


**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
Development Review Manager 

DATE: March 9, 2018

SUBJECT: **BZA Case No. 19377** – 3015 4th Street NE (St. Paul the Apostle Townhomes)

APPLICATION

The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle (together the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9 and 10, requests special exceptions under the theoretical lot subdivision requirements of Subtitle C § 305.1 and the new residential use requirements of Subtitle U § 421 as well as a variance from the vehicular access requirements of Subtitle C § 305.3. The Applicant proposes to construct 60 one-family dwelling units in the RA-1 zone with 95 vehicle parking spaces. The site is located at 3015 4th Street NE (Square 3648, Lot 915). DDOT understands that an additional 26,000 SF of religious use space is proposed on-site with an unspecified number of vehicle and bicycle parking spaces, but is not associated with this specific BZA request.

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 transportation 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:

Site Design

- The Applicant proposes two access points on 4th Street NE;

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- While the proposed northern curb cut will function more like a street than a driveway, it should be narrowed in width from 26-feet to 24-feet to meet DDOT standards (DEM 31.5.2);
- The access points open into a series of private streets offering limited vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity;
- The community directly east of the site contains a private street network, which will be gated and will prevent east-west access between 4th and 7th Street NE;
- The proposal is missing a logical connection linking the existing and proposed private street networks (see Figure 1 below); and
- Together, the existing private street network in the adjacent community to the east and the private street network proposed through this application significantly limit connectivity and reduce potential options for traffic dispersion for all modes.

Transportation Analysis

- The Applicant submitted a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study to assess the transportation impacts associated with its proposal as well as future conditions;
- DDOT anticipates the implementation of a future road diet and cycle track project on 4th Street NE adjacent to the site, which was accounted for in the CTR analysis;
- The Applicant anticipates that 70% of the trips generated by the site will be vehicle trips, 25% will be transit trips, 2% will be bicycle trips, and 3% will be walking trips;
- The Applicant anticipates the site will generate 31 morning and 35 evening peak hour vehicle trips;
- DDOT notes that at this location transit users will likely access transit by walking or bicycling, which increases the need for a connected, safe pedestrian network;
- Although the proposed streets are private, the Applicant has the opportunity to enhance the site's pedestrian realm by widening the sidewalks to meet DDOT's minimum standards;
- The "furniture zone" of public space along 4th Street NE has gaps where additional street trees may be added to enhance the pedestrian realm;
- The Applicant is not required by zoning to provide bicycle parking for the proposed townhouses;
- DDOT finds the 95 proposed vehicle parking spaces to be high given the proximity to the Brookland-CUA Metrorail Station; and
- DDOT finds the proposed TDM plan acceptable based on the use and number of vehicle trips generated by the development.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, this proposed action will have minimal adverse impacts on the travel conditions of the District's existing transportation network. However, the subject site and the adjacent townhouse community to the east are positioned in a location that currently lacks east-west connectivity for the general public. DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested special exceptions with the following conditions:

- Design all private streets to DDOT's 2017 DEM standards where they connect with the public street network;
- Provide 6-foot wide sidewalks adjacent to all private streets, including the driveway extending from 4th Street NE to Regent Place NE; with adequate landscape strips and/or pedestrian buffers, subject to DDOT's approval;
- Provide public access easements spanning the extent of all private streets and associated sidewalks;

- Provide a 6-foot pedestrian connection and associated public access easement no less than 42 feet wide extending north from the intersection of the northern driveway and private road to the property line at the eastern curve of Regent Place, as approximated in the red box in Figure 1;
- Improve pedestrian porosity between the site’s access points by implementing a sidewalk connection from the 4th Street NE sidewalk to the pedestrian switchback ramp within the “Sylvan Grove” concept, as shown on the Applicant’s landscape plan associated with the prehearing submission (sheet B-3), titled “Proposed Site Plan, February 9, 2018.” Should the Applicant not pursue the “Slyvan Grove,” an alternative pedestrian connection between the two (2) proposed site access points may be acceptable, subject to DDOT’s review and approval.
- Provide a pedestrian connection along the western side of townhome units 50 and 60 (per the numbering shown on the site plan of the Applicant’s pre-hearing submission) that also ties into the switchback connection to 4th Street NE;
- Provide and furnish additional street trees on 4th Street NE adjacent to the site to fill all existing gaps in the “furniture zone”; and
- Implement the following Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan as proposed in the Gorove/Slade and Associate’s February 2, 2018 CTR:
 - The Applicant will identify a TDM Leader (for planning, construction, and operations). The TDM Leader will work with residents to distribute and market various transportation alternatives and options;
 - The Applicant will provide updated contact information for the TDM Leader and will report TDM efforts and amenities to goDCgo staff once per year; and
 - The Applicant will establish a TDM marketing program that provides detailed transportation information and promotes walking, cycling, and transit. This information will be compiled in a brochure for distribution to residents. The marketing program will also use and provide website links to CommuteConnections.com and goDCgo.com, which provides transportation information and options for getting around the District.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Trip Generation

