

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: September 28, 2015

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 15-07 – 315 H Street NE

PROJECT SUMMARY

MRP Realty (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) and related map amendment to allow construction of an eight-story mixed-use residential building with 6,297 square feet of ground floor retail development and up to 135 residential units with 30 vehicular parking spaces and 50 bicycle parking spaces in the existing C-2-B/HS-H District at premises 315 H Street NE (Square 777, Lots 24-28 and 813-815) (the “Site”).

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, 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

- Loading access is proposed via the alley network, with a 24-foot loading berth provided, and on-street on 4th Street, and is generally in keeping with DDOT’s approach to site access;
- Vehicular access is proposed via the rear alley; and
- The Applicant proposes to provide a robust amount of 50 long-term bicycle parking spaces.

Travel Assumptions

- The Applicant utilized sound analysis methodology and assumptions; and
- 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 finds nearby street parking availability for retail trips;
- The Applicant proposes restricting residents from RPP program eligibility;
- Existing pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure, and transit service can accommodate additional project demand; and
- The Applicant proposes a TDM plan sufficient to encourage non-auto travel and support the high non-auto mode split assumed in the analysis

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;
- Provide the alley refurbishment for the east-west portion of the alley at the rear of their proposed building, the details of which will be finalized during public space permitting; and
- Provide at least nine additional short-term bicycle parking spaces.

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, and bike rack locations;
- A loading management plan, which should be provided as part of the public space permitting process; and
- As streetcar operations are established in this corridor, which could impact construction and staging activities, construction and maintenance of traffic (MOT) should be planned so as to 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*.

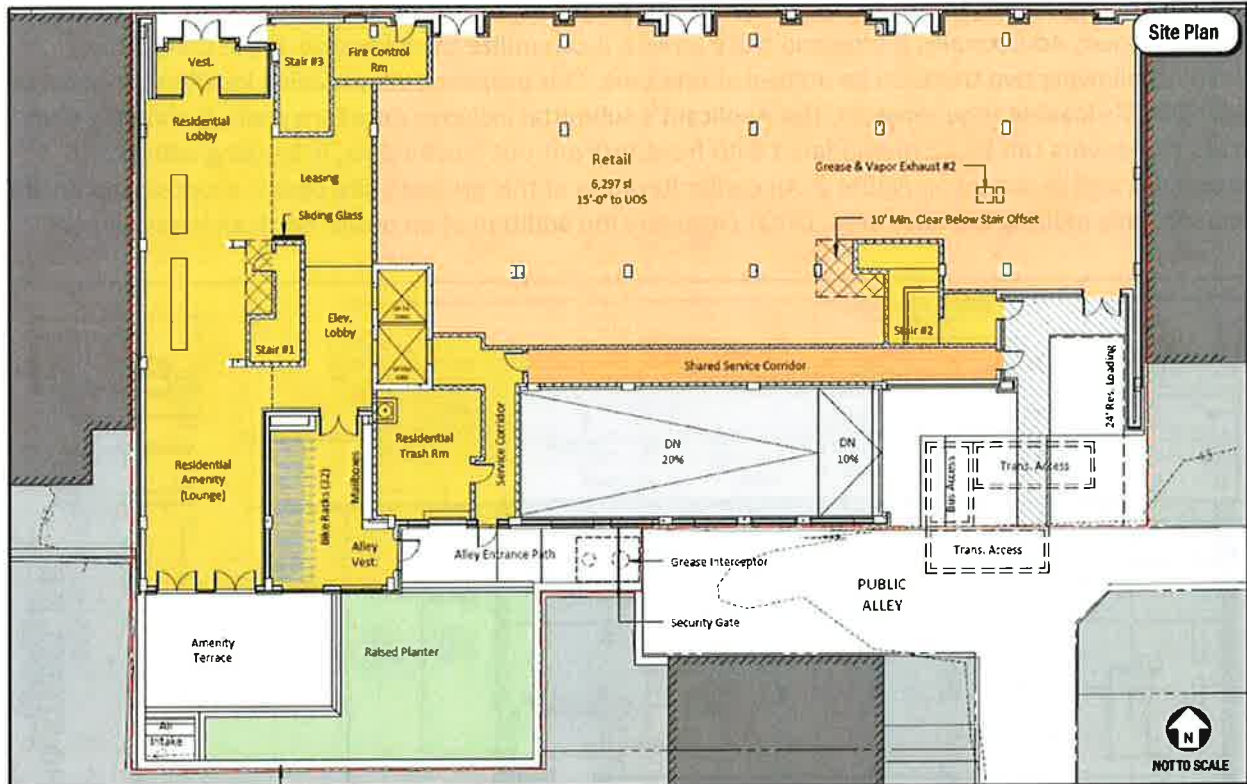


Figure 1. Site Plan (Source: Applicant)

