

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Shepard Beamon, Development Review Specialist
Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: January 7, 2026

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21378: Request for special exception relief to allow a new child development center in an existing, detached, two-story, building on the 2nd floor only at 2420 Rhode Island Avenue NE.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following special exception pursuant to Subtitle C § 703 and Subtitle X § 901:

- Minimum Parking, C § 701 (Daytime Care) Required: 0.5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. with a minimum of 1 space required (1 space required); Existing: n/a.; Proposed: 0 spaces; and
- Matter-of-Right Use, U § 203.1(h) Daytime care use (Daycare) allowed in the R-1B zone with special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and Subtitle U, Chapter 2.

The Office of Zoning Administration (ZA) initially indicated that a use variance from U-201.1 would be required, to allow a child development center. The ZA has since updated the determination to note that a use variance to occupy the 2nd floor of the church as a child development center is not required, and instead a special exception pursuant to U-203.1(h) is required, for which OP has provided analysis.

The property was previously approved for a special exception ([17950](#)) to permit a child development center use with up to 75 students and 17 staff members in 2009, in addition to being issued a certificate of occupancy (C of O) to allow 60 children. Both the special exception and C of O had a validity period of 10 years and have been void since 2019.

Per C § 701.8(b), Minimum Parking Requirements, required parking spaces can be located on another lot, subject to the following:

- (1) The off-site location shall be a maximum of six hundred feet (600 ft.) from the use or structure that the parking spaces serve, as measured from the nearest lot line;*
- (2) The off-site location may be located within a different zone, except that the off-site parking location for a use within any zone other than an R or RF zone shall not be located within an R or RF zone, except parking for Transportation Infrastructure uses as permitted by Subtitle U § 202.1(q); and*
- (3) Spaces provided off-site in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8(b) shall not serve as required parking for any other use, unless they are shared parking spaces in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.9;*

The applicant has access to a nearby off-site parking lot under the same ownership as the subject property; therefore, a written agreement is not required. The parking area is less than 600 ft. from

the property, along Hoover Road NE, and is also located in the R1-B zone. The parking lot is shared with the owner of the adjacent church, who also owns majority of the other properties in the square. Shared parking spaces are permitted, per Subtitle § 701.9, subject to conditions, which the proposal meets including the condition that “*spaces shall not serve as required parking for any other use during the days and times each use they serve is in operation*”. The applicant has indicated that the parking lot will not be used by other uses during the daycare hours of operation. Therefore, parking relief may not be needed, but if it is determined a special exception for parking relief is required, OP recommends approval and has provided analysis in this report, accordingly.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	2420 Rhode Island Avenue NE
Applicants	McKendree-Simmi-Brookland United Methodist Church
Legal Description	Square 4290, Lot 803
Ward, ANC	5, 5B
Zone	R-1B, low density residential which permitted a childcare development center of this size by special exception.
Historic Districts	N/A
Lot Characteristics	Irregular-shaped through lot with a 15 ft. building restriction line along Lawrence Street NE.
Existing Development	Two story plus basement detached building (educational center)
Adjacent Properties	The property is adjacent to a single-family detached dwelling to the east and single-family detached dwellings and church to the west.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood primarily consists of single-family detached dwellings.
Proposed Development	Allow a childcare development center (daycare) on the second floor of the existing building. 60 children (2 to 5 years), 12 staff Hours of operation: 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM Dropoff: 7:30-9:00 AM Pick-up: 3:30-6:00 PM

III. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

R-1B Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Parking C § 701	0.5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. (1 required for 2,200 sq. ft.)	N/A	No parking	Relief requested
Use Permissions (R zones) U § 203.1(h)	Daytime care use (Daycare) allowed in the R-1B zone with special exception	N/A	Daycare with up to 60 children/12 staff	Relief requested

IV. OP ANALYSIS

Subtitle C § 703 SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS FROM MINIMUM PARKING NUMBER REQUIREMENTS

703.1 *This section provides flexibility from the minimum required number of parking spaces when providing the required number of spaces would be:*

- (a) *Impractical due to the shape or configuration of the site;*

The site is already developed and due to the site's existing configuration, the minimum parking requirement cannot be met on-site.

- (b) *Unnecessary due to a lack of demand for parking, or the site's proximity to transit options; or*

Based on the minimum parking requirements, the proposed daycare is only required to provide one vehicle parking space. The property is in proximity to off-site parking and is along multiple Metrobus routes on Rhode Island Avenue. The property has shared ownership with a nearby, off-site parking area that can accommodate parking needed for the proposed use.

- (c) *Contrary to other District of Columbia regulations.*

The proposed flexibility from the parking requirement would not be contrary to other regulations.

703.2 *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant a full or partial reduction in the number of required parking spaces, as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9, and subject to the applicant's demonstration to the Board's satisfaction of at least one (1) of the following:*

- (a) *Due to the physical constraints of the property, the required parking spaces cannot be provided either on the lot or within six hundred feet (600 ft.) of the lot in accordance with Subtitle C § 701.8;*

- (b) *The use or structure is particularly well served by mass transit, shared vehicle, or bicycle facilities;*

The applicant has demonstrated that due to the physical constraints and existing development of the property, no parking can be accommodated on site, however, it can be provided within 600 feet of the property. The site is located on several Metrobus routes along Rhode Island Avenue.

