

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: April 29, 2022

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20711 – 2628 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE

APPLICATION

2628 MLK, LLC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), requests a special exception from the matter-of-right uses of Subtitle U § 401 to raze an existing building and to construct a new 10-unit apartment house with seven (7) vehicle parking spaces. The site is located in the RA-1 Zone at 2628 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE (Square 868, Lot 1059) and is not served by public alley.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicle, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips on the localized transportation network. In addition, the project may result in increased pick-up and drop-off activity and slightly reduced availability of on-street parking within the immediate area. Despite these minor impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested relief.

However, DDOT notes several issues with the proposed site layout and design that should be remedied:

- The sidewalk area is shown as only 6-feet wide. This is narrower than DDOT’s standard 10 feet combined sidewalk and treebox area. The plans should be updated to show a 4-foot treebox zone and 6 foot sidewalk, consistent with the properties to the south;
- The Applicant is proposing a 20-foot driveway to Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE. The Zoning Commission recently approved a Text Amendment (ZC 21-10) reducing the minimum drive aisle width requirements (Subtitle C § 711.6.a.) to only 18 feet to match DDOT’s commercial curb cut standards. Since the site will only have seven (7) vehicle parking spaces, the driveway should be

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narrowed and amount of pavement reduced. This will also better align the driveway and curb cut to minimize the transition area near the property line; and

- The Applicant's submitted plans do not show that long-term bicycle parking spaces have been designed into the project. DDOT estimates zoning would require three (3) long-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant should confirm they are meeting all bicycle parking requirements and submit revised plans showing how the long-term spaces are provided.

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 Applicant is required to provide one (1) off-street parking spaces. Per the Applicant's Architectural Plans, the Applicant is providing seven (7) off-street parking spaces at the rear of the property. While this parking ratio is high from DDOT's perspective, it does not trigger the parking mitigations of Subtitle C 707.3.a.

The parking spaces are proposed to be accessed by a curb cut to Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE. Since the driveway will only serve seven (7) parking spaces, the two-way drive aisle should be reduced from 20 feet to 18 feet, matching the recently amended access requirements of Subtitle C, 711.6.a. in Text Amendment ZC 21-10. This will reduce the amount of pavement on-site and better align with DDOT's curb cut standards since there will need to be a transition from driveway to curb cut near the property line.

Residential Permit Parking (RPP)

The site is located on the 2600 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE, which is not currently in the DDOT and DMV Residential Permit Parking (RPP) database. Therefore, current and future residents will not be eligible to obtain a RPP pass from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Bicycle Parking

Zoning requires the building to provide three (3) long-term bicycle parking spaces (1 per 3 units) and zero (0) short-term spaces (1 per 20 units). The submitted plans do not show any long bicycle parking spaces. DDOT requests the Applicant confirm they are meeting the requirements and update the BZA plans to show that these have been designed into the project.

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.

Per Subtitle C § 901.1 of the Zoning Regulations, buildings with fewer than 50 units are not required to provide a loading berth. As such, future residents should use an on-site parking space or the internal drive aisle for move-in/move-outs. Residents may also obtain “emergency no parking” signs from DDOT to reserve an on-street parking space. Since the site has more than three (3) units, the Applicant must contract a private trash collection service. Trash should be stored entirely on private property and out of the view of the sidewalk. The plans show the trash bins on private property toward the rear of the site, which DDOT concurs with.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT’s lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm design. If any portion of this or future projects at the property propose elements within District owned right-of-way, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space permit through DDOT’s permitting process. It is noted that the curb cut width should be minimized as much as possible and will be further refined during public space permitting. Additionally, the sidewalk area should be widened from 6 feet to 10 feet and tree boxes added along the frontage, consistent with the properties to the south.

DDOT expects the adjacent public realm to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the [DCMR](#), the most recent version of DDOT’s [Design and Engineering Manual \(DEM\)](#), and the [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System \(TOPS\)](#) website.

AC:sm