The Applicant completed a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study, dated February 2, 2018, to assess the traffic impacts associated with its project. Per the CTR, the subject property is anticipated to generate 31 vehicle trips during the AM peak hour and 35 vehicle trips during the PM peak hour. Table 1 depicts the trips generated by the site for each mode of travel. DDOT notes that transit users will need to walk to transit stations and stops as they will not be located within the site.

| Mode ¹ | AM Peak Hour | | | PM Peak Hour | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-----|-------|--------------|-----|-------|
| | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| Vehicle ² | 9 | 22 | 31 | 21 | 14 | 35 |
| Transit | 2 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 11 |
| Bicycle | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Pedestrian | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

¹ measured in people per hour, except for vehicle trips, which are measured in vehicles per hour
² includes anticipated 26,000 SF religious use, measured in vehicles per hour

Table 1 – Trip Generation Summary (Source: CTR, Gorove/Slade Associates, February 2, 2018)

Site Design

The project proposes a network of new private roads accessible by two (2) driveways on 4th Street NE and a private roadway connection at Regent Place NE that will be gated on the Chancellor's Row side of the property line. The southern driveway serving 3025 4th Street NE exists today and will be relocated further north to increase the distance from the intersection of 4th Street NE and Lincoln Road NE. This driveway will also serve the existing public charter school operating at 3025 4th Street NE. Figure 1 below depicts the main access points for the site.

DDOT supports maximizing site porosity to improve the dispersion of traffic and enhance the connectivity of all modes on both public and private streets. The subject property is located in an area with limited east-west connectivity between 4th Street NE and 7th Street NE. As shown in Figure 1, the Applicant has not proposed to connect the northern driveway through to Regent Place but has left the area clear for a future connection. DDOT considers this missing connection to be a missed opportunity, particularly as the connecting driveway is designed to function like a street. To improve connectivity and maintain the space in perpetuity, DDOT recommends that the Applicant provide a pedestrian connection no less than 6-feet wide at this location with an associated public access easement no less than 42 feet in width. DDOT also recommends that the Applicant should provide public access easements for each of the proposed private streets and their associated sidewalks. The requested easements increase the future potential to improve access between 4th Street NE and 7th Street NE for the general public.

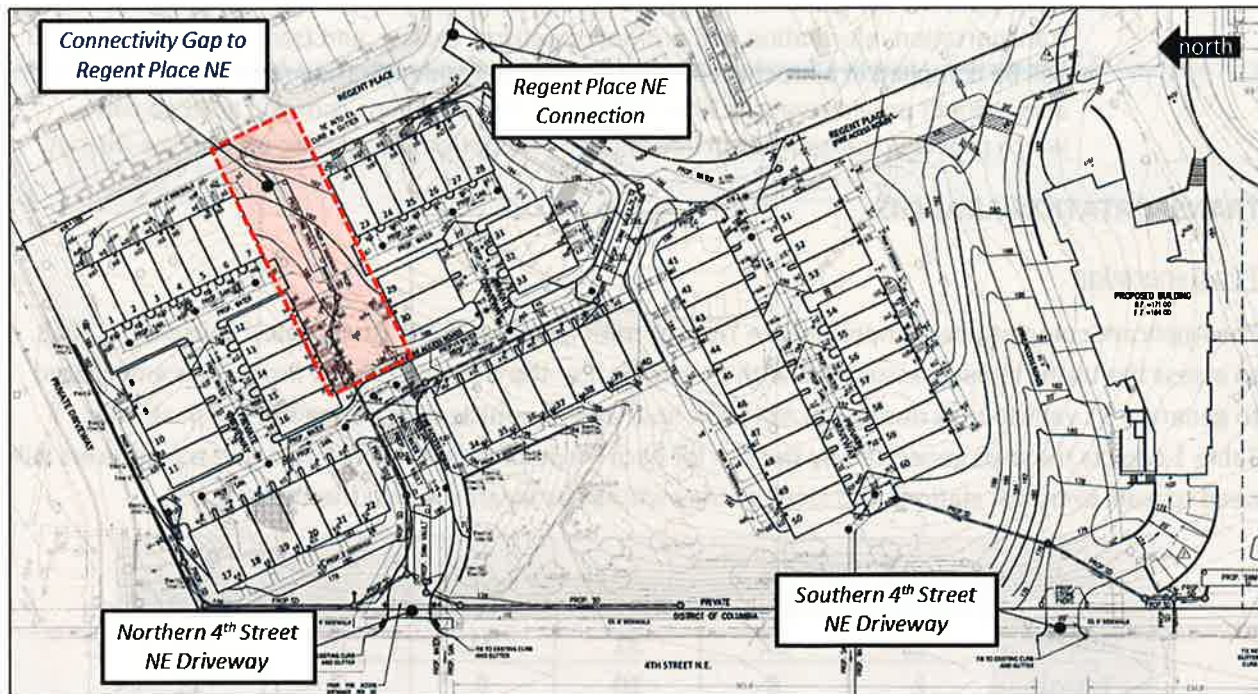


Figure 1 - Site Plan (Source: Vika, Applicant's Prehearing Submission, dated February 28, 2018)

DDOT notes that all of the sidewalks shown on the plan adjacent to private streets are five (5) feet wide. DDOT requires a minimum unobstructed width of six (6) feet for all public streets. While the streets are private, DDOT recommends expanding the five (5) foot sidewalks by a foot to meet the minimum standards of a public street.

