

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: March 3, 2016

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 16-01 – 1542 First Street SW

PROJECT SUMMARY

TMASSHLDG, LLC (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a new four-story residential development in the Capitol Gateway Overlay District at the premises 1542 First Street SW (Square 656, Lot 813). The site is bounded by First Street to the west, High Road Middle School to the north, residential row properties to the east and, commercial row properties to the south. The development proposal includes:

- Eight residential units;
- Zero off-street vehicle parking spaces; and
- Three long-term bicycle parking spaces.

The Applicant seeks full relief from three off-street parking requirements.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and 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;
- Preliminary public space plans are consistent with DDOT standards; and
- Primary residential access is proposed from First Street.

Travel Assumptions

- The Applicant used sound methodology and assumptions to perform analysis;
- Future residents are likely to use auto and non-auto options at approximately equal shares; and
- The site is served by Metrorail and Metrobus.

Analysis

- The Transportation Demand Management Plan (TDM) measures are appropriate and will serve to encourage non-auto use;
- Existing transit service should have capacity to accommodate future demand;
- The Applicant shows long-term and short-term bicycle parking facilities; and
- Curbside parking is sufficient to accommodate increase demand.

Mitigations

DDOT has no objection to the requested approval.

Continued Coordination

Given the action, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT outside of the Zoning Commission process on the following matters:

- 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 Buzzard Point Streetscape Guidelines when publically available or to current DDOT standards in the absence of these guidelines. Careful attention should be paid to pedestrian and bicycle connections along the site's perimeter and adjacent infrastructure.

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

The site is located on a narrow lot with no curb cuts and no alley access. Installation of a curb cut for access to parking would be roughly the size of the lot. Therefore, the Applicant is proposing no vehicular access for this site. Primary pedestrian access is proposed from First Street.

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 site development program proposes less than 50 units; therefore, loading facilities are not required. The Applicant proposes to have trash pickup schedule coordinated with neighboring properties for efficiency. In addition, the Applicant proposes to use an internal room for trash storage or have trash collected in the rear.

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 DDOT is currently developing streetscape guidelines for Buzzard Point. As such, DDOT expects the Applicant to design public space according to the Buzzard Point Streetscape Guidelines or to current DDOT standards in absence of these guidelines. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

Final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process. DDOT notes the importance of maximizing the width of sidewalks along the perimeter of the site to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle activity.

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.

Off-Street Vehicle Parking

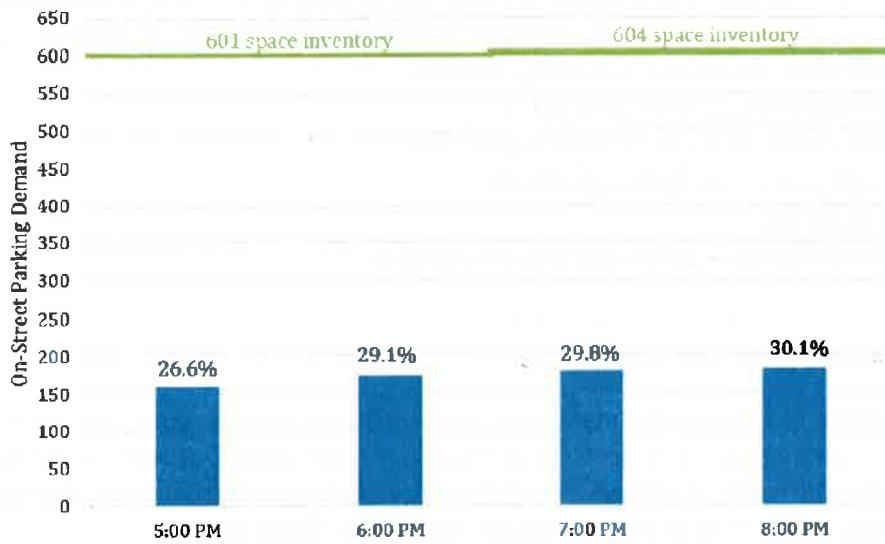
The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/supply of parking spaces. However, in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high quality transit, frequency of transit service, and proximity to transit.

