

# Government of the District of Columbia


## Department of Transportation



### d. Planning and Sustainability Division

#### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Anna Chamberlin, AICP   
Associate Director

**DATE:** July 8, 2024

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 23-24 – 1708-1710 First Street NE (Eckington Mews PUD)

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

Eckington Mews, LLC (the “Applicant”) has requested approval of a Consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD) application to develop a property bounded by First Street NE to the east, McKinley Technology High School to the north, and public alleys to the south and west. The site currently contains two (2) townhomes in addition to garages and vacant lots. The proposed multifamily residential development includes the following program:

- 26 residential units, classified as multifamily for zoning purposes but which will function like flats or rowhomes;
- 13 vehicle parking spaces, mostly contained within individual unit garages; and
- 13 long- and 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces.

The Applicant has a concurrent Surveyor’s Order (SO) application at this site (SO Case No. 23-06402) for closure of a 1,125-square foot public alley adjacent to the property.

#### SUMMARY OF DDOT REVIEW

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is committed to achieving an exceptional quality of life 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:

- Vehicular access to the site is proposed via multiple garage entrances from the existing rear alley network, and all loading and trash access will occur from the alley. This is consistent with DDOT standards;

- The project proposes to exceed the DCMR 11 and DCMR 18 minimums for long- and short-term bicycle parking, which DDOT strongly supports. DDOT encourages the Applicant to relocate at least two (2) short-term bicycle parking spaces (one (1) U-rack) from the rear of the site to the tree box area along First Street NE and add an overhead shelter over the rear short-term spaces. Short-term bicycle parking spaces should be accessible to the public and in this case, they are located behind a fence. It is likely that residents without garage access will use these spaces instead and need a shelter from the elements.
- The project is meeting zoning requirements for vehicle parking, and the parking supply is close to DDOT's preferred parking maximum for sites near Metrorail stations; and
- To offset the impact of the increased number of vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle trips within the existing alley network, the Applicant has agreed with DDOT to install traffic calming measures (subject to DDOT approval) and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to improve the safety and comfort of walking and bicycling to and from the site. DDOT requests revisions to this proposal, noted at the end of this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

DDOT has no objection to the approval of this PUD application with the following condition included in the Zoning Order:

- Implement the TDM Plan as proposed in the June 18, 2024 Transportation Statement (Exhibit 20A), for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted with the revisions requested in the TDM section of this report.

## **CONTINUED COORDINATION**

Given the complexity and size of the action, the Applicant is expected to continue to work with DDOT on the following matters outside of the zoning process:

- Continue to coordinate with DDOT's Planning and Sustainability Division (PSD) and Traffic Engineering and Safety Division (TESD) to refine the design of traffic calming measures along the east-west alley and Lincoln Road NE;
- The Applicant will be required to obtain public space permits for all elements of the project proposed in public space. DDOT has several comments on the initial public space design which are noted in the Streetscape and Public Realm section below and can be resolved during the public space permitting process;
- The Applicant should participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) to discuss the public space design with DDOT and the District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP);
- Coordinate with PSD to ensure the long-term bicycle parking spaces meet both zoning requirements and DDOT design guidelines;
- Submit a detailed curbside management and signage plan for Curbside Management Division (CMD) review, consistent with current DDOT policies;
- Coordinate with DDOT's TDM Team and goDCgo on the implementation of the TDM Plan; and
- Coordinate with DDOT's Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 5 Arborist regarding the possibility of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property as well as any street trees in public space.

