

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Anna Chamberlin *Jonathan Rogers for*
Associate Director

DATE: May 5, 2023

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 23-02 – 1617 U Street NW

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Planning (DMPED) (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone two (2) lots totaling 81,981 SF from MU-4 to MU-10. The subject property is at 1617 U Street NW (Square 0175, Lots 826 and 827) on the northeast corner of the intersection of 17th Street and U Street NW. The lots are served by two (2) public alleys connecting to U Street and V Street. The properties are the current site of MPD Third District Station, FEMS Engine Company #9, and a parking garage.

SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life in the nation’s capital by encouraging sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and outstanding access to goods and services. 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 multi-modal transportation network and, as necessary, propose mitigations that are commensurate with the action. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The site is less than ½ mile from the U Street Metrorail Station and just over ½ mile from the Dupont Circle Station. There are also several priority bus routes along U and 16th Streets;
- The proposed MU-10 zone would allow for approximately 252 more residential units and 25,000 SF retail space on the property as compared to the maximum allowed in the existing MU-4 zone;
- The increased density is expected to generate a moderate increase the amount of transit, biking, and walking trips;
- From a vehicle trip generation standpoint, maximum build-out in the proposed MU-10 zone could generate an additional 26 AM peak hour trips and 27 PM peak hour trips, as compared to the maximum matter-of-right development under MU-4 zoning;

- The additional vehicle trips generated by the site are expected to have a minimal impact on the roadway network;
- DDOT concurs with the up-zoning in order to further support nearby transit and generate additional foot traffic to support nearby businesses. This is consistent with DDOT’s approach to infill sites which should be dense, compact, transit-oriented, and have a walkable design;
- Given the site’s proximity to high-quality and high-frequency transit, the Applicant is encouraged to minimize the amount of off-street parking provided with any future redevelopment proposal of the non-MPD/FEMS portion of the site, in accordance with the parking ratios in the 2022 *CTR Guidelines* and requirements of the active DMPED RFP;
- Any development proposals for the site will need to account for a long-term bicycle parking storage room in an easily accessible location, ideally adjacent to the lobby, as well as short-term bicycle parking, as required by 11 DCMR 801 and 18 DCMR 1214; and
- When the site redevelops, it is expected that all loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking will take place from the public alley network. Any existing curb cuts to U and 17th Streets, aside from the fire station driveway, should be closed.

RECOMMENDATION

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 coordinate with DDOT through the permitting process on the following actions to minimize impacts of a future development proposal on the transportation network:

- Continue to coordinate with DDOT and the Office of the Surveyor regarding the potential closure of the existing public alley that currently connects to U Street NW. The remaining alley network should be expanded or re-aligned to ensure all loading, trash collection, and vehicle parking occur from the alley. DDOT will not support an alley closure that results in the need for additional curb cuts on the block;
- Coordinate the future 1617 U Street redevelopment with the on-going U Street bus priority and streetscape projects;
- Depending on the final development program and if any future relief is requested from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) or Public Space Committee (PSC), a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study or some other transportation analysis may be required;
- A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan may be required the time of curb cut approval, commensurate with the land use, parking supply, and scale of future development, in accordance with the January 2022 *CTR Guidelines*;
- When the property ultimately redevelops, the site should be designed so that loading occurs from the alley without trucks performing backing maneuvers through public sidewalk space. Also, coordinate with DDOT on an appropriate Loading Management Plan (LMP), as necessary;
- Submit a detailed curbside management and signage plan to DDOT, consistent with current DDOT policies. If meter installation is required, they will be at the Applicant’s expense;

- Coordinate with DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 1 Arborist regarding the possibility of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property; and
- Continue coordination with DDOT on the public space design elements noted in the Streetscape and Public Realm sections of this report and the active DMPED RFP.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Mode Split and Trip Generation Comparison

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of several residential development scenarios under the existing MU-4 and proposed MU-10 zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on current and proposed zoning.

The existing Mu-4 zone allows for the site to be developed with moderate-density mixed-use development with an FAR of 3.0 and building height max of 50 feet. If rezoned to MU-10, the site could potentially achieve a 7.2 FAR, assuming the inclusive zoning (IZ) bonus and a building height max of 100 feet. It is estimated that a maximum of 408 residential units with 65,000 SF retail could be constructed on-site if the rezoning to MU-10 is granted, as compared to approximately 156 dwellings and 40,000 SF retail under the existing MU-4.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the rates published in the ITE *Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition*, webtool. A 75% non-auto mode share was assumed based on the site’s proximity to Metrorail. Table 1 below presents a summary of DDOT’s estimate of vehicle trips for each development scenario for only the residential/mixed-use portion of the site. The new MPD and FEMS facility was excluded from the analysis because it was assumed the trips would be approximately the same after redevelopment. For the purpose of this trip generation analysis, it was assumed the mixed-use portion of the site is approximately 60,000 SF lot area with the remaining 22,000 SF of lot area for the MPD/FEMS facility. It is noted that these square footages will likely be different once a developer and proposal is selected.

