

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 
Associate Director

DATE: October 20, 2020

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20303 – 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW

APPLICATION

Government Properties Income Trust LLC, (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, special exceptions under the penthouse restaurant use requirements of Subtitle C § 1500.3(c), and under the capitol security sub-area requirements of Subtitle I § 605.6, to renovate a 324,108 SF existing office building and convert it into a mixed-use building containing 227,339 SF office, 12,628 SF retail, 274-room lodging, and a 5,408 SF restaurant. The site is located in the D-3 Zone at 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW (Square 626, Lot 78) and is served by a 20-foot public alley.

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 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 site is located two (2) blocks from Union Station, a regional transit center;

- The proposed mixed-use conversion would result in a net reduction of 19 vehicle trips during the morning peak hour and an increase of 1 vehicle trip in the evening peak hour, assuming the proposed TDM strategies are implemented;
- There is an existing 187 space parking garage accessed via a 20-ft public alley that will remain, but the number of spaces will reduce to 186;
- The Applicant is proposing to meet the zoning requirement for 82 long-term bicycle spaces and is exceeding the requirement of 16 short-term bicycle spaces by providing 40 spaces;
- The Applicant will bring the building up to ZR16 compliance for showers and locker facilities by providing 6 showers and 55 lockers. These are not currently shown on the BZA plans;
- Loading activities and trash pick-up are anticipated to continue occurring via the public alley network connecting to Massachusetts Avenue NW and F Street NW;
- The proposed TDM Plan is sufficiently robust for the new mixed-use building to effectively encourage non-automotive travel and achieve the non-auto mode split assumed in the Transportation Statement. It should be included as a condition of approval; and
- The Applicant received conceptual approval for the curb cuts and public space design and has submitted again for their final public space permit.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicle, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips on the localized transportation network. In addition, the project may result in increased pick-up and drop-off activity and slightly reduced availability of on-street parking within the immediate area. Despite these minor impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application with the following condition:

- The Applicant will implement the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, as proposed by the Applicant in the September 16, 2020 Transportation Statement (Exhibit 31A), for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted.

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 of the Zoning Regulations requires a zero (0) vehicular parking space since the project is located in a D Zone. The Applicant is renovating an existing building that has 187 parking spaces and will be maintaining the existing garage but reducing the amount of parking to 186 spaces accessed via a 20-ft public alley.

The Applicant is proposing a circular drive on Massachusetts Avenue NW for pick-up and drop-off at the hotel entrance. The Public Space Committee (PSC) granted Conceptual Approval for the circular drive as it is designed to DDOT standards and is common for hotels along this corridor.

Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations require 82 long-term and 16 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing to meet the long-term requirement and exceed the short-term requirement by providing 40 short-term spaces (20 inverted U-racks) are proposed in public space as shown in their public space site plan. The Applicant is also proposing to bring the building up to ZR16 compliance for showers and locker facilities intended for bicycle commuters. A total of 6 showers and 55 lockers will be provided, per the zoning tabulation table. It is noted that the showers and lockers are not currently shown on the plans.

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.

Subtitle C § 902.1 of the Zoning Regulations require three (3) loading berths at this location which currently exist and the Applicant is maintaining. This site is served by a 20-foot public alley which connects to Massachusetts Avenue NW to the north and F Street NW to the south. Loading and unloading, deliveries, and trash pick-up are anticipated to occur in the loading area via the public alley.

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, proximity to transit options, availability and cost of vehicle parking, among many others.

The Applicant provided trip generation estimates which utilized the rates published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition* (Land Use Code 710 General Office, Code 310 Hotel, Code 820 Shopping Center and Code 931 Quality Restaurant) and the assumed mode-split to convert base vehicular trips to base person trips using average auto occupancy data and then back to vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips. DDOT finds these methods appropriate.

Mode split assumptions used in the subject analysis were informed by the Census, a survey from the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) State of the Commute, and the WMATA Ridership Survey. Figure 1 below shows the mode splits assumed for the trip generation analysis within the Transportation Statement. Figure 2 below shows the trip generation summary. The proposed mixed-use conversion would result in a net reduction of 19 vehicle trips during the morning peak hour and an

increase of 1 vehicle trip in the evening peak hour, assuming the proposed TDM strategies are implemented to achieve the increased non-auto mode split.

Figure 1. Summary of Mode Split (Source: Gorove/Slade 9/16/2020, Transportation Statement, Table 1)

Land Use	Mode			
	Auto	Transit	Bike	Walk
Existing Office	45%	47%	3%	5%
Proposed Office	35%	45%	10%	10%
Proposed Hotel	25%	40%	5%	30%
Proposed Retail	5%	40%	15%	40%
Proposed Restaurant	15%	35%	10%	40%

Figure 2. Multimodal Trip Generation (Source: Gorove/Slade 9/16/2020, Transportation Statement, Table 2)

Mode	Land Use	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
		In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
Auto (veh/hr)	Proposed Office	72	12	84	14	73	87
	Proposed Hotel	23	15	38	30	29	59
	Proposed Retail	5	3	8	3	3	6
	Proposed Restaurant	0	0	0	4	2	6
	Total Proposed Development	100	30	130	51	107	158
	<i>Existing Office Development</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>157</i>
	Δ (Proposed Development - Existing Development)	-28	9	-19	26	-25	1
Transit (ppl/hr)	Proposed Office	109	18	127	21	111	132
	Proposed Hotel	66	45	111	88	85	173
	Proposed Retail	71	44	115	42	44	86
	Proposed Restaurant	1	2	3	21	10	31
	Total Proposed Development	247	109	356	172	250	422
	<i>Existing Office Development</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>193</i>
	Δ (Proposed Development - Existing Development)	89	83	172	141	88	229
Bike (ppl/hr)	Proposed Office	24	4	28	5	24	29
	Proposed Hotel	8	6	14	11	11	22
	Proposed Retail	27	16	43	16	16	32
	Proposed Restaurant	0	1	1	6	3	9
	Total Proposed Development	59	27	86	38	54	92
	<i>Existing Office Development</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>12</i>
	Δ (Proposed Development - Existing Development)	49	25	74	36	44	80
Walk (ppl/hr)	Proposed Office	24	4	28	5	24	29
	Proposed Hotel	49	34	83	66	64	130
	Proposed Retail	71	44	115	42	44	86
	Proposed Restaurant	2	1	3	24	11	35
	Total Proposed Development	146	83	229	137	143	280
	<i>Existing Office Development</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>21</i>
	Δ (Proposed Development - Existing Development)	129	80	209	134	125	259

