

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



d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Samuel Zimbabwe 
Associate Director

DATE: May 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 14-14 – Jemal’s CDC, 501 H Street NE

PROJECT SUMMARY

Jemal’s CDC, LLC (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) and related map amendment to allow construction of a six-story mixed-use residential building with 13,482 square feet of ground floor retail development and 28 residential units in the existing C-2-A District at premises 501 H Street NE (Square 833, Lot 47) (the “Site”).

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

DDOT is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, constructing safer streets, and providing 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:

Site Design

- Vehicle and loading access is proposed via the alley network, and is in keeping with DDOT’s approach to site access; and
- Larger loading trucks and trash pickup are proposed curbside on 5th Street in the existing loading zone, leading to trucks circulating through the adjacent neighborhood.

Travel Assumptions

- The Applicant utilized sound analysis methodology and assumptions;
- Future residents and retail visitors are likely to utilize transit, walking, and bicycling at high rates, thus auto use is likely to be relatively low, in a manner similar to projections;

Analysis

- The action is projected to minimally increase travel delay in the area;
- An on-street parking evaluation was conducted that shows nearby street parking availability for retail trips;
- The Applicant has restricted residents from RPP program eligibility;
- Existing pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure, and transit service can accommodate additional project demand; and
- The Applicant proposes to provide a robust amount of bicycle parking spaces.

Mitigations

DDOT has no objection to the requested PUD provided the Applicant adhere to the commitments for a TDM plan as proposed in the Applicant's supplemental filing and short-term bicycle parking as verbally agreed to and called for in this report.

Continued Coordination

The Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- Design of the public realm, including utility vault location and treatment;
- A loading management plan, which should be provided as part of the public space permitting process; and
- As streetcar infrastructure is established in this corridor, which could impact construction and staging activities, construction and maintenance of traffic (MOT) should not conflict with streetcar operations.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

DDOT requires applicants who request PUD approval from the Zoning Commission perform a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) in order to determine the PUD's impact on the overall transportation network. Accordingly, an applicant is expected to show the existing conditions for each transportation mode affected, the proposed impact on the respective network, and any proposed mitigations, along with the effects of the mitigations on other travel modes. A CTR should be performed according to DDOT direction. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR that is consistent with the scale of the action.

The review of the analysis is divided into four categories: site design, travel assumptions, analysis, and mitigations. The following review provided by DDOT evaluates the Applicant's CTR to determine its accuracy and assess the action's consistency with the District's vision for a cohesive, sustainable transportation system that delivers safe and convenient ways to move people and goods, while protecting and enhancing the natural, environmental, and cultural resources of the District.

Site Design

Site design, which includes site access, loading, and public realm design, plays a critical role in determining a proposed action's impact on the District's infrastructure. While transportation impacts can change over time, the site design will remain constant throughout the lifespan of the proposed development, making site design a critical aspect of DDOT's development review process. Accordingly, new developments must provide a safe and welcoming pedestrian experience, enhance the public realm, and serve as positive additions to the community. The proposed Site plan is shown in *Figure 1*.

