

# 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, AICP  
Associate Director 

**DATE:** October 21, 2020

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 20308 – 4865 MacArthur Boulevard NW

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#### APPLICATION

4865 MacArthur Landlord, 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 use provisions of Subtitle U § 203.1(g), to construct a continuing care retirement community and retail/grocery store on the site of a vacant grocery store and surface parking lot. The site is in the R-1-B and MU-4 Zones at 4865 MacArthur Boulevard NW (Square 1389, Lot 25).

The Applicant’s proposal consists of the following development program:

- Approximately 154-160 independent and assisted living units;
- Approximately 6,400 SF retail/grocery store use; and
- 77 vehicle parking spaces, 57 long-term and eight (8) short-term bicycle parking spaces.

#### SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. 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 multi-modal transportation network.

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:

## Site Design

- The development is proposed to be built in two wings. The primary wing of the facility will contain the grocery store and will be built along MacArthur Boulevard in the commercial zone. The secondary wing will be built along V Street in the residential zone;
- The site was most recently used as a 14,350 square foot grocery store, surrounded by surface parking;
- The development proposes 77 vehicle parking spaces. 62 parking spaces will be in a below-grade garage accessed off a curb cut from 48th Place. 15 parking spaces will be in a surface parking lot accessed off a curb cut from V Street. The development is providing more parking than what is required by zoning;
- The site currently has three (3) curb cuts, one each on 48th Place, MacArthur Boulevard, and U Street. The proposed development will have two (1) curb cuts, one on 48th Place and one on V Street.
- The Applicant originally proposed fewer on-site parking (54 spaces) and more green space along V Street (Exhibit 5) and has updated the plans to show the green space replaced with a surface parking lot and curb cut (Exhibit 27A1). DDOT prefers the original design with fewer parking spaces, no curb cut on V Street, and more green space;
- The presence of additional parking could induce more driving on the roadway network. The location of a curb cut on V Street could attract commercial traffic into to the residential neighborhood and create a new conflict point between vehicles and pedestrians;
- If the BZA approves the site design including the 15-space surface parking lot, the Applicant must meet the landscaping and screening requirements per Subtitle C § 714 and 715 in the 2016 Zoning Regulations, which are not currently shown on the plans;
- The Applicant is meeting the zoning minimums for long- and short-term bicycle parking, per the Zoning tabulation table. However, the long-term storage rooms are not shown on the BZA planset. The Applicant must meet the zoning design and accessibility requirements;
- There is an inconsistency in the amount of bicycle parking proposed in the TDM plan (18 long term spaces) and the minimum required by zoning and stated will be provided on the zoning tabulation page (57 spaces). The TDM Plan should be revised accordingly; and
- The development includes a loading dock with one (1) 30-foot loading berth and one (1) 10-foot by 20-foot service space, which meets zoning and is designed to accommodate head-in/head-out truck maneuvers from 48th Place.

## Analysis

- Residents would only be eligible for RPP passes if the site chooses an address on V Street or MacArthur Boulevard. 48th Place and U Street are not eligible per the DDOT and DMV database;
- The proposed development will complete the sidewalk network surrounding the site by building new sidewalks on 48th Place and V Street;
- The proposed development will include off-street space for the existing Capital Bikeshare station on U Street. The station is currently in an on-street location due to construction;
- There is no nearby Metrorail station, but the development is served by two Metrobus routes, D5 and D6; and

- The proposed project would generate approximately 39 morning and 72 evening peak hour vehicle trips. This represents an increase of three (3) peak hour trips in the morning and a reduction of 14 trips during the evening.

### **Mitigation**

- The Applicant proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan in the October 7, 2020 Transportation Statement. DDOT finds the TDM plan adequate to reduce the potential for resident, employees, visitors, and retail patrons to park vehicles on-street in adjacent neighborhoods and to encourage usage of non-auto travel modes; and
- The TDM plan should be updated to remove the incorrect reference to bicycle parking spaces. It should just state that the minimum number required by zoning will be provided.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed project will have no 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. Vehicle parking demand may increase slightly as a result of the project, inducing a higher level of parking utilization in the immediate area.

