


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: February 12, 2016

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 15-22 – 301 Florida Ave NE

PROJECT SUMMARY

301 FL Manager LLC (the “Applicant”) proposes a consolidated Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) and related map amendment from C-M-1 to C-3-C to construct a mixed-use development at premises 301 Florida Avenue NE (Sq. 722N, Lot 803). The development proposal includes:

- 56 residential units
- 10,600 square feet of retail
- 56 long-term bicycle parking spaces

The Applicant is seeking full relief from the on-site parking and loading requirements.

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, multi-administration review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

Site Design

- No curb cuts are proposed;
- Access and preliminary public space plans are consistent with DDOT's recent Florida Avenue Multimodal Study ("Study");
- Curbside uses such as parking or loading are prohibited on Florida Avenue, and therefore loading will need to occur from 3rd Street or N Street curbside;
- The Applicant proffers funding for changes to the 300 Block of N Street NE that would involve redesigning the street to limit or prohibit vehicular access and improve pedestrian amenities. While DDOT is willing to work with the Applicant and others to further explore the concept, additional requested information regarding the changes has not yet been provided, and DDOT has not approved any changes to N Street; and
- The loading management plan, with revisions eliminating references to a curbside loading zone, is acceptable.

Travel Assumptions

- The Applicant utilized sound methodology and assumptions to perform the analysis; and
- Future residents and retail patrons are likely to use transit, walking, and bicycling at high rates; thus, auto ownership and use is likely to be low.

Analysis

- The block is not currently in the RPP system nor is it likely to be added in the future;
- The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan as proposed needs to be strengthened to further encourage non-auto travel and support the requested parking relief;
- Pedestrian infrastructure within the study will be improved as part of pipeline developments in the vicinity;
- The site is well-served by rail and bus services, as well as a robust network of bicycle facilities; and
- The proposed 56 long-term bicycle parking spaces greatly exceed the 19 required spaces and an additional 18 short-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed.

Mitigations

DDOT has no objection to the requested action with the following conditions:

- Limit the financial incentive as part of the TDM plan to bikeshare and carshare memberships only and offer annual memberships to all new tenants for a period of 5 years; and
- Install a transit information screen in the residential lobby.

Continued Coordination

Given the complexity and size of the action, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters outside of the zoning process:

- Proposed changes to the 300 block of N Street NE, including the requested transportation analysis, design, funding, and construction;
- Public space, including curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other features within the public rights of way, are expected to be designed and built to DDOT standards. Public space plans are required to be compatible with changes from the Florida Avenue Multimodal Study;
- Utility vault locations and treatments;

- A curbside management and signage plan, possibly including multi-space meter installation at the Applicant's expense, consistent with current DDOT policies; and
- Short-term bicycle parking locations and treatment.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

DDOT requires applicants requesting an action from the Zoning Commission complete a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) in order to determine the action'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.

Site Access

Because no on-site vehicle parking or loading facilities are proposed, no vehicle site access is needed for the site. Primary residential access is proposed from Florida Avenue while retail entrances are from Florida Avenue, N Street, and 3rd Street.

The site is located adjacent to the study area of DDOT's Florida Avenue Multimodal Study, which seeks to improve multimodal safety and operations on Florida Avenue between 1st Street NE and H Street/Benning Road NE. Preliminary design work is underway. The subject proposal is consistent the study, and final design of the streetscape will need to be coordinated as design work to implement the study advances.

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.