Site Access

This Site is located along the south side of H Street NE between the intersections of 3rd Street and 4th Street, with an alley behind the eastern portion of the proposed development where the Applicant proposes vehicle and loading access. The alley passes through from 4th Street before heading south (ultimately to 3rd Street) behind the proposed development, and is relatively narrow in some areas. This would serve the building from the rear, allowing access to the 30 vehicular parking spaces, along with a 24' loading berth. Additional loading for retail uses would occur in the existing on-street loading zone on 4th Street. 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 along H Street for both retail and for residential. Bicyclists will access the 50 bicycle parking spaces provided within the building either via the lobby or the rear entrance.

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 desires 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 and 55-foot loading dock requirements (for retail and residential, respectively). A 24-foot loading berth is proposed for trucks serving the residences at the building's rear. Additionally, if a second truck arrives, it can utilize the alley stub at the rear of the building, allowing two trucks to be utilized at one time. 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*. An earlier iteration of this project's site design proposed no onsite loading, only utilizing the alley area. DDOT considers the addition of an onsite berth an improvement.

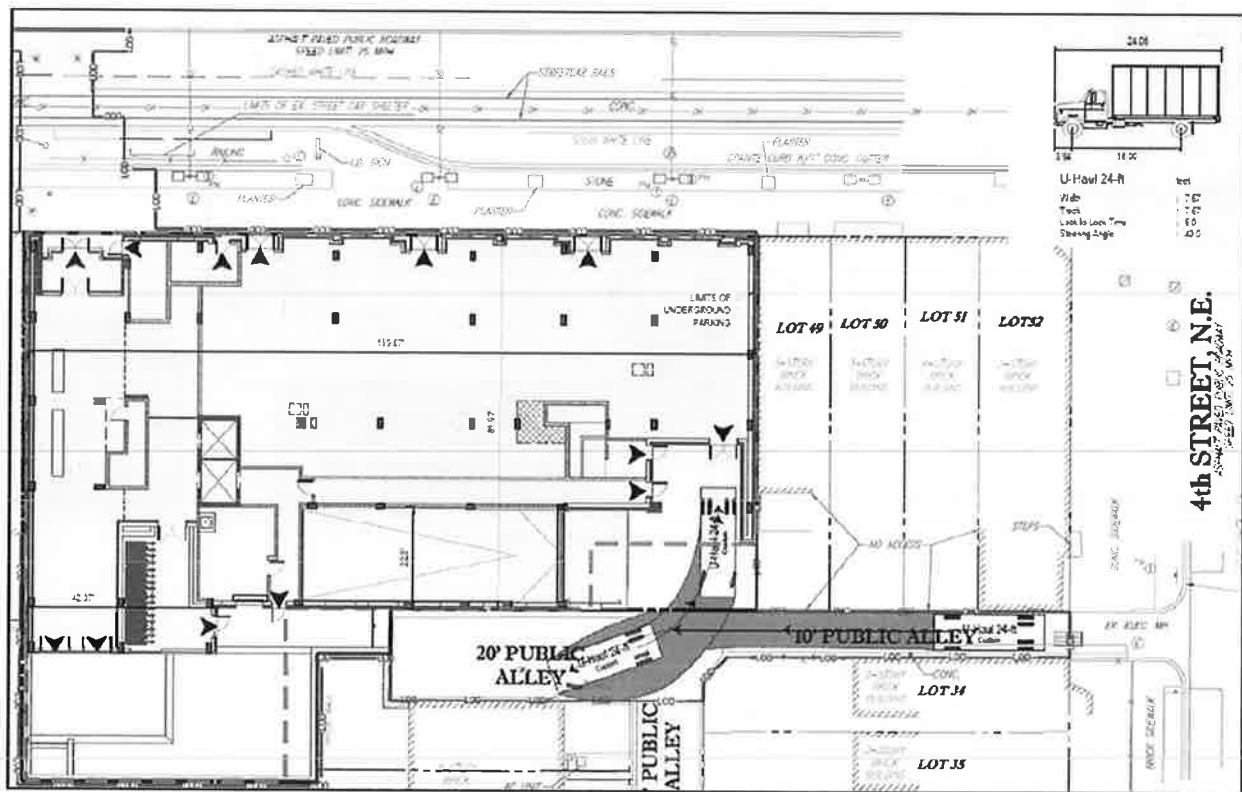


Figure 2. Truck Entry (Source: Applicant)

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. Trucks that are too large to utilize the alley or rear on-site loading facility or serving the retail component will also need to serve the project. An existing loading zone is located on 4th Street, which can be utilized for this purpose, but will require trucks to move through the neighborhood to access the loading zone. And retail deliveries will require goods movement along the sidewalks between

the loading zone and the retail entrances. These loading operations are not optimal, but are acceptable considering the constraints caused by the streetcar and narrow alley area.

