

# Government of the District of Columbia


## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

**FROM:** Anna Chamberlin, AICP  
Associate Director 

**DATE:** June 17, 2021

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 19616A – 818 Potomac Avenue SE

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#### APPLICATION

Thomas Jefferson Real Estate, LLC, (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle Y § 704.1, Modification of Significance to BZA No. 19616 for a Special Exception from the loading requirements of Subtitle C § 909.1 (pursuant to Subtitle C § 909.2 and Subtitle X § 901.2) and Special Exception relief from the showers and clothing lockers required under Subtitle C §§ 806.4 & 806.5. The Applicant is not proposing any changes to the previously approved design but is requesting to rent the 49 apartments on a short-term (nightly) basis. The site is located in the NC-6 Zone at 818 Potomac Avenue SE (Square 930, Lots 10, 14, 800, 801, 816, 817, 828, and 829).

#### 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, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. As a 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 multi-modal 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:

- The building design and configuration was previously approved as part of BZA 19616 with 49 units and 44 vehicle parking spaces located in an underground garage;

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 19616A  
EXHIBIT NO. 32

- The building is currently under construction and not proposing design changes for the proposed use change from residential to lodging;
- The lodging facility will not have any on-site full-time or part-time employees as guest check-in and all management is off-site and done virtually;
- The Applicant is requesting relief from one (1) loading berth as the previously approved residential use did not require loading and is being constructed without loading. The Applicant has committed to a Loading Management Plan (LMP) in the April 15, 2021 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement, which DDOT supports;
- Subtitle C § 806 requires two (2) showers and two (2) lockers for the new lodging use that were not required for the existing residential use. The project is being constructed without these showers and lockers and requesting relief from this requirement and the Applicant has stated that no one will be working on-site regularly nor will maintenance materials be stored in the building. The Applicant has committed to a Transportation Demand Management (TDM Plan) in the April 15, 2021 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement, which DDOT supports;
- The Applicant is proposing to exceed the existing bicycle requirements by providing 18 long-term and six (6) short-term spaces (three (3) inverted U-racks) as part of their TDM package. These are being provided at the higher ‘residential’ rate as previously approved;
- The Applicant was required in BZA 19616 to provide one (1) electric vehicle charging station and two (2) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces (1 inverted U-rack). The Applicant should continue to meet these conditions; and
- The Applicant already has public space approval for the proposed project (TOPS # PA277889).

## RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has no objection to the approval of the requested relief with the following conditions:

- The Applicant will continue to be required to meet the conditions from BZA 19616 for one (1) electric vehicle charging station and two (2) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces above and beyond the requirement for the residential use;
- The Applicant shall implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted:
  - Unbundle the cost of parking from the cost to lease the building and only hourly, daily, or weekly rates will be charged. Free parking, validation, or discounted rates will not be offered;
  - Identify Transportation Coordinators for the planning, construction, and operations phases of development. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement. There will be a Transportation Coordinator for each tenant and the entire site. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement;
  - Will provide Transportation Coordinators’ contact information to goDCgo, and report TDM activities to goDCgo once per year;
  - Transportation Coordinators will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to employees and patrons, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) on property website and in any internal building newsletters or communications;
  - Transportation Coordinators will receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the TDM conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan.
  - Customer-interacting staff will be provided training by goDCgo (either in-person or webinar) to learn of the nonautomotive options for traveling to the property;

