

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Meredith Soniat *MS*
Acting Associate Director

DATE: April 11, 2025

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 24-13 – 4301 Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue NE (McDonald's)

PROJECT SUMMARY

The McDonald's Corporation (the "Applicant") seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone a 23,054 -square-foot property from MU-3A to MU-7B to rebuild and expand a fast-food restaurant with a drive-through. The subject property is located at 4301 Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue NE (Square 5094, Lot 104) and bounded by Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue to the northeast, private property to the southeast and south, and a park to the west. The site is currently a McDonald's with a drive-through.

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 Applicant participated in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with DDOT on January 16, 2025 to review proposed site plans to rebuild and expand the existing McDonald's with a drive-through, which is a by-right use for MU-7B. The Applicant also has a public space permit application (TOPS #464369) for the proposed project currently under review;
- DDOT does not support drive-throughs because they further perpetuate auto-dependency and create more opportunities for safety conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles including buses, which is particularly important since Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue is in the [DDOT Bus Priority Network](#);

- Redevelopment of the site with a mixed-use program in the MU-7B (Mixed-Use Moderate Density) zone would allow for approximately 87 more residential units on the property than allowed in the existing MU-3A zone (102 units versus 15 units);
- From a vehicle trip generation standpoint, maximum build-out of a mixed-use project in the proposed MU-7B zone could generate an additional 14 vehicle trips in the weekday morning peak hour, 17 vehicle trips in the weekday evening peak hour, and 19 vehicle trips in the Saturday peak hour, as compared to maximum build-out of a matter-of-right mixed-use development on the site under the MU-3A zone;
- The Applicant's proposal to rebuild and expand the existing McDonald's would **increase** site-generated vehicular traffic by more than 50% across weekday and Saturday peak hours compared to existing conditions, while maximum build-out of a mixed-use project in the proposed MU-7B zone would **decrease** site-generated vehicular traffic by approximately 50% to 80% across weekday and Saturday peak hours;
- 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 Title 11 of the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)* Subtitle C, § 801 and Title 18 of the *DCMR* § 1214;
- The site does not have access to a public alley. When the site develops, it is expected that all loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking will take place on private property. Any existing curb cut proposed for reuse must be applied for as a new curb cut and driveway during the public space permitting process and meet modern standards as detailed in the most recent version of DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* § 31.5, including a maximum width of 12 feet for one-way curb cuts; and
- During public space permitting, DDOT will require the Applicant to scope a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR), likely with a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), to determine impacts to the transportation network and to optimize site circulation for the specific development proposed. If a fast-food with drive-through is proposed to remain or expand, a post-occupancy study will be required to ensure drive-through queues do not impact adjacent streets.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, the Applicant intends to rebuild and expand an existing fast-food restaurant with a drive-through, which will be a by-right use if the rezoning is granted. Therefore, DDOT objects to this Map Amendment application. DDOT discourages construction of drive-through lanes since they perpetuate auto-dependency, negatively impact pedestrian safety, and present more conflicts for buses, which is particularly important since Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue is in the [DDOT Bus Priority Network](#).

Instead, DDOT recommends the Applicant consider a different zone, with similar densities to the MU-7B but which does not include a drive-through by-right. DDOT supports higher densities and mixed uses for the long-term redevelopment potential of the site that align with the vision of the Council-approved [Nannie Helen Burroughs Corridor Small Area Plan](#) for a vibrant corridor with retail, housing, parks, green spaces, and improved pedestrian and multimodal connections while preserving the area's unique qualities and celebrating its history.

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:

- Depending on the ultimately proposed development program and 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 CTR, likely with a TIA;
- Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures commensurate with the land use and scale of future development, as appropriate;
- When the property ultimately develops, the site should be designed so that all vehicle and loading occur on private property without trucks performing backing maneuvers through sidewalk space. Also, coordinate with DDOT on an appropriate Loading Management Plan (LMP), if 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 7 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 section of this report.