To improve site porosity and encourage pedestrian travel, DDOT recommends the Applicant provide a sidewalk connection between the site's two access points on 4th Street NE that feeds into the private street network. The Applicant's prehearing submission proposes a landscape concept, shown in Figure 2, which could potentially facilitate this connection. DDOT recommends linking the proposed switchback sidewalk in the conceptually proposed preserve to the sidewalk adjacent to the proximate units. If the connection is not feasible due to the constraints related to existing trees, DDOT may accept an alternative pedestrian connection between the two (2) proposed driveway entrances.

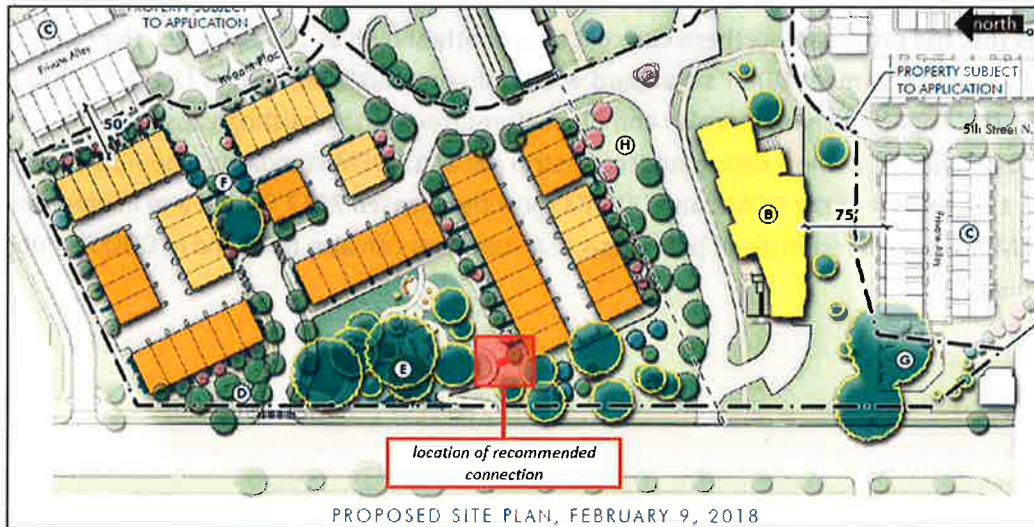


Figure 2 – Landscape Plan (Source: Studio 39, Applicant's Prehearing Submission, dated February 28, 2018)

Vehicle and Bicycle Parking

Per Subtitle C § 701.5, the Applicant is required to provide one (1) vehicle parking space per townhome unit. The Applicant proposes a mix of one (1) and two (2) car garages for a total of 95 vehicle parking spaces. DDOT finds this amount of vehicle parking to be high given the site's proximity to the Brookland-CUA metro station. Additionally, it is unclear how many vehicle and bicycle parking spaces are proposed for the Seminary Building, which is not proposed with this BZA application. Per Subtitle C § 802.1, bicycle parking spaces are not required for the townhome uses; however, the Applicant has indicated that it plans to design the garages to accommodate bicycle storage.

Transportation Demand Management Plan

The Applicant's CTR, dated February 2, 2018, proposes a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan containing the following elements:

- The Applicant will identify a TDM Leader (for planning, construction, and operations). The TDM Leader will work with residents to distribute and market various transportation alternatives and options;
- The Applicant will provide updated contact information for the TDM Leader and will report TDM efforts and amenities to goDCgo staff once per year; and
- The Applicant will establish a TDM marketing program that provides detailed transportation information and promotes walking, cycling, and transit. This information will be compiled in a brochure for distribution to residents. The marketing program will also use and provide website links to CommuteConnections.com and goDCgo.com, which provides transportation information and options for getting around the District.

While limited, DDOT finds the proposed TDM plan sufficient based on the proposed use and number of vehicle trips generated by the development.

Public Space

DDOT's lack of objection to the requested special exception should not be viewed as an approval of public space elements. All elements of the project in public space such as the proposed curb cuts and recommended sidewalk connections require approval through DDOT's public space permitting process. DDOT notes that the proposed northern curb cut is currently shown as 26 feet wide. The curb cut should be reduced to 24 feet to meet DDOT's standard width for commercial driveways (2017 DEM 31.5.2). Additionally, the Applicant should furnish and plant street trees in the existing gaps on 4th Street NE. Trees should be planted in the existing landscape strip per 2017 DEM standards. The Applicant may refer to Titles 11, 12A, and 24 of the DCMR and DDOT's recently released 2017 Design and Engineering Manual (DEM) for specific controls of public space. A summary can also be found in DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual.

AC:pr