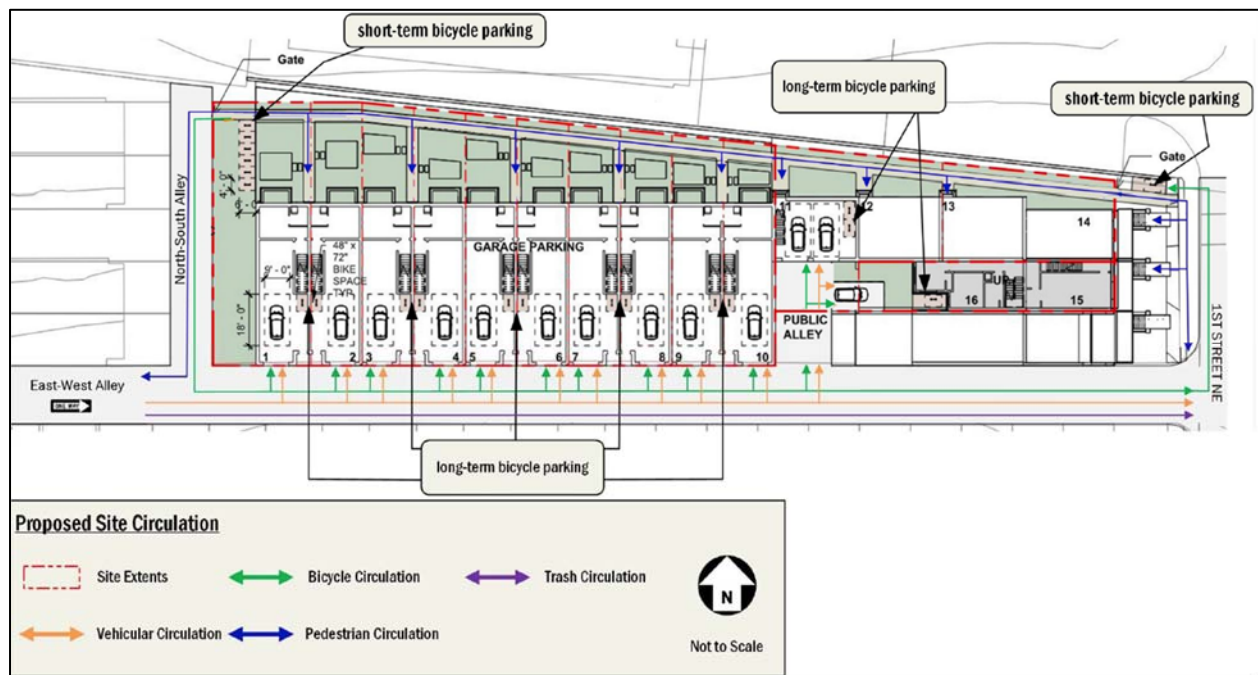
## TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

The following is DDOT’s review of the submitted plans, application materials, and June 18, 2024 Transportation Statement (Exhibit 20A) to assess the project’s consistency with the District’s vision for an equitable and sustainable transportation system that delivers safe and convenient ways to move people, goods, and services.

### Site Access

Pedestrian access to a gated pedestrian walkway connecting to the site’s residential units is proposed from 1<sup>st</sup> Street NE and from the north-south public alley to the west of the site. Vehicular access to the site’s individual unit parking garages is proposed via the existing one-way eastbound east-west public alley, which connects Lincoln Road to First Street NE. The project proposes no new curb cuts, consistent with DDOT *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* standards for vehicle access. Figure 1 below shows the site layout of the proposed project.

**Figure 1 | Site Plan**



Source: Gorove/Slade 6/18/24 Transportation Statement, Figure 14

### Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by a development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price, and supply of parking spaces. However, in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high-quality transit, frequency of transit service, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, demographic composition, and other characteristics.

The project is required by Zoning to provide seven (7) vehicle parking spaces after taking the eligible 50% reduction for the site’s location within ½ mile of the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metrorail Station. The project proposes a total of 13 parking spaces split among 11 individual garages and one small outdoor parking area to the rear of the townhomes along First Street NE. DDOT’s preferred maximum parking

rate for multifamily residential buildings, per the January 2022 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, is 0.35 spaces per unit, which would equate to a preferred maximum of nine (9) spaces for this development.

Using this value would set this development at nearly 50% above DDOT's maximum parking value; however, as stated in the Project Summary section of this report and shown in Figure 1, the site's residential units will look and function more like flats or rowhomes than an apartment building. If the units were classified as flats, the Zoning parking requirement would be 1 space per 2 units (before the 50% Metrorail reduction), and DDOT's preferred maximum would be 12 spaces (only 1 fewer than what is provided). Therefore, DDOT finds the amount of parking provided to be appropriate given the site's location and context. No electric vehicle charging stations are proposed.

