

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: January 6, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18900 – 4501 Dix Street, N.E. (Square 5135, Lot 73)

APPLICATION

Pursuant to 11 DCMR §§3104.1 Academy of Ideal Education (the Applicant) seeks a special exception from the private school requirements under 206.1 to allow the operation of a private school in the R-2 District at premises 4501 Dix Street, N.E. (Square 5135, Lot 73)

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is unable to provide a complete review and despite requests for additional information we did not receive sufficient analysis to determine if the project will lead to adverse travel conditions on the District's transportation network. The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the impact of the proposed action on the District's transportation network and, as necessary, propose appropriate mitigations. The materials submitted with the application do not provide enough information nor did the Applicant respond to requests for further information. The submission did not include site plans, information on the mode split, or identify the student drop-off location.

DDOT recommends the Applicant comply with the following conditions;

- Coordinate with the DDOT Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator on drop-off and pick-up activities, existing regulatory signage to accommodate the school use and ensure safe access to off-site recreational facilities.
- Install a minimum of two long-term and five short-term bicycle racks for student and staff use.
- Coordinate with DDOT to identify the short-term and long-term bicycle racks locations.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Overview

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 network and ultimately discourage single occupancy vehicle trips.

Accordingly, 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. DDOT sent the Applicant a copy of the scoping form to determine the level of analysis that should be performed in a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) that is consistent with the scale of the action. The Applicant did not complete a DDOT scoping form to determine if a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) is required.

The school will occupy a portion of the Grace Apostolic Church in a 9,259 SF space previously used for a child development center and no internal or exterior construction work is proposed. The school will serve students from kindergarten to Grade 12 with a total enrollment of 110 students and 12 staff members. The school previously occupied a building located at 62 T Street, N.E. and the lease expired at the end of the 2013-2014 school year. The proposed operating hours are between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm with staff expected to arrive at 8:00 am and depart at 4:00 pm. The site lacks recreation or athletic facilities and will rely on nearby open spaces and park facilities for recess and exercise using the public sidewalk network for access.

Site Access

Site plans were not included with the submittal package. DDOT expects that pedestrians will access the site using the main entrance doors on Dix Street with vehicles using a driveway entrance at the rear on Clay Street, N.E. that serves a surface parking lot with 17 parking spaces and a trash dumpster pad. According to the Applicant, the parking lot is available for staff during normal school hours and the 17 parking spaces exceed the minimum 14 spaces required by Zoning. DDOT is unable to determine if the parking lot will be used for student loading.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

DDOT recommends the school provide a minimum of two long term bicycle racks (one per every 7,500 SF) and five short-term bicycle racks (one per every 2,000 SF). The long-term bicycle racks should be installed indoors or in an easily accessible secure outdoor location where they are visible by school staff and protected from the elements.

Loading and Curbside Management

DDOT is unable to determine if student loading will occur on a public street or in the parking lot at the rear of the site. The submission did not include mode share information to determine how students will arrive, how many live within walking distance of the facility or if staff will be available to assist younger students. The Applicant should develop standard operation procedures for drop-off and pick-up activities and distribute the information to students, parents, caretakers and guardians. In addition, the Applicant should coordinate with the DDOT Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator to review the existing regulatory signage and determine if they should be adjusted to accommodate the school use.

The Applicant expects very few students to arrive and depart by automobile based on the information gathered during the years of operation at its previous location at 62 T Street, N.E. Furthermore, the Applicant projects a majority of students will commute using the Metro bus or rail systems with the exception of students living within walking distance. The site is located less than 1/3 mile from the Benning Road Metro Station.

Streetscape and Public Realm

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.