


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
Neighborhood Planning Manager 

DATE: October 10, 2018

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 19841 – 900-914 55th Street NE

APPLICATION

Habitat for Humanity of Washington DC (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 (2016 Zoning Regulations) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), Subtitle X, Chapter 9, requests a special exception under Subtitle C § 305.1 from the subdivision regulations of Subtitle C § 302.2, to replace two detached dwelling units with 17 new semi-detached and detached dwelling units on a single record lot. The site is located in the R-2 Zone at 900-914 55th Street NE (Square 5204, Lot 22).

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 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:

- Access to the 17 units is proposed via a single private driveway connection to 55th Street NE. The internal driveway terminates just before connecting to a 60-foot wide stub of unused DDOT right-of-way along the northwestern property line;
- The unused segment of right-of-way is currently vacant and was originally envisioned to be used for Jay Street to extend across the site;

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- As part of this development, the missing segment of Jay Street should be constructed, or at a minimum, a roadway and pedestrian connection made between 55th Street and Hunt Place;
- DDOT's preference is for Jay Street to be constructed as a public roadway in a straight line across the site as shown in Figure 2 below. However, DDOT is amenable to other designs and public/private arrangement so long as the connection across the site is made in the approximately location of the missing segment of Jay Street;
- A continuous and uninterrupted sidewalk should be constructed on each side of the internal roadway, connecting to the sidewalk networks on both Hunt Place and 55th Street;
- It is unlikely DDOT will approve public space permits for the project's curb cut on 55th Street NE if the driveway doesn't also connect through the Jay Street right-of-way stub at Hunt Place;
- The Applicant should continue to work with DDOT on the site access and circulation design; and
- Additional zoning relief may be necessary depending on the ultimate design of the through street connection.

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 slightly reduce the amount of available on-street parking within the immediate area. Despite these minor impacts, DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application with the following conditions:

- Provide a connection, either as a public street or private street with an easement, through the site from 55th Street NE to Hunt Place in the approximate location of the missing segment of Jay Street; and
- Construct a continuous and uninterrupted sidewalk along each side of the internal street connection between 55th Street and Hunt Place.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Site Design and Access

Site access is proposed off of a 20-foot curb cut on 55th Street NE to a private driveway. The proposed private driveway will provide access to all 17 units (Figure 1). DDOT typically prefers to allow only one curb cut per site in order to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts and improve pedestrians' experience within public space. However, this Application is for 17 individual, new units, and two curb cuts would be appropriate to improve site and neighborhood circulation by building a missing connection on Jay Street NE. DDOT requested that the Applicants consider two curb cuts: one on Hunt Place NE and another on 55th Street NE connecting Jay Street NE through the project. Figure 2 shows a proposal with a Jay Street NE connection while maintaining access to 17 units. DDOT and OP have shared this concept with the Applicant and recommend the Applicant provide a connection, either as a public street or private street with an easement, through the site from 55th Street NE to Hunt Place in the approximately location of the missing segment of Jay Street. The Applicant will also need to construct a continuous and uninterrupted sidewalk along each side of the internal street connection between 55th Street and Hunt Place to provide adequate pedestrian infrastructure.

