

Government of the District of Columbia

Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: *KB for* Meredith Soniat
Associate Director

DATE: January 23, 2026

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 24-23A – 701 Howard Road SE (Cedar Tree Academy)

PROJECT SUMMARY

Cedar Tree Academy Public Charter School, (the “Applicant”) seeks approval for a Modification with Hearing to an approved Design Review application. The subject property is located at 701 Howard Road SE (Square 5861, Lot 89) in the NHR Zone. Zoning Case 24-23 was approved in 2025 for a new four-story school building with 77,329 square feet of gross floor area. The Applicant is seeking to modify the approval to instead construct a 27,347-square-foot addition to the existing school building for a gross floor area of 62,541 square feet.

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:

- The previous zoning approval (ZC 24-23) was for a new school building with 77,329 square feet of gross floor area, 33 vehicle parking spaces, 11 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and 39 short-term bicycle parking spaces;
- The Applicant proposes to instead construct an addition to the existing school building that brings the gross floor area of the new school to 62,541 square feet, as well as 34 vehicle spaces, four (4) long-term bicycle spaces, and 14 short-term bicycle spaces;
- No changes to the student enrollment cap are proposed;
- The parking lot will remain in its existing location, and no changes to the site’s two (2) curb cuts are proposed;

- A Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study was not required since the Applicant is only minimally increasing the parking supply from the prior approval and has committed to implementing a revised Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan in the January 5, 2026, Transportation Statement ([Exhibit 7B](#)); and
- The revised TDM Plan carries forward the prior TDM commitments from the original Design Review application and makes modifications due to the reduced size of the addition.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application with the following condition:

- The Applicant will implement the revised Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, as proposed by the Applicant in the January 5, 2026, Transportation Statement (Exhibit 7B), for the life of the project, unless otherwise noted. This TDM Plan shall supersede the prior TDM commitments from the original Design Review approval ZC 24-23.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Site Access

Pedestrian access to the school is proposed from Howard Road SE. Vehicular access to the parking lot and pick-up/drop-off area is proposed via two existing one-way driveways connecting to Howard Road. Existing driveways, while wider than DDOT standard, will remain in place to reduce disturbance within the critical root zones of Special trees in the right-of-way. Figure 1 below shows the site layout of the proposed project.

Figure 1 | Site Plan



Source: Symmetra Design 1/5/26 CTR, Figure 1

Vehicle Parking and Pick-Up/Drop-off

Since the existing building was constructed under the 1958 Zoning Regulations, parking requirements for the existing building are based on these regulations, while requirements for the addition are based on 2016 Zoning requirements for additions to an existing structure. As such, 37 vehicle parking spaces are required. The project proposes a total of 34 vehicle parking spaces on site and requests relief from three (3) spaces.

Based on DDOT's preferred maximum parking rates in the 2024 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review* for a new school of this size, a total number of spaces between eight (8) and 12 would be more appropriate. However, since the existing portion of the building must conform to the 1958 requirements, DDOT finds acceptable the Applicant's proposed 34 spaces and request for relief from three (3) spaces.

The Applicant proposes to conduct pick-up and drop-off operations primarily from the driveway loop that passes through the parking lot. The pick-up/drop-off illustration in the report assumed that 14 vehicles can be accommodated along the south side of Howard Road in the event of a backup. DDOT finds that the estimate of 14 vehicles may be higher than reality, and the Applicant should provide an updated version of this figure showing the linear curbside for vehicles queuing along the site's Howard Road frontage, accounting for Howard Road's current and future built condition, with appropriate driveway offsets, prior to entering (west of) the school's proposed pick-up/drop-off loop.

Bicycle Parking

The project is required by Zoning to provide four (4) long-term and 14 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The Applicant proposes this exact number of spaces. While not required by Zoning, DDOT strongly encourages the Applicant to provide additional bicycle parking spaces to offset the excess demand for driving created by providing greater than the preferred number of vehicle spaces. The Applicant should also provide all short-term bicycle parking as U-racks and cover these racks where appropriate.

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm design. All elements of the project proposed within District-owned right-of-way require the Applicant to pursue a public space construction permit.

The following items proposed in public space will need to be resolved by the Applicant during permitting:

- Continue to work with DDOT on the site's pick-up and drop-off plan to ensure that vehicle queueing does not extend into public space, including documenting how pick-up and drop-off operations will be enforced along the Howard Road curb frontage and revising the Applicant's graphic to show 14 vehicles queueing in this area;
- Install "No Standing or Parking" signage 5 feet from either side of both curbs. District regulations prohibit parking within 5 feet of curb cuts; and
- Add striping and flex posts in the parking lane of Howard Road between the curb cuts to prevent illegal standing/parking in this area.

DDOT expects the adjacent public realm to meet all District standards. The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the [DCMR](#), the most recent version of DDOT's [Design and Engineering Manual](#), and the [Public Realm Design Manual](#) for public space regulations and design guidance. A permit application can be filed through the DDOT [Transportation Online Permitting System](#) (TOPS) website.

The Applicant is encouraged to participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with DDOT and the Office of Planning (OP) to discuss the public space comments in this report.

MS:nh