- Provide guests with goDCgo’s Get around Guide by making it available on the property website and in printed format for front office or customer-facing staff;
  - Transportation Coordinator will subscribe to goDCgo’s hospitality newsletter;
  - Will exceed ZR16 short- and long-term bicycle parking requirements. Long-term bicycle parking will be provided free of charge to all employees. Three (3) long-term and one (1) short-term bicycle parking spaces are required by zoning. The project will exceed the bike parking requirements with 18 long-term and six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed for the project;
  - Long-term bicycle storage rooms will accommodate non-traditional sized bikes including cargo, tandem, and kids bikes;
  - Will post “getting here” information in a visible and prominent location on the website with a focus on non-automotive travel modes. Also, links will be provided to goDCgo.com, CommuterConnections.com, transit agencies around the metropolitan area, and instructions for patrons discouraging parking on-street in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones;
  - Provide comprehensive transportation information and directions on property website, including promoting the use of non-automotive modes of transportation and links to website for goDCgo, Capital Bikeshare, DC Circulator, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); and
  - Provide brochures with information on non-automotive options for traveling to the property available at all times in a visible location in the lobby.
- The Applicant shall implement the following Loading Management Plan (LMP), for the life of the project:
    - A loading manager will be designated by the building management who will be on duty during delivery hours. The manager will be responsible for coordinating with vendors and tenants to schedule deliveries and will work with the community and neighbors to resolve any conflicts should they arise;
    - Trucks using curbside areas will not be allowed to idle and must follow all District guidelines for heavy vehicle operation including but not limited to DCMR 20 – Chapter 9, Section 900 (Engine Idling), the goDCgo Motorcoach Operators Guide, and the primary access routes shown on the DDOT Truck and Bus Route Map ([godcgo.com/freight](http://godcgo.com/freight));
    - The loading manager will be responsible for disseminating suggested truck routing maps to the building’s tenants and to drivers from delivery services that frequently visit the development as well as notifying all drivers of any access or egress restrictions. The loading manager will also distribute flyer materials, such as the MWCOG Turn Your Engine Off brochure, to drivers as needed to encourage compliance with idling laws. The loading manager will also post these materials and other relevant notices in a prominent location; and
    - Trash pickup will occur in the curbside area along L Street SE, which is closest to the trash room. Property management personnel will bring the trash receptacles out to the trash vehicle and return them to the trash room after the trash has been picked up.

## **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

### Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price, and 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.

Subtitle C § 701.5 the Zoning Regulations requires a minimum of 14 vehicle parking spaces for a lodging building with approximate gross floor area of 28,289 square feet. The building design and configuration was previously approved as part of BZA 19616 with 44 vehicle parking spaces located in an underground garage, and the building is currently under construction and not proposing design changes for the proposed use change from residential to lodging.

A portion of the site is used as a surface parking lot approved under BZA Order No. 14346 for the owner of the office building at 810 Potomac Avenue SE, which requires that 13 vehicle parking spaces be available on the property. The proposed project will continue to provide 13 dedicated vehicle parking spaces in the underground garage for use by 810 Potomac Avenue SE.

DDOT notes that even after excluding the required 13 vehicle parking spaces required by BZA No. 14346 for 810 Potomac Avenue SE, the proposed amount of vehicle parking spaces is more than double the zoning requirement. The Applicant was required in BZA 19616 to provide one (1) electric vehicle charging station and two (2) additional short-term bicycle parking spaces (1 inverted U-rack). The Applicant should continue to meet these conditions. The Applicant has also committed to a Transportation Demand Management (TDM Plan) in the April 15, 2021 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement, which DDOT supports.

#### Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations require three (3) long-term and one (1) short-term bicycle parking space for the lodging use. The Applicant is proposing to exceed these requirements by providing 18 long-term and three (3) short-term spaces (2 inverted U-racks) as part of their TDM package, which are at the higher 'residential' rate that was previously approved.

With the use change to lodging, zoning requires two (2) showers and two (2) lockers that do not exist for residential use. The project is being constructed without these showers and lockers and requesting relief from this requirement. Although the project will be non-residential, it will not have any full-time or part-time on-site employees and lodging patrons will have showers in their rooms. The Applicant has stated that no one will be working on-site regularly nor will maintenance materials be stored in the building as guest check-in and management are done virtually. Based on these conditions, DDOT has no objection to this requested relief with the implementation of the TDM Plan outlined in the Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement.

#### Loading

Subtitle C § 902.1 of the Zoning Regulations require one (1) 30-ft loading berth for a gross floor area of 28,289 square feet. The Applicant is requesting relief from the loading berth as the previously approved residential use did not require loading and is being constructed without loading. The Applicant has committed to a Loading Management Plan (LMP) in the April 15, 2021 Gorove/Slade Transportation Statement, which DDOT supports. The LMP is outlined in the Recommendation section above and DDOT finds the proposal sufficient to mitigate the loading needs.

### **STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM**

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of public space design. All elements of the project proposed in public space, such as grading, curb cuts, sidewalk, bike racks, and vaults, require the Applicant to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process. If the Applicant is interested in pursuing a café patio or streatery in the future, a public space occupancy permit is required.

The Applicant has an approved public space permit application TOPS # PA277889.

DDOT expects the adjacent public space to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the [DCMR](#), and the most recent version of DDOT's [Design and Engineering Manual](#), and DDOT's [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System](#) (TOPS) website.

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