Despite these minor potential impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested special exceptions on the following conditions:

- The Applicant will implement the following TDM Plan, as proposed in the October 7, 2020 Transportation Statement, for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted:
  - The Applicant will unbundle the cost of vehicle parking from the housing cost for each independent living unit and lease vehicle parking spaces separately at a rate equivalent to or greater than the average market rate within a half mile;
  - The Applicant will provide private transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, errands, and other common trips to the project's residents;
  - The Applicant will designate a Transportation Coordinator for the planning, construction, and operations phases of development. The Transportation Coordinator will act as the point of contact with DDOT, goDCgo, and Zoning Enforcement;
  - The Applicant will provide the Transportation Coordinator's contact information to goDCgo, conduct an annual commuter survey of staff, transportation survey of residents, and report TDM activities and data collection efforts to goDCgo once per year;
  - The Transportation Coordinator will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to the staff and residents, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) on the staff portal, property website, and in any internal building newsletters or communications;
  - The Transportation Coordinator will receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the TDM conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan;
  - The Applicant will provide welcome packets to all new staff and residents that include site shuttle information, the Metrorail pocket guide, brochures of local bus lines,

- carpool and vanpool information, Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) brochure, and the most recent DC Bike Map;
- The Transportation Coordinator will provide staff who wish to carpool with detailed carpooling information and will be referred to other carpool matching services sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) or other comparable service if MWCOG does not offer this in the future;
  - The Transportation Coordinator will subscribe to goDCgo’s newsletters and distribute information on alternative transportation options to staff and residents on a regular basis;
  - The Applicant will post all TDM commitments on website, publicize availability, and allow the public to see what commitments have been promised;
  - The Applicant will provide every staff member free SmarTrip card pre-loaded with \$50 and a complimentary annual Capital Bikeshare membership for 1 year after the building opens;
  - The Applicant will provide every resident a free SmarTrip card pre-loaded with \$50;
  - The Applicant will meet the ZR16 minimums for short- and long-term bicycle parking;
  - The Applicant will provide three (3) collapsible shopping carts (utility cart) available to residents to promote and encourage residents to walk for grocery shopping and to run errands; and
  - The Transportation Coordinator will host transportation events for staff and residents twice a year to raise and maintain awareness of alternative transportation options. Examples include resident social, walking tour of local transportation facilities, goDCgo lobby event, transportation fair, WABA Everyday Bicycling seminar, bicycle safety/information class, bicycle repair event, etc.

## **TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS**

### Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price, and 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, and the demographic composition and other characteristics of the potential residents.

The development is required by zoning to provide 57 parking spaces, assuming the carshare space credit. The Applicant proposes a total of 77 vehicle parking spaces. 62 parking spaces will be for the residential use in a below-grade garage accessed off a curb cut from 48th Place. 15 parking spaces will be for the retail use in a surface parking lot accessed off a curb cut from V Street.

The Applicant originally proposed the zoning minimum number of spaces (Exhibit 5) but has since increased the size of the underground garage and replaced green space on site with a surface parking lot (Exhibit 27A1). DDOT prefers the original design that has fewer parking spaces, no curb cut on V Street, and more green space on site. Research has shown the presence of extra parking has the potential to induce more demand for driving on the roadway network. Additionally, the presence of a curb cut on V Street will result in the loss of an on-street parking space and create a new conflict point with pedestrians.

If the BZA approves the design with the surface lot, DDOT notes that the Applicant must meet the landscaping and screening requirements per Subtitle C § 714 and 715 in the 2016 Zoning Regulations, which are not currently shown on the plans. Additionally, the curb cut would need to be approved by the Public Space Committee (PSC).

#### Residential Permit Parking (RPP)

The site is located on the 4800 blocks of MacArthur Boulevard and V Street NW, which are both currently designated as Residential Permit Parking (RPP) streets in the DDOT and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) database. Future residents at the property would be eligible to obtain an RPP pass from the DMV assuming the project has an address on either MacArthur Boulevard or V Street. Alternatively, if the project chooses an address on either 48th Place or U Street, residents would not immediately be eligible to obtain RPP passes. However, as time goes on, residents at the site would be able to petition DDOT to establish 48th Place and U Street as RPP streets, if they choose.

