

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Matt Jesick, Case Manager
JL Joel Lawson, Associate Director for Development Review

DATE: December 11, 2020

SUBJECT: BZA #20341 – 1544 Rhode Island Avenue, NE – Request for special exception relief to provide fewer parking spaces than required for a new apartment building

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following requested special exception:

- C § 701 Parking, pursuant to C § 703.2 (15 spaces required for new construction; equivalent of 7 spaces proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Applicant	4527 Georgia Ave., LLC
Address	1544 Rhode Island Avenue, NE
Legal Description	Square 4021, Lot 15
Ward / ANC	5B
Zone	MU-4 (moderate density mixed use)
Historic District or Resource	None
Lot Characteristics	Roughly trapezoidal lot; 16 th Street bordering to the east; Grade goes up from south to north.
Existing Development	Single story restaurant building with parking lot.
Adjacent Properties and Neighborhood Character	5-story apartment building to the west; 5-story apartment building to the north along 16 th Street; 2-story apartment building to the northwest. Rhode Island Avenue is a mix of apartment buildings and low to moderate scale commercial buildings. Surrounding neighborhood is primarily single family detached housing.
Proposal	Construct a 49-unit apartment building with the equivalent of 7 parking spaces.

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND RELIEF REQUESTED

The proposed 49 unit apartment building would require 15 parking spaces. The applicant proposes three physical parking spaces, two of which would be car share parking spaces. Pursuant to Subtitle C § 708.2, each of those car share spaces would count as three spaces. For zoning purposes, therefore, the project would provide the equivalent of seven spaces, and the applicant requests relief for eight spaces.

Item	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Lot Width	n/a	~107' at Rhode Island Ave.	No change	Conforming
Lot Depth	n/a	~125' on western property line	No change	Conforming
Lot Area	n/a	14,098 sf	No change	Conforming
FAR G 402	3.0	Not provided	2.8 (39,380 sf)	Conforming
Height G 403	50'	Not provided	46'7"	Conforming
Lot Occupancy G 404	75%	Not provided	69.9%	Conforming
Residential Units	n/a	0	49	Conforming
Vehicle Parking C 701 C 708.2	RESIDENTIAL 1 per 3 dwelling units in excess of 4 units (49 units – 4 = 45; 45/3 = 15 spaces req.)	Not provided	7 (2 car share spaces, equivalent to 3 spaces each, plus 1 standard, accessible space)	Requested

IV. ANALYSIS

Relief from the parking requirements of C § 701 can be granted by the Board as a special exception, pursuant to C § 703.2. The relevant criteria of that section are reviewed below.

SUBTITLE C § 703 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FROM MINIMUM PARKING NUMBER REQUIREMENTS

703.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in number of required parking spaces, subject to the general special exception requirements of Subtitle X, and the applicant's demonstration of at least one (1) of the following:*

...

- (b) *The use or structure is particularly well served by mass transit, shared vehicle, or*

bicycle facilities;

- (c) *Land use or transportation characteristics of the neighborhood minimize the need for required parking spaces;*

...

The application demonstrates that the project would meet two of the criteria for granting the requested parking relief. This area is well served by transit and other modes of transportation. The site is approximately one mile from both the Rhode Island Avenue and Brookland metro stations, and the immediate vicinity is served by 10 bus lines. There are also a number of bikeshare stations. The application states that two of the parking spaces on the site will be dedicated to car-share parking spaces. The land use characteristics of the neighborhood would also minimize the need for vehicle parking. The neighborhood contains a number of retail, service and institutional uses, and civic facilities, including a post office and library, are also within walking distance.

703.3 Any reduction in the required number of parking spaces shall be only for the amount that the applicant is physically unable to provide, and shall be proportionate to the reduction in parking demand demonstrated by the applicant.

The applicant proposes to provide spaces in the area to the rear of the building. The design proposes to locate dwelling units in the cellar of the building, rather than provide parking in that space. The applicant has agreed to a TDM plan that should reduce the parking demand for the project. The plan would require an on-site transportation coordinator, and would promote alternate modes of transportation by providing Smartrip cards to residents, and using various means to promote transit, bicycling and walking options for residents.

703.4 Any request for a reduction in the minimum required parking shall include a transportation demand management plan approved by the District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval.

The DDOT report at Exhibit 36 indicates that they have worked with the applicant to develop a TDM plan for the project. DDOT supports the reduction of parking and has no objection to the relief.

V. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

At Exhibit 36 is a memo from DDOT indicating their support for the application.

VI. ANC COMMENTS

At Exhibit 34, the ANC submitted a resolution in support of the application.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The record contains letters of support at Exhibits 28 – 30.

VIII. VICINITY MAP

