

# 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, AICP  
Associate Director 

**DATE:** April 12, 2021

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 20-23 – 525-605 Rhode Island Avenue NE

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

LDP Acquisitions, LLC & 525 Rhode Island Avenue LP (jointly, the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone an approximately 122,631 square-foot property from PDR-2 to MU-10. The subject property is located at Square 3623, Lots 1 and 2, and Parcels 131/94, 131/146, 131/147, 131/155, 131/161, 131/162, and 131/217. The multiple lots and parcels in the subject property are bounded by Rhode Island Avenue NE to the north, W Street NE to the south, the Metrorail tracks and Rhode Island Avenue Metrorail Station to the east, and Engine 12 property to the west that is also undergoing a rezoning to MU-10 (ZC 21-01). The site currently has a variety of industrial, warehouse, retail, surface parking, and other uses associated with the Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church community programs.

#### 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 proposed map amendment on the District’s transportation network. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The proposed MU-10 (Mixed-Use Medium-High Density) zone would allow for multi-family residential use on the site, which is currently not permitted in the PDR-2 zone, and could permit as much as ~330,000 SF additional development;

- Redevelopment alternatives under MU-10 are expected to yield significantly more vehicle trips as compared to max build-out under the existing PDR-2 and will impact the transportation network and, as such, DDOT will require a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study be completed during public space permitting;
- The site is within a ½-mile of a Metrorail station and ZR16 allows a 50% vehicle parking reduction. DDOT strongly encourages the Applicant to minimize the amount of vehicle parking provided if and when the site redevelops;
- Per the off-street parking guidelines in the 2019 *Guidance of Comprehensive Transportation Review*, DDOT expects a maximum parking ratio of 0.30 spaces/residential unit. DDOT will review the parking ratio when a development is reviewed during EISF and public space permitting, and mitigation will be required, as necessary;
- For site access, all existing curb cuts to Rhode Island Avenue should be closed. DDOT encourages this site to develop a shared driveway scheme with the property to the west so that both can take advantage of the traffic signal on Rhode Island Avenue NE; and
- The Applicant should incorporate a connection to the Metropolitan Branch Trail into the design of the project.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, the proposed rezoning would likely not lead to a significant increase in the number of peak hour vehicle trips on the District's transportation network if developed with the most intense matter-of-right uses. Therefore, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested Map Amendment.

## **CONTINUED COORDINATION**

Given the achievable matter-of-right density possible on the subject property, it is expected that the Applicant will work with DDOT through the permitting process (e.g., public space permitting and EISF) if and when a development proposal is put forth, on the following actions to minimize impacts to the transportation network:

- The Urban Forestry Division (UFD) identified two (2) trees along 5th Street NE that appear large enough to be considered Special or Heritage Trees. Along the Metropolitan Branch Trail, UFD was unable to determine the size of trees. Special Trees range in size from 44-inches to 99-inches and may be removed with a permit from UFD. Heritage Trees are 100-inches or larger and must be preserved if non-hazardous. The Applicant should coordinate with the Ward 6 Arborist on the preservation or removal of these trees;
- Depending on the ultimately proposed development program and if any future relief is requested from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) or Public Space Committee (PSC), the Applicant will be required to scope and provide a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study or some other analysis;
- Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures commensurate with the land use and scale of future development, as appropriate;
- Any development proposals for the site will need to account for a long-term bicycle parking storage room, either below- or at-grade in an easily accessible location from the lobby, as well as short-term bicycle parking, as required by ZR16. For any non-residential uses, showers and lockers are required for bicycle commuters;

- The redeveloped site should be designed so that loading occurs from an alley or private property without trucks performing backing maneuvers across the public realm surrounding the site. Also, coordinate with DDOT on an appropriate Loading Management Plan (LMP), if necessary;
- Coordinate with the DDOT Planning and Sustainability Division (PSD) to scope an appropriate Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study once a development program and access scheme have been determined;
- Coordinate with DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 6 arborist regarding the possibility of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property; and
- Continue coordination with DDOT on the public realm design elements noted in the Public Space section of this report.

## TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

### Vehicle Trip Comparison

The Applicant conducted a trip generation analysis (Exhibit 12C) for the site to compare the transportation impacts of several redevelopment scenarios under the existing PDR-2 and proposed MU-10 zones. To complete the analysis, the Applicant first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on existing conditions and the current and proposed zoning districts.

The existing PDR-2 zone allows for the site to be predominately developed light industrial use. The Applicant assumed a 4.5 FAR for the PDR-2 zone, which is documented in the OP Set Down report. If rezoned to MU-10, the site could potentially achieve a floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.0 (up to 7.2 with inclusionary zoning), of which no more than 3.0 FAR can be dedicated to non-residential uses. Therefore, a potential redevelopment of this site for a project that includes affordable housing could result in a development up to 882,943 square feet.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, the Applicant utilized the trip rates for residential, office, and retail land uses published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Trip Generation Manual, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Mode split assumptions were based on other similar projects adjacent to a Metrorail Station. Table 1 below presents a summary of the Applicant’s estimate of vehicle trips for each development scenario.