Trash will be picked up at the rear of the building in the alley, as is the case for the homes sharing this alley network.

With the onsite loading berth accommodation, and given the proposed land uses, the loading relief is appropriate and unlikely to significantly 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 appropriately located. For this building, the vaults should be designed to be in private space, but at a minimum should be outside the alley travel path since a less used area is available. 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

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.

The Applicant provided trip generation estimates utilizing the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, the WMATA 2005 *Development Related Ridership 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. Mode split assumptions used in the subject analysis were informed by the above resources and the building location and 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)	135	Units	14	56	70	60	32	92
<i>Non-Auto Reduction</i>	<i>65%</i>		-9	-36	-45	-39	-21	-60
Total New Residential Trips			5	20	25	21	11	32
Retail (LU 820)	6,297	Sf	4	2	6	11	12	23
<i>Non-Auto Reduction</i>	<i>80%</i>		-3	-2	-5	-9	-10	-19
Total New Retail Trips			1	0	1	2	2	4
Total Site-Generated Trips			6	20	26	23	13	36

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

Based on this level of trip generation, a full vehicle traffic analysis is not required, as impacts to the surrounding vehicle network are expected to be 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 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 facilities in the vicinity of the site, such as sidewalk widths slightly too narrow on the H Street block to the west, but overall conditions can be considered good.

Bicycle Facilities

The District 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 provide north-south bicycle connections. East-west bicycle lanes are provided on G Street and I Street. Four Capital Bikeshare

stations are located within ¼ of a mile of the Site, and the Metropolitan Branch Trail is located slightly further from the Site to the west.

To serve bicycling needs, the Applicant will be expected to provide at least nine additional short-term bicycle parking spaces on H Street or 3rd or 4th Streets beyond any 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 50 internal long-term bicycle parking spaces, versus the requirement of 35 spaces, as well as a bicycle repair facility.

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 ½ of a mile from the Union Station Metro station, roughly a 10 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:

- D3 – Ivy City - DuPont Circle Line
- D4 – Ivy City - Franklin Square Line
- D8 – Hospital Center Line
- X1/X3 – 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 will provide connections to Union Station and east along H Street and Benning Road.

Vehicle Parking

The proposed building requires 50 parking spaces per code. Due to the small Site, and an anticipated low demand for parking, the Applicant requests a variance from the requirement for full onsite provision of vehicular parking. 30 vehicular parking spaces are proposed. The Applicant has proposed 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 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.

DDOT preference is to mitigate vehicle traffic impacts first through establishing an optimal site design and operations to support efficient site circulation. When these efforts alone cannot properly mitigate an action's impact, TDM measures may be necessary to manage travel behavior to minimize impact. Only when these other options are exhausted will DDOT consider capacity-increasing changes to the transportation network because such changes often have detrimental impacts on non-auto travel and are often contrary to the District's multi-modal transportation goals.

The following analysis is a review of the Applicant's proposed mitigations and a description of DDOT's suggested conditions for inclusion in the PUD.

Transportation Demand Management

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires the Applicant to produce a comprehensive 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 Transportation Management Coordinator (TMC) responsible for implementing and managing as well as marketing the TDM plan;
- Install a TransitScreen in the residential lobby to provide real-time transportation updates;
- Provide at least 20 additional long-term bicycle parking spaces in a bicycle room and short-term bicycle parking spaces in public space as well as a bicycle repair facility;
- For each initial residential tenant in the first two years, provide a one-time \$100 SmarTrip card, a one-time carsharing membership, and a one-time annual Capitol Bikeshare membership;

- For retail employees and residents who wish to car pool, carpool matching services will be coordinated; and
- 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 prohibit any lessee or owner of the Property from obtaining an RPP or Visitor Parking Pass (VPP) at the building.

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.

Physical Improvements

In some cases, physical improvements can be used to mitigate the impacts of a proposed project or upgrade the transportation network surrounding a Site to support its development. These improvements allow an Applicant to ensure the surrounding infrastructure meets current DDOT standards, supports the proposed program, and exists in optimal condition for future residents and tenants as well as their neighbors who utilize this shared public transportation network and infrastructure.

The Applicant proposes to reconstruct the east-west portion of the alley at the rear of their proposed building. This reconstruction will be utilized by trucks loading at this proposed building, vehicles ingressing and egressing the parking garage, trash trucks, and vehicles accessing the residential properties served via this alley. DDOT supports this improvement, the details of which will be coordinated during the public space permitting process.

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