GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Policy and Planning Administration

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Memorandum

TO: Ellen McCarthy
Deputy Director
Office of Planning

FROM: Kenneth Laden
Associate Director
Transportation Planning Administration

DATE: OCT 23 2003

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 03-21 – Request for a consolidated review and approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and related Zoning Map Amendment from unzoned to SP-1

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application and other material submitted by the applicant. This report addresses the transportation elements of the proposal.

The Proposal

The applicant, St. Coletta of Greater Washington, requests a consolidated review and approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that includes a zoning map amendment from an unzoned district to SP-1 for the property located at the southeast corner of the intersection of 19th Street and Independence Avenue, SE. The project is an educational facility to serve physically challenged persons residing principally in the District. The total square footage of the building is approximately 100,612 square feet.

The subject site is part of Reservation 13, a large tract of land between the Capitol Hill East neighborhood and the Anacostia River and bordered by the RKF Stadium/DC Armory complex to the north. Currently, Reservation 13 houses the DC General Hospital, the DC Central Detention Facility, and other vacant parcels.

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The school will accommodate a total of 250 students consisting of 225 children and 25 adults. The supportive staff will be approximately 205 employees. According to the applicant, school day for the students begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, while hours of operation of the school for faculty and staff will be from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The project will provide 112 parking spaces and one loading berth plus one service delivery area. Access to both the parking and loading area will be from the Independence Avenue service roadway.

The Transportation System

As previously stated, the project will be located at the intersection of 19th Street and Independence Avenue, south of East Capitol Street, SE. Other streets serving the immediate area in the vicinity of the site include Bay, Burke and C Streets. These are all local residential streets terminating on 19th Street. The Office of Planning is preparing a Master Plan for Reservation 13. The Plan calls for the redevelopment and some adaptive reuse of the existing facilities within the Reservation. The extension of Burke Street and 20th Street to and through Reservation 13 is recommended to improve access and circulation on the adjacent roadway network.

The applicant plans to use an exit driveway at the southern edge of the property to allow buses and other vehicles to exit the property onto 19th Street SE. The Department recommends that this driveway be designed and constructed to align with Burke Street SE, and should be constructed so as to meet District design standards as a local roadway. The applicant should provide DDOT a copy of design plans and specifications for review and approval prior to construction of the school facility. The applicant should provide all costs for the design and construction of this access road from 19th Street SE to the property. DDOT will periodically inspect the project during construction to ensure that the roadway meets District standards.

The applicant has furnished a detailed description of the major arterial streets in his transportation assessment of the project. The description includes the number of lanes, turning movements, functional classification and signalized intersections for these streets. We concur with the findings of the applicant's report on the local street system. The Department notes that the project is in proximity to the Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station. The site is situated between the two entrances to the rail station, within 200 feet from the southern Metro entrance. In addition, the site is served by two metrobus routes along 19th Street and Independence Avenue, both adjacent to the site. We conclude that this project is ideally located with respect to the transit system.

The Impact of the Proposal

As was stated previously, the project is for the development of a school facility for physically and otherwise challenged students. For the purpose of this report, we have addressed the impact of the proposal in the following areas:

- Trip generation and level of service,

- Project access, parking and loading facilities,
- Transportation Management Program.

Trip Generation and Level of Service

We have reviewed the applicant's transportation report with regard to trip generation and level of service calculations on the critical intersections leading to and from the proposed project. With respect to trip generation rates, St. Coletta operates a similar school facility in Alexandria, Virginia. A survey of the Alexandria campus was conducted to derive trip generation used for the new facility in the District. St. Coletta uses buses, vans and taxis to transport the students to and from the site. A bus occupancy of four students was assumed by the applicant. Using the Alexandria campus experience, it is projected that approximately 63 buses would access the site during the drop-off and pick-up operations. As regard to faculty and staff trip generation, the applicant assumes that a 40 percent modal split and a car occupancy of 1.2 is achievable for the site. Based on the above assumptions, approximately 92 vehicle trips would enter the site and 10 would leave the site during the morning peak hour.

The result of the applicant's calculation indicates that the total trip generated by the PUD would be 155 vehicle trips entering the site and 73 vehicles exiting during the a.m. peak hour. The p.m. peak hour of the school would occur between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., therefore, outside of the afternoon peak travel time. DDOT agrees with the applicant's capacity analysis and the level of service (LOS) computation at the pertinent intersections in the vicinity of the project. The results of the analysis indicate that future level of service at the intersections leading to and from the site would all operate at level of service C or better during the a.m. peak period. During the p.m. peak hour, the performance level of the intersection of Independence Avenue at 19th Street would deteriorate from D to E, causing some congestion during that period. However, as previously stated, the contribution of the school traffic generation during the p.m. peak hour will have a minimal impact in the adjacent streets with regard to capacity and level of service at the critical intersections.

Project Access and Parking and Loading Facility

As previously stated, vehicular access to the development will be from the Independence Avenue service roadway via four driveways and one egress point onto 19th Street. The buses will access the site from the easternmost driveway and proceed to a staging area at the southern extremity of the parking area from where they will be dispatched to the drop-off area. The same process will be repeated during the afternoon pick-up operation. DDOT supports the proposed circulation arrangement as it will provide enough space for the buses to form a queuing lane and minimize bus spillover into the public space. The applicant states that the project will provide a loading facility as required by the Zoning Regulations. However, the applicant has not submitted a site plan for DDOT's comments with respect to design, location and operation of the loading facility.

The applicant will provide 122 parking spaces to include 12 handicapped spaces compared to132 spaces required by the Zoning Regulations. The applicant is requesting a reduction of the number of parking spaces required for nonresidential uses. In consideration of the good location of the development with respect to the transit system (Metrorail and Metrobus) located less than 200 feet from the development, DDOT could support the reduction provided the applicant implement a Transportation Management Program as spelled out below. DDOT notes that the redevelopment of Reservation 13 and the planned extension of 20th Street will affect the parking supply of the school. According to the applicant, the proposed improvement would eliminate a significant amount of parking spaces shown on the site plan. The applicant further states that based on the lease for the St. Coletta property, the City will provide 100 off-street parking spaces elsewhere in a surface lot or structure within Reservation 13. The lease provides that this parking is located within a reasonable and safe distance from the school. DDOT is concerned that If 20th St. is constructed before the 100 off-street parking spaces mentioned in the lease are in place, the school may have a negative impact on the neighborhood parking supply. Furthermore, DDOT has not seen a copy of the lease that agrees to the 100 off-street parking spaces.

Transportation Management Program

The Department recommends that the applicant develop a Transportation Management Program (TMP) to include:

1. Encourage use of carpools/vanpools: the school provides all employees with carpool/vanpool information.
2. Provide transit service information to all employees including Metro pocket guide with a system map, schedule and fare information, as well as auto and bicycle parking provision at Metro Stations
3. DDOT strongly urges the applicant to implement a Metrocheck Farecard subsidy program to further encourage transit usage by the school employees.
4. DDOT welcomes the provision of bicycle parking spaces as a means to encourage employees to leave their cars at home and commute by bike.
5. The school shall provide funding for the design and construction of an access road within the site area connecting the property to 19th Street SE. This access road should meet District roadway construction standards and be aligned with Burke Street SE.

Conclusion

The Department of Transportation would support the proposed Planned Unit Development if the applicant implements the recommended TMP to reduce employees' vehicular traffic to and from the site during the peak hour periods. However, the design and the location of the loading facility will require further coordination with the Department.

Cc: Jerrily R. Kress, OZ
Maxine Brown-Roberts, OP