

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Sara Bardin  
Director, Office of Zoning

**FROM:** Anna Chamberlin *Jonathan Rogers for*  
Associate Director, AICP

**DATE:** December 27, 2021

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 12-01E – The Catholic University of America (West Campus Solar Facility)

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

The Catholic University of America (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Campus Plan Amendment and Further Processing application to install an accessory solar facility on the West Campus of the University. The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Harewood Road NE and Scale Gate Road NE (Square 3663, Lot 7; Square 3671, Lot 3; Square 3821, Lot 44) in the RA-1 Zone. Zoning Case 12-01 was approved in 2012 to support The Catholic University of America’s Campus Master Plan (“2012 Master Plan”) which outlines a 15-year vision for the university.

#### SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. As one means 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 multimodal transportation network.

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential impacts of the zoning action on the District’s transportation network. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The Applicant proposes to install a solar array on 60 percent of the West Campus in the area previously planned for a surface parking lot and new access road in the 2012 Campus Plan;
- No new curb cuts or access points are proposed for the solar facility;
- A Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study was not required since this action is not anticipated to generate many trips nor is the Campus’s parking supply or number of students or employees proposed to increase;
- While the proposed design does not accommodate the planned campus access road which would provide important multimodal east-west connectivity between the Campus and the

redevelopment of the Armed Forces Retirement Home to the west, the proposed solar array is intended to be an interim use for 15-25 years according to conversations with the Applicant and will not preclude the long-term development potential of the West Campus. The submitted materials do not state a timeframe of the interim use, so DDOT requests the Zoning Commission set a time limit; and

- In the next Campus Plan Update, anticipated to occur in approximately 5 years, the vision for the West Campus will be re-evaluated. As part of the Campus Plan Update, the Applicant will be expected to coordinate with DDOT to identify short-, medium-, and long-term opportunities for enhanced multimodal connectivity through the West Campus. This may require modifications to the solar facility prior to the end of that facility's useful life. Ideally, the West Campus would include multiple east-west connections to N. Capitol Street to shorten block lengths and create synergies with the urbanizing nature of the area. Further, the Campus Plan Update will need to consider ways to support and leverage the potential reconfiguration of the North Capitol Street & Irving Street cloverleaf.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the installation of a solar facility will not have adverse impacts on the District's transportation network. However, in the short-term, the solar facility will preclude planned east-west connectivity through the West Campus. Therefore, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application so long as the Zoning Commission sets a timeframe for the interim solar facility use and it be documented in the Zoning Order. DDOT looks forward to working with the Applicant during the next Campus Plan update on the long-term vision for the West Campus.

## **STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM**

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm design. 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 \(DEM\)](#), 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.

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