

# 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 *MS*  
Acting Associate Director

**DATE:** February 14, 2025

**SUBJECT:** BZA Case No. 21267 – 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, NW (Embassy of Poland)

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#### **APPLICATION**

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, requests a Foreign Mission approval for the matter-of-right uses of Subtitle U § 401 to convert to a chancery use, an existing, detached, 8-story school building. The site is in the MU-1/DC zone at 1740 Massachusetts Avenue NW and is served by a public alley (varying in width from approximately 10 to 30 feet).

#### **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 an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- Zoning requires 15 off-street vehicle parking spaces. The Applicant is proposing 25 spaces;
- The site is located less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from the Dupont Circle Metrorail station and within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of one (1) Metrobus Priority Corridor Network route (S9);
- The proposed change of use entails to physical changes to the building’s exterior or public space along Massachusetts Avenue NW;
- DDOT concurs with the Applicant maintaining 25 existing off-street vehicle parking spaces on private property accessed via the rear public alley;
- DDOT expects that the Applicant implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan as the proposed chancery will occupy 10,000 square feet or more of non-residential use, which

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includes long-term bike parking and appointing a transportation coordinator for the building; and

- Given the site's accessibility to transit and the walkability of the neighborhood, in conjunction with the Applicant's proposed TDM Plan, the impacts on the transportation network are expected to be minimal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application. DDOT concurs with the Applicant's proposal to implement a TDM Plan with the following strategies:

- Identify Transportation Coordinators for the planning and operations phases of the Project. The Transportation Coordinators will act as points of contact with DDOT and goDCgo, and will provide their contact information to goDCgo.
- Transportation Coordinator will conduct an annual commuter survey of employees on-site, and report TDM activities and data collection efforts to goDCgo once per year.
- Transportation Coordinator will develop, distribute, and market various transportation alternatives and options to students and employees, including promoting transportation events (i.e., Bike to Work Day, National Walking Day, Car Free Day) on property website and in any internal building newsletters or communications.
- Transportation Coordinators will receive TDM training from goDCgo to learn about the transportation conditions for this project and available options for implementing the TDM Plan.
- Provide link to CommuterConnections.com and goDCgo.com on property website.
- Provide at least two (2) short- and 12 long-term bicycle parking spaces, meeting ZR16 minimum requirements.

DDOT also encourages the Applicant to provide employees with a SmarTrip card and complimentary Capital Bikeshare memberships.

## **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, demographic composition, and other characteristics.

The Applicant is required by Zoning to provide a minimum of 15 vehicle parking spaces after taking a 50% reduction for being located within ½ mile of the Dupont Circle Metrorail station. Per the Applicant's Transportation Statement (Exhibits 20A1 and 20A2), the Applicant is providing 25 off-street parking spaces accessed from a rear public alley. These parking spaces are existing and will be maintained.

### Bicycle Parking

The project is required by Zoning to provide 12 long- and one (1) short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant is meeting these requirements by providing 12 long- and two (2) short-term bicycle parking spaces (1 inverted U-rack). The long-term bike parking has not yet been designed and at least 50% of spaces must located horizontally on the floor, as required by Zoning. As the storage room is designed, ensure that at least 5% of spaces (minimum 2) are 10 feet by 3 feet size (rather than 6 feet by 2 feet) to

accommodate cargo and larger bikes and at least 10% of spaces are served by electrical outlets for e-bikes and scooters.

The Applicant should work with DDOT during public space permitting to determine a final location for the short-term bike spaces, ideally in the ‘furniture zone’ of public space near the edge of the street. The Applicant should refer to the most recent 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 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 Title 11 of the *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 901.5, a change in use only requires additional loading if the new use requires more loading than prior use. Here, the prior university use and current chancery use both require one (1) loading berth and one (1) service/delivery space, and no additional loading is required. The Applicant’s Transportation Statement shows loading facilities on private property accessed via the rear public alley. The loading has been designed so that all truck movements through public space are head-in/head-out and that all turning movements occur on private property. Trash must be stored entirely on private property, out of the view of the sidewalk, and collected via the loading area.

#### **STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM**

DDOT’s lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm. 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 construction permit.

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 no Heritage nor Special trees. DDOT expects the Applicant to coordinate with the Ward 2 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of existing small street trees, as well as the planting of new street trees, in bioretention facilities or a typical expanded tree planting space.