### **Bicycle Parking**

The project is required by zoning to provide 9 long-term and one (1) short-term bicycle parking spaces. According to the Transportation Statement, the project includes 13 long- and 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces, exceeding these requirements. Similarly to the vehicle parking spaces, each long-term bicycle space will be located within the individual unit garages rather than a centralized parking area. The short-term spaces are proposed to be accommodated with six (6) inverted U-racks along the north-south alley, within the site's secure perimeter fence, and one (1) inverted U-rack within public space along the site's First Street NE frontage. DDOT recommends the Applicant to relocate at least two (2) short-term bicycle parking spaces (one (1) U-rack) from the rear of the site to the tree box area along First Street NE since the short-term spaces in the secure area will not be accessible to delivery bicyclists and other site visitors. DDOT also recommends the Applicant add a shelter over the rear short-term spaces since these will likely be used for permanent storage by residents who do not own a vehicle.

As the design of the long-term bicycle parking spaces moves forward, the Applicant should refer to page F-9 of Appendix F in the *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review* for design best practices. The bicycle parking spaces must be designed so that a minimum of 50% of long-term spaces be located horizontally on the floor or bottom of a two-tier rack system, 10% of spaces be served by electrical outlets, 5% of spaces (minimum 2 spaces) be designed for larger tandem/cargo bikes (10 feet by 3 feet, rather than 6 feet by 2 feet). DDOT confirms the most recent submitted plans accommodate these guidelines with long-term spaces inside of each individual garage and the TDM Plan states these amounts.

### **Loading**

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle modes and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. Access to this project for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the project to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Per Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, Subtitle C § 901.1 and § 901.4, residential properties with fewer than 50 residential units are not required to provide loading facilities. No loading facilities are proposed. The project is designed so that resident trash can be stored in garages

and collected from the east-west public alley. This is consistent with DDOT's standards that trash is not stored in public space or be visible from the public sidewalk.

### **Heritage and Special Trees**

According to the District's [Tree Size Estimator map](#), the site has one (1) Special Tree within public space along First Street NE. DDOT expects that the Applicant coordinate with the Ward 5 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of this tree and other existing street trees in addition to the planting of new street trees in bioretention facilities or a typical expanded tree planting space.

Special Trees are between 44 inches and 99.99 inches in circumference. Special Trees may be removed with a permit. However, if a Special Tree is designated to remain by UFD, a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) will be required.

### **Streetscape and Public Realm**

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. 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 must work closely with DDOT and OP to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulate around it. In conjunction with Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the *DCMR*, the most recent version of DDOT's *DEM* and *Public Realm Design Manual* will serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. Streetscape designs will be reviewed in further detail during the public space permitting process.

While the preliminary public space plans, shown above in Figure 1, are generally consistent with DDOT standards, there are several considerations that need to be reviewed in greater detail during the public space permitting process:

- Continue to coordinate with DDOT about the Applicant's proposed traffic calming measures within public space.
- All vehicular site access to the site, as well as trash pick-up, must be via the existing rear public alley network. The closest alley entrance is from Lincoln Road NE;
- Submit a detailed curbside management plan with proposed signage for review and approval by DDOT Curbside Management Division (CMD);
- Determine a final location for the inverted-U bicycle racks in public space, with preferably at least one (1) U-rack moved from the rear of the site to the site's First Street NE frontage; and

DDOT encourages the Applicant to participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) to address design-related comments provided by DDOT and OP.

### **Mode Split and Trip Generation**

Each trip a person makes is made by a certain means of travel, such as vehicle, bicycle, walking, and transit. The means of travel is referred to as a 'mode' of transportation. A variety of elements impact the mode of travel, including density of development, diversity of land use, design of the public realm, proximity to transit options, availability and cost of vehicle parking, among many others.

Mode split assumptions used in the analysis were informed by the US Census, WMATA’s Development-Related Ridership Survey, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s 2022 *State of the Commute* survey. As shown in Figure 2 below, it was assumed that 35% of trips to and from the site will be made via automobile with the remainder of trips are anticipated to be made by transit, walking, or bicycling.

**Figure 2 | Summary of Mode Split Assumptions**

| Mode  |         |      |      |             |
|-------|---------|------|------|-------------|
| Drive | Transit | Bike | Walk | Telecommute |
| 35%   | 30%     | 15%  | 10%  | 10%         |

Source: Gorove/Slade 6/18/24 Transportation Statement, Attachment B

The study provided trip generation estimates based on the rates published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers *Trip Generation Manual*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition (Land Use Code 220 Multi-Family Low-Rise Housing). The assumed mode-split was used to convert base vehicular trips to base person trips using average auto occupancy data and then back to vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips. DDOT finds these methods appropriate.

