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MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, ^{JS} Deputy Director for Development Review & Historic Preservation

DATE: October 9, 2009

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case Number 09-16
Proposed Text Amendment to allow Car-Sharing Spaces in residential, CR and SP districts.

I. PETITION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends that the Zoning Commission amend §§ 199, 201, 501, 601 and 2116 of the Regulations. It is proposed that car-sharing spaces be permitted as a matter-of-right in residential, CR and SP districts. These spaces would be permitted with the principal use of the lot, a secondary use, on accessory parking lots and privately owned residential lots, subject to the retention of the minimum required number of parking spaces for the use.

This report also serves as a pre-hearing statement.

II. BACKGROUND

The Zoning Administrator (ZA) requested the Office of Planning draft a text amendment to include car-sharing spaces as a permitted use in residential districts, provided that required parking for residential and other uses is not reduced. Specifically, it was noted that car-share vehicles have been occupying private spaces on residential lots, including alley lots and driveways. In addition, requests were being made by residents to the ZA to consider granting certificates of occupancy for car-share spaces within required residential parking spaces. The ZA became concerned that residents would "hire out" their required residential parking spaces to car-share companies.

OP consulted with the Zoning Administrator on the existing regulations governing parking, including §§ 201, 204, 2300 and 2500 that might be used to accommodate car-sharing vehicles on private property, even if the required parking for that site was not reduced. It was determined that § 204 'parking garage' is a structure to encompass public parking which allows any customer to park without prior arrangement, while a private garage can only be used by residents or users of the principal use of the subject property, or by customers with a pre-arranged contract when the space(s) involved are above and beyond [in excess] the minimum required number of spaces for a property. In addition, since the closest use for car-sharing that is listed in the Zoning Regulations is for car rental, a car-sharing use of residential parking spaces cannot be allowed.

Defining Carsharing¹

Academic research and literature differentiates car-sharing from a car rental service and defines car-sharing as a distinct business process wherein car-share operators (CSOs) typically provide members with short-term vehicle access from a network of unstaffed and distributed neighborhood locations. Members pay a flat hourly and/or per-mile fee that includes fuel and insurance costs. These characteristics make car-sharing distinct from car rental, where vehicles are rented under a negotiated contract with the customer for longer periods of time, and from centralized, staffed locations.

¹ T. Stillwater, P. Mokhtarian and S. Shaheen. *Carsharing and the Built Environment: A GIS-Based Study of One US Operator*. Institute of Transportation Studies. 2008. p. 3

The term “car-sharing” has also been used to describe both shared-use vehicles and what is now known as ridesharing or carpooling. Car-sharing services range from station cars (transit-linked vehicles) to the short-term vehicle use that has gained worldwide popularity. OP is not considering car-pooling or ridesharing as a part of this amendment.

Car-Sharing in the District – ZipCar

The District is one of several cities in which car share operators have deployed this innovative alternative to vehicle ownership. As of 2008, the major US car-share operator, Zipcar, operates over 7,000 vehicles in more than 100 cities in the US, Canada and the United Kingdom, including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis, Toronto, Vancouver and London.

According to information provided to OP by Zipcar, Washington, DC members travel anywhere from 0.01 miles to 3.73 miles to get to a Zipcar, via Metro bus and/or rail. However, the average distance is 0.67 miles to get to a vehicle.

They reported the following benefits of car-share:

- Each car-share vehicle removes 15-20 personally owned vehicles off the road.
- Members drive 2,500 fewer miles per year and save 219 gallons of gasoline per year
- It is expected that at current membership levels, 16 million gallons of gasoline will be saved
- Members of car sharing programs report a 47% increase in public transit trips, a 10% increase in bicycling trips and a 26% increase in walking trips.²

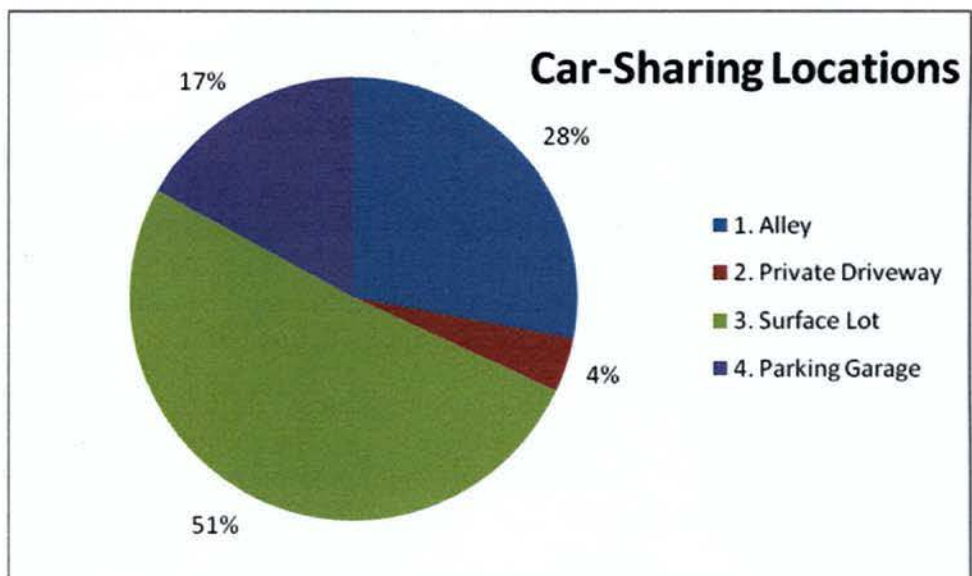
A smart-card is used to access any vehicle in any location worldwide. Members make reservations on-line, by telephone or through a mobile reservation system. Reservations can be made minutes or up to a year in advance of the start time and can be accessed 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Vehicle pick-up and return processes are automated and self-service.