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

The following is a list of TDM strategies the Applicant proposed for the 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW development, in the September 16, 2020, Transportation Statement (Exhibit 31A). DDOT requests this TDM Plan be included as condition of approval for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted to encourage use of non-automotive modes of travel and achieve the increase non-auto mode split assumed in the analysis.

- The Applicant will identify Transportation Coordinators for the planning, construction, and operations phases of development. There will be a Project Transportation Coordinator as well as a Transportation Coordinator for each site use (office, hotel, and retail). The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement.
- The Applicant will provide Transportation Coordinators' contact information to goDCgo, conduct an annual commuter survey of employees on-site, and report TDM activities and data collection efforts to goDCgo once per year. All employer tenants must survey their employees and report back to the Transportation Coordinator.
- The Applicant will ensure Transportation Coordinators 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 the property website and in any internal building newsletters or communications.
- The Applicant will ensure Transportation Coordinators receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the TDM conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan.
- The Applicant will ensure Project Transportation Coordinators require by lease or other agreement that tenants with 20 or more employees on-site comply with the DC Commuter Benefits Law and participate in at least one of the three transportation benefits outlined in the law (employee-paid pre-tax benefit, employer-paid direct benefit, or shuttle service), as well as any other commuter benefits related laws that may be implemented in the future.
- The Applicant will provide a minimum of six (6) showers and 46 lockers for use by employees, complying with the ZR16 requirements for this project, based on its gross floor area and minimum required number of long-term bicycle parking spaces.
- The Applicant will provide 82 long-term and up to 40 short-term bicycle parking spaces free of charge to employees. This meets or exceeds the ZR16 requirements of 82 long-term spaces and 16 short-term spaces for this project.
- The Applicant will provide storage for two (2) child trailers/strollers and two (2) tandem bikes in the long-term bicycle storage room.
- The Applicant will provide outlets for charging electric bicycles and a bicycle repair station in the long-term bicycle storage room.

For the office portion of the project, the Applicant proposes the following:

- The Applicant will unbundle the cost of parking from the cost to lease an office unit.
- The Applicant will notify goDCgo each time a new office tenant occupying more than 15% of the leasable area of the project moves in and provide TDM information to each tenant as they move in.

- The Applicant will provide links to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on property websites.
- The Applicant will ensure the Transportation Coordinator implements a carpooling system such that individuals working in the building who wish to carpool can easily locate other employees who live nearby.
- The Applicant will distribute information on the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program, which provides commuters who regularly carpool, vanpool, bike, walk, or take transit to work with a free and reliable ride home in an emergency.
- The Applicant will provide employees who wish to carpool with detailed carpooling information and will be referred to other carpool matching services sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) or other comparable service if MWCOC does not offer this in the future.
- The Applicant will designate up to five (5) of the total 186 proposed parking spaces as preferential carpooling spaces in a convenient location within the parking garage for employee use.

For the retail portion of the project, the Applicant proposes the following:

- The Applicant will unbundle the cost of parking from the cost to lease an office unit.
- The Applicant will post “getting here” information in a visible and prominent location on the website with a focus on nonautomotive travel modes. Also, links will be provided to goDCgo.com, CommuterConnections.com, transit agencies around the metropolitan area, and instructions for customers, attendees, and patrons discouraging parking on-street in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) zones.
- The Applicant will provide employees who wish to carpool with detailed carpooling information and will be referred to other carpool matching services sponsored by MWCOC or other comparable service if MWCOC does not offer this in the future.

For the hotel portion of the project, the Applicant proposes the following:

- The Applicant will require front office and customer-facing staff are provided training by [goDCgo](http://goDCgo.com) (either in-person or webinar) to learn of the non-automotive options for traveling to the property.
- The Applicant will provide guests with [goDCgo](http://goDCgo.com)’s Get Around Guide by making it available on the property website and in printed format for front office or customer-facing staff.
- The Applicant will ensure the Transportation Coordinator subscribes to [goDCgo](http://goDCgo.com)’s hospitality newsletter.
- The Applicant will post “getting here” information in a visible and prominent location on the website with a focus on nonautomotive travel modes. The Applicant will also provide links to goDCgo.com, CommuterConnections.com, transit agencies around the metropolitan area, and instructions for patrons discouraging parking on-street in RPP zones.
- The Applicant will provide comprehensive transportation information and directions on the hotel website, including promoting the use of non-automotive modes of transportation and links to website for [goDCgo](http://goDCgo.com), Capital Bikeshare, DC Circulator, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).
- The Applicant will 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 will provide employees who wish to carpool with detailed carpooling information and refer them to other carpool matching services sponsored by MWCOG or other comparable service if MWCOG does not offer this in the future.

PUBLIC SPACE

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, and vaults, require the Applicant to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process.

The Applicant received conceptual approval for their public space design (Tracking Number 347782) and has applied for their final public space permit (Tracking Number 356360). The site has several non-standard elements which will require a covenant of maintenance.

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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