GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

d. Policy Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe
Associate Director

DATE: November 4, 2013

SUBJECT: **DDOT Report of the Zoning Regulations Review Text Subtitle C**

ROLE AND MISSION OF DDOT

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is established "to improve the District's economic competitiveness and quality of life by planning, coordinating, and operating the transportation system, ...and managing and maintaining the transportation infrastructure, to ensure the safe, efficient movement of people, goods and information along public rights-of-ways."[1] Although DDOT does not have direct responsibilities for transportation infrastructure in private space in the District, Subtitle C of the Zoning Regulations Review Text contains several areas closely linked with DDOT's responsibilities.

It is DDOT's mission to develop and maintain a cohesive sustainable transportation system that delivers safe, affordable, and convenient ways to move people and goods—while protecting and enhancing the natural, environmental and cultural resources of the District. Central to this mission is a robust multi-modal transportation system. As described in the Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia, "A well-balanced and multi-modal transportation system is integral to the city's efforts to sustain and enhance the quality of life and key to its future economic growth and its role as the nation's capital. Achieving such a system requires integrating land use and transportation, and implementing a range of improvements that enhance connectivity, livability, and vitality."[2]

A well-balanced and multi-modal transportation system is by nature intended to serve a diverse set of users and needs. It is not a one-size fits all approach to transportation, but rather is intended to serve rich and poor, well and infirm, old and young, along with families with children and single person

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[1] DC Code § 50-921.01 Establishment of the Department of Transportation.
[2] DC Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 4: Transportation Element § 400.3.

households. A truly multi-modal system should provide transportation service to all elements of the community in a way that is equitable, reliable, and relatively fast.

DDOT finds that the Zoning Regulations Review Text Subtitle C, as drafted, supports the fulfillment of DDOT's transportation mission, while at the same time preserving flexibility that is sensitive to existing context. While this report is focused on the provisions in Subtitle C, by way of background, DDOT offers the following points to be expanded on in this report in serving the basis of the agency's evaluation:

- DDOT continues to work with multiple stakeholders to provide a world-class transportation system, with easily accessible transportation options throughout the District.
- At the same time, the demands on the transportation system from residents and visitors alike are evolving, and flexibility will be required to meet these evolving demands.
- Private development has a substantial role in shaping transportation demands on the public rights-of-way, and these demands should be addressed, without impeding on the rights of private property owners in the District.

CURRENT AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The District owns and operates a large and complex transportation system providing for many modes of travel that serves 632,000 residents and 800,000 employees. In peak travel periods, the current transportation network experiences extensive delay on arterials and freeways resulting in long and unreliable travel times in vehicles and surface transit. Delay is so extensive that the peak period of travel has extended from an hour to multiple hours. It is not uncommon to find congested conditions between the hours of 7:00 and 10:00 AM and 3:00 and 7:00 PM. As such, there is little ability to avoid travel delay simply by adjusting a schedule. Avoiding delay requires a more fundamental change in the schedule of work by telecommuting, alternate work schedules, etc. Transit service is currently strained as well. Several Metrorail lines experience congestion during rush hour and buses are subject to delays caused by congestion on roadways.

The District is projected to experience substantial growth in the future. It is expected that the District will add more than 140,000 residents and 180,000 jobs by 2040.[3] This growth must also be viewed within the context of a metropolitan region that is projected to add 2 million people and over 1.6 million jobs by 2040.[4] With this growth comes the need to ensure safe, efficient, and sustainable transportation options for the District's residents, employees, and millions of visitors that pass through the District's borders each year. The District's transportation network is largely built out, and largescale expansion of the District's road network is not possible to accommodate significantly more vehicles.

In light of these constraints and challenges, DDOT and other public and private stakeholders are working to increase transportation options throughout the District in order to address existing and future needs. DDOT and its partner stakeholders have been working toward promoting a multi-modal transportation network for many years, and much progress has been made toward increasing transportation options. In fact, over 50 percent of District residents commute without a car each day, the second highest of any city in the United States.[5] Additionally, the District has seen increases in bicycle and transit commuting over the past decade. However, much work remains, especially in light of future growth projections. The process of providing a transportation network that meets future needs is an ongoing process that will

[3] Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Cooperative Forecast Round 8.2, 2013.
[4] Ibid.
[5] US Census, American Community Survey, 2012.

continue to evolve in response to population and employment changes, technological advances, and changing preferences.

Guiding Documents

Given current and anticipated challenges caused by population growth, the District has adopted a transportation policy to promote a multi-modal transportation network. The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and the transportation component of the Sustainable DC Plan establish a broad vision for the District's transportation future. The two documents recognize the predicted growth in the District and anticipate the associated transportation challenges.

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan stresses the importance of multi-modalism and acknowledges the important relationship between transportation and land-use as a means to meet the District's current and future transportation needs. Similarly, the transportation component of the Sustainable DC Plan calls for the encouragement of non-automobile transportation while reducing dependence on private vehicles. In pursuit of this vision, the Plan establishes the following targets for commute mode splits by 2032: 50% transit, 25% biking & walking, and 25% auto.