Vehicles are cleaned on-site every 10 days by mobile car-cleaning vendors; cleanings generally last no more than 10 minutes per vehicle. Members are required to leave each vehicle with at least one quarter of a tank of fuel. All vehicles are equipped with an assigned fuel card that can be used at any major gas station that accepts credit cards. Zipcar maintains computer-based records and maintenance logs. Since vehicles are typically kept for two to three years, the amount of non-routine maintenance work required is minimal. No maintenance work is performed at a shared vehicle location.

Car Sharing Locations in DC

According to information provided, and based on OP’s GIS analysis, there are approximately 533 car-sharing spaces/vehicles (ZipCar) located on private property throughout the District, predominantly in the R-4 district. The majority of the spaces are located either in a private residential driveway, an alley, on surface lots, or private garages with access through an alley. The data provided did not indicate the location of the spaces on the lots or whether alley lots functioned as surface lots. GIS review of the locations was also indeterminate.

Recently acquired data of vacant alley lots in residential zones is presented as a preliminary review regarding concerns about car-sharing spaces on alley lots in residential districts. The findings shown below indicate the number of available vacant record lots and their distribution in the residential districts.



² Zip Car. Environmental and Community Impact, July 2009 (www.zipcar.com)

OP understands that the use of these lots may be limited due to lot size and alley widths as prescribed by Section 2507, but may be able to support a parking pad or a small parking lot, since a private garage on an alley lot, a parking lot and a private garage are all permitted in the R-1 district.

Vacant Alley Lots in Residential Zones (Record Lots)

Zone	Count	Percentage
R-1-A	0	0.0%
R-1-B	87	12.9%
R-2	66	9.8%
R-3	162	24.0%
R-4	249	36.8%
R-5-A	93	13.8%
R-5-B	18	2.7%
R-5-C	1	0.1%
R-5-D	0	0.0%
R-5-E	0	0.0%
All R Zones	676	



Example of an existing car-sharing location- a private driveway accessed via an alley. (R-4 district)

Based on a review of the operation, access, and maintenance of the existing car-share vehicles in the district, The impacts of a car-share vehicle on a lot would be similar to vehicles in private parking lots or garages in residential districts. Therefore, OP proposes that car-sharing spaces be permitted in residential districts.

Recent media reports indicate that other companies have intentions of entering the Washington DC market as early as next year. Car sharing will likely receive greater attention as a sustainable transportation alternative in an era of higher fuel prices and smart growth initiatives.

III. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposal is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and would further a policy statement in the Transportation element, including the expansion of car-sharing services as an alternative to private vehicle ownership (414.10). The proposed amendments would permit the expansion of car-sharing services in the District by permitting the use in Residential, CR and SP districts, where they are currently not permitted.

As a transportation demand management strategy, the Comprehensive Plan supports reducing “the need to own and drive a vehicle within the District” (414.5). The proposed amendments are in support of demands for an alternative to vehicle ownership and would promote easier access to an alternative means of transportation in residential neighborhoods.

IV. DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DDOT)

The District Department of Transportation also recognizes and supports car-sharing as a TDM strategy, and in 2005 a rule was established (Title 18 of the DC Municipal Regulations Sections 2406.12 and 2406.13) to permit curbside car-sharing spaces in the District. In 2007, an evaluation of the car-sharing initiative was completed

and one of the findings indicated that the program has helped make car-sharing vehicles more accessible by mandating broader geographic coverage that also provides accessibility to more low-income households.

The proposed amendment would also support accessibility to a broader range of households in the District.

V. RECOMMENDATION and PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS

The Office of Planning recommends that the Zoning Commission set down the proposed text amendment for a public hearing. The text amendments are not inconsistent with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, as well as other planning initiatives for the District.

(New text is shown in **bold and underline**):

Amend Chapter 1, DEFINITIONS to read as follows:

Car-sharing vehicle – any vehicle available to multiple users who are required to join a membership organization in order to reserve and use such a vehicle for which they are charged based on actual use as determined by time and / or mileage.

The above language is consistent with the definition of a car-sharing vehicle in The District Department of Transportation's Vehicle and Traffic Regulations (18 DCMR), Chapter 99, DEFINITIONS.

Car-sharing space - a parking space that is designated for the parking of a car-sharing vehicle.

Amend Chapter 2 as follows:

201 USES AS A MATTER OF RIGHT (R-1)

201.1 The following uses shall be permitted as a matter of right in R-1 Districts

(v) **Car-sharing space, provided no more than two (2) spaces may be located on a single residential lot and the car-sharing space may not be a required parking space for the principal use.**

Amend Chapter 3 as follows:

350.4 The following uses shall be permitted as a matter of right in an R-5 District:

j) **Car-sharing spaces without limit on number, provided that any car-share spaces beyond the first two (2) spaces shall be located within the principal structure or an underground parking garage and may not be a required parking space for any use on site.**

Amend Chapter 5 as follows:

501.1 The following uses shall be permitted as a matter of right in a SP District:

(l) **Car-sharing spaces, none of which may be a required parking space for any use on site.**

Amend Chapter 6 as follows:

601.1 The following uses shall be permitted as a matter of right in a CR District:

(dd) Car-sharing space, none of which may be a required parking space for any use on site.

Amend Chapter 21 as follows:

2116.1 Except as provided in §§ **201.1 (w)**, 214, 510,.....

2116.2 Parking spaces, **including car-sharing spaces** shall be located in one (1) of the following ways:

JS/kt