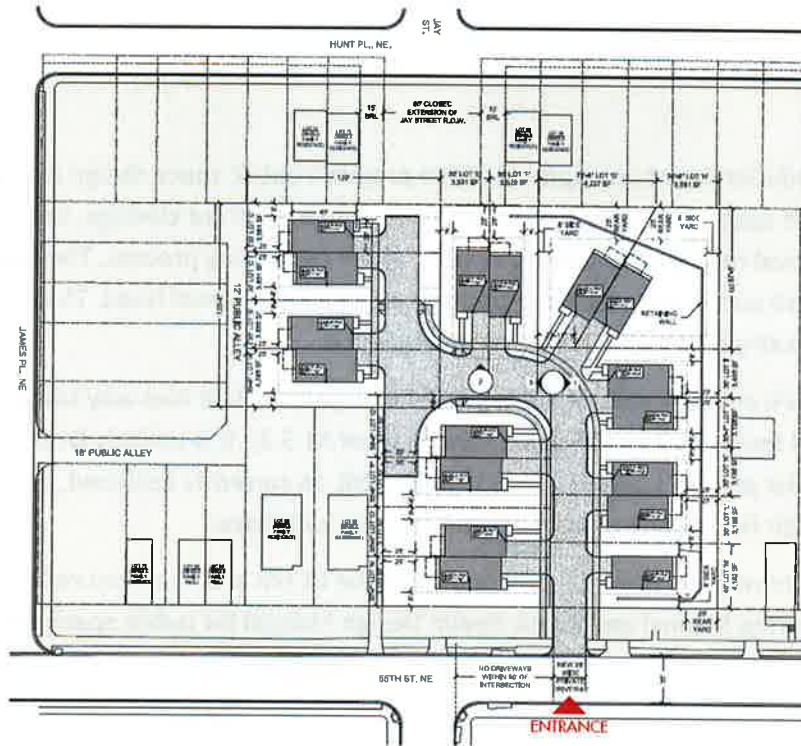


Figure 1 – Proposed Site Plan (Source: Architectural Plans and Elevations, Sheet 6, undated)

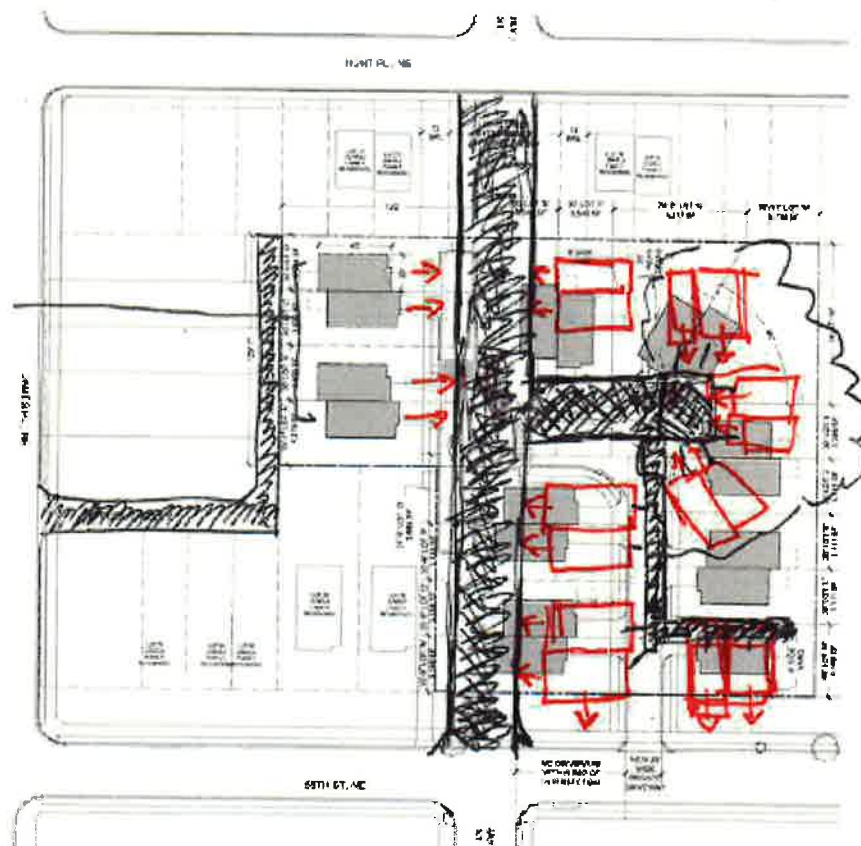


Figure 2 – DDOT Suggested Site Access Option

Public Space

DDOT's recommendation is not an approval of the project's public space design elements. Elements of the project in public space, including the proposed curb cuts, curb cut closings, sidewalks, and street trees require approval through the District's public space permitting process. The Applicant is proposing to close existing curb cuts which will likely create more space for street trees. The Applicant should work with the Urban Forestry Division on tree type and location.

Additionally, the curb cuts will need to be designed to accommodate two-way traffic and should be between 18 and 24 feet (Design and Engineering Manual 31.5.2). It is unlikely DDOT will approve public space permits for the project's curb cut on 55th Street NE, as currently designed, if the driveway doesn't also connect through the Jay Street right-of-way stub at Hunt Place.

The Applicant should refer to Titles 11, 12A and 24 of the DCMR and the most recent versions of DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual and Public Realm Design Manual for public space design guidance.

AC:az