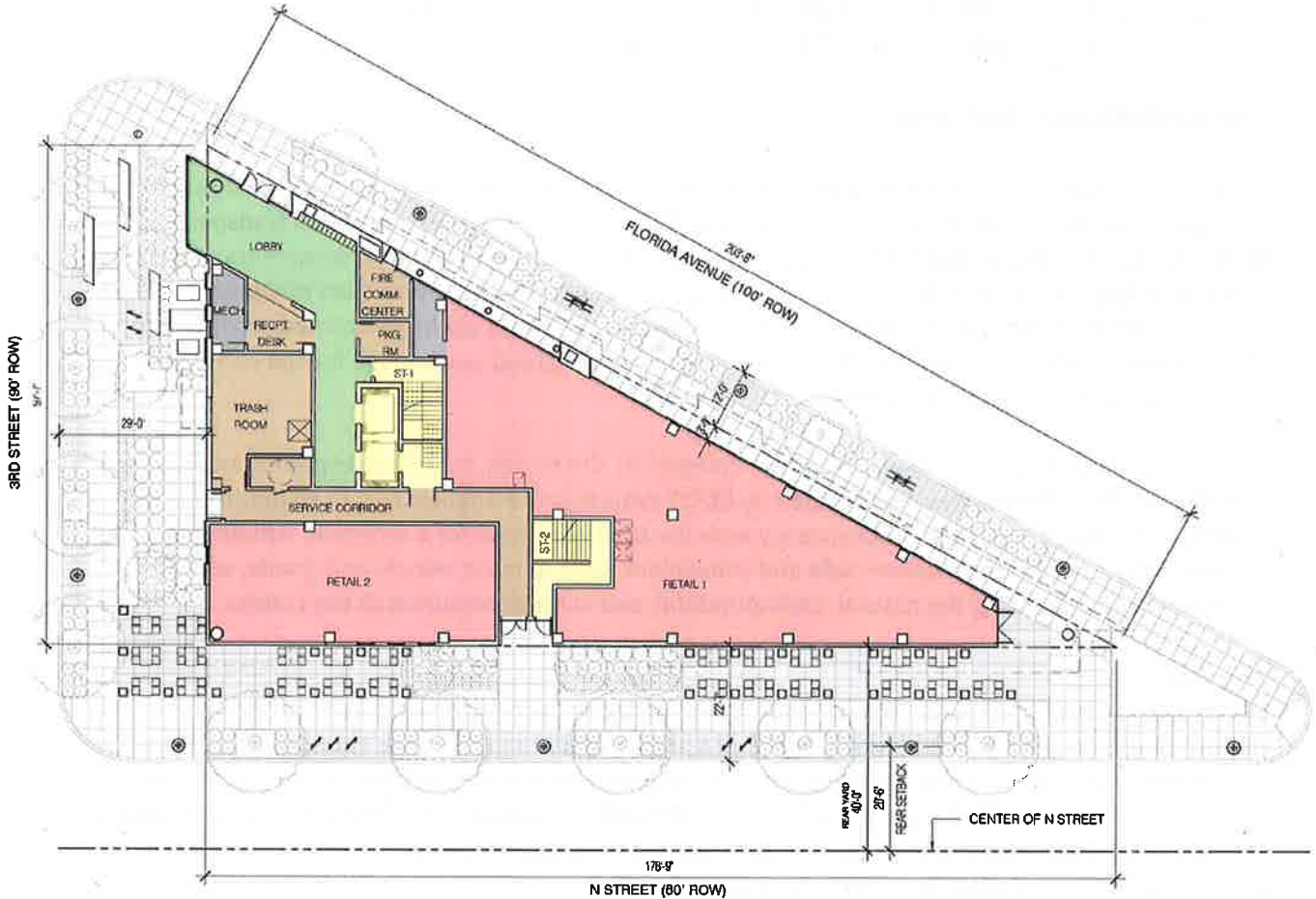


Figure 1 Site Design and Access (Source: DEP)

As noted above, no on-site loading facilities are proposed. Instead, loading is proposed to occur from the N Street or 3rd Street curbside. The ground floor of the project is designed with service corridor access to both streets to facilitate curbside loading and trash pick-up. Florida Avenue does not include any space for curbside uses such as parking or loading, and therefore there are no opportunities to load from Florida Avenue.

Zoning requires that the Applicant provide at least one 55-foot berth, one 200 square foot loading platform, and one 20-foot service/delivery space. In order to ensure that the requested loading relief does not adversely impact the surrounding roadway network, a loading management plan is proposed with the following elements:

- Designate a loading facility manager, who will coordinate with residents and retail vendors to schedule deliveries;
- Limit trucks serving the site to a maximum of 30 feet in length;
- Schedule deliveries such that on-street capacity is not exceeded;
- Prohibit deliveries directly from Florida Avenue; and
- Limit loading space operations from 7am-7pm with vehicular parking during all other hours.

While not explicitly stated, the final element of the plan indicates that the Applicant plans to apply for a curbside loading zone. A curbside loading zone requires an application to DDOT, and no application has been submitted at the time of this report. DDOT would evaluate any potential application to determine the appropriateness of establishing a curbside loading zone in the vicinity. Of note, curbside loading zones are for commercial loading activity only and not intended for residential loading activity. Should a curbside loading zone not be granted, loading could occur in open curbside space along N Street or 3rd Street. DDOT's preference is that loading occur from N Street because it is a lower volume street and is likely to generate fewer operational issues. As discussed in the Streetscape and Public Realm section below, any potential changes to N Street must account for loading activity. In addition, emergency No Parking Signs are available from DDOT to create temporary loading areas on the curbside.

