

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: April 20, 2020

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20266 – 3400 Connecticut Avenue NW

APPLICATION

3400 Connecticut Partners 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, to construct a mixed use retail/residential development. The Applicant is seeking full relief from 17 required parking spaces. The site is in the NC-3 Zone at 3400 Connecticut Avenue NW (Square 2069, Lots 817-821) and served by a 15-foot public alley.

The Applicant’s proposal consists of the following development program:

- 52 residential units (17 existing, 35 new);
- Approximately 16,000 square feet of retail space (13,300 SF existing, 2,700 SF new); and
- Zero (0) vehicle parking spaces.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. 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 multi-modal 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 Applicant is not providing off-street parking due to physical constraints inherent to the site;
- The site is very well-served by Metrorail and Metrobus transit, and is approximately 500 feet from the Cleveland Park Metrorail station;
- The project will close the existing curb cut on Connecticut Avenue;
- The Applicant evaluated several options to include off-street parking in the project, none of which were feasible;
- According to the Applicant's parking occupancy study, which evaluated curbside parking supply within a two-block radius of the site, the availability of on-street parking in the area near the site would accommodate the residents and visitors expected to travel by automobile;
- The Applicant proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan in the April 16, 2020 Parking Study, which DDOT finds adequate to reduce the potential for residents parking vehicles on-street in adjacent neighborhoods;
- The Applicant has proposed a Loading Management Plan for the site which proposes a retail loading zone on Connecticut Avenue NW and a residential loading area using the public alley at the northwest corner of the site. DDOT is generally supportive of this concept and will further refine the details of the commercial loading zone when the Applicant submits a signage plan during public space permitting; and
- The Applicant should coordinate with DDOT's Urban Forestry Division regarding any impacts to trees, including Heritage Trees and Special Trees.

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 special exception on the following conditions:

- The Applicant will implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted:
 - Identify Transportation Coordinator for the development. The Transportation Coordinator will act as point of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement.
 - Will provide Transportation Coordinator contact information to goDCgo and coordinate with goDCgo.
 - Transportation Coordinators will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to the residents, employees, and customers, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) on property website and in any internal building newsletters or communications.
 - Transportation Coordinators will receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the TDM conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan.

- Will post “getting here” information in a visible and prominent location on the website with a focus on nonautomotive travel modes. Also, links will be provided to goDCgo.com, CommuterConnections.com, transit agencies around the metropolitan area, and instructions for customers discouraging parking on-street in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones.
- Provide residents and employees who wish to carpool with detailed carpooling information and will be referred to other carpool matching services sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG) or other comparable service if MWCOCG does not offer this in the future.
- Transportation Coordinator will subscribe to goDCgo’s residential newsletter.
- Post all TDM commitments on website, publicize availability, and allow the public to see what commitments have been promised.
- The Applicant will provide 16 long-term and eight (8) short-term bicycle parking spaces above ZR16 requirements. Long-term bicycle storage space will be provided free of charge to residents.
- Long-term bicycle storage rooms will accommodate non-traditional sized bikes including cargo, tandem, and kids bikes.
- Will provide a bicycle repair station in the long-term bicycle parking storage room. • Will identify nearby parking lot/garage facilities that can provide additional parking for guests, customers, and employees.
- Will provide two (2) Capital Bikeshare expansion plates (8 docks) for the adjacent station, which requires 20 additional linear feet. The larger Bikeshare station will be shown in permitting plans that the Applicant submits for permitting. The Applicant will pay for the expansion to the existing station and pay to have the Bikeshare station removed and relocated during construction.
- Transportation Coordinator will demonstrate to goDCgo that tenants with 20 or more employees are in compliance with DC Commuter Benefits Law and participate in one of the three transportation benefits outlined in the law (employee-paid tax benefit, employer-paid direct benefit, or shuttle service), as well as any other commuter benefits relate laws that may be implemented in the future.
- Will participate in Capital Bikeshare corporate at the Gold Level and offer free annual memberships to employees at the site for the first five (5) years of building occupancy.
- Provide welcome packets to all new residents that should, at a minimum, include the Metrorail pocket guide, brochures of local bus lines (Circulator and Metrobus), carpool and vanpool information, CaBi coupon or rack card, Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) brochure, and the most recent DC Bike Map. Brochures can be ordered from DDOT’s goDCgo program by emailing info@godcgo.com.
- Install a Transportation Information Center Display (electronic screen) within the lobby containing information related to local transportation alternatives. At a minimum the display will include information about nearby Metrorail stations and schedules, Metrobus stops and schedules, carsharing locations, and nearby Capital Bikeshare locations indicating the availability of bicycles.
- Will prohibit residents at the property from participating in the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program.
- Will offer a free annual Capital Bikeshare membership to every resident during the first five (5) years of building occupancy
- The Applicant will implement the following Loading Management Plan (LMP) for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted:
 - A loading manager will be designated by the building management who will be on duty during delivery hours. The loading manager will be responsible for coordinating with

vendors and tenants to schedule deliveries and will work with the community and neighbors to resolve any conflicts should they arise.