DDOT is in the midst of leading moveDC, a collaborative effort to develop a bold and implementation-focused vision that responds to the anticipated transportation challenges facing the District, and will guide strategic investments—for bicycles, pedestrians, vehicles, and transit—in the District's transportation system for the next 25 years and beyond. These investments are likely to include identifying new multimodal transportation options and supportive policies to encourage the use of transportation options.

Streetcar

DDOT is currently pursuing a 22-mile Priority Streetcar System. The system is intended to make travel within the District much easier for residents, workers and visitors, and is specifically designed to connect neighborhoods. The vision for a larger network of high capacity transit will be defined through the moveDC plan.

Circulator and Capital Bikeshare

DDOT established the DC Circulator system to provide high-quality, dependable, easy-to-use bus service to better connect areas of the District. The Circulator currently operates 5 distinct routes with plans to add up to 6 additional routes by 2020. Capital Bikeshare provides residents, employees, and visitors with yet another transportation option. With nearly 2,000 bicycles available at about 200 docking stations, approximately 9,000 people use Capital Bikeshare each day. The system planned for continued expansion, which will provide greater breadth of coverage and added system capacity.

Bicycle Facilities

The District is a national leader in providing safe and efficient bicycle infrastructure. Over 56 miles of bicycle lanes, 56 miles of multi-use trails, and 3 miles of protected cycle tracks have helped to increase

bicycling from 1.4% in 2000 to 4.1% of work trips in 2012.[6] DDOT continues to work on expanding bicycle facilities throughout the District.

Metrorail and Metrobus

Metrorail plays a vital role in the regional transportation network and is particularly vital to meeting the transportation needs of District residents, workers, and visitors. Through its Momentum initiative, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority is planning for the long-term maintenance and growth of the Metrorail system. WMATA also currently operates about 100 bus lines and serves about 235,000 people in the District each day. Some of the lines offer frequent headways that minimize wait time during peak travel times, while other lines offer less frequent service WMATA recently began operating express bus routes to provide faster, higher-quality bus service that is more competitive with auto travel. WMATA has defined the Priority Corridor Network for high-quality bus service to support continued regional growth in transit demand. DDOT and WMATA are currently working together to establish a Priority Bus Corridor network in the District to improve bus service in areas both with and without Metrorail service.

Curbside Management

On street parking is in high demand in many areas of the District, and the management of this resource is an ongoing and iterative process. High demand is found in long-established neighborhoods and emerging ones, as well as areas around attractive uses, like university campuses and Metrorail stations. Demand comes from immediate residents, other residents of the District of Columbia, and non-District residents. In recent years, DDOT has evolved parking management processes to respond to changing demands, including the introduction of "performance parking" districts around the Nationals Stadium, in Columbia Heights, and along H Street NE. Working with the City Council, DDOT will continue to update and make changes to parking programs, some of which have remained largely unchanged for nearly 40 years.

Private Sector Efforts

The private sector is contributing to the quantity and quality of transportation options available in the District. Taxis, which have been providing a valuable on-demand transportation option for decades, are now being augmented by new car services including Uber and UberTAXI. Carsharing, which provides members with access to a fleet of automobiles, is an increasingly popular alternative to auto ownership. Carsharing has been proven to lower demand for driving and parking and reduce transportation costs. Zipcar, Enterprise, Hertz, and Car2Go provide commercial carsharing services within the district.

Technology is also playing a key role in expanding transportation options and making them more convenient. Numerous web-based applications are designed to provide real-time transit information, which decreases wait time and promotes transit use. Additional web-based applications are making it easier to share personal vehicles or find rideshare partners, both of which decrease the need for auto ownership, parking, and driving. These applications – made possible by relatively recent technological advances – are collectively making transportation options more appealing. It is expected that technology will continue to evolve and alter people's transportation choices.

[6] US Census.

PRIVATE LAND DEVELOPMENT'S IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION

Although DDOT and other public and private stakeholders are working to increase the supply of non-auto transportation options, this is only a part of the effort necessary to develop a more complete multi-modal transportation network. The Zoning Regulations, too, should facilitate a multi-modal network by providing the flexibility for developers to deliver a built environment that is more consistent with a no-car or car-lite lifestyle.

Private land development, in particular vehicle parking provision, greatly impacts people's transportation choices and subsequently affects the District's transportation network. Both scholarly research and anecdotal evidence from DDOT's development review process reveal that not all land development projects have an equal transportation impact. Rather, development location and building characteristics play a significant role in a development project's transportation impact. Projects in dense, walkable neighborhoods with good transit access tend to produce many more non-auto trips than projects located in lower density neighborhoods further from transit. Building characteristics, particularly parking provision, are also highly predictive of a building's transportation impact. Simply put, the lower the parking provision, the fewer vehicle trips that are likely to be generated.