DDOT finds that the loading management plan with revisions eliminating references to a curbside loading zone will sufficiently address loading impacts.

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. In addition, consistency is required with the Florida Avenue Multimodal Safety Study, which is currently in the preliminary design phase. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process. DDOT suggests that the Applicant participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) to address design related issues prior to the submission of public space permit applications.

The project is adjacent to the study area for Florida Avenue Multimodal Study. DDOT's project may alter the curbline for Florida Avenue adjacent to the site. The proposed development is consistent with the project. The Applicant will need to coordinate with DDOT as the timeline for the DDOT project and development are better defined to determine how the Applicant should rebuild the public space. Depending on timing, the Applicant may need to rebuild public space based on the current or future curbline.

While the preliminary public space plans are mostly consistent with DDOT standards, there are several elements that will need to be adjusted to come into compliance during the public space permitting process.

- Vault: Preliminary site plans show a utility vault in the public space along 3rd Street. DDOT's approach to utility vaults is to allow vaults in public space only when they cannot be located on private property. If located in public space, vaults must be surrounded by landscaping on at least three sides, as shown in the preliminary public space plans. The Applicant will need to coordinate with DDOT on the final vault location and treatment during the public space permitting process.

- Sidewalk widths: Sidewalk widths along all adjacent streets should be a minimum of 8 feet wide, with a preference for 10 feet wide on Florida Avenue depending on the availability of right-of-way.
- Special paving: The amount of special paving along the N Street frontage exceeds the amount of special paving that is typically permitted and will need to be reduced.
- Canopies: The Applicant's plans show a series of canopies extending along a significant portion of the Florida Avenue building façade. The canopies, as shown, likely do not meet regulations for canopies and may require a modification from the Building Code. The final design of the canopies will be addressed during permitting.

The Applicant proposes as a PUD benefit to make a contribution “to support the construction of enhanced pedestrian improvements and the creation of a pedestrian-oriented plaza on N Street, NE, between Florida Avenue, NE, to the east and 3rd Street, NE, to the west” (ZC Exhibit 26). On October 28, 2015, the Applicant met with DDOT and developers of other parcels in the vicinity to discuss potential changes to the aforementioned section of N Street, NE. Such changes could include closing or restricting vehicular traffic on N Street and increasing pedestrian amenities.

DDOT expressed a willingness to consider changes to the 300 block of N Street NE, and established a set of next-steps for the developer group to complete to assist DDOT with its evaluation of the concept: transportation analysis to determine the vehicle capacity impacts of removing or reducing the vehicle capacity of the block, plans for the redesign of the street (which would require public space permits from DDOT), and funding and construction plans showing that all physical improvements needed to realize an approved design are feasible from a financial and engineering perspective. To date, DDOT has not been provided with the above information needed to further evaluate the request to make changes to N Street. DDOT remains willing to work with the Applicant and other developers in the vicinity to further explore the concept.

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 & Parking

The Applicant provided trip generation estimates utilizing the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. The Applicant utilized the following ITE land uses in their trip generation estimation:

- Residential: Apartment (Land Use Code 220)
- Retail: Shopping Center (Land Use Code 820)

Each trip a person makes is made by a certain means of travel, such as vehicle, bicycle, walking, etc. 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. Because the Applicant seeks full relief from the on-site parking requirements, vehicle use is expected to be minimal. The Applicant utilized mode split data from the WMATA Development Related Ridership Survey and revised the mode split to account for the parking provision. Ultimately, a 30% auto mode split was assumed, which is appropriate. DDOT expects that a

significant portion of vehicle trips for the site will be taxi, carsharing, and other types of trips that do not require personal vehicles.

Based on the trip generation and mode split assumptions discussed above, the action is expected to generate a significant number of new transit and pedestrian trips, a moderate number of bicycle trips, and few vehicle trips. The projected number of auto trips does not warrant a vehicular capacity analysis.

Mode	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Auto	4 veh/hr	14 veh/hr	18 veh/hr	10 veh/hr	9 veh/hr	19 veh/hr
Transit	5 veh/hr	13 veh/hr	18 veh/hr	17 veh/hr	12 veh/hr	29 veh/hr
Bike	2 veh/hr	3 veh/hr	5 veh/hr	5 veh/hr	3 veh/hr	8 veh/hr
Walk	3 veh/hr	6 veh/hr	9 veh/hr	9 veh/hr	6 veh/hr	15 veh/hr

Figure 2 Peak Hour Trip Generation (Source: Gorove/Slade)

Study Area and Data Collection

The Applicant in conjunction with DDOT identified appropriate study areas for transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and curbside parking analysis.