#### Bicycle Parking

Subtitle C § 802.1 of the Zoning Regulations require 57 long-term and eight (8) short-term bicycle parking spaces for the project. The Applicant is meeting the zoning minimum for bicycle parking requirements, per the zoning tabulation page of Exhibit 27A1. The long-term bicycle parking spaces are not currently shown on the planset but must meet the design requirements of Subtitle C § 805. The required short-term bicycle parking spaces should be accommodated with inverted-U racks and installed in public space near building entrances. It is also noted that the Applicant will be reserving space along the U Street frontage for relocation of the on-street Capital Bikeshare station.

#### Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas 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. Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Loading and unloading, deliveries, and trash pick-up are proposed to occur using the 48th Place curb cut. The development includes a loading dock with one (1) 30-foot loading berth and one (1) 10-foot by 20-foot service space. Truck turning maneuvers are expected to take place entirely on private property with head-in and head-out movements to 48th Place, consistent with DDOT standards.

#### Trip Generation

Each trip a person makes is made by a certain means of travel, such as vehicle, bicycle, walking, and transit. The means of travel is referred to as a 'mode' of transportation. A variety of elements impact the mode of travel, including density of development, diversity of land use, design of the public realm, proximity to transit options, availability and cost of vehicle parking, among many others.

The October 7, 2020 Transportation Statement provided trip generation estimates which utilized the rates published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Land Use Code 254 Senior Adult Housing and Code 850 Supermarket) and the assumed mode-split to

convert base vehicular trips to base person trips using average auto occupancy data and then back to vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips. DDOT finds these methods appropriate.

Mode split assumptions used in the subject analysis were informed by the Census, a survey from the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board’s (TPB) State of the Commute, and the WMATA Ridership Survey. Figure 1 below shows the mode splits assumed for the trip generation analysis within the Transportation Statement. Figure 2 below shows the trip generation comparison.

| Land Use                    | Mode  |         |      |      |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|------|------|
|                             | Drive | Transit | Bike | Walk |
| Existing Retail Mode Split  | 65%   | 25%     | 5%   | 5%   |
| Proposed Project Mode Split | 65%   | 33%     | 0%   | 2%   |

Figure 1. Summary of Mode Split (Source: Gorove/Slade 10/7/20, Transportation Statement, Table 3)

| Density Scenario  | AM Peak Hour |          |          | PM Peak Hour |           |            |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
|   | In           | Out      | Total    | In           | Out       | Total      |
| Existing Conditions   | 21           | 15       | 36       | 45           | 41        | 86         |
| Assisted Living Max Build-Out                                   | 20           | 13       | 33       | 31           | 33        | 64         |
| Assisted Living with V St Wing                                  | 23           | 16       | 39       | 34           | 38        | 72         |
| Difference Between Allowed Max and Existing                     | -1           | -2       | -3       | -14          | -8        | -22        |
| <b>Net New Trips (Difference Between Proposed and Existing)</b> | <b>2</b>     | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>-11</b>   | <b>-3</b> | <b>-14</b> |

Figure 2. Trip Generation Comparison (Source: Gorove/Slade 10/7/20, Transportation Statement, Table 7)

As shown above, the proposed project would generate approximately 39 morning and 72 evening peak hour vehicle trips. This represents an increase of three (3) peak hour trips in the morning and a reduction of 14 trips during the evening. This amount of traffic would not result in impacts to the nearby roadway network, assuming the Applicant’s proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, in the October 7, 2020 Transportation Statement (see Recommendation section above), is implemented. DDOT finds the TDM plan acceptable and requests it be included as a condition of approval.

**PUBLIC SPACE**

DDOT’s lack of objection 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 Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT’s Design and Engineering Manual for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT’s Public Realm Design Manual.

The Applicant will need to apply for public space permits and should continue to coordinate with DDOT on the following elements of public space design:

- Ensure all building entrances are at-grade with the sidewalk so that no stairs or ramps are proposed within public space;
- Complete sidewalk network on 48th Place and V Street immediately adjacent to the development, including curb ramps and high visibility crosswalks;
- Construct V Street curb cut to be no wider than 18 feet, if approved by the PSC;
- Construct curb cuts so that sidewalk material continues across them;
- Continue to coordinate with DDOT regarding the design of a possible shared 48th Place;

- Provide landscaping and screening for the proposed surface lot; and
- Determine final off-street locations for Capital Bikeshare station and short-term bicycle racks.

AC:tvh