

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

**FROM:** Meredith Soniat  
Acting Associate Director *MS*

**DATE:** May 9, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 21247 - 4715 16th Street NW (Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School South Campus)

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#### APPLICATION

Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital Inc (the "Applicant"), pursuant to Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, requests a Special Exception relief from the minimum vehicle parking requirement and under the private school use requirement to increase the limit from 130 students to 150 students and from 26 staff members to 37 staff members. In 2012, in BZA Case No. 18399, the Board granted relief to increase the limit from 125 students to 130 students and 14 staff members to 26 staff members. The site is in the R-1B Zone at 4715 16th Street NW (Square 2707, Lot 33) and is not served by a public alley.

#### SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life 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 and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. After a review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- Zoning requires 25 off-street vehicle parking spaces for the proposed staff cap of 37. The Applicant is providing seven (7) spaces on site, requesting relief from 18 spaces. While the Applicant has proposed to secure 18 off-site vehicle parking spaces via an agreement with the nearby 19<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, they are still seeking relief from 18 vehicle parking spaces;

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- Title 11 of *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 703.4 requires the Applicant implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan if the Applicant is requesting relief from more than four (4) parking spaces;
- The Applicant and DDOT collaborated on a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan to support non-automotive travel to and from the site. It includes bike parking and maintaining exemplary strategies such as the existing bus program and subsidized transit (see Recommendation section below);
- DDOT supports the requested relief given the site's proximity to Metrobus transit, the walkability of the neighborhood, and successful ongoing bus program and other measures implemented by the school to reduce vehicle travel; and
- With implementation of the agreed-upon TDM Plan, the impacts on the transportation network are expected to be minimal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested parking relief with the following conditions:

- The Applicant will work with DDOT to revise its morning and afternoon bus pick-up and drop-off operations to Decatur Street NW, requiring changes to curbside signage on Decatur Street;
- The Applicant shall implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan:
  - Appoint School Transportation Coordinator
  - Meet with goDCgo to develop goals and plans
  - Conduct commuter survey of staff
  - Conduct Show of Hands Commute Survey of students
  - Check in with goDCgo's School Services Team halfway through the year to track progress
  - Send out reminders for Commuter Benefits Open Enrollment
  - Promote commuter benefits and other sustainable transportation programs to new and existing hires
  - Provide transportation information to new and existing students and families
  - Provide brochures in communal areas for staff, student, and parent inquiries
  - Provide information on nearby transportation options on your school's website (work with goDCgo to create a Get Around Guide customized for your school)
  - Include transportation information in school newsletter
  - Promote sustainable transportation in communal areas (mail room, lobby, etc.)
  - Set up transportation display
  - Participate in Sustainable Transportation Holidays:
    - Park(ing) Day (September)
    - Car Free Day (September)
    - Walk to School Day (October)
    - National Walk to Work Day (April)
    - Bus to Work/Transportation Equity Day (February)
    - National Bike Month (May)
    - National Bike to School Day (May)
  - Bike to Work Day (May)