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-3A and proposed MU-7B 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-3A zone allows for the site to be developed with low density mixed-use development and provide convenient retail and personal service establishments for the day-to-day needs of a local neighborhood, as well as residential and limited community facilities with a minimum impact upon surrounding residential development. If rezoned to MU-7B, the site could potentially achieve a 4.8 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for a mixed-use development assuming an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bonus. It is estimated that a maximum of approximately 102 residential units and 18,400 square feet of retail could be constructed on-site if the rezoning to MU-7B is granted, as compared to approximately 15 dwellings with 13,800 square feet of first-floor retail under MU-3A.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the rates published in the ITE *Trip Generation Manual*, 11th Edition webtool. For mixed-use redevelopment, a 60% non-auto mode share was assumed for residential, and a 75% non-auto mode share was assumed for retail, based on the site's proximity to Priority Transit¹ service on Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue. DDOT also estimated

¹ Based on DDOT's January 2022 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, Priority Transit includes the DC Streetcar and its future Benning Road extension as well as WMATA Priority Corridor Network Metrobus Routes defined in Title 11 of the DCMR, Subtitle C, § 702.1(c), including the X9 on Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue.

trips generated by the existing 2,617-square-foot fast food restaurant with a drive-through window and the proposed 4,093-square-foot fast food restaurant with a drive-through window based on designs that the Applicant presented to DDOT during the January 16, 2025 PDRM and submitted for its public space permit application (TOPS #464369). Due to the auto-centric uses, the non-auto mode share is 15% for both the existing and proposed restaurants with drive-throughs. Tables 1 through 3 below summarize DDOT's estimate of vehicle trips generated for each development scenario.

Since the MU-7B allows for more density than MU-3A (4.8 FAR versus 1.20 FAR), maximizing residential and retail mixed-use development under the proposed zoning would generate an additional 45 person trips in the weekday morning peak hour, 66 person trips in the weekday evening peak hour, and 77 person trips in the Saturday peak hour, mostly by non-auto modes, to help support nearby transit and businesses. As a subset of these person trips, the development would approximately generate an additional 14 vehicle trips in the morning, 17 vehicle trips in the evening, and 19 vehicle trips on a Saturday compared to existing zoning.

Table 1 | Trip Generation Comparison (Mixed-Use Redevelopment)

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	SAT Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips	SAT Peak Vehicle Trips
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-3A Zone	15 Multi-Family Dwellings 13,832 SF Retail	28	95	118	5	15	18
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-7B Zone	102 Multi-Family Dwellings 18,443 SF Retail	73	161	195	19	32	36
Net Change Max MU-3A to Max MU-7B	+87 Multi-Family Dwellings +4,611 SF Retail	+45	+66	+77	+14	+17	+19

In comparison, the Applicant's proposal to rebuild and expand the existing McDonald's would generate moderately more traffic than existing conditions. Table 2 shows the Applicant's proposal would approximately generate an additional 56 vehicle trips in the morning, 42 vehicle trips in the evening, and 69 vehicle trips on a Saturday compared to the existing McDonald's. This equals a more-than 50% increase in site-generated vehicle trips across all weekday and Saturday peak hours compared to existing conditions.

Table 2 | Trip Generation Comparison (Fast Food Restaurant)

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	SAT Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips	SAT Peak Vehicle Trips
Existing Conditions	2,617 SF Fast Food with Drive-Through	212	157	263	99	73	123
Applicant Proposal	4,093 SF Fast Food with Drive-Through	332	246	412	155	115	192
Net Change	+693 SF Fast Food with Drive-Through	+120	+89	+149	+56	+42	+69

In contrast, the maximum build-out of a mixed-use project in the proposed MU-7B zone would significantly decrease traffic compared to existing conditions. Table 3 shows a mixed-use project in the proposed zone would decrease traffic by approximately 80 vehicle trips in the morning, 41 vehicle trips

in the evening, and 87 vehicle trips on a Saturday compared to the existing McDonald's. This approximately equals a reduction of between 50% and 80% of site-generated vehicle trips across all weekday and Saturday peak hours compared to existing conditions.

Table 3 | Trip Generation Comparison (Max Build-Out versus Fast Food Restaurant)

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	SAT Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips	SAT Peak Vehicle Trips
Existing Conditions	2,617 SF Fast Food with Drive-Through	212	157	263	99	73	123
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-7B Zone	102 Multi-Family Dwellings 18,443 SF Retail	73	161	195	19	32	36
Net Change		-139	+4	-68	-80	-41	-87

Vehicle Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading Requirements

Since the site is located directly adjacent to the future high frequency Metrobus route C31 (existing X9 Metrobus Priority Corridor Network route on Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue) and within ½ mile of the Minnesota Avenue Metrorail station, DDOT encourages the Applicant to take advantage of the allowable 50% reduction in the parking minimum, per Title 11 of *DCMR*, Subtitle C, § 702.1(a), when the site redevelops.

