

# 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:** May 9, 2025

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 24-16 – (MR 1401 15th Street Retail LLC)

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

MR 1401 15th Street Retail LLC (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone a 7,200-square-foot property from RA-5 to ARTS-3. The subject property is located at 1401 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW (Square 210, Lot 827) on the east side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street between Rhode Island Avenue and P Street NW. The site currently is improved with a church and parish house building, which collectively are designated as an historic landmark in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.

#### 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 Map Amendment process to evaluate the requested zoning change and inform the Zoning Commission on the order of magnitude impacts on the transportation network. After an extensive review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

- The site is within ½ mile from both the Farragut North Metrorail Station and the Dupont Circle Metrorail Station, and within ¼ mile of Metrobus Priority Corridor Network routes on 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW;
- The proposed ARTS-3 (Commercial - Moderate Density) zone would allow for approximately 40 fewer residential units while 18,000 square feet more retail on the property than the maximum allowed in the existing RA-5 zoning;
- The decreased potential density with change in use is expected to generate a moderate increase the amount of transit, biking, and walking trips and a minor increase in the amount of generated vehicle trips;

- The additional vehicle trips generated by the additional density are expected to have a minimal impact on the roadway network;
- The site is near multiple priority transit options and fronts the 15<sup>th</sup> Street bikeway, and DDOT encourages the Applicant to minimize the amount of off-street parking provided with any future redevelopment proposals. Per DDOT’s January 2022 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, ideally the development would provide no more than 0.25 vehicle spaces per unit (1 per 4 units);
- 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 currently has access to existing 30-foot and 10-foot rear public alleys. When the site redevelops, it is expected that all loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking will take place from the rear alleys;
- DDOT will not support any new curb cuts to the property from 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW; and
- The proposed rezoning would support nearby transit and generate additional foot traffic to support nearby businesses, while providing an existing historic building with an adaptive reuse. This is consistent with DDOT’s approach to infill sites which should be dense, compact, transit-oriented, and improve the public realm.

## 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 if the rezoning is granted, 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 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;
- When the property ultimately redevelops, the site should be designed so that loading occurs 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 4 Arborist regarding the preservation of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property. According to the District’s [Tree Size Estimator map](#), there is one Special Tree in the 15<sup>th</sup> Street public right-of-way fronting 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 development scenarios under the existing RA-5 with the proposed ARTS-3 zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on current and proposed zoning.

The existing RA-5 zone allows for the site to be developed with high-density development and does not permit retail or eating and drinking establishment uses as a matter-of-right or as a special exception. If rezoned to ARTS-3, the site could potentially achieve a 4.8 FAR for a mixed-use development assuming an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bonus. It is estimated that a maximum of 18 residential units and 18,000 square feet of retail could be constructed on-site if the rezoning to ARTS-3 is granted, as compared to approximately 58 dwellings with no retail under RA-5. Despite the higher number of units permissible under the existing RA-5 zone, it is noted in the Applicant's Revised Statement of Support ([Exhibit 5](#)) that the property's landmark designation and unique architectural configuration make full residential conversion and maximizing development potential infeasible.

While a specific development has not been proposed for the site, the Applicant has stated that they propose to renovate the church for commercial uses with the parish house for residential uses. Therefore these are just estimates of a potential development that maximizes the commercial (retail) uses of the ARTS-3 zone based on lot size, lot coverage, FAR, by-right uses, and building heights allowed by zoning, which DDOT obtained from the OP Setdown Report ([Exhibit 13](#)). Granting the rezoning would not lock in the development program estimated in this report since the ARTS-3 allows for a wider range of uses and the site may include additional constraints that will affect the amount of developable space.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the rates published in the *ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition*, webtool. A 75% non-auto mode share was assumed based on the site's proximity to Metrorail and Metrobus. Table 1 below presents a summary of DDOT's estimate of vehicle and person trips for each development scenario.

As shown below, development of the site with the maximum number of allowable units (estimated 18 units) and 18,000 square feet of additional retail will generate approximately four (4) vehicle trips in the weekday morning and approximately 11 vehicle trips during the weekday evening, as compared to the approximately five (5) trips in the weekday morning and approximately six (6) vehicle trips during the weekday evening that could be generated under maximum build-out under existing zoning. This represents a minor decrease in the morning vehicle trips and minor increase in evening vehicle trips on the transportation network.

**Table 1 | Trip Generation Comparison**

Development Scenario	Estimated Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
Existing Conditions	Former Church and Parish (vacant)	0	0	0	0
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in RA-5 Zone	58 Residential Units	25	27	5	6
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in ARTS-3 Zone	18 Residential Units 18,000 SF Retail	36	120	4	11
<b>Net Change RA-5 to ARTS-3 +75,600 SF</b>	- 40 Residential Units + 18,000 SF Retail	10	93	-1	5

Vehicle Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading Requirements

Since the site is located within ½ mile of the Dupont Circle and Farragut North Metrorail Stations and ¼ mile of the Metrobus Priority Corridor Network routes on 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, 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) and 1.25 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail. The presence of surplus parking has the potential to induce demand for additional driving on the roadway network. During public space permitting, the Applicant will be required to commit to a TDM plan if the project has 20 or more residential units and a curb cut, the contents of which will be determined at that time and will be influenced by the amount of off-street parking provided. 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 and head-out with turns occurring on private property or the alley. All access must be provided via the alley. 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 the alley. Move-ins and move-outs should occur from a loading berth or off-street

parking space or alley. Future residents may also 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.

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](#), there is one Special Trees in the public right-of-way fronting the property. DDOT expects that the Applicant coordinate with the Ward 2 Arborist regarding the preservation and protection of existing Special or small street trees, as well as 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 DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division, a Tree Protection Plan will be required.

### **STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM**

If the site develops 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.

Specifically, there are potential access and public space issues that the Applicant should be aware of and continue to coordinate with DDOT on, when the site develops:

- All vehicular site access to the site, as well as loading facilities and trash pick-up, must be via the existing rear public alley network;
- No new curb cuts to the property from 15<sup>th</sup> Street should be proposed;
- If the redevelopment proposal triggers loading requirements, ensure there is no backing of trucks across the sidewalk and all movements through sidewalk space are head-in and head-out;
- Ensure any pedestrian entrances to a future multi-family building are at-grade with the public sidewalk so that no stairs or ramps are required in public space;
- Provide a plan showing the detailed design of the long-term bike storage room so DDOT can confirm it meets the requirements of Title 11 of *DCMR* Subtitle C, § 800, Title 18 of *DCMR* § 1214, and DDOT *Bike Parking Guide* best practices;
- During permitting, submit a Curbside Management Plan for all public streets surrounding the site showing existing and proposed signage and curbside designations; and
- Any existing 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.

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.

MS:eo