

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *KB for* Meredith Soniat
Associate Director

DATE: February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 12-08E – Text Amendment to Subtitle K § 605.1, Front Setback, St. Elizabeths East

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The Office of Planning (OP) proposes a text amendment to Title 11 of *the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)* Subtitle K § 605.1 of the Zoning Regulations to remove the required ten-foot front setback along 13th Street SE for Parcel 18 (StE-18 zone) within the St. Elizabeths East Campus. This amendment is necessary to allow construction of a new District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) branch on Parcel 18 without requiring a significant redesign that would reduce the building footprint and compromise planned programs and services.

The new library will replace the existing Parklands-Turner Library and will be located adjacent to the Congress Heights Metrorail Station on property owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The design has been coordinated with WMATA to address critical transit infrastructure, including escalator structures, ventilation shafts, and other below- and above-grade operational elements. Removal of the setback requirement provides essential flexibility to accommodate these constraints and deliver a viable project.

The proposed amendment is limited in scope and applies only to the portion of 13th Street abutting Parcel 18. It will enable the library to proceed without delay and maintain coordination with transit and public realm improvements.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) reviewed the proposed text amendment and associated materials, including OP's Setdown Report, the Notice of Emergency and Proposed

Rulemaking, and correspondence with the applicant team. DDOT also met with the DCPL project team to discuss site context and design considerations. Based on this review, DDOT finds:

- The proposed amendment is limited to removing the 10-foot front setback requirement along 13th Street SE for Parcel 18 (StE-18 zone) at St. Elizabeths East Campus;
- The amendment facilitates construction of a new public library adjacent to the Congress Heights Metrorail Station, improving access to transit and community services;
- The design has been coordinated with WMATA to address operational constraints and maintain safe and functional transit infrastructure;
- No active entrances are proposed along the 13th Street frontage, reducing potential conflicts with pedestrian flow and curbside activity; and
- DDOT has no transportation concerns related to the removal of the setback requirement. Questions raised during coordination pertained to internal site circulation and public space design, which are outside the scope of this text amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested Text Amendment.

MS:pj