

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 22, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 21297 – 1400 41st Street SE (Fort Davis Community Center)

APPLICATION

The District of Columbia Department of General Services (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, requests a Special Exception from the long-term bicycle parking space requirements (four spaces) to raze an existing structure and construct the new, two-story Fort Davis Community Center. The site is in the R-2 Zone at 1400 41st Street SE (Square 5369, Lot 807 and Parcels 201/204, 201/213, and 201/214) and is served by a 16-foot 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 four (4)¹ long-term bicycle parking spaces, and the Applicant is seeking relief from all spaces;
- Zoning requires six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces, and the Applicant is proposing 14 spaces (seven inverted U-racks);
- The site is located within ¼ mile of the high-frequency Metrobus Route C21 which will begin providing service every 12 minutes or better along Southern Avenue SE on June 29, 2025, as

¹ The Applicant noted three (3) required spaces in the submitted Burden of Proof ([Exhibit 8](#)). DDOT calculated four (4) required spaces for the proposed 29,620-square-foot building at one (1) space per 7,500 square feet.

part of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Better Bus Network Redesign. Additionally, Metrobus Route C37 will provide service every 20 minutes or better directly adjacent to the site along 41st Street SE, and Metrobus Route C23 will provide service every 30 minutes or better along Alabama Avenue SE;

- For BZA cases, DDOT only requires a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan if more than 10,000 square feet of non-residential use is proposed and the BZA action will increase density, result in a new land use, or increase vehicle activity. Since the BZA action is strictly limited to long-term bicycle parking relief, a TDM Plan is not required in this case; and
- Given the site's accessibility to bus service and the walkability of the neighborhood, alongside the Applicant's commitment to exceed short-term bicycle parking requirements, the impacts on the transportation network are expected to be minimal.

RECOMMENDATION

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

- The Applicant shall provide a minimum of 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces (seven inverted U-racks), including at least four (4) spaces (two inverted U-racks) close to the main entrance with protection from the elements; and
- Coordinate with DDOT during public space permitting to place additional racks within the site closer to the baseball field, tennis courts, and basketball court, subject to DDOT approval.

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 seven (7)² off-street parking spaces. Per the Applicant's Architectural Plans ([Exhibit 6](#)), the Applicant is providing seven (7) off-street parking spaces. The parking spaces are accessed via the public alley adjacent to the site.

Bicycle Parking

The project is required by Zoning to provide four (4) long- and six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces as a local government use. The Applicant is requesting relief from all long-term bicycle parking spaces and exceeding the short-term bicycle parking requirements by providing 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces (seven inverted U-racks).

Though the site is being categorized as a local government use for the purpose of this case, it is also similar to a parks and recreation use in function which does not have a long-term bicycle parking space requirement per Zoning. As such, DDOT does not object to the Applicant's requested relief but requests

² The Applicant noted six (6) required spaces in the submitted Burden of Proof. DDOT calculated seven (7) required spaces for the proposed 29,620-square-foot building at 0.25 spaces per 1,000 square feet in excess of 2,000 square feet.

the Applicant provide at least four (4) of the short-term bicycle parking spaces (two inverted U-racks) close to the main entrance with protection from the elements (e.g., awning or other overhang).

The Applicant should work with DDOT during public space permitting to determine a final location for the short-term bike spaces, and DDOT additionally requests the Applicant place additional racks within the site closer to the baseball field, tennis courts, and basketball court, subject to DDOT approval. The Applicant should refer to DDOT's [Bike Parking Guide](#) for best practices on design of 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 the *DCMR*, Subtitle C § 901.1, a local government use with less than 30,000 square feet does not have Zoning-required loading facilities. Trash must be stored entirely on private property, out of the view of the sidewalk, and collected from the public alley.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm. All elements of the project proposed within District-owned right-of-way, such as lead walks, retaining walls, and stairs, require the Applicant 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 at least three (3) Heritage and 22 Special trees. DDOT expects the Applicant to coordinate with the Ward 7 Arborist regarding their preservation and protection.

Heritage Trees have a circumference of 100 inches or more and are protected by the Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016. With approval by the Mayor and DDOT's Urban Forestry Division (UFD), Heritage Trees might be permitted to be relocated. As such, the Applicant may be required to redesign the site plan to preserve the Non-Hazardous Heritage 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 UFD, a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) will be required.