Table 1 | Trip Generation Comparison (Non-MPD / FEMS Portion of Site)

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips*	PM Peak Person Trips*	AM Peak Vehicle Trips*	PM Peak Vehicle Trips*
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-4 Zone	156 Residential Units	129	319	19	36
	40,000 SF Retail				
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone	408 Residential Units	277	590	46	73
	65,000 SF Retail				
Net Change MU-4 vs MU-10	+252 Residential Units +25,000 SF Retail	+148	+271	+26	+37

Note:

* Table excludes trips generated by new MPD and FEMS facilities. It is anticipated there will be minor or no increase in trips to MPD/FEMS once replaced with facilities of approximately the same size. The focus of the trip generation analysis was on the residential/mixed-use portion.

As shown above, after the rezoning, development of the site with the maximum number of allowable units and retail square footage on the non-MPD/FEMS portion of the site will generate approximately 46 vehicle trips in the weekday morning commuter peak hour and approximately 73 vehicle trips during the

weekday evening commuter peak hour, as compared to the approximately 19 and 36 trips, respectively, if constructed with max build-out under existing zoning.

Zoning Requirements

Table 2 below details DDOT’s estimates of the theoretical vehicle parking and bike parking zoning requirements for each of the evaluated development scenarios. Note that the exact requirements will be determined by the Department of Buildings (DOB) and will be based on the specific development ultimately proposed. This also includes any required loading facilities.

Since the site is located within ½ mile of the western entrance to the U Street Metrorail Station, DDOT encourages any future redevelopment to minimize the amount of off-street parking, particularly with the non-MPD/FEMS portion of the site. According to DDOT’s January 2022 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, a site this proximate to priority transit should provide no more than 0.35 spaces per residential unit (1 space per 3 units), 0.50 spaces per 1,000 GSF office (1 per 5 employees), 1 per 5 hotel rooms, and 1.25 spaces per 1,000 GSF retail. The presence of surplus parking has the potential to induce additional demand for driving on the roadway network. During public space permitting, the Applicant may be required to commit to a TDM plan, the contents of which will be determined at that time and will be influenced by the amount of off-street parking provided.

While not a zoning requirement, DDOT encourages the Applicant to provide a minimum of 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging station for every 50 spaces in the parking garage (both MPD/FEMS and mixed-use portions of the site). It is noted that a new District law, the Electric Vehicle Readiness Amendment Act of 2020, calls for 20% of all new off-street parking spaces to be EV-ready. At this time, the law has not gone into effect. The Applicant should be aware that this requirement may go into effect prior to pulling their building permit.

The project must meet all bicycle parking requirements. DDOT encourages the Applicant to meet or exceed the bicycle parking and showers/lockers requirements of 11 DCMR C-800 and 18 DCMR 1214. Long- and short-term bicycle parking should be designed in accordance with the 2018 DDOT *Bike Parking Design Guide*. As required by zoning, at least 50% of long-term bicycle parking spaces must be located horizontally on the floor or easily accessible on the bottom level of a two-tier rack system. Additionally, DDOT requires at least 5% of spaces be designed for larger cargo/tandem bikes (10 feet by 3 feet rather than 6 feet by 2 feet) and 10% of spaces be served by electrical outlets for e-bikes and scooters.

Table 2 | Zoning Requirements for Vehicle Parking and Bicycle Parking

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	Zoning Min Vehicle Parking Spaces*	DDOT Preferred Max Vehicle Parking Spaces**	18 DCMR 1214 Long-Term Bicycle Spaces	Zoning Short-Term Bicycle Spaces
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-4 Zone	156 Residential Units 40,000 SF Retail	50	79	56	19
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-10 Zone	408 Residential Units 65,000 SF Retail	109	167	142	39

Note: * Includes 50% reduction for being located within ½ mile of a Metrorail station.

** See Table 2 of the CTR Guidelines for DDOT parking benchmark rates

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

When the site redevelops, it is expected the Applicant will 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.

For DDOT's specific public space requirements for this site, refer to the active Request for Proposal (RFP) led by the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Planning (DMPED). The Applicant should coordinate with DDOT on a potential alley closure application to remove the ally access point from U Street, as well as curb line realignments on U and 17th Streets, and the potential for a traffic signal on U Street at the FEMS driveway.

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 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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