**Table 1 – Vehicle Trip Generation Comparison (Grove/Slade Transportation Memo, Exhibit 12C)**

Development Scenario	Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
<b>Existing Conditions</b>	32,380 SF Retail Use 58,126 SF Light Industrial	90	229	35	65
<b>Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in PDR-2 Zone 551,840 SF</b>	35,000 SF Basic Utility  7,600 SF Animal Care  509,240 SF Light Industrial	305	265	145	123
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU- 10 Zone Scenario 1 882,943 SF</b>	1,086 Residential Units  122,631 SF Retail	569	1201	182	339
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU- 10 Zone Scenario 2 882,943 SF</b>	736 Residential Units  122,631 SF Retail 245,262 SF Office	727	1342	252	404
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU- 10 Zone Scenario 3 882,943 SF</b>	1,002 Residential Units  0 SF Retail 181,494 SF Office	579	670	219	253
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU- 10 Zone Scenario 4 882,943 SF</b>	855 Residential Units  122,631 SF Retail 161,873 SF Office	683	1300	233	384

As shown by Table 1, redevelopment of the site with the maximum number of allowable units (estimated 1,086 units) with ground floor retail allowed under the MU-10 zone will add approximately 264 person trips in the weekday morning commuter peak hour and approximately 936 person trips in the weekday evening commuter peak hour, as compared to the trips generated by max build out under the existing zoning. Person and vehicle trip generation are expected to be comparable under any of the redevelopment scenarios. Any of the redevelopment options under consideration are expected to yield net new vehicle trips, as compared to the existing retail and light industrial buildings on-site.

Zoning Requirements

Table 2 below details DDOT’s estimates of the theoretical zoning requirements for each of the evaluated development scenarios. Note that the exact requirements would be determined by the Zoning Administrator and would be based on the specific development ultimately proposed.

Since the site is located within ½ mile of a Metrorail station (directly adjacent to Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail Station), DDOT encourages the Applicant to take advantage of the 50% reduction in the parking minimum, per ZR16 Subtitle C, Section 702.1(a), if and when the site develops.

Additionally, DDOT encourages the Applicant to meet or exceed the bicycle parking and showers/lockers requirements of ZR16.

According to the off-street parking guidelines in the DDOT *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, it is expected that the development will provide no more than 0.30 vehicle parking spaces per residential unit given the proximity to the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metrorail Station. Lower parking ratios encourage transit usage and reduce auto-dependency. The presence of extra parking spaces has the potential to induce additional demand for driving. DDOT will review the parking ratio at EISF and public space permitting and require any mitigation, if necessary, at that time.

**Table 2 – Zoning Requirements for Vehicle Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading (Gorove/Slade)**

Development Scenario	Development Program	ZR16 Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT Maximum Vehicle Parking Spaces	ZR16 Long-Term	ZR16 Short-Term
				Bicycle Spaces	Bicycle Spaces
<b>Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in PDR-2 Zone</b> 551,840 SF	35,000 SF Basic Utility 7,600 SF Animal Care 509,240 SF Light Industrial	19	14	2	1
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone Scenario 1</b> 882,943 SF	1,086 Residential Units 122,631 SF Retail	261	449	374	89
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone Scenario 2</b> 882,943 SF	736 Residential Units 122,631 SF Retail 245,262 SF Office	263	442	355	78
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone Scenario 3</b> 882,943 SF	1,002 Residential Units 0 SF Retail 181,494 SF Office	211	374	407	55
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone Scenario 4</b> 882,943 SF	855 Residential Units 122,631 SF Retail 161,873 SF Office	262	445	362	82

**PUBLIC SPACE**

If the site redevelops or there are any substantial renovations to future buildings, the property owner will be expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines, in line with District policy and practice. This includes curb and gutters, street trees and landscaping, streetlights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

The Applicant should be aware of the following elements to continue to coordinate with DDOT on, if and when the site redevelops:

- All existing and proposed vaults should be moved out of the sidewalk zone and onto private property;
- The pedestrian clear path on Rhode Island Avenue, W Street NE, and 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE should be a minimum of 10-feet wide;
- No new curb cuts to the property should be proposed. The existing curb cuts on Rhode Island Avenue NE should be removed. If proposal requires vehicle and loading access, ideally it will be provided via a shared driveway with the adjacent redevelopment project to the west at the existing traffic signal on Rhode Island Avenue NE. If a shared driveway is not possible, access could also be provided off W Street NE so long as the driveway is as far from the intersection with 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE as possible;
- Ensure building entrances are at-grade with the sidewalk to avoid the need for ramps and stairs in public space;
- Provide multimodal access to the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the east of the site, ideally in the vicinity of W Street;
- Install a Capital Bikeshare station adjacent to the site and designed into the final streetscape plans;
- Submit a detailed curbside management plan, if any changes to existing curbside restrictions are proposed. DDOT will require the Applicant to fund the installation of new multi-space parking meters, if needed;
- Install missing street trees on all sides of the site; and
- Determine final locations of short-term bicycle spaces (inverted U-racks).

DDOT encourages the Applicant to participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with the Office of Planning and DDOT to discuss the public space design if and when a future development is proposed.

In conjunction with the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* and the *Public Realm Design Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

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