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). The presence of surplus parking has the potential to induce demand for additional driving on the roadway network. During public space permitting, a project with 20 or more residential units and a curb cut would be required to commit to a TDM plan, the contents of which would be determined at that time and would be influenced by the amount of off-street parking provided. During public space permitting, DDOT will require the Applicant to scope a CTR, likely with a TIA, to determine impacts to the transportation network and to optimize site circulation for the specific development proposed. Assuming the Applicant moves forward with its proposal to rebuild and expand the existing fast-food restaurant with a drive-through, a post-occupancy study will be required alongside the CTR with a TIA to ensure drive-through queues do not impact adjacent streets. The Applicant will need to meet the requirements for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in accordance with the Comprehensive Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Access, Readiness, and Sustainability Amendment Act of 2024, which goes into effect in 2027.

The project must meet all bicycle parking requirements. DDOT encourages the Applicant to meet or exceed the bicycle parking, showers, and lockers requirements of Title 11 of the *DCMR* Subtitle C § 800 and Title 18 of *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 cargo and larger 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.

If the redevelopment proposal triggers loading requirements, the Applicant must ensure that there is no backing of trucks across the sidewalk and that all movements through sidewalk space are head-in/head-out with turns occurring on private property. If the project has more than three (3) residential units, the Applicant must contract a private trash collection service. Trash must be stored on private property out of the view of the sidewalk and collected from an alley or parking lot. Move-ins and move-outs should occur from a loading berth, off-street parking space, or parking lot, if provided. Though future residents may typically obtain “emergency no parking” signs through DDOT’s Transportation Online Permitting System (TOPS) to reserve an on-street parking space for move-ins and move-outs, Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue adjacent to the site does not have on-street parking.

Note that the exact zoning requirements for vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and loading will be determined by the Department of Buildings (DOB) and will be based on the specific development ultimately proposed.

HERITAGE AND SPECIAL TREES

According to the District’s [Tree Size Estimator map](#), the property has one (1) Special Tree at the southwest corner of the site. The Applicant should work with the Ward 7 Arborist to determine whether this Special Tree has reached Heritage Tree size and whether other Special Trees exist. DDOT additionally expects the Applicant to coordinate with the Ward 7 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of any potential existing Heritage, Special, and small street trees, as well as the planting of new street trees, in bioretention facilities or a typical expanded tree planting space, if proposed.

Heritage Trees have a circumference of 100 inches or more and are protected by the Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016. With approval by the Mayor and DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD), Heritage Trees might be permitted to be relocated. As such, the Applicant may be required to redesign the site plan to preserve the Non-Hazardous Heritage Trees. 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

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.

As previously noted, the Applicant participated in a PDRM on January 16, 2025, at which DDOT identified the following concerns that will need to be addressed through continued coordination:

- DDOT will require the Applicant to scope a CTR, likely with a TIA, to determine impacts to the transportation network and to optimize site circulation for the specific development proposed. If a fast-food with drive-through is proposed to remain or expand, a post-occupancy study will be required alongside the CTR with a TIA to ensure drive-through queues do not impact adjacent streets;
- All loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking must take place on private property. Any existing curb cut proposed for reuse must be applied for as a new curb cut and driveway during the public space permitting process and meet modern standards as detailed in the most recent

version of DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* § 31.5, including a maximum width of 12 feet for one-way curb cuts;

- DDOT encourages the Applicant to orient the future building, whether a fast-food restaurant or mixed-use project, up against the public sidewalks to better interact with the public realm. The building should not be set back with surface parking between building and street;
- The Applicant should evaluate other restaurant design options that do not include a drive-through lane;
- Provide a minimum sidewalk clear width of 6 feet along the site's frontage;
- Ensure any pedestrian entrances to a future building are at-grade with the public sidewalk so that no stairs or ramps are required in public space;
- In accordance with the District's policy prohibiting right-turn on red movements at signalized intersections, install any missing No Right Turn on Red signage at the signalized intersections of Nannie Helen Burroughs with Minnesota Avenue NE and 44th Street/Hunt Place NE;
- All overhead power lines should be moved to underground at the time of redevelopment so that poles and wires do not clutter DDOT public space; and
- Any existing Cobra Head-style streetlights along the site perimeter should be replaced with either Washington Globe or Decorative Tear Drop-style streetlights. Exact style to be installed will be determined at the time of permitting.

In conjunction with the *DCMR*, DDOT's *Design and Engineering Manual* 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.

MS:pj