

**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:** Samuel Zimbabwe  
Associate Director, PPSA  
District Department of Transportation

**DATE:** July 2, 2013

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case #18579, Holy Trinity School, 3514 O Street, NW

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18579

EXHIBIT NO. 29

2013 JUL -2 PM 3:35

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**APPLICATION**

Application of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington (the "Applicant") pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3104.1 and 3103.2, for a variance from the lot occupancy requirements under section 403, and special exceptions from subsections 411.3 and 411.5, from the roof structure requirements for an addition to a private school, and special exceptions for a private school and child development center under sections 205 and 206, to allow a student enrollment cap of 350 students and 70 staff in the R-3 District at premises 3514 O Street, N.W. (Square 1227, Lot 95).

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF**

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the potential impacts of the project on the District's transportation network. After an extensive multi-administration review, DDOT finds:

- There are no significant adverse impacts to the transportation network caused by the current student and employee caps at Holy Trinity School.
- The requested student and employee caps are expected to have minor impacts on the transportation network.
- The Applicant has committed to participating in the District's Safe Routes to School program, which will likely increase the use of transportation alternatives amongst students.

DDOT has no objection to the special exception request to increase the enrollment cap to 350 students and 70 employees, provided that the Applicant:

- Implement their proposed mitigation measures in full and also monitor the performance of the proposed mitigation measures on reducing vehicle trips.

- Give preferential consideration to carpools when awarding access to reserved off-street parking spaces
- Offer one-year Capital Bikeshare memberships to employees.
- Provide adequate on-site bicycle parking that meets District requirements and satisfies the demand for bicycle parking.

## **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 that impacts from new developments are manageable within, and take advantage of, the District's multimodal transportation. The Applicant and DDOT coordinated on an agreed-upon scope for the CTR that focused on parking need and availability. An evaluation of the Applicant's CTR follows.

### **Student Transportation**

#### ***Mode Split***

The Applicant completed a survey to ascertain students' existing travel behaviors. Approximately 92% of parents responded to the survey. The vast majority of students (approximately 76%) are picked up and dropped off in non-carpools. About 9% of students are dropped off in a carpool in the morning and 14% are picked up in a carpool in the afternoon. Bicycling and walking comprise about 12% of morning trips and 7% of afternoon trips. Given that over 30% of students live within 2 miles of the school, there is room to increase the number of students bicycling and walking.

#### ***Student Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures and Issues***

The Applicant currently operates pick-up/drop-off procedures at the school to accommodate the approximately 85-90% of students who arrive or depart via private vehicle. In the mornings, there are three different drop off procedures based on student age groups. Although the school day begins at 8:10, the school offers complimentary morning care, which helps to spread out student arrival times and reduce queuing associated with morning drop-offs. A total of 151 students were observed being dropped off between 7:20AM and 8:20AM, with 52% of students being dropped off during the peak 15 minute period from 7:50AM to 8:05AM.

Afternoon pick-up also designates three pick-up procedures that send parents along different routes to various curbside pick-up locations adjacent to the site. The afternoon period generates only about 45% of the morning activity levels due to students staying late to participate in after school activities, but in a more condensed time period. 67 students were picked up between 2:50 and 3:35, with 85% of pick-ups occurring between 3:00PM and 3:15PM. Contributing to the more concentrated pick-up time is a \$25 fine imposed by the school for pick-ups that occur after 3:15.

The Applicant observed pick-up/drop-off operations on several school days, and noted that, although more students are dropped off during the morning that picked up in the afternoon, there were more issues regarding the afternoon pick-up procedures because pick-up operations take more time per vehicle. As a result, some limited queuing issues were observed along the 36<sup>th</sup> Street pick-up location. On 36<sup>th</sup> Street, vehicles that are waiting to pick-up form a queue along 36<sup>th</sup> Street that general stretches from O Street to P Street. Occasionally, the queue was seen spilling onto P Street for a short period of time. The Applicant notes that, because pick-up time occurs outside the afternoon peak period and

because most pick-up activity is confined to a 15-minute period, the disruptions caused to traffic operations in the area are minimal.

#### *Impact of Student Cap Increase*

The existing student enrollment cap for Holy Trinity School is 330 students. The Applicant is seeking to increase the student cap by 20 to 350. There are currently 342 students enrolled at the school – 12 more than are allowed under the existing student cap. The proposed student cap would permit up to 8 more students than are currently enrolled. The increase in the student cap would result in some additional vehicles trips during the pick-up/drop-off periods. This increase in vehicles could worsen some the existing pick-up related queuing issues and potentially introduce drop-off related traffic operations problems, but the impacts of the potential additional vehicle trips can be mitigated if proper strategies are implemented. These mitigation strategies are discussed in the Mitigations section below.

#### Employee Transportation

The Applicant also analyzed employees travel habits. It is important to note that the majority of employees arrive at the school prior to student arrival peak times and depart the school after student arrival peak times.

#### *Mode Split*

The Applicant conducted an employee survey to determine employees' transportation habits. The survey had a 45% response rate. Approximately half of employees commute via private vehicle, 34% carpool, 9% take transit, and 7% walk. There is room to increase non-single occupancy vehicle commuting amongst employees.

