

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Policy Planning and Sustainability Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin  
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Sam Zimbabwe  
Associate Director

DATE: December 11, 2012

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18472 – Excel Academy – 2501-2553 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue S.E.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18472

EXHIBIT NO. 28

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U.S. OFFICE OF ZONING

APPLICATION

Excel Academy (the "Applicant") seeks a variance relief from the parking requirements associated with their proposed staff and faculty increase at the former Birney Elementary Public School located on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue S.E.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) reviewed the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Technical Memorandum submitted by the Applicant and generally agrees with the assumptions and methodology used in the analysis. The proposed 162 faculty and staff members would support a 1,000 student population, which represents an increase of 241 students and 35 staff and faculty members from the existing conditions on-site. DDOT expects that the student population growth associated with the increase in staff will impact the surrounding transportation network.

As a condition of approval, DDOT requests that the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) require the Applicant to:

- Complete a trip generation analysis of existing and future conditions associated with the population increase;
- Maintain a comparable site trip generation rate for future conditions;
- Develop and implement a student drop-off and pick-up plan;
- Install at least 5 inverted bicycle U-racks at the main building entrance;

- Install at least 10 inverted bicycle U-racks in an accessible and secured location within the building; and
- Implement the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies described in their Technical Memorandum regarding a TDM Coordinator, education, carpooling, transit benefits, Safe Routes to School participation, and monitoring.

## **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

DDOT is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, constructing safer streets, and providing outstanding access to goods and services. As one means to achieve this vision, DDOT works through the zoning process to ensure alternative modes of transportation are adequate to accommodate new travel demand, while discouraging single occupancy vehicle trips. The following analysis evaluates the Applicant's Technical Memorandum to determine its accuracy and consistency with the District's vision and goals for its transportation network.

### **Roadway Network, Capacity, and Operations**

The trip generation rates associated with the proposed staff and faculty increase alone did not increase to a level requiring a full Transportation Impact Study. As such, the expected impacts to the roadway network associated with the staff increase are minimal. However, the associated student population increase ensuing from the increase in teachers is expected to impact the transportation network. As a result, DDOT requests the Applicant complete a trip generation analysis to determine the existing and future peak hour trips to the site and ensure that future conditions are comparable through a monitoring program.

### **Safety**

DDOT policy requires that Applicants conduct safety analyses to demonstrate that specific land developments will not create or exacerbate new or existing safety issues for all modes of travel. The expected low impacts resulting from the staff increase and parking variance alone did not require a safety analysis. DDOT requests the Applicant develop and implement a student pick-up and drop-off plan that minimizes conflicts between vehicles and students accessing the site, and improves safety for all modes of transportation.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

The Applicant did not provide a bicycle and pedestrian analysis. DDOT recommends that at least 5 inverted U-racks be located at the main entrance of the building for short-term parking and at least 10 racks be located within the building for long-term secured parking. These secured bicycle parking spaces should be easily accessible and visible to users.

### **Transit Services**

DDOT and the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District. DDOT's vision is to leverage these investments to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes, so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The school is well served by transit given its close proximity to the Anacostia Metro Station and various bus stops. Per the commuter survey completed by the Applicant, 21% of staff and 32% of students currently arrive to the school by transit. DDOT recommends that the Applicant strive to increase staff access to transit and provide transit benefits to employees. In addition, the school should ensure information on the District's School Transit Subsidy Program is easily available to students.

#### Site Access and Loading

The Applicant did not provide any information related to student drop-off and pick-up activities. DDOT requests that the Applicant develop an operational student drop-off and pick-up plan to determine the location and circulation needs to minimize impacts to the surrounding transportation network. A successful plan will improve transportation safety and congestion.

#### Parking

The existing site has 48 marked parking spaces accessed off of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and an unknown number of parking spaces access off of Sumner Road. Under existing conditions, a total of 75 vehicles are parked on-site where they can fit. Zoning regulations require 108 off-street parking spaces be provided for the proposed 162 faculty and staff members. It is unclear how many parking spaces can be provided on-site with a restriping plan, but the Technical memorandum states that 10-15 additional spaces may be gained. In addition, the Applicant has entered into an agreement to use 15 parking spaces at the Matthews Memorial Baptist Church located nearby. DDOT supports the parking variance as long as TDM measures are implemented to reduce the expected transportation impacts related to the associated student population increase.

#### Streetscape and Public Realm

In accordance with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb and gutter, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

Currently, no changes to the public right-of-way or streetscape are proposed, but any impacts related to the student pick-up and drop-off plan on public space will need to be coordinated.

#### Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length in order to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods.

The Applicant has committed to the following strategies:

- Designate a TDM Coordinator;

- Distribute educational materials to faculty, staff, and students on TDM measures and transportation options to the school;
- Provide preferable parking for carpool employees;
- Enroll in the SchoolPool program;
- Provide SmartBenefits program to employees;
- Participate in the District Safe Routes to School program;
- Install bicycle parking for both students and employees; and
- Conduct annual trip generation and mode split monitoring.

**Performance Monitoring & Measuring**

DDOT recognizes the continuing impact that developments can have on the transportation network and local community, and therefore requires the Applicant to compose a performance monitoring plan. This plan should consist of the establishment of benchmark goals with regard to TDM measures, along with a commitment to increase TDM efforts should the Applicant fail to reach these goals.

The Applicant proposes to monitor the trip generation and mode split for both students and employees on an annual basis. DDOT recommends that the Applicant establish benchmark goals to ensure that the future trip generation rates are comparable to or lower than existing conditions.

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