

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe
Associate Director 

DATE: September 22, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18138-C – 410 Allison Street, N.W. (Parcel 0111/0037)

APPLICATION

Pursuant to 11 DCMR §§3104.1 St. Paul's Episcopal Church (the "Applicant") seeks a special exception under §205 and §206 to allow a private school and child development center with 120 students ages 2.5 years through 12 years and 18 staff in the R-3 District at premises 210 Allison Street, N.W. (Parcel 0111/0037)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Applicant seeks approval to continue the operations of an existing child development center and private school within the Rock Creek Church Cemetery Campus. The 86-acre site includes a historic church, cemetery and the Saint Paul Center, the building that is home to the subject school and child development center. The BZA first approved the use of the site for a private school and child development center with 120 students and 18 staff in BZA Order No. 18138 on December 14, 2010 for a period of 5 years.

The purpose of the District Department of Transportation's (DDOT's) review is to assess the impact of the proposed action on the District's transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The Applicant proposes no changes to the existing operations, enrollment or staff levels;
- A full Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) was not required by DDOT; and
- The Applicant proposes an adequate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan.

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed project will have no adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested special exception.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Depending on the scale of the development project and requested zoning relief, DDOT requires applicants to complete a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) in order to determine the project's impact on the overall transportation network. An applicant is expected to show the existing conditions for each transportation mode affected, the proposed impact on the respective network, and any proposed mitigations, along with the effects of the mitigations on other travel modes. A CTR should be performed according to DDOT direction.

As no changes were proposed to the school operations, student or staff levels, DDOT determined a full CTR was not required and agreed to a limited analysis. The Applicant submitted a transportation statement to DDOT on April 3, 2015. The Applicant committed to promote carpooling and alternative travel modes as a method to reduce single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips for students and staff. The projected continued operations of the child development center will not lead to a substantial increase of new vehicular trips during the peak periods and will have a negligible impact on the transportation network.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

The School has an adequate TDM program that including the following items;

- The Applicant encourages parents and staff to carpool to the facility. Prior to the start of the school year, the Applicant distributes a list of all enrolled families sorted by zip code with the dismissal time of each student. Staff is also provided a list of each staff members work hours.
- Information is provided on the Guaranteed Ride Home program for staff that carpool;
- Transit information is provided including posting bus routes, fares and scheduling information for the routes that serve the site;
- The Applicant provides information on the DC School Transit Subsidy Program and enrolls interested families;
- Student loading procedures and site access are provided in a Local Area Access Plan (Plan) included in the parent and staff handbook provided at the start of the school year. The Plan directs parents and staff driving to the facility to use routes that will not impact the immediate neighborhood;
- One exterior bicycle rack is installed to accommodate up to four bicycles;
- Semi-annual transportation surveys are conducted by the Applicant to determine the general travel habits of students; and
- The Applicant designates a member of the faculty to serve as the School Transportation Coordinator responsible for disseminating information on the TDM program, ensuring compliance with the required conditions and conducting the semi-annual travel surveys.

DDOT recommends the Applicant distribute the semi-annual transportation survey to staff to determine travel characteristics and identify options to reduce SOV.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

The School has staggered arrivals and departures minimizing the impact on area peak-hour traffic. Students arrive between 8:00 – 9:00 am. The morning sessions ends at 11:45 am with a small portion of students dismissed at that time. Afternoon dismissal for all-day programs occurs at 3:00 pm with aftercare and afternoon activities continuing until 6:00 pm.

An existing surface parking lot at the front of the property is used for student loading. The private internal roads and driveways provide adequate capacity for onsite vehicle queuing during drop-off and pick-up periods. The school has a one-way vehicular traffic pattern outlined in the Plan with parents and staff entering the site using the existing gated entrance at the intersection of Webster Street and Rock Creek Church Road and continuing through the site to the exit at Allison Street.

PARKING

The school and child development center is required to provide a minimum of five accessory vehicular parking spaces or one parking space for every four staff. The site has a surface parking lot in the front of the building containing 59 striped spaces of which 20 are reserved exclusively for School use exceeding the minimum accessory parking requirement. There is additional parking capacity in the parking lot and the internal roadways to accommodate special events that include, but are not limited to, two student performances in the spring, two school picnics at the beginning and end of the school year and graduation in mid-June.

One bicycle rack is provided outside the school building with a capacity to park up to four bicycles. No interior changes are proposed for the existing building and a dedicated bicycle storage room will not be provided. However, staff may be able to store bicycles inside on an informal basis if capacity is available in classrooms or storage areas. According to the most recent transportation survey provided by the Applicant, only one student bicycles to school on a daily basis with an additional student bicycling a few times per month. Bicycle mode splits for staff were not provided.

PUBLIC SPACE IMPACTS

Public space impacts are limited to the ingress and egress points for the site. A total of three outdoor play areas are provided proximate to the school and will serve as the designated play and recreation areas. No offsite play areas are associated with the school and thus no need to use public sidewalks to access offsite facilities.

DDOT's lack of objection to the zoning special exception 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 the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.