As shown below in Figure 3, the projected person and vehicle trips did not meet DDOT’s thresholds in the Guidance of Comprehensive Transportation Review for further analysis (100 total person trips OR 25 inbound or outbound vehicle trips during any one of study periods). As such, a full Comprehensive Transportation Review study with Traffic Impact Analysis was not required.

**Figure 3 | Multi-Modal Trip Generation Summary**

| Mode                         | AM Peak  |          |          | PM Peak  |          |          | Weekday | Saturday Peak |          |          |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------------|----------|----------|
|                              | In       | Out      | Total    | In       | Out      | Total    |         | In            | Out      | Total    |
| Proposed Residential (26 du) |          |          |          |          |          |          |         |               |          |          |
| Auto                         | 1 veh/hr | 2 veh/hr | 3 veh/hr | 3 veh/hr | 1 veh/hr | 4 veh/hr | 61 veh  | 2 veh/hr      | 2 veh/hr | 4 veh/hr |
| Transit                      | 1 ppl/hr | 3 ppl/hr | 4 ppl/hr | 3 ppl/hr | 2 ppl/hr | 5 ppl/hr | 62 ppl  | 2 ppl/hr      | 2 ppl/hr | 4 ppl/hr |
| Bike                         | 0 ppl/hr | 2 ppl/hr | 2 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 2 ppl/hr | 31 ppl  | 1 ppl/hr      | 1 ppl/hr | 2 ppl/hr |
| Walk                         | 0 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 0 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr | 21 ppl  | 1 ppl/hr      | 0 ppl/hr | 1 ppl/hr |

Source: Gorove/Slade 6/18/24 Transportation Statement, Table 8

### **Pedestrian Network**

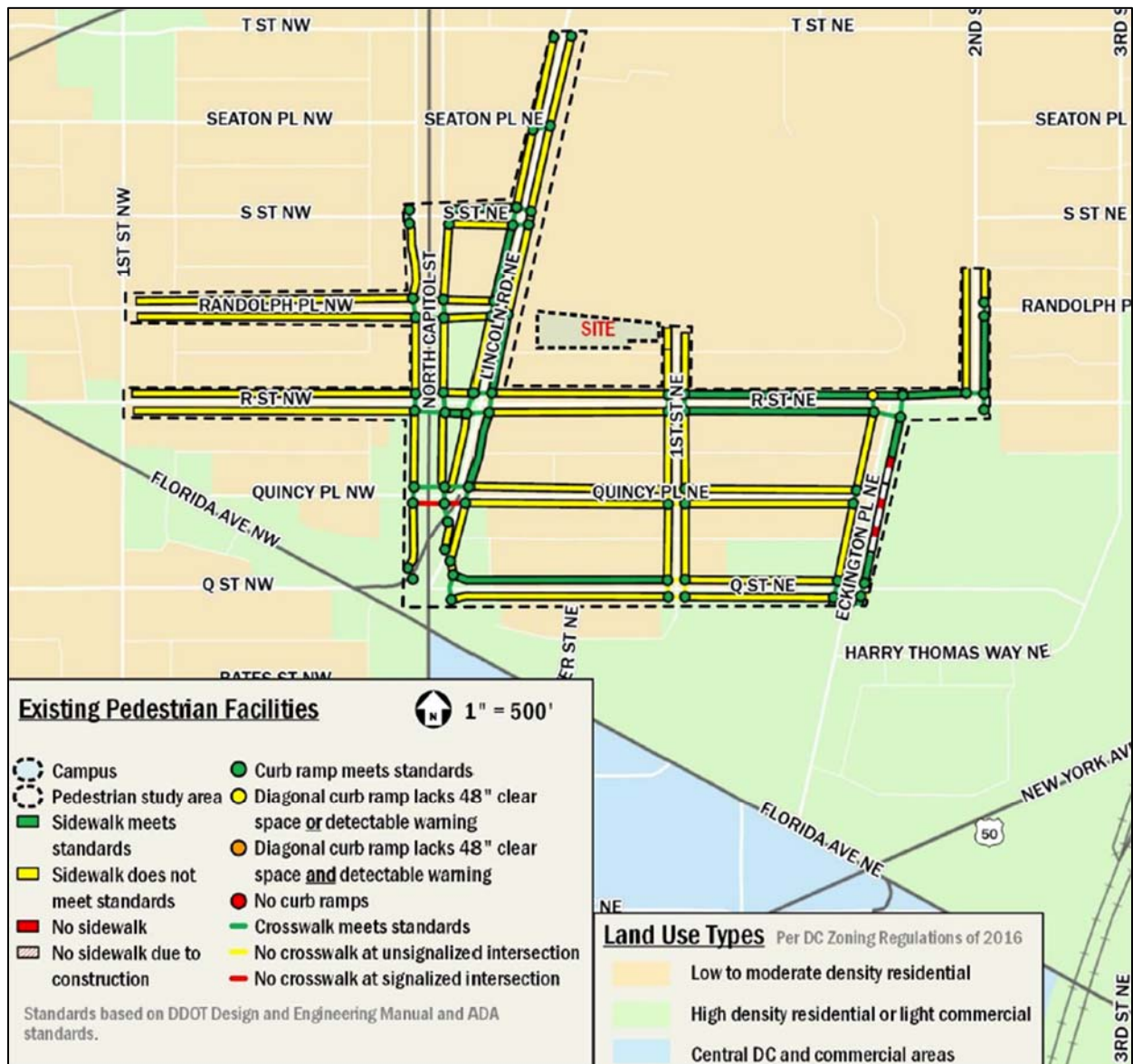
The District is committed to enhancing pedestrian accessibility by ensuring consistent investment in pedestrian infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including pedestrian trips. Walking is expected to be an important mode of transportation for this development. DDOT expects the Applicant will reconstruct the public space along the frontage and upgrade any pedestrian facilities leading to transit stops and neighborhood services to current DDOT standards.