Analysis

To determine the action’s impacts on the transportation network, a CTR includes an extensive multi-modal analysis of the existing baseline conditions, future conditions without the proposed action, and future conditions with the proposed development. The Applicant completed their analysis based on the assumptions described above.

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 0.2 miles, roughly a 4 minute walk, from the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metro Station. The station is served by the Red Line.

The site is well-served by high-frequency bus routes. Bus routes include:

- 90, 92, 93 – U Street – Garfield Line
- X3 – Benning Road Line
- D4, D4, D8

These bus routes provide frequent service with peak hour headways less than 10 minutes. The closest bus stops are adjacent to the site at 3rd Street/Florida Avenue. The site is approximately 0.5 miles from the future H Street Streetcar Line and X2 and X9 Metrobus lines.

WMATA’s analysis of bus load factors revealed overcrowding conditions on the 90 Line. A recent study of the route recommended additional express service for this line in the future in order to reduce overcrowding and expand capacity.

Pedestrian Facilities

The District of Columbia 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 Applicant's analysis identified a DDOT standard sidewalk on the north side of N Street adjacent to the subject site. However, this sidewalk segment is currently missing. In addition, the Applicant's preliminary public space plans show 6' sidewalks on N Street and 3rd Street. Sidewalk widths along all adjacent streets should be a minimum of 8 feet wide, with a preference for 10 feet wide on Florida Avenue depending on the availability of ROW. The Applicant will be required to upgrade all adjacent pedestrian facilities to current DDOT standards during the permitting process.

The analysis also revealed a gap in the sidewalk network along the west side of 3rd Street between N Street. This gap is expected to be remedied by future developments. Deficiencies along Florida Avenue will be repaired as part of ZC 06-40C, ZC 15-01, and the Florida Avenue Multimodal Study implementation.

Significant substandard pedestrian facilities exist in the interior of the Florida Avenue Market ("Market"). Developments in the Market (ZC 14-07 and 14-12) will upgrade the pedestrian facilities on 4th Street between Florida Avenue and Morse Street, the south side of Neal Place between 4th Street and 5th Street, and along the 5th Street and 6th Street frontages. Such connections between the subject site and other pipeline developments in the Market will allow adequate and safe pedestrian connections between the subject site and destinations in the Market. Pedestrian infrastructure within the Market will continue to be improved as the area redevelops.

Bicycle Facilities

The District is committed to enhance bicycle access by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure by 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 located in close proximity to a southbound bicycle lane on 4th Street south of Florida Avenue and a northbound bicycle lane on 6th Street south of Florida Avenue and a two-way cycle track north of Florida Avenue. Bicycle lanes on I Street and G Street provide east-west connectivity. The site is approximately two blocks from the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Future plans include a concept for a multiuse trail along New York Avenue that will connect through the Market area via railroad right of way to the west of 4th Street.

The closest Capital Bikeshare station with 22 docks is located two blocks from the site at M Street & Delaware Avenue.

The Applicant proposes 56 long-term bicycle parking spaces in the basement level, which greatly exceeds the 19 required spaces, and an additional 18 short-term bicycle parking spaces adjacent to the site.

Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/supply of parking spaces. However in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high quality transit, frequency of transit service, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, and the demographic composition and other characteristics of the potential residents.

A minimum of 21 vehicular parking spaces are required by zoning, including 14 spaces for the residential component and 7 spaces for the retail component. The Applicant is seeking full relief from the parking requirement to provide no onsite parking.

The 300 block of Florida Avenue NE is not currently in the District's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program and residents of the building would not be able to register for Zone 6 RPP permits. Should future residents on the block petition for inclusion in the RPP program, the block is not consistent with evaluation criteria used by DDOT to approve requests for new RPP blocks.

The Applicant plans to place a restriction to prohibit future residents from applying for or obtaining RPP passes. Should the option to apply for RPP permits become available, this restriction is not a strictly enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

The Applicant conducted a curbside parking utilization study in an area surrounding the site to determine the availability of parking. The inventory noted a total of 322 curbside parking spaces within an approximately 500 feet of the site, including about 273 Zone 6 RPP spaces and 38 unrestricted spaces. A map of parking restrictions in the vicinity is shown in Figure 3. Of note, two of the adjacent block faces are currently unrestricted. During permitting, the Applicant will be required to coordinate with DDOT to develop a curbside management and signage plan, possibly including multi-space meter installation at the Applicant's expense, consistent with current DDOT policies.