#### *Parking*

On-site parking is not available. Instead, the school has the following off-site parking arrangements: 11 spaces are leased from Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School (about .2 miles from Holy Trinity); 5 spaces are leased from Jelleff Recreation Center (about .8 miles from Holy Trinity); and the school reimburses employees up to \$10 per day for parking in nearby garages.

About 23% of respondents who drive to Holy Trinity used on-street parking (either at a parking meter or in a Residential Permit Parking zone with or without a valid Zone 2 RPP permit).

#### *Alternative Transportation*

The school is well served by a transit network that includes Metrorail, Metrobus, and the DC Circulator. Metrobus route D5 and the DC Circulator both have stops within ¼ mile of the school, while Metrobus route 36 is approximately .4 miles from the site. The Rosslyn Metro station is approximately .9 miles from the subject site.

Pedestrian infrastructure is generally well established with sidewalks and crosswalks. Nearby bike facilities include one-way paired bicycle lanes on 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets, the Capital Crescent Trail, and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Trail. A Capital Bikeshare station is located about 1 block from the school at 37<sup>th</sup> & O Streets NW.

#### *Impact of Employee Cap Increase*

The current employment cap for the school is 70. A total of 62 people are currently employed at the school. The school seeks to maintain the employment cap at 70 people. While no increase in the employment capacity is requested, an additional 8 employees at the site would likely result in 5-6 additional employees who drive, which would strain an already constrained parking supply. DDOT believes the impacts of the potential additional vehicle trips can be mitigated if proper strategies are implemented. In particular, DDOT believes there is room to increase the amount of non-single occupancy vehicle commuting amongst employees. The strategies are discussed in the Mitigations section below.

### Mitigations

As part of all major development review cases, DDOT requires the Applicant to produce a comprehensive plan to mitigate a project's transportation impact. Mitigation efforts include 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.

#### *Existing Mitigation Strategies*

The school currently employs the following mitigation strategies:

- For employees:
  - A limited amount of parking is provided, which encourages carpooling and other alternative transportation modes
  - Public transportation costs are subsidized up to \$10.00 per work day (but so are parking costs)
- For students:
  - Students are allowed to arrive at school between 7:30 and 8:10 at no additional charge, which staggers arrival times
  - A highly structured pick-up/drop-off procedure is in place
  - The student directory is sorted by zip code to facilitate carpooling

#### *Additional Mitigation Strategies*

As mentioned above, the increase in students and employees at the school can be managed if the proper mitigations are put into place as a condition of BZA approval.

The Applicant has proposed adding the following measures to the school's existing mitigation strategies:

- Designating a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) coordinator.
- Educating parents on TDM measures available at the beginning of the school year.
- Incentivizing carpooling through faster drop-off and pick-up.
- Facilitate student carpool formation, potentially by utilizing SchoolPool from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOC). SchoolPool allows parents to create on-line profiles that can be used to find other parents for trip-sharing.
- Subsidizing public transit over driving. Subsidies include:
  - Increasing the public transportation stipend up to \$15 per day
  - Lowering the vehicular parking reimbursement

- Participating in the District's Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Incorporating "semi-regular" walk/bike to school days that incentivize biking and walking for students.

In addition, the Applicant will discourage the use of on-street parking through new school policies for employees and by providing information to employees on nearby off-street parking garages. The Applicant also proposed to try several different measures to improve the pick-up operations. The measures include (1) station a school employee on the block of 36<sup>th</sup> Street between O and P Streets to ensure that residents in that block maintain access when there is a queue, and (2) splitting the pick-up procedure so that vehicle picking up more than one student use 36<sup>th</sup> Street, while other vehicles use O Street. The Applicant proposes working with the surrounding community and ANC to evaluate the options and whether to make them permanent.

DDOT is in general agreement with the proposed mitigation strategies and believes they should be made a condition of BZA approval. DDOT also recommends the following additional mitigation measures be made conditions of BZA approval:

- Give preferential consideration to carpools when awarding access to reserved off-street parking spaces
- Offer one-year Capital Bikeshare memberships to employees.
- Provide adequate on-site bicycle parking that meets District requirements and satisfies the demand for bicycle parking.

#### Performance Monitoring

The Applicant is proposing to monitor mode split for both students *and* employees in May of 2014, one year after the survey for the Applicant's CTR data collection was completed. Monitoring should include vehicle counts, queue observations, and the number of children picked up per car. DDOT acknowledges that because some employees travel with their children, who are also students, precise measurement of student and employee mode share may not be possible. The Applicant will provide the results from the monitoring to DDOT and suggest modifications to the mitigation plan based on the results as needed. DDOT agrees with the Applicant's proposal to monitoring mode split, with the addition of reporting of the mitigation measures in place the day that the trip generation and mode split are monitored. DDOT believes that the proposed monitoring should be made a condition of BZA approval.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has no objection to the special exception request for the requested increase in the student and employee cap, provided that the Applicant implement the proposed mitigation measures and conduct performance monitoring to ensure that the desired vehicle trip reductions materialize.

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