The Transportation Statement’s inventory of existing pedestrian infrastructure, as shown in Figure 4 below, demonstrates that while there are several substandard facilities in the vicinity of the site, most facilities that are substandard still provide an unobstructed clear width of at least five (5) to six (6) feet even if they do not provide sufficient buffer width. Most also include accessible curb ramps. Despite



these substandard facilities, the existing pedestrian network along major walking routes from the site to schools, attractions, and the Metrorail station is generally acceptable.

**Figure 4 | Existing Pedestrian Network**



Source: Gorove/Slade 6/18/24 Transportation Statement, Figure 9

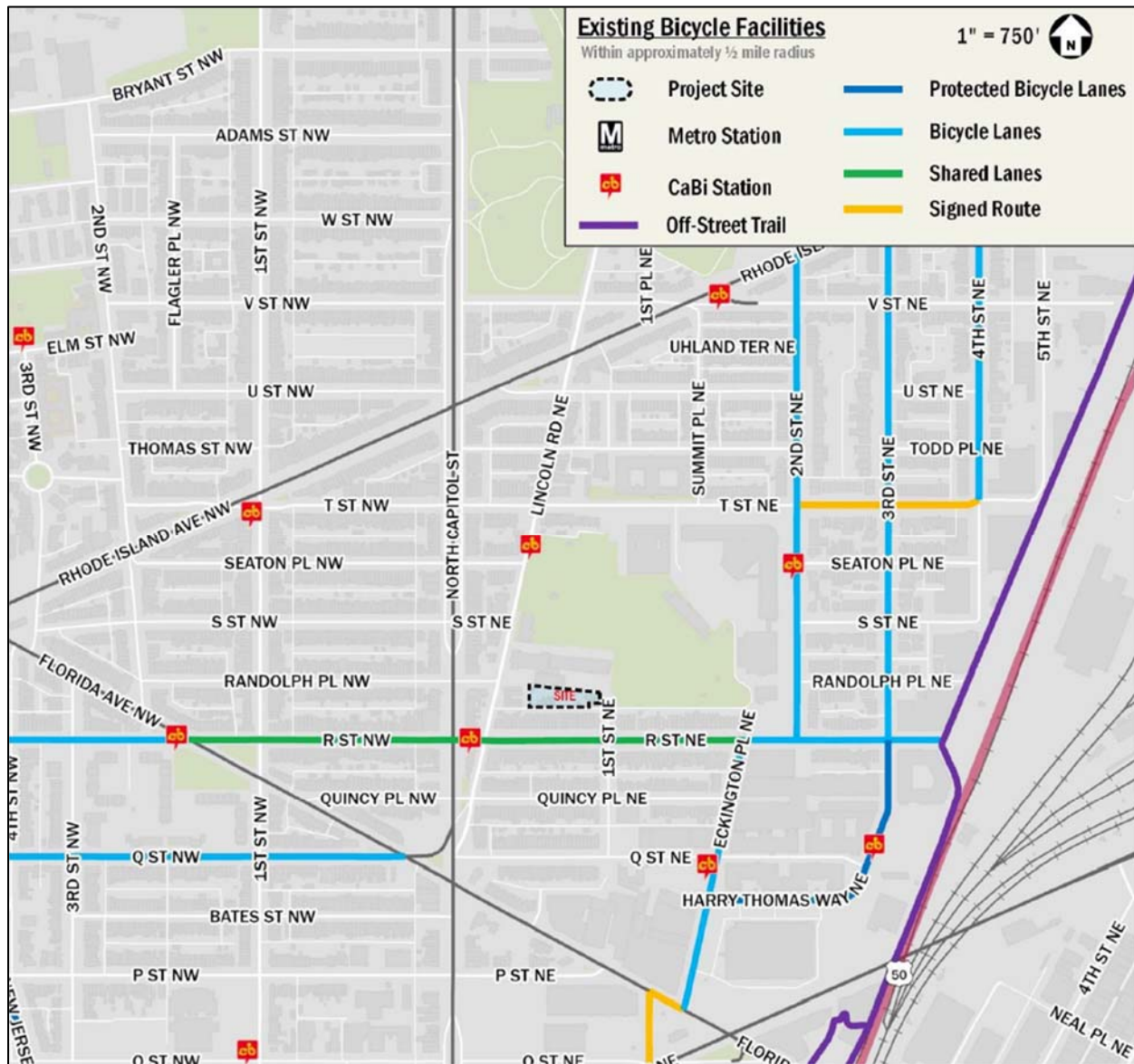
To offset the increased number of vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle trips expected to travel through the alley system, the Applicant has agreed to fund and construct traffic calming measures in the immediate vicinity of the site to promote safety. Specifically, the Applicant has agreed to install speed bumps in the east-west alley, subject to DDOT approval. DDOT and the Applicant are also engaged in ongoing conversations about improving pedestrian crossings across Lincoln Road at R Street and Randolph Street NE. DDOT notes that the final design of these improvements will occur during public space permitting.