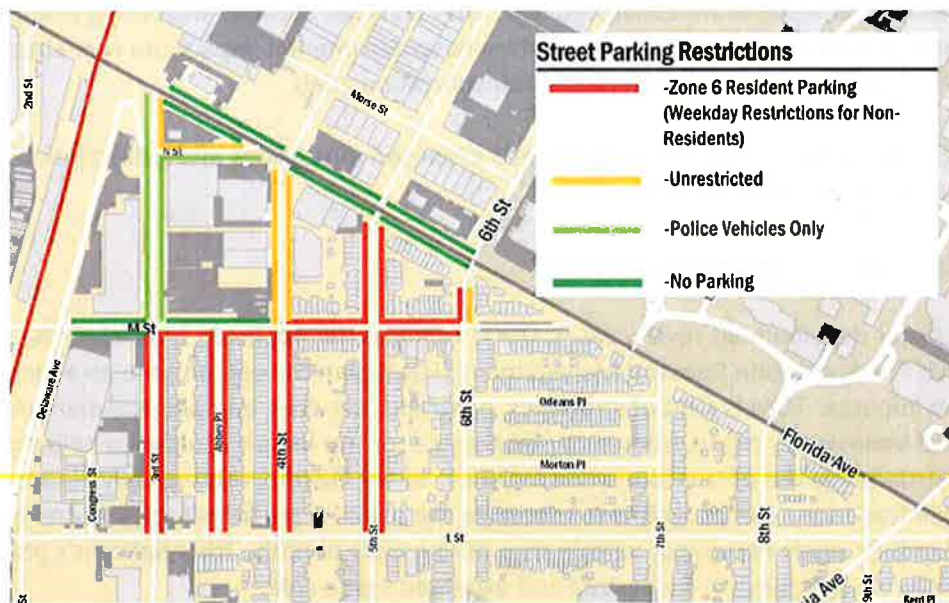


Figure 3 Curbside Parking Restrictions

The Applicant surveyed parking utilization on a typical weekday during two time periods: morning (6:00am-9:00am) and evening/night (5:00pm-11:00pm). The peak periods for parking occupancy were 8:00am and 11:00pm when 92% and 90% of parking spaces were utilized, respectively. Parking availability by space time is shown in Figure 4.

Space Type	Morning Peak Period (8 AM)				Evening Peak Period (11 PM)			
	Spaces	Occupancy	Utilization	Available	Spaces	Occupancy	Utilization	Available
RPP	273	255	93%	18	273	262	96%	11
Unrestricted	38	33	87%	5	38	26	68%	12
Other Spaces*	5	2	40%	3	11	1	9%	5
All On-Street Spaces	316	290	92%	26	322	289	90%	28

* The other spaces include the **handicapped** spaces and no parking on school days spaces

Figure 4 Peak Hour Curbside Parking Utilization by Space Type

The Applicant’s parking occupancy inventory found that curbside parking availability in the vicinity is highly utilized. The Applicant proposes a TDM plan, discussed in detail in the Mitigations section, to encourage non-auto modes and reduce demand for parking by future residents and patrons.

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 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 Transportation Management Coordinator responsible for organizing and marketing the TDM plan;
- Restrict future residents from securing RPP permits;
- Develop a marketing program detailing transportation information;
- Provide 56 long-term and 18 short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- Install a bicycle maintenance facility in the bicycle room;
- For the first three years of operation, offer an in-unit bicycle rack for each residential unit;
- Provide ridsharing information through Commuter Connections to retail employees; and
- Offer each residential unit the option of either a one-time annual carsharing membership and application fee, a \$100 SmarTrip card, or a one-time annual Capital Bikeshare membership.

The Applicant plans to place a restriction to prohibit future residents from applying for or obtaining RPP passes. This restriction is not a strictly enforceable condition by the District and therefore the restriction may not realize its intended outcome.

DDOT finds the TDM plan needs to be strengthened to further encourage non-auto travel and support the requested parking relief. Accordingly, the following elements or adjustments are needed:

- DDOT finds that bikeshare and car-share are more effective means to encourage long-term travel behavior change. Accordingly, the financial incentive should be limited to bikeshare and car-share memberships. DDOT also finds that the success of these trip reduction measures would depend on the promotion of continuous use of the bikeshare and car-share programs by the prospective tenants, rather than the initial tenants only. Therefore, DDOT recommends that the Applicant offer annual membership fees for either bikeshare or car-share for each new tenant for a period of 5 years; and
- Install a transit information screen in the residential lobby.

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