

# 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. 21-01 – 501-513 Rhode Island Avenue NE

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

DC Office of Planning (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone an approximately 30,574 square-foot property from PDR-2 to MU-10. The subject property is located at 501-513 Rhode Island Avenue NE (Square 3623, Lots 131/216 and 131/44) and bounded by Rhode Island Avenue to the north and 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE to the west. Directly to the south and east of the subject property is another group of lots proposed for rezoning to the MU-10 zone in ZC Case No. 20-23. Abutting the subject property to the south is 2215 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE (Square 3623, Lot 131/208), which is currently a storage facility. The site under consideration of this rezoning currently has District of Columbia Fire & EMS Engine 12 with two surface parking lots.

#### 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 higher FARs that could achieve an additional ~82,000 SF of development;
- The redevelopment alternatives under MU-10 are projected to generate a comparable amount of person and vehicle trip generation under max build-out under PDR-2;

- Additional trips generated by the site are expected to have a minimal impact on the transportation network;
- Since the site is within a ½-mile of a Metrorail station, 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; and
- Per the off-street parking guidelines in the 2019 *Guidance of Comprehensive Transportation Review*, DDOT would expect a maximum parking ratio of 0.30 spaces/residential unit.

## **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:

- 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 may 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. Non-residential uses are required to provide showers and locker facilities for bicycle commuters;
- If and when the site develops, it is expected that all loading and trash pick-up will be designed so that no backing maneuvers will occur through DDOT public space. For site access, DDOT encourages this site to develop a shared driveway scheme with the property to the east so that both can take advantage of the traffic signal on Rhode Island Avenue NE;
- 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; 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

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of several residential redevelopment scenarios under the existing PDR-2 and proposed MU-10 zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT 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 with warehousing, large-scale government, and office space. DDOT assumed a 4.5 floor area ratio (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 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 220,113 square feet.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT 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 DDOT’s estimate of vehicle trips for each development scenario.

**Table 1 – Vehicle Trip Generation Comparison (DDOT Estimates)**

Development Scenario	Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
<b>Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in PDR-2 Zone Office w/ First Floor Retail 137,583 SF</b>	0 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 113,124 SF Office	197	323	49	60
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone - Alt 1 Residential w/ First Floor Retail 220,133 SF</b>	217 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 0 SF Office	134	282	23	38
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone - Alt 2 Hotel/Res w/ First Floor Retail 220,133 SF</b>	143 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 67,000 SF Hotel	264	450	41	61

As shown by Table 1, redevelopment of the site with the maximum number of allowable units (estimated 217 units) allowed under the MU-10 zone will reduce approximately 33 person trips in the weekday morning commuter peak hour and approximately 41 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 not expected to yield more than one (1) net new vehicle trips, as compared to the existing office building 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 the 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 Facilities**

Development Scenario	Development Program	ZR16 Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT Maximum Vehicle Parking Spaces	ZR16 Long-Term Bicycle Spaces	ZR16 Short-Term Bicycle Spaces
<b>Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in PDR-2 Zone (Office w First Floor Retail)</b>	0 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 113,124 SF Office	42	70	48	10
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone - Alt 1 (Residential w First Floor Retail)</b>	217 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 0 SF Office	50	90	75	18
<b>Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone - Alt 2 (Hotel/Res w First Floor Retail)</b>	143 Residential Units 24,459 SF Retail 67,000 SF Hotel	53	94	57	16

**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 and 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE should be a minimum of 10-foot wide;
- No new curb cuts to the property should be proposed. The existing curb cuts on Rhode Island Avenue NE and 5<sup>th</sup> Street 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 east at the existing traffic signal on Rhode Island Avenue NE. If a shared driveway is not possible, access could also be provided off 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE so long as the driveway is as far from the intersection with Rhode Island Avenue NE as possible;

- Ensure building entrances are at-grade with the sidewalk to avoid the need for ramps and stairs in public space;
- Ensure the existing Capital Bikeshare stations adjacent to the site are protected and operational during construction and designed into the final streetscape plans in their current locations. If it is necessary to relocate a station, it will be at the expense of the Applicant;
- 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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