

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 

DATE: March 3, 2015

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 18911** – PEPCO Substation, 100 block of Q Street, SW

APPLICATION

Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) (the “Applicant”), pursuant to 11 DCMR §§ 3103.2 and 3104.1, seeks variances from the public space requirements under § 633, and the off-street parking space requirements under § 2101.1, and a special exception from the utilities requirements under § 608.1, to construct a new electric substation in the CG/CR District at premises 100 block of Q Street, SW (Square 603, Lot 809).

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District’s transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The substation is unmanned and the five proposed parking spaces provided are adequate to meet the site’s needs.

Accordingly, DDOT has no objection to the requested variance for parking.

Continued Coordination

The Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- DDOT will require additional analysis to show the truck turning movements needed to access the site and may require a loading management plan to ensure loading and maintenance uses can be accommodated in a safe and efficient manner; and
- The Applicant is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. The public space adjacent to the site is currently substantially substandard and will require extensive improvements. The Applicant proposes several non-standard features, including in-ground light fixtures and brick pavers, that are highly unlikely to be permitted.

DDOT suggests that the Applicant schedule a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) in order to determine the final design of the public space.

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 network and ultimately discourage single occupancy vehicle trips.

Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, and price/supply of parking spaces. However in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high quality transit, frequency of transit service, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, composition of nearby land-uses, and the demographic composition of the potential residents/patrons.

The Applicant proposes to provide five (5) vehicle parking spaces in lieu of the 151 required spaces. The parking spaces are located in a surface parking lot on the 2nd Street side of the site. A new curb cut is proposed to provide access to the parking spaces.

According to the Applicant, the substation is an unmanned substation with no operational crew needed on-site on a daily basis. Employees do not access the facility daily nor are they expected to be on site regularly. The five on-site vehicle parking spaces are intended for to provide parking for employees performing maintenance of the substation. Typically, maintenance of the substation is accomplished by two employees coming to the substation approximately once per month. Additional maintenance staff may be required to serve the site during infrequent emergency situations. According to the Applicant, the five parking spaces are provide adequate capacity for any other types of maintenance that may be needed.

Loading and Curbside Management

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle modes and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. This often results in loading being accessed through an alley network.

The Applicant proposes loading and trash facilities to be accessed via a new curb cut on Q Street. The loading facility will act as a maintenance corridor for the site. Passenger vehicles or light/medium trucks will access the loading facilities during the typical maintenance of the substation. When more intense maintenance occurs, larger and heavier vehicles may be required for installation and removal of equipment. According to the Applicant, this type of work is typically done every five to ten years or when there is an operational need.

As noted above, the loading facility is proposed to be accessed via a new curb cut on Q Street. During the public space permitting process, DDOT will require additional analysis to show the truck turning

movements needed to access the site and may require a loading management plan to ensure loading and maintenance uses can be accommodated in a safe and efficient manner.

Streetscape and the Public Realm

In line 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. As part of this process, the Applicant must work closely with DDOT to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulating around it. The Applicant may refer to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. Additionally, the site should be consistent with the *Buzzard Point Design Framework*, recently completed by the Office of Planning.

The public space adjacent to the site is currently substantially substandard and will require extensive improvements to come into compliance with current standards. In particular, sidewalks, curb and gutter, and streetlights are missing and/or substandard. Given the site's proximity to the proposed soccer stadium, the Applicant will be required to coordinate with DDOT to ensure sidewalks are sufficiently wide to accommodate pedestrian volumes. Existing street trees are expected to be protected during construction. New street trees will be required in places where street trees do not currently exist. A curbside management and signage plan to support the new uses will be required.

The Applicant's preliminary public space plans indicate in-ground lighting fixtures in public space and decorative brick pavers in the sidewalks, tree box zones, and streets. These non-standard treatments in public space are highly unlikely to be permitted. DDOT suggests that the Applicant schedule a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) in order to determine the final design of the public space.

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