

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Jamie Henson
Systems Planning Manager

DATE: October 13, 2017

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19572 – 1916 15th Street SE

APPLICATION

SIM Development, LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 10, requests variances from the non-conforming structure requirements of Subtitle C § 202, and the parking requirements (three (3) spaces) of Subtitle C § 701.5, to add two stories containing sixteen units to an existing two-story, nine-unit, mixed-use building. The proposed project will consist of 25 residential units and 5,484 SF of commercial use on the first floor. The site is located in the MU-4 zone at 1916 15th Street SE (Square 5766, Lot 845).

The project will consist of the following:

- 5,484 SF of existing commercial space;
- 25 residential units (16 new units and 9 existing);
- Zero (0) vehicle parking spaces; and
- Unspecified amount of bicycle parking spaces.

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

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- The Applicant must meet the bicycle parking requirements as determined by the Zoning Administrator;
- The Applicant should provide a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan as described below as required by Subtitle C § 703.4 for parking reductions;
- The site has access to the existing 16-foot alley that connects 15th Street SE to 16th Street SE. DDOT expects vehicles to perform only head-in and head-out movements to the alley; and
- 15th Street SE currently has unregulated on-street parking (except for school zones). Residents will be eligible to park their vehicles on-street without permits.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed action will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. The proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. In addition, the project has the potential to generate minor impacts to on-street parking conditions in the area. Vehicle parking demand may increase slightly as a result of the project, inducing a higher level of parking utilization in the immediate area.

Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested variances with the following condition:

- Implement the TDM package with the following elements:
 - Identify a staff member on-site to be the TDM Coordinator to work with goDCgo on implementation;
 - Provide TDM materials to new residents in the Residential Welcome Package to notify them of non-automotive options for travel;
 - Provide two (2) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces (one inverted u-rack) in the "furniture zone" in public space or on private property; and
 - Provide website links to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on developer and property management websites.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicular Parking

Subtitle C § 701.5 of the Zoning Regulations requires a total of three (3) vehicular parking space (1 per 3 units and a 50% reduction due to proximity to a Priority Corridor Network Metrobus Route) for 16 additional residential building units. The existing site consists of nine (9) residential units and 5,484 SF of commercial space, and does not currently provide any vehicle parking spaces. The Applicant is seeking relief from all three (3) vehicular parking spaces required for the addition.

Subtitle C § 703.4 of the Zoning Regulations requires that any request for a reduction in the minimum number of required parking spaces include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan that has been approved by DDOT. DDOT requests that the Applicant take the following actions to ensure that demand for vehicle parking does not exceed the amount of spaces provided on-site:

- Identify a staff member on-site to be the TDM Coordinator to work with goDCgo on implementation;
- Provide TDM materials to new residents in the Residential Welcome Package to notify them of non-automotive options for travel;
- Provide two (2) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces (one inverted u-rack) in the “furniture zone” in public space or on private property; and
- Provide website links to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on developer and property management websites.

Residential Permit Parking (RPP)

The site is located on the 1900 block of 15th Street SE, which currently is not subject to the Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program restriction. This street is currently unregulated except for restrictions during school hours on several segments. Since this block has no RPP restrictions, current and future residents are eligible to park on the street without a permit. If the neighborhood would like to petition DDOT to establish an RPP district in the vicinity of the site, DDOT would be available to work with the community.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires eight (8) long-term spaces (1 space per 3 dwelling units and 1 space for each 10,000 SF of retail use) and two (2) short-term spaces (1 space for every 20 dwelling units and 1 space for every 3,500 SF of retail). The Applicant is not proposing to provide any long- or short-term bicycle parking with this action. DDOT expects the Applicant to meet the bicycle parking requirements as determined by the Zoning Administration.

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 mode areas 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 the alley network, to which this building is adjacent.

Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT’s standards for loading. This site is served by a rear 16-foot public alley that connects 15th Street SE to 16th Street SE. Subtitle C § 901.1 of the Zoning Regulations requires one (1) loading berths and zero (0) delivery spaces for retail uses over 5,000 SF. Given the retail is existing to the original structure, the Applicant is not required to provide a loading berth. DDOT expects that all move-in/move-out and trash pick-up activities will occur in the alley and only head-in and head-out maneuvers will be performed. Additionally, there is a 62-foot long commercial loading zone along the site’s Good Hope Road SE frontage. Residents may also obtain “emergency no parking” signs to reserve a space on street for move-ins and move-outs.

Public Space

This review only pertains to zoning issues and does not consider potential impacts to District owned public space. DDOT's lack of objection to the requested variances should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. If any portion of the project has elements in the public space requiring approval, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. The Applicant may refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT's recently released 2017 Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

JH:kb