requested variances and special exceptions with the following conditions:

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 19267
EXHIBIT NO. 39

- Expand the existing Capital Bikeshare station in public space adjacent to the Applicant's building to include four new bicycles and docks;
- Provide access to all tenants, if multiple tenants, to the shower and changing facilities;
- Provide a minimum of 40 long-term bicycle parking spaces in a secure and easily accessible location; and
- Provide a minimum of four short-term bicycle parking spaces (two racks) located within public space.

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 proposed short-term bicycle parking spaces, 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; and
- The proposed site plan does not show the existing Capital Bikeshare station in public space adjacent to the Applicant's building. While the station will need to be relocated during construction, the bikeshare station must be incorporated into the site's public space design along Rhode Island Avenue.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Off-Street Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price and 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 the provision of 57 parking spaces. The Applicant proposes a total of 48 parking spaces, 36 zoning compliant spaces and 12 non-compliant spaces (six tandem spaces). Of the 36 zoning compliant spaces, 15 spaces are compact, which is above the zoning requirement that permits a maximum of 40% compact spaces. The Applicant also seeks relief from the minimum drive aisle width of 20 feet and proposes widths ranging from 14 feet to 19 feet 4 inches in eight locations.

Typically, DDOT requires Applicants seeking parking relief of five or more spaces to provide a parking occupancy study to determine if the streets surrounding the site have the capacity to meet parking demands generated by the requested relief; however, a cursory review of the streets surrounding the site shows that the area has low capacity to meet parking demand generated by requested relief.

In lieu of requiring a parking occupancy study, DDOT requested that the Applicant provide a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan that focuses on office employees. Though TDM measures have been discussed with DDOT, the Applicant has not submitted a robust TDM plan to support the relief requested.

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 proposed the following TDM plan:

- Provide a public transit information screen, showing real-time information on nearby transit services and carshare and bikeshare locations and availability;
- Shower and changing facilities will be provided in the building for employees who bike, walk, or job to work;
- A marketing program highlighting transportation alternatives and TDM measures; and
- Provide 30 secure bicycle spaces in the P1 level of the garage.

DDOT requests the following additional TDM measures in order to create a robust TDM plan:

- Expand the existing Capital Bikeshare station in public space adjacent to the Applicant's building to include four new bicycles and docks;
- Provide access to all tenants, if multiple tenants, to the shower and changing facilities;
- Provide a minimum of 40 secure bicycle spaces, in order to meet the Zoning Regulations Rewrite requirement of one long-term bicycle parking space for each 2,500 square feet of office;
- Provide a minimum of four short-term bicycle parking spaces (two racks) located within public space.

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.

The proposed site plan does not show the existing Capital Bikeshare station in public space adjacent to the Applicant's building. DDOT expects that the station will remain in its current location.

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. The proposed short-term bicycle parking spaces located within public space is required to be approved 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.