

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
Associate Director 

DATE