


**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin
Neighborhood Planning Manager 

DATE: November 2, 2018

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 19864** – 526-528 8th Street SE

APPLICATION

MDP 526 8th Street LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9 requests a special exception under Subtitle C § 703.2 from the minimum parking requirements of Subtitle C § 701.5, and pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 10, for a variance from the loading berth requirements of Subtitle C § 901. The site is located in the MU-25 zone at 526-528 8th Street SE (Square 926, Lots 809 and 810).

The Applicant proposes to construct a new 9,245 SF three-story retail building on the site of an existing surface parking lot. The Applicant is seeking relief from two (2) of four (4) required vehicle parking spaces and the requirement for one (1) loading berth.

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 site is currently served by a 30-foot rear alley. Trash pick-up and the proposed vehicle parking spaces will be accessed from the alley;

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 19864

- There is an existing 54-foot commercial loading zone immediately to the north of the site on 8th Street SE. This loading zone can be used by the property owner to accommodate any large food or beverage delivery trucks;
- The Applicant's proposal for using both the existing alley and commercial loading zone to serve the site's loading needs is acceptable with the implementation of the Loading Management Plan (LMP), as proposed in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment;
- Since the site's existing curb cut on 8th Street SE will be closed, the Applicant should coordinate with DDOT's Parking and Ground Transportation Division (PGTD) regarding the final curbside uses and changes to the street signs, as appropriate;
- ZR16 requires four (4) vehicle parking spaces be provided. The Applicant is proposing to provide only two (2) spaces. DDOT finds the Applicant's proposed TDM Plan, in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment, acceptable to meet the requirements of Subtitle C § 703.4 for relief from two (2) parking spaces;
- An on-street vehicle parking occupancy study was not required because, in accordance with DDOT policy, relief from five (5) or more spaces was not requested;
- The site is well served by transit with the Eastern Market Metrorail station less than ¼ mile to the north and several DC Circulator stops in the vicinity of the site; and
- The Applicant is proposing to exceed the ZR16 long- and short-term bicycle parking requirements by providing three (3) long-term spaces and four (4) short-term spaces. DDOT notes that these are not currently shown on the submitted plans. The Applicant should confirm the locations and update the final planset.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed project will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. The proposed project may lead to a minor increase in vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. In addition, the project has the potential to generate minor impacts to on-street parking conditions in the area. Vehicle parking demand may increase slightly as a result of the project, inducing a higher level of parking utilization in the immediate area.

Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested loading and vehicle parking relief with the following conditions:

- Update the planset to show the quantity and locations of short- and long-term bicycle parking spaces. As proposed by the Applicant, three (3) long-term spaces will be provided in the basement level and four (4) short-term spaces in public space;
- Implement the following Loading Management Plan (LMP), as proposed by the Applicant in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment:
 - All tenants will be notified to use the commercial loading zone on the east side of 8th Street for all deliveries. Tenants also will be notified that the hours of operation of the loading zone are 7:00 AM to 6:30 PM;
 - Tenants will be advised that trucks are not permitted to block vehicular, bike, or pedestrian traffic on 8th Street;
 - Trucks will not be allowed to idle and must follow all District guidelines for heavy vehicle operation including but not limited to DCMR 20-Chapter 9, Section 900 (Engine Idling),

the regulations set forth in DDOT's Freight Management and Commercial Vehicle Operations document, and the primary access routes listed in the DDOT Truck and Bus Route Map (godogo.com/freight); and

- Tenants will be provided suggested truck routing maps (including any restricted routes) for drivers that frequently deliver to the building. Tenants also will be given DDOT's Freight Management and Commercial Vehicle Operations document to provide drivers, as needed, to encourage compliance with idling laws.
- Implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, as proposed by the Applicant in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment:

Employees

- Information on and/or links to current transportation programs and services will be provided to employees either electronically (via a website) or in a hard-copy format. Examples of information that may be provided included: WMATA, goDCgo.com, Capital Bikeshare, Car-sharing services, Uber, Ridescout, Commuter Connections Rideshare Program, Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home, and Commuter Connections Pools Program.
- Convenient and covered secure bike parking facilities will be provided for a minimum of three bicycles in lieu of the one required long-term bicycle space.
- New employees, at the time of hire, will be offered a one-time, one-year Capital Bikeshare membership or a one time, \$85 SmarTrip card for the first 10 years that the building is leased. Memberships will be limited to one membership or SmarTrip card per employee.