- Host a tabling event with goDCgo to sign staff up for commuter benefits
- Install six (6) inverted-U bike racks in public space or on private property for short-term and staff bike parking
- Promote Capital Bikeshare as a form of commuting to and from school
- Host bike safety course for staff and students
- Promote WABA bicycling classes to staff
- Provide preferential parking for carpools/vanpools
- Facilitate car/vanpool formation meetings and ride matching (goDCgo can help with this)
- Promote the Carpool Now App and Commuter Connections' ride matching platform
- Sign up for and promote SchoolPool, a ride matching platform for students and families
- Comply with DC Parking Cashout Law
- The Applicant will continue to implement the following existing practices, as a part of their TDM Plan:
  - **Bus Program** – The Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School has a successful bus program offering nine school buses, depending on the time and day with approximately 70% of current student population enrolled. Bus capacity ranges from 13-66 students, depending on route and age of child. Annually, the school evaluates the need for additional bus stops, clusters of families, and bus capacity and will add routes or increase bus size as needed to ensure that the majority of families have nearby bus service. The school subsidizes the cost of bus ridership to make it more accessible to all families and provides financial aid for bus service when necessary, which has greatly increased ridership.
  - **Carpool** – The school's online parent portal provides families with zip code list and map that helps connect families interested in carpooling to/from school.
  - **Subsidized public transportation:**
    - **Students:** The school supports the Kids Ride Free program in encouraging families to register for the program. Several of our south campus students have Kids Ride Free cards and occasionally arrive to campus with an older sibling or parent. More often, students at South Campus will take the shuttle bus from South Campus to North Campus where they meet an older sibling to take public transportation home.
    - **Staff:** The school matches up to \$50 for staff who would like to take public transportation to school through WMATA's smart benefits program.
  - **Shower and Bike Facilities** – The school has shower facilities in the South Campus building as an incentive for faculty/staff members to bike to the school.
  - **Intercampus connectivity** – The school provides two inter-campus shuttles to shuttle children to/from the main campus and the early elementary campus. Families who drive to school with siblings in both campuses will have a single drop off point at one campus and the sibling(s) that attends the other campus will be shuttled via the designated shuttle bus. In addition, staff who go between campuses, students who live walking distance from one campus and attend school on the other, and students whose parents work on one campus but attend school on the other campus make use of the shuttle.

## 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 by Zoning to provide 25 off-street parking spaces. Per the Applicant's Architectural Plans, the Applicant is providing seven (7) off-street parking spaces and is requesting relief from 18 parking spaces. While the Applicant is requesting this parking relief, the Applicant's April 17, 2025 Transportation Statement ([Exhibit 22B](#)) notes that the 18 parking spaces subject to the relief request are being provided offsite at the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, which is approximately 300 feet from the school. Nevertheless, Title 11 of *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 703.4 requires that any request for a reduction in the minimum number of parking spaces over four (4) spaces include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan be approved by DDOT. The Applicant and DDOT have coordinated on and agreed to the TDM Plan in the Recommendation section of this report.

### Bicycle Parking

The project would be required by Zoning to provide two (2) long- and nine (9) short-term bicycle parking spaces; however, the project does not trigger this requirement under Title 11 of *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 802.5 since there is no building addition planned of 25% or more of the gross floor area. The Applicant is supportive of students, parents, and staff biking to the school and is proposing 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces (6 inverted U-racks) for use by visitors and staff on 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, as well as showering facilities for those who bike to the school.

The Applicant should work with DDOT during public space permitting to determine a final location for the short-term bike spaces in public space. The Applicant should refer to the DDOT [Bike Parking Guide](#) for best practices on design of long- and short-term bicycle parking spaces.

### Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate loading operations safely and efficiently, while prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle safety and limiting negative impacts to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading takes 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 Title 11 of *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 901.1, Education uses in buildings under 30,000 square feet in area are not required to provide a loading berth. The Applicant must contract a private trash collection service. Trash must be stored entirely on private property, out-of-view of the sidewalk, and collected at the rear of the property.

## 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 or the building restriction area, the Applicant is required to pursue a public space construction permit.

The following items proposed in public space will need to be resolved by the Applicant during permitting:

- Bike parking – Final locations will need to be determined for the six bike racks proposed in public space.
- Curbside signage – Changes to curbside signage on Decatur Street to implement revised bus pick-up and drop-off operations from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to Decatur Street.
- Curb cuts – In response to DDOT comments, the applicant proposes low-cost measures to restrict use of the northern curb cut on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, which will not trigger a public space permit. If there are future changes to the property or public space, DDOT expects the northern curb cut to be closed, as it is not compliant with current standards given its proximity to the intersection at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Decatur Street.

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](#), 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.

## HERITAGE AND SPECIAL TREES

According to the District's [Tree Size Estimator map](#), the property has six (6) Special Trees, with an additional four (4) Special Trees in the surrounding right-of-way. DDOT expects the Applicant to coordinate with the Ward 4 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of existing Special and small street trees.

Special Trees are between 44 inches and 99.99 inches in circumference. Special Trees may be removed with a permit. However, if a Special Tree is designated to remain by DDOT's Urban Forestry Division, a Tree Protection Plan will be required.

MS: eo