

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

Memorandum

TO: Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA)

FROM: Karina Ricks, Associate Director
District Department of Transportation

DATE: November 21, 2008

SUBJECT: BZA Application #17850 (Whitman Walker Clinic)
14th and S Streets, N.W.

APPLICATION

The JBG Companies (applicant) requests special exception relief from the required amount of parking for an addition to an historic structure. The proposed project includes construction of a mixed-use development with 120 residential units and approximately 18,000 square feet of ground floor retail. About 2,000 square feet of the retail space will be located inside of the existing historic structure. The project will include approximately 90 below grade parking spaces located on two levels.

RECOMMENDATION IN BRIEF

DDOT agrees with the applicant's request for the special exception. DDOT recommends the BZA require a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy approved by DDOT for the applicant to receive the special exception. Although the proposed project does not appear to have a projected demand that may place a significant burden on the local network of neighborhood streets, we would like to remain assured that it does not effectuate undue congestion.

DDOT ANALYSIS

The applicant's proposal shows approximately 90 underground parking spaces. If the spaces are deeded parking spaces, DDOT prefers a deed restriction be considered with the underground parking upon project completion. Leasing arrangements involving the parking spaces may result in additional vehicle trips. The number of parking spaces does not exceed the quantity required by code and DDOT applauds the applicant for seeking the relief for less parking. As stated in the applicant's transportation impact study, public transportation is accessible to the site and therefore DDOT views this project as transportation oriented development (TOD). DDOT requests the applicant to provide WMATA SmartTrip cards to all residents and business owners upon move-in to the new property. The \$5 SmartTrip cards shall contain \$60 Metro fare per person.

This development is also surrounded by a very strong bicycle and pedestrian network of facilities. DDOT firmly believes the vehicle parking should be complemented with ample bicycle parking for residents as well as retail customers. Therefore, we believe bicycle parking in the underground garage should be accessible for residents and retail employees. We believe the applicant should furnish lockers and showers to encourage bicycle commuting for the retail staff. We would like to have the applicant show its commitment to ample public bicycle parking by furnishing a minimum total of 4 bicycle racks on 14th Street as well as S Street.

Although there may be many carsharing spaces along 14th Street within vicinity of the site, DDOT believes the applicant should evaluate carsharing inside of its underground garage. Additionally, the developer shall pay for the initial carsharing application fee (\$25) and annual fee for one year (\$50) for all residents or business owners inside of the residential and retail development to encourage carsharing use.

As the applicant is well aware, DDOT has a bikesharing rack within vicinity of the site. SmartBikes memberships for 1 year (\$40) will be included for residents and proprietors by the developer. This feature complements the developer's goal of creating a site with less motorized vehicle trips.

DDOT believes the development address should be excluded from the residential permit parking (RPP) system in the District of Columbia. The residents of the building will have the opportunity to park personal vehicles in the underground garage facility and therefore should not additionally burden the neighborhood curbside parking inventory.

In a review of the applicant's transportation impact study, the loading berth suffices for a 30' single unit truck. However, DDOT is aware how there may be larger delivery vehicles for retail or residential use. Therefore, DDOT is interested to hear from the applicant where those vehicles may park while making deliveries. We believe any parking along heavily trafficked 14th Street or narrow S Street will cause undue congestion to the neighborhood.

DDOT also believes the applicant should adhere to the standards found in the DDOT 14th Street Transportation and Streetscape Study published in 2008. We believe full participation from the applicant will contribute to the goal of the study that includes a streetscape design that will create a vibrant commercial and residential corridor.

CONCLUSION

The applicant's proposal to build the site as mixed use with less parking is one we invite at DDOT. The TOD project is one that makes logical sense because of its central location to transit and the central downtown district.

If the Commission votes to approve the application, DDOT strongly recommends the Commission require the above noted measures, approved by DDOT, for the applicant to receive the requested special exceptions.