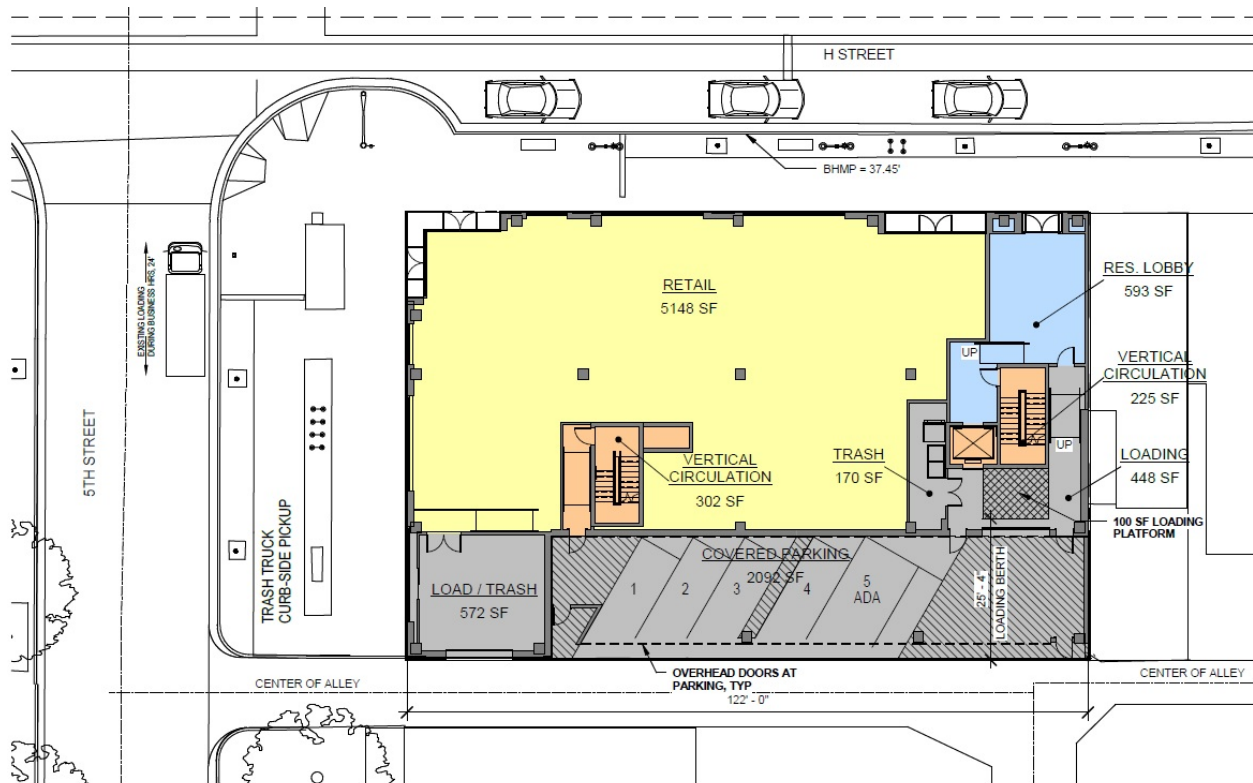


Figure 1. Site Design and Access (Source: Applicant)

Site Access

This Site is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of 5th Street and H Street, with an alley at its rear. The 11' alley passes through from 5th Street to 6th Street, going behind the proposed development, and is relatively narrow. Another portion of the alley connects south, ultimately also reaching 6th Street. The Applicant proposes vehicle and loading access via the alley network. This would serve the building from the rear, allowing access to three compact vehicular parking spaces, one car share space, and one handicapped-accessible space, along with a 24' loading berth. The proposed site access is consistent with DDOT's approach to site access, which seeks alley access and that the number of curb cuts be minimized.

Primary pedestrian access points are located near the intersection of 5th Street and H Street and along H Street for retail, and on H Street for residential.

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 modes 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 an alley network.

The Applicant is seeking relief from the 30-foot loading dock requirement. A loading berth has been supplied for 24' trucks at the building's rear. This proposed alley loading location is consistent with DDOT's loading requirements. The Applicant's submittal includes AutoTurn analysis showing that truck maneuvers can be accommodated with front-in/front-out movements, in keeping with DDOT standards, and as shown on *Figure 2*.



Figure 2. Truck Entry (Source: Applicant)

Trucks that are too large to utilize the on-site loading facility may also occasionally need to serve the project. And while H Street has a parking lane, streetcar service at this location does not allow for loading activities to occur as the parking lane is too narrow to allow truck parking without interference with streetcar operations. An existing loading zone is located on 5th Street, which can be utilized for this purpose, but which will require trucks to move through the neighborhood to access.

Trash will be picked up curbside within the loading zone, as also shown in *Figure 2*, which will necessitate movement of the trash from the trash rooms, one of which is located at this corner of the building, to this area.

Given the proposed land uses, the loading relief is appropriate and unlikely to negatively impact the District's transportation network.

Streetscape and 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 gutters, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

The Applicant must work closely with DDOT and the Office of Planning 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 circulate around it. In conjunction with the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

DDOT's preference is for electrical vaults to be located on private space. If this option is not feasible, the vaults may be located in the alley. If that is not possible, the final option would be in public space if they are against the building façade and shielded by a landscaped buffer on all three sides. Additionally, streetcar is established in this corridor, which could impact building operations and construction activities. Construction and MOT should be closely coordinated with DDOT. Further coordination will be necessary during the public space permitting process.

Travel Assumptions

The purpose of the CTR is to inform DDOT's review of a proposed action's impacts on the District's transportation network. To that end, selecting reasonable and defensible travel assumptions is critical to developing a realistic analysis.

Trip Generation

The Applicant provided trip generation estimates utilizing the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, the WMATA 2005 *Development Related Readership Survey*, and the assumed mode split to convert base vehicular trips to base person trips using average auto occupancy data and then back to vehicular trips. DDOT generally finds this method appropriate.

Each trip a person makes is made by a certain means of travel, such as vehicle, bicycle, walking, and transit. The means of travel is referred to as a 'mode' of transportation. A variety of elements impact the mode of travel, including density of development, diversity of land use, design of the public realm, availability and cost of parking, among many others. Mode split assumptions used in the subject analysis were informed by the above resources and the building program.

Based on the trip generation and mode split assumptions discussed above, the Applicant predicted the following level of weekday peak hour trip generation:

Land Use	Size	Trip Generation					
		AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
		In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Apartment (LU 220)	28 Units	3	14	17	21	12	33
<u>Non-Auto Reduction</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>-9</u>	<u>-11</u>	<u>-14</u>	<u>-8</u>	<u>-22</u>
Total New Residential Trips		1	5	6	7	4	11
Retail (LU 820)	13,482 Sf	8	5	13	24	26	50
<u>Non-Auto Reduction</u>	<u>80%</u>	<u>-6</u>	<u>-4</u>	<u>-10</u>	<u>-19</u>	<u>-21</u>	<u>-40</u>
Total New Retail Trips		2	1	3	5	5	10
Total Site-Generated Trips		3	6	9	12	9	21

Figure 3. Weekday Peak Hour Vehicle Trip Generation (Source: Applicant)

Based on this level of trip generation, a more comprehensive vehicle traffic analysis is not required, as impacts to the surrounding vehicle network are minimal.