703.3 *Any reduction in the required number of parking spaces granted under Subtitle C § 703.2 shall be:*

- (a) *Proportionate to the reduction in parking demand demonstrated by the applicant;*

- (b) *Limited to the number of spaces that the applicant demonstrates cannot reasonably be provided on the site as proposed to be developed in the application; and*

- (c) *Limited to relief from the minimum number of parking spaces required by this section and shall not provide relief from the location, access, size or layout, screening, or other requirements of this chapter.*

The requested reduction in required parking spaces is limited to the number of spaces that the applicant demonstrates cannot reasonably be provided on the site and does

require relief from the location, access, size or layout, screening, or other requirements of this chapter.

703.4 *Any request for a reduction of more than four (4) spaces from the required number of parking spaces shall include a transportation demand management plan approved by the District Department of Transportation, the implementation of which shall be a condition of the Board of Zoning Adjustment's approval.*

The applicant does not request relief for a reduction of more than four spaces.

Subtitle U § Section 203 SPECIAL EXCEPTION USES: R-USE GROUPS A, B, AND C

203.1 *The following uses shall be permitted in R-Use Groups A, B, and C, if approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and subject to the applicable conditions for each use below:*

(h) *Daytime care uses subject to the following conditions:*

(1) *The facility shall be located and designed to create no objectionable traffic condition and no unsafe condition for picking up and dropping off persons in attendance;*

The applicant proposes pick-up and drop-off (PUDO) in the rear of the building, along Lawrence Street, which should not create unsafe traffic conditions on Rhode Island Avenue. Although Lawrence Street is a two-way street, the applicant proposes one-way traffic for PUDO. The applicant states that will be designated staff to escort children, pick up will occur between 7:30–9:00 AM, and drop off will occur between 3:30–6:00 PM.

The applicant has been informed by DDOT that the applicant will need to submit a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR).

(2) *Any off-site play area shall be located so as not to endanger individuals traveling between the play area and the center or facility;*

The applicant has stated that if off-site play areas are used, children will be supervised by staff at the front and rear of the group. The applicant would provide walking routes on sidewalks with no mid-block crossings and play areas would be fenced. The applicant also states that the daycare program will comply with OSSE transition requirements.

(3) *The Board of Zoning Adjustment may require special treatment in the way of design, screening of buildings, planting and parking areas, signs, or other requirements as it deems necessary to protect adjacent and nearby properties; and;*

OP does not recommend any special treatments as conditions of approval, but the applicant should ensure adequate directional signage and information to parents and guardians regarding proper protocol for pick up and drop off.

(4) *More than one (1) child/elderly development center or adult day treatment*

facility in a square or within one thousand feet (1,000 ft.) of another child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility may be approved only when the Board of Zoning Adjustment finds that the cumulative effect of these facilities will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood due to traffic, noise, operations, or other similar factors;

There are no other childcare development centers within 1,000 feet of the property.

Subtitle X § Section 901 SPECIAL EXCEPTION REVIEW STANDARDS

901.2 The Board of Zoning Adjustment is authorized under § 8 of the Zoning Act, D.C. Official Code § 6-641.07(g)(2), to grant special exceptions, as provided in this title, where, in the judgment of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the special exceptions:

- (a) Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps;*

Parking

The intent of the parking regulations is to ensure that vehicular parking areas are located, accessed, and designed to minimize negative impacts on adjacent property, urban design, the pedestrian environment, and public spaces and to ensure that vehicle parking areas are safe and accessible. Although, there is no parking on site, the applicant states that they will utilize the church's nearby existing off-street parking lot, which accommodates up to 30 vehicles and is under the same ownership. The off-site parking lot exceeds the number of parking spaces required for the daycare use and should provide an adequate number of parking spaces for both staff and visitors.

Use Permissions (Daycare)

The requested special exceptions would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations. The R-1B zone is intended to stabilize the residential areas and promote a suitable environment for family life. Child development center uses are deemed compatible with residential uses. The requested use is consistent with supporting family life and can provide an important service for the neighborhood.

- (b) Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and*

Parking

The available parking lot is within 200 feet of the subject site and is not separated by an alley. While not preferred to have off-site parking, the parking lot is owned by the same owner as the subject site, and was acquired to provide accessory spaces for the church properties' use. There should be no conflict of hours of use of the off-site parking lot.

Use Permissions

The proposed use should not adversely impact neighboring properties. The property was previously used for a daytime child development center with no known issues or complaints. The proposed use should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and the applicant has provided a plan for pick-up and drop-off that should not impact traffic along South Dakota Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue.

(c) *Subject in specific cases to the special conditions specified in this title.*

The applicant should provide all parents and guardians are provided with adequate information detailing all pick-up/drop-off and parking procedures.

V. OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

DDOT has reviewed the application and has informed the applicant that they will need to submit a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) to DDOT. OP has not received comments from other agencies.

VI. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

No comments from ANC 5B have been filed to the record as of the date of this report. ANC 5C, which is nearby, provided a letter in support in the record.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

No comments from community members have been filed to the record as of the date of this report.

LOCATION MAP

