


**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin
Project Review Manager 

DATE: February 22, 2018

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 19704** – 127 35th Street SE (Meadow Green Court Apartments)

APPLICATION

Milestone East Capitol 4, LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests a special exception under the new residential development provisions of Subtitle U § 421 to construct a new multifamily building in the RA-1 zone. Additionally, pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 10, the Applicant requests variances from the floor area ratio requirements of Subtitle F § 302, the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle F § 304, and the rear yard requirements of Subtitle F § 305. The site is located at 127 35th Street SE (Square 5413, Lot 802).

The Applicant proposes to construct a new multifamily building as a component of a larger, multi-phase Planned Unit Development (PUD). This BZA action will allow for new units to be created to house existing residents of surrounding blocks during the development of the larger PUD project. The development program proposed with this BZA application includes:

- 89 new multifamily units, replacing 52 existing units;
- 49 vehicle parking spaces within two (2) unconnected below-grade parking decks;
- Two (2) vehicle parking spaces located in an exterior surface lot;
- 30 long-term and five (5) short-term bicycle parking spaces; and
- One (1) 30-foot loading berth, one (1) loading platform, and one (1) delivery service space

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and 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.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 19704

The purpose of DDOT's review is to assess the potential transportation 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 Applicant has completed a Transportation Assessment Memorandum to assess the impacts of its proposal;
- The Applicant proposes to meet its bicycle parking, loading berth, platform, and delivery space zoning requirements;
- Trash collection will occur internally within private property;
- The Applicant proposes to exceed its parking requirement, but the excess parking does not necessitate mitigation per DCMR Title 11, Subtitle C § 707.3;
- DDOT notes that there are numerous substandard pedestrian facilities surrounding the site and will work with the applicant through the public space permitting and PUD development processes to upgrade the facilities;
- Due to grade constraints, the Applicant proposes two (2) curb cuts to serve two (2) unconnected levels of parking and states that connecting the parking levels presents a hardship due to issues with the site's grade; and
- The Applicant has proposed a minimal Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan and will work with DDOT through the PUD development process to develop a robust TDM plan for the larger PUD.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed project will have minimal adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's transportation network. The proposed project may lead to a minor increase in vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips. In addition, the project has the potential to generate minor impacts to on-street parking conditions in the area. Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the special exception and variance requests.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Trip Generation

The site is approximately a one (1) mile walk from the Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road Metrorail Stations, which are serviced by the Silver, Blue, and Orange rail lines. The Applicant's February 5th, 2018 Transportation Assessment Memorandum anticipates that 11% of peak-hour trips generated by the proposal will use Metrorail. The site is also convenient to various Metrobus lines, including the V1, V2, and V4 service routes on Minnesota Avenue. The Applicant projects that 31% of peak-hour trips generated by the proposal will be bus-based trips.

The Applicant's proposal is anticipated to generate 25 new person trips during the AM peak (11 vehicle trips) and 29 new person trips during the PM peak (13 vehicle trips). This level of trip generation did not meet the threshold for a full Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study.

Site Access and Loading

The Applicant's proposal represents a component of a larger Planned Unit Development (PUD). In its entirety, the PUD is bounded by 34th Street SE and the CSX Railway to the west, Minnesota Avenue SE

to the east, East Capitol Street SE to the north and B Street SE to the south. The proposed building in this application fronts the 3400 block of B Street SE and the 100 block of 35th Street SE.

The Applicant proposes two (2) curb cuts on B Street SE to provide access to the two (2) below-grade parking decks. Parking levels P1 and P2 serve different portions of the building and are not internally connected. DDOT typically prefers to limit the number of curb cuts to one (1) curb cut per building. Consequently, the Applicant has committed to explore opportunities to limit curb cuts within the larger block during the development of its PUD application. DDOT and the Applicant will continue to coordinate on access points for future buildings through the public space permitting process.

Off-Street Vehicle Parking

The Applicant is required by zoning to supply 30 vehicle parking spaces and proposes to supply 49 below-grade vehicle parking spaces and two (2) surface spaces. The Applicant has justified the excess supply, noting that some of the parking provided through this application will fulfill the requirements of future construction developed through the PUD process. While DDOT prefers new developments to not exceed minimum parking requirements, the Applicant's proposal does not meet the threshold for TDM mitigation requirements of DCMR Title 11 Subtitle C § 707.3.

Pedestrian Facilities

DDOT reviews the pedestrian realm to encourage walking trips and ensure that existing facilities meet DDOT's safety standards. A number of the pedestrian facilities proximate to the site need to be replaced or upgraded. The following crosswalk markings are significantly degraded and require future replacement:

- 34th and A Street SE – east-west leg, standard parallel lines
- B Street/Minnesota Ave/36th Street – all intersection legs, high visibility ladders

The following intersection corners do not meet the standards of DDOT's 2017 Design and Engineering Manual and require future upgrades:

- 34th and B Street SE, northwest corner – curb ramps lack detectable warning strips
- 34th and B Street SE, southwest corner – curb ramps lack detectable warning strips
- 34th and B Street SE, southeast corner – curb ramps lack detectable warning strips
- 34th and B Street SE, northeast corner – utility pole located in the curb ramp inhibits the clear pedestrian path
- 34th and A Street SE, east and west ramps lack detectable warning strips
- 35th and A Street SE, all corners – curb ramps lack detectable warning strips
- 35th and B Street SE, only one (1) ramp provided per corner; each missing detectable warning strips

DDOT also notes that a number of the sidewalks adjacent to the site taper below 6 feet in width. DDOT and the Applicant will continue to coordinate on pedestrian facility improvements through the public space permitting process and PUD development process.

Bicycle Facilities

The Applicant proposes to meet its bicycle parking zoning requirement through the supply of 30 long-term bicycle parking spaces and five (5) short-term bicycle parking spaces in public space.

There are no bicycle lanes, sharrows, trails, or cycle tracks immediately adjacent to the site. The closest Capital Bikeshare Stations are located approximately 0.75 miles from the site at 37th Street & Ely Place SE (15 docks) and the Benning Branch Library (11 docks). There are additional bikeshare stations located at the Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road Metrorail Stations. The project generally falls within an existing Capital Bikeshare service gap.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The Applicant has proposed to offer new residents a preloaded \$10 SmartTrip card at the initial lease of a unit and will designate a TDM coordinator for the property. The coordinator will work with goDCgo to develop and market TDM materials to residents, and will report to DDOT on an annual basis. The Applicant has indicated that it cannot unbundle its parking spaces due to requirements associated with funding for its affordable units. DDOT finds that the TDM plan proposed by the Applicant is minimal for the number of units and parking spaces proposed. DDOT will work with the Applicant through the PUD development process to create a more robust TDM plan for the subject property and other planned developments surrounding the site.

Public Space

Based on the plans provided, the proposal contains elements within public space, including the two (2) proposed curb cuts, short-term bicycle racks, and an areaway. As noted above, there are also existing pedestrian facilities that will require upgrades. DDOT and the Applicant are in the process of coordinating these elements through the public space permitting process. DDOT's lack of objection to the special exception and variance requests should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. The Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process for all elements proposed in public space. The Applicant may refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT's recently released 2017 Design and Engineering Manual (DEM) for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

AC:pr