Analysis

Analysis of the existing transportation network was completed in the following categories.

Pedestrian Facilities

The District is committed to enhance the pedestrian accessibility by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including pedestrian trips. Walking is expected to be an important mode of transportation for this development.

The site generally has excellent pedestrian access to nearby destinations and transit, and the H Street streetscape was recently reconstructed. The Applicant's analysis revealed a few substandard pedestrian curb ramps in the vicinity of the site, but overall conditions can be considered excellent.

Bicycle Facilities

The District of Columbia is committed to enhance bicycle access by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including bicycling trips.

The site is currently well-served by bicycle infrastructure. Bicycle lanes on 4th Street and 6th Street provide north-south bicycle connections. East-west bicycle lanes are provided on G Street and I Street. Four Capital Bikeshare stations are located within 1/4 of a mile of the Site. The Metropolitan Branch Trail is located slightly further from the Site.

To serve bicycling needs, the Applicant will be expected to provide at least 6 additional short-term bicycle parking spaces on H Street or 5th Street beyond the existing racks. The exact location of short-term bicycle facilities will be determined during the public space permitting process. The building will provide an ample 24 internal long-term bicycle parking spaces.

Transit Service

The District and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District of Columbia. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The site is located approximately 2/3 of a mile from the Union Station Metro station, roughly a 12 minute walk. The Metro station is served by Metro's Red line. The site is well-served by high-frequency bus routes. Bus routes include:

- 90, 92, 93 – U Street - Garfield Line
- D3 – Ivy City - DuPont Circle Line
- D4 – Ivy City - Franklin Square Line
- D8 – Hospital Center Line
- X1 – Benning Road Line
- X2 – Benning Road - H Street Line
- X9 – Benning Road - H Street Limited

Additionally, the development is located adjacent to the H Street Streetcar route. This streetcar line is soon to open in this corridor, which will provide connections to Union Station and east along H Street and Benning Road.

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building requires 26 parking spaces per code. Due to the small Site, and anticipated low demand for parking, the development as designed requests a variance from the requirement for full onsite provision of vehicular parking. Three compact spaces, one car share space, and one handicapped-accessible space are proposed. The Applicant has agreed to terms intended to restrict access to the District's Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program. Therefore, the only other available parking spaces will be unrestricted on-street spaces, metered spots, or nearby within parking garages/lots.

The Applicant completed an extensive parking utilization study as part of their CTR, which shows many available on-street spaces in close proximity to the Site within the parking study area, but most are RPP spaces. These available spaces also include metered spots, which should accommodate the expected retail trips. Residential tenants are anticipated to own few cars, but for those who do, available spaces in nearby garages, specifically at Union Station, may be available. Thus, an adequate supply of vehicular parking spaces should be present.

Generally, DDOT has no objection to reduced parking provision if documentation as to where parking could occur is made and if the close proximity to transit, provided bicycle storage, and the overall available transportation network suggests an appropriate split between vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips.

Mitigations

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires the Applicant to mitigate the impacts of the development in order to positively contribute to the District's transportation network. The mitigations must sufficiently diminish the action's vehicle impact and promote non-auto travel modes. This can be done through Transportation Demand Management (TDM), physical improvements, operations, and performance monitoring.

Transportation Demand Management

As part of all major development review cases, 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's proposed TDM measures play a role in achieving the desired and expected mode split.

The specific elements within the TDM plan vary depending on the land uses, site context, proximity to transit, scale of the development, and other factors. The TDM plan must help achieve the assumed trip generation rates to ensure that an action's impacts will be properly mitigated. Failure to provide a robust TDM plan could lead to unanticipated additional vehicle trips that could negatively impact the District's transportation network.

The Applicant proposes the following TDM strategies:

- Designate a Resident Transportation Coordinator (RTC) responsible for organizing and marketing the TDM plan;
- Install a TransitScreen in the residential lobby;
- Provide at least 24 long-term bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle room and short-term bicycle parking spaces in public space;
- For each initial residential tenant, provide a one-time membership for a car sharing network (up to \$85) and annual Capital Bikeshare membership;
- For each initial residential tenant, provide a one-time \$100 SmarTrip card;
- Incorporate Resident Permit Parking (RPP) restrictions in the form of lease provisions and a covenant that will enforce this prohibition for the life of the project. This will be recorded as a covenant against the Property among the Land Records of the District of Columbia prohibiting any lessee or owner of the Property from obtaining an RPP or Visitor Parking Pass (VPP) at the building for the life of the project; and
- A provision will be placed in the retail leases prohibiting unlawful parking or stopping by building visitors.

DDOT agrees with these measures and finds the TDM plan to be sufficient to encourage non-auto travel and support the high non-auto mode split assumed in the analysis.

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