- A lease provision will require all tenants to use only the loading area for all deliveries and move-in and move-out activities.
- All tenants will be required to schedule deliveries that utilize the loading area (any loading operation conducted using a truck 20-feet in length or larger).
- The loading manager will schedule deliveries using the berth such that the dock's capacity is not exceeded. In the event that an unscheduled delivery vehicle arrives while the dock is full, that driver will be directed to return at a later time when a berth will be available so as to not compromise safety or impede Connecticut Avenue NW or the public alley's functionality.
- The loading manager will schedule residential loading activities so as not to conflict with retail deliveries. All residential loading will need to be scheduled with the loading manager and it is anticipated that residential loading will take place primarily during afternoons and evenings, when the retail loading activity is minimal.
- The loading manager will monitor inbound and outbound truck maneuvers and will ensure that trucks accessing the loading area do not block vehicular, bike, or pedestrian traffic along Connecticut Avenue NW except during those times when a truck is actively entering or exiting a loading berth.
- Service vehicle and truck traffic interfacing with Connecticut Avenue NW traffic will be monitored during peak periods and management measures will be taken if necessary, to reduce conflicts between truck and vehicular movements.
- Residential and retail trash pickup will occur outside of the peak hours at the residential loading area accessible from the commercial loading zone on Connecticut Avenue NW.
- The loading manager will monitor the timing of the retail and/or residential deliveries to see if any adjustments need to be made to ensure any conflicts with the retail loading and residential loading activities are minimized.
- Trucks using the loading areas 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 goDCgo Motorcoach Operators Guide, and the primary access routes shown on the DDOT Truck and Bus Route Map (godcgo.com/freight).
- The loading manager will be responsible for disseminating suggested truck routing maps to the building's tenants and to drivers from delivery services that frequently utilize the development's loading areas as well as notifying all drivers of any access or egress restrictions (ex. No left turn onto Connecticut Avenue NW). The loading manager will also distribute flyer materials, such as the MWCOG Turn Your Engine Off brochure, to drivers as needed to encourage compliance with idling laws. The loading manager will also post these materials and other relevant notices in a prominent location within the loading area.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

The Applicant is required to provide and is seeking relief from all 17 vehicle parking spaces. In situations where an Applicant requests relief from five (5) or more vehicle parking spaces, DDOT requires an on-street parking occupancy study to understand the action's impact on neighborhood parking conditions. The Applicant analyzed parking availability for a two-block radius surrounding the site. On-street parking near the site is composed of metered spaces, Residential Permit Parking (RPP) spaces, and time-restricted spaces. The results of the parking occupancy study indicated that demand for on-street parking spaces does not exceed the available supply during any of the projected peak hours.

Subtitle C § 703.4 of the Zoning Regulations requires that any request for a reduction in the minimum number of required parking spaces includes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan that has been approved by DDOT. To meet this requirement, the Applicant has committed to implement a robust TDM program, as documented in the April 16, 2020 Parking Study and listed in the Recommendation section above.

DDOT finds the amount of available non-RPP on-street parking within a two-block radius sufficient to meet the needs of the project in conjunction with the above referenced TDM plan.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires that the Applicant provide 14 long-term and seven (7) short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to meet exceed this requirement by providing additional spaces, as noted in the TDM plan. The long-term bicycle parking spaces should be in an area internal to the building and easily accessible to residents. The Applicant can provide the short-term bicycle parking spaces by installing two inverted U-racks (one residential, one retail) in public space within 120 feet of a primary building entrance.

Loading

Subtitle C § 901.1 of the Zoning Regulations does not require the provision of loading facilities for 35 new residential units and 2,700 SF of new retail. To accommodate loading for the proposed development, the Applicant is proposing a 30 foot long retail loading zone on Connecticut Avenue NW and a residential loading area off the public alley at the northwest corner of the site. DDOT will work with the Applicant during public space permitting to refine the signage and dimensions of the loading zone. The Applicant has also proposed a Loading Management Plan (LMP) in the April 16, 2020 Parking Study to help minimize impacts to the transportation network from trucks and trash pick-up (see Recommendations section above for details of the LMP).

PUBLIC SPACE

DDOT's lack of objection 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 Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

The Applicant will need to apply for public space permits and should continue to coordinate with DDOT on the following elements of public space design:

- Ensure all building entrances are at-grade with the sidewalk so that no stairs or ramps are proposed within public space;
- The Applicant should work with DDOT on its proposed plans for the curb cut closure and Connecticut Avenue streetscape, and coordinate with the construction phase of DDOT's Cleveland Park Streetscape and Drainage Improvement Project;
- Submit a signage plan for Connecticut Avenue NW frontage showing proposed loading zone;
- The Applicant should work with DDOT staff regarding the expansion to the Capital Bikeshare station; and
- Determine final locations for short-term bicycle racks.