A minimum of three parking vehicular parking spaces are required by zoning. The Applicant is seeking full relief of the off-street parking requirements to provide no onsite parking.

The Applicant conducted an on-street parking inventory and peak occupancy count on Thursday, December 10, 2015 to determine the availability of parking. The on-street parking inventory was performed at 6:30PM. Inventory was determined on all streets within two blocks of the site. The analysis showed that there were 601 available spaces before 6:30PM and 604 spaces available after 6:30PM. Parking Occupancy was surveyed on a typical day from 5PM to 8PM. This analysis showed that of the 604 available parking spaces, only 182 were occupied; resulting in 30% occupancy overall.

The analysis performed by the Applicant concluded that there are 422 on-street parking spaces available on a typical day during the peak period, indicating adequate curbside parking to accommodate parking demand generated by this site. Of note, the site is located in a Residential Parking Permit (RPP) eligible zone and the Applicant is not seeking to exclude RPP from future residents.

Graph 1: Parking Occupancy per Hour



NOTE: Graph includes data collected during the Well & Associates parking assessment completed on December 10, 2015

In addition, the Applicant performed an off-street parking assessment for review of local public parking facilities. The Applicant identified two facilities that appeared to only open for game days at Nationals Ballpark and are not 24-hour public lots.

Due to the site's close proximity to Nationals Ballpark and the proposed DC United Stadium, it should be noted that the Applicant performed parking analysis on a typical day and did not include parking demand during game day activities. Curbside parking availability is likely to decrease on game days. Furthermore, several large projects are proposed to be developed in the surrounding area which may increase curbside parking demand.

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 0.6 miles, roughly a 13 minute walk, from the Navy Yard/ Ballpark Metro Station and 0.7 miles, roughly a 14 minute walk, from the Waterfront Metro Station. Both stations serve the Green Line.

The site is served by high-frequency bus routes. The closest bus stop is located approximately 260 feet away, roughly a one minute walk, at First and P Street. This stop serves the 74 – Convention Center – Southwest Waterfront Line. Additional bus routes include:

- A9 – Martin Luther King Jr. MetroExtra Line
- A42, A46, A48 – Anacostia – Congress Heights Line
- P17, P19 – Oxon Hill – Fort Washington Line
- W13 – Bock Road Line
- 74 – Convention Center – Southwest Waterfront Line

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 existing sidewalk immediately adjacent to the site on First Street has a width of four-feet six-inches, which does not meet DDOT minimum standards of six-feet. The Applicant proposes to provide a six-foot wide sidewalk; however, eight-foot wide sidewalks will be required per the Buzzard Point Streetscape Guidelines. As mentioned, final design of the public space will be determined during DDOT's public space permitting process.

Bicycle Facilities

The District of Columbia 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 currently located within 0.5 miles from the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.

The Applicant proposes three long-term bicycle parking spaces located inside of the building and eight short-term bicycle parking spaces to be located near the sidewalk. The exact location of short-term bicycle facilities will be determined during the public space permitting process.

The closest Capital Bikeshare Station with 38 docks is located 0.6 miles from the site at First and N Street SE.

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.

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 proposed the following TDM strategies:

- Provide, as a one-time incentive, up to eight bicycle helmets (one per unit) for distribution to new residents;
- Provide new residents with an information packet regarding available transportation choices and links to resources that provide real-time transportation updates for smart phones, computers, etc;
- Offer an annual Capital Bikeshare or car share membership at lease signing or unit purchase for new residents for up to five years after the building is completed ;
- Provide a new resident with a \$30.00 credit towards on-demand car services (e.g. UberX) for each unit at the initial lease or sale of units in the building for up to five years after the building is completed;
- Install a minimum of four short term bicycle parking spaces in the public space, subject to DDOT approval;
- Design the building with three secure bicycle parking spaces subject to DDOT guidelines; and
- Post all TDM commitments on-line for a one-year period.

DDOT finds that the Applicant's proposed TDM measures are appropriate and will serve to encourage non-auto use.

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