The current Zoning Regulations make it difficult to provide fewer parking spaces than required, thereby creating a parking floor that may be higher than actual demand. A more market-based approach to parking provision is a key element in promoting a multi-modal transportation network.

More flexibility in the vehicle parking requirements is increasingly important in light of changing demographics and housing preferences. Recent analysis indicates a growing demand for car-free or car-lite lifestyles, particularly amongst Millennials. However, as noted above, the current Zoning Regulations make it difficult for developers to deliver this product type to market without navigating through a variance process. This has resulted in a constrained supply of residential buildings with a level of parking provision consistent with demand from this segment of the market. Other proposed changes in the Zoning Regulations, including permitting some corner store uses and accessory dwellings, will also serve to attract individuals seeking car-free or car-lite lifestyles and promote non-auto transportation options.

PROPOSED ZONING REGULATIONS

The Zoning Regulations Review (ZRR) Subtitle C text recognizes the projected growth and associated transportation challenges as well as the macro level shifts in transportation supply and demand, and attempts to align land development requirements with these realities. The proposed modifications to the zoning code would:

- Remove vehicle parking requirements in Downtown;
- Halve the vehicle parking requirements in highly transit accessible areas;
- Require TDM measures to be implemented for vehicle parking above given thresholds; and
- Require a robust provision of bicycle parking.

DDOT supports these proposed changes as integral elements in promoting a multi-modal transportation network.

Impacts of the Proposed Vehicle Parking Regulations

The ZRR calls for eliminating parking requirements in Downtown and reducing the vehicle parking requirements in areas with excellent high-quality transit service while not changing requirements in much of the city where transportation options are less plentiful.

Reduced vehicle parking minimums would give greater flexibility for developers to provide a level of parking that they believe is necessary for a successful real estate project – the developer would have the choice to provide the minimum vehicular parking spaces required, or provide vehicle parking spaces in excess of the minimum requirements. The ability to more easily provide lower levels of parking than currently required would allow developers to better target segments of the population that do not own cars. Developers wishing to target a car-free or car-lite demographic currently have to navigate through a variance process through the Board of Zoning Adjustment, which adds time, cost, and uncertainty to the entitlements process and increases costs for future tenants. As a reviewer of parking variance requests, DDOT is almost always able to support these requests because projects with fewer vehicle parking spaces generate fewer auto trips. Under the proposed changes, developers would be permitted to target these demographics as a matter-of-right, thereby reducing costs and increasing the real estate industry's ability to deliver a product type that is increasingly in high demand.

Further, by allowing development by-right that supports these demographics in a manner that is more consistent with their lower levels of auto ownership, demand on the transportation system is reduced. Instead of being pushed toward vehicle travel through higher levels of required parking, this demographic can travel by transit or bicycle, both of which have a more marginal impact on travel conditions.

The ZRR text also establishes mitigation efforts that must accompany parking provision for projects that seek to provide more parking than required. Tying the overprovision of vehicle parking and thus trip generation with mitigations is important in encouraging the use of non-auto modes and ensuring the continued functionality of the transportation network. DDOT supports this approach to provide some additional certainty to the review and approval process, and this is an area where DDOT would expect the specific items to evolve as this approach moves forward.

Bicycle Parking

The ZRR text considers that lower rates of single occupancy vehicles will require that people make more trips by bicycle and provides for robust bicycle parking minimums. The proposed minimums facilitate a mode split that is consistent with DDOT's vision as described in the Sustainable DC Plan as well as District Code.

The ZRR text adopts the current requirement for residential parking as described in the Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007 of 1 long-term bicycle parking space per 3 residential dwelling units. DDOT believes this standard is sufficient, but has recently seen some demand exceeding this level. This is an area that continues to evolve, and DDOT encourages the Commission to explore this issue during its deliberations. For other uses, the ZRR text adopts standards to facilitate a robust bicycle mode split consistent with mode split goals established in the Sustainable DC Plan. For instance, in office uses, the ZRR text seeks to require 1 bicycle parking space for each 2,500 square feet of office development. Although difficult to comprehend in the abstract, the bicycle parking requirements are

appropriate for achieving the walking and biking mode split targets established in the Sustainable DC Plan. Assuming an average of 250 square feet of space per office worker, the proposed bicycle parking requirements would require approximately 1 bicycle parking space per 10 employees which equates to about a 10% bicycle mode split.

CONCLUSION

DDOT supports Subtitle C of the Zoning Regulations Review. The proposal provides flexibility for the provision of vehicle parking in areas where such provision is appropriate, requires a robust level of bicycle parking, and imposes TDM requirements on projects that have the greatest potential to impact the transportation system. When taken together, the ZRR supports a robust multi-modal transportation network that serves the needs of all residents, guests, and employees in the District.

DDOT also notes that the ZRR text would impact new land developments only. The new regulations would not change parking provision requirements for existing buildings. Therefore, the Zoning Regulations changes are expected to cause incremental, albeit important, changes to ensure the continued functionality of the transportation network in the long-term.

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