Visitors

- Short-term bicycle parking will be provided in public space in front of the proposed building for visitor use.
- The tenants' websites will be encouraged to include a "How to Get Here" link, which will provide information regarding alternate modes of transportation that can be used to get to the site. Information will include specific Metrobus routes serving the site, including location of the bus stops near the site, the location of the nearby Metrorail station, and the location of the nearest Capital Bikeshare stations.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

Subtitle C § 701.5 of the Zoning Regulations (ZR16) requires a total of four (4) vehicular parking spaces (1.33 per 1,000 SF in excess of 3,000 SF and 50% transit reduction) be provided for the 9,245 SF retail building. The Applicant is proposing to provide only two (2) vehicle parking spaces on-site. These spaces will be accessed via the 30-foot rear public alley. The alley network for this block is accessed via 15-foot alley entrances on both 8th Street and 9th Street SE.

In situations where an Applicant is requesting relief from five (5) or greater vehicle parking spaces, DDOT typically requires an on-street parking occupancy study be provided. Since relief was only requested from two (2) spaces, an occupancy study was not required. Additionally, a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study was not required because the proposed uses and densities are matter-of-right, plus given the context of the neighborhood the vast majority of patrons are anticipated to arrive by transit or foot.

Subtitle C § 703.4 of ZR16 requires that any request for a reduction in the minimum required parking include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan approved by DDOT. The Applicant proposed a TDM Plan in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment, prepared by Wells + Associates, as listed out above in the Recommendation section. DDOT finds the TDM Plan acceptable to meet this zoning requirement.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of ZR16 requires a total of one (1) long term (1 per 10,000 SF) and three (3) short term (1 per 3,500 SF) bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to exceed these requirements by providing three (3) long- and four (4) short-term spaces (2 inverted U-racks). It is stated in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment that the long-term spaces will be provided in the basement and short-term spaces in public space in front of the site. However, DDOT notes that these are not shown on the plan set.

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 requires 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 the alley network, to which this building is adjacent. Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Subtitle C § 901.1 of ZR16 requires one (1) loading berth be provided for a retail use between 5,000 and 20,000 SF in size. The Applicant is requesting relief from this loading berth requirement. Instead, the Applicant proposes to take advantage of the 30-foot rear public alley, which connects to 15-alley entrances on 8th Street SE and 9th Street, for trash pick-up and vehicle parking. Additionally, food and beverage truck deliveries are anticipated to use the existing 54-foot commercial loading zone which is located in front of the neighboring property to the north. DDOT finds this proposal acceptable with the implementation of the following Loading Management Plan (LMP), as proposed by the Applicant in the October 12, 2018 Transportation Assessment and listed out in the Recommendation section above.

With the removal of the curb cut on 8th Street SE, the Applicant has proposed extending the loading zone another 25 feet to the south. The Applicant should work with DDOT's Parking and Ground Transportation Division (PGTD) to update the parking signs and create either new on-street vehicle parking spaces or extend the commercial loading zone, as appropriate for the needs and context of the neighborhood.

Public Space

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of public space design. All elements of the project proposed in public space, such as closure of the existing curb cut, restoration of the brick sidewalk, installation of short-term bicycle parking, building projections, and bay windows, require the Applicant to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. Additionally, in the location of the curb cut to be closed the Applicant should install a new street tree.

A permit application can be filed through the DDOT Transportation Online Permitting System (TOPS) website. DDOT expects the proposed public space design to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A and 24 of the DCMR and the most recent versions of DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual and Public Realm Design Manual for public space design guidance.

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