## Bicycle Network

The District is committed to enhancing bicycle accessibility by ensuring consistent investment in bicycle infrastructure on the part of both the public and private sectors. DDOT expects new developments to serve the needs of all trips they generate, including bicycling trips. Bicycling is expected to be an important mode of transportation for this development.

As shown below in Figure 5, there are currently bicycle lanes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Q Street, R Street, and Eckington Place NE near the site. Access to the Metropolitan Branch Trail from R Street NE is also roughly three blocks from the site. The existing bicycle lanes on Eckington Place NE will be upgraded to protected bike lanes as part of DDOT's Florida Avenue & New York Avenue NE Intersection project. Capital Bikeshare stations are located near the site at R Street & Lincoln Road NE and at Lincoln Road & Seaton Place NE.

**Figure 5 | Existing Bicycle Facilities**



Source: Gorove/Slade 6/18/24 CTR, Figure 6



### **Transit Service**

The District and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have partnered to provide extensive public transit service in the District of Columbia. DDOT's vision is to leverage this investment to increase the share of non-automotive travel modes so that economic development opportunities increase with minimal infrastructure investment.

The site is located approximately 0.4 miles, roughly a 10-15 minute walk, from the NoMa-Gallaudet U Metrorail station which is served by the Red Line. Trains serve this Metrorail station every 6 minutes daily before 9:30 p.m. and every 10 minutes after 9:30 p.m.

There are several bus stops near the site along R Street, North Capitol Street, and Florida Avenue NE. R Street NE is served by Metrobus route P6 with bus headways ranging from 7 to 35 minutes throughout the day. North Capitol Street is served by Metrobus route 80 with bus headways ranging from 7 to 20 minutes throughout the day. Florida Avenue NE is served by Metrobus routes 90 and 92 with bus headways ranging from 6 to 30 minutes throughout the day. DDOT's future Florida Avenue NE/NW Bus Priority project will improve bus travel times along this corridor.

### **Curbside Management**

When a property redevelops, it is DDOT policy to reevaluate the existing curbside restrictions around the site frontages to ensure they align with the new land use(s) to occupy the property as well as the surrounding neighborhood context.

The site's First Street NE frontage currently allows two-hour parking during the daytime for all vehicles except for Zone 5 permit holders. No parking is permitted in the east-west alley adjacent to the site. The Applicant does not propose any changes to these curbside designations.

DDOT is generally supportive of this concept, however, a detailed curbside and signage plan must be submitted during public space permitting for review and approval by DDOT's CMD. At that time, the plan may be refined by CMD and the exact signage placards will be determined. If multi-space meters are required by CMD then they will be at the Applicant's expense.

### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**

As part of all land development cases, DDOT requires an Applicant to develop a comprehensive TDM Plan to help mitigate an action's transportation impacts. TDM is a set of strategies, programs, services, and physical elements that influence travel behavior by mode, frequency, time, route, or trip length to help achieve highly efficient and sustainable use of transportation facilities. In the District, this typically means implementing infrastructure or programs to maximize the use of mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during peak periods. The Applicant's proposed TDM measures play a role in achieving the desired and expected mode split.

The specific elements within the TDM Plan vary depending on the land uses, site context, proximity to transit, scale of the development, and other factors. The TDM Plan must help achieve the assumed trip generation rates to ensure that an action's impacts will be properly mitigated. Failure to provide a robust TDM Plan could lead to unanticipated additional vehicle trips that could negatively impact the District's transportation network.

The Applicant proposed a TDM Plan in the June 18, 2024 Transportation Statement, which is included with this report as Attachment 1. DDOT finds the TDM Plan sufficiently robust to support non-automobile ownership lifestyles and encourage alternatives to auto travel with the following revisions included in the Zoning Order:

- Add the Applicant's proposed traffic calming to the TDM Plan;
- Ensure that there is a gap of at least 2 feet between the proposed speed bumps and that they are not placed directly in front of an existing or future driveway. Also, add an additional one-way sign on the south side of the alley's intersection with Lincoln Road NE.
- To ensure safe operations for the increased number of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians navigating in and out of this alley, revise the proposed traffic calming to include striping parking boxes along the east side of Lincoln Road and adding intersection daylighting at the crosswalks at R Street NE and Randolph Street NE.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Proposed TDM Plan, Gorove/Slade, June 18, 2024

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## Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the application of policies and strategies used to reduce travel demand or redistribute demand to other times or spaces. TDM focuses on reducing the demand of single-occupancy, private vehicles during peak period travel times or on shifting single-occupancy vehicular demand to off-peak periods.

The following proposed TDM plan has been tailored for the unique nature of this project. As noted earlier, while the project is considered a single, multifamily building for zoning purposes, each unit will be sold in fee simple to individual purchasers and will function the same as traditional individual rowhomes. Furthermore, whereas multifamily rental buildings have a single owner that manages ongoing responsibilities tied to the overall property, there is no collective entity managing the overall site in this case. As such, the Applicant proposed the following TDM strategies for the Project:

### ***Residential TDM Plan***

- Provide welcome packets to all new residents that should, at a minimum, include the Metrorail pocket guide, brochures of local bus lines (Circulator and Metrobus), carpool and vanpool information, CaBi coupon or rack card, Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) brochure, and the most recent DC Bike Map. Brochures can be ordered from DDOT's goDCgo program by emailing [info@godcgo.com](mailto:info@godcgo.com).
- Provide a SmarTrip card and one (1) complimentary Capital Bikeshare coupon good for a free ride to every new resident for initial sale and lease-up.
- Provide at least 1 short- and 9 long-term bicycle parking spaces in accordance with ZR16 minimums. The current plan proposes 13 long-term and 14 short-term spaces across the site.