

Government of the District of Columbia


Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Anna Chamberlin, AICP
Associate Director 

DATE: April 30, 2021

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 18830B – 3418 4th Street SE (Bright Beginnings)

APPLICATION

Bright Beginnings, Inc. (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests a modification of consequence to the conditions of BZA Order No. 18830, to permit an increase in the number of children to 150 and the number of staff to 60 at an existing child development center. The site is located in the RF-1 Zone at 3418 4th Street SE (Square 5969, Lot 249).

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. As a 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 multi-modal transportation network.

The purpose of DDOT’s review is to assess the potential safety and capacity impacts of the proposed action on the District’s 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 Applicant has been operating the child development center pursuant to the Order since construction was completed in 2018;
- In 2020, pursuant to Order No. 18830A, the Board granted a modification of consequence to permit an increase in the number of children to 115 and the number of staff to 43;

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- With this application, the Applicant is proposing to further increase these caps to 150 children and 60 staff;
- Given the low rate of automobile ownership among the population that the child development center serves, impacts to the transportation network are expected to be minor, as most teachers, staff members, and students arrive by walking or via public transit;
- The school is currently served by an on-site parking lot accessed via 4th Street SE with 13 vehicle parking spaces. This Application does not increase the amount of parking;
- The site is served by the WMATA Metrobus Priority Route A2 with two (2) bus stops located less than 0.3 miles from the site. The site is also located approximately 1 mile from the Congress Heights Metrorail Station;
- DDOT reviewed and concurred with the Applicant's pick-up and drop-off plan currently being implemented in BZA 18830A. The Applicant is proposing to continue these operations;
- Parking along the northern half of 4th Street SE is currently restricted during school days from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and the curbside is designated as a school pick-up and drop-off zone from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The remainder of the curbside along 4th Street SE is unrestricted parking; and
- The Applicant has added six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces as a condition of the previous BZA 18830A Order.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and has determined that the proposed action may lead to a minor increase in vehicle, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle trips on the localized transportation network. In addition, the project may result in increased pick-up and drop-off activity and slightly reduced availability of on-street parking within the immediate area. Despite these minor impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application.

DDOT notes that if this application is approved, it will have been two (2) consecutive cap increases in which the incremental increases were small enough to not warrant conducting a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study. Cumulatively, these increases would have been large enough to necessitate further transportation analysis. Per DDOT's 2019 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review* (Thresholds for Analyses section on page 12), in situations where two (2) individual cap increases did not meet the trip threshold for a CTR, a study will be required for the third cap increase and will evaluate the total impacts of all previous cap increases combined. Therefore, the Applicant should be aware that DDOT will require a study with the next BZA application to increase the children and staff caps.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

The site currently provides 13 vehicle parking spaces. The Applicant proposes to maintain the existing number of parking spaces and is not increasing the parking.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off

Dedicated 15-minute curbside pick-up and drop-off is designated along the northern half of 4th Street SE from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The Applicant reports the small number of children

being driven to the center are currently dropped off at this designated curbside location. This section of 4th Street SE is currently restricted parking during school days from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The remainder of the curbside along 4th Street SE is unrestricted parking. DDOT reviewed these operations in the 18830A application and found it to be acceptable. DDOT and the Applicant will re-evaluate these operations with the next cap increase application to ensure they are still meeting the needs of the site.

Bicycle Parking

DDOT understands that the site is not required to provide additional bicycle parking. Per DDOT's request at the previous Order for 18830A, the site has added six (6) short-term bicycle parking spaces in the form of three (3) inverted U-racks.

STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

This review only pertains to zoning issues and does not consider impacts to District owned public space. DDOT's lack of objection to this application should not be viewed as an approval of the public realm design. If any portion of this or future projects at the property propose elements within District owned public space the Applicant is required to obtain a public space permit through DDOT's permitting process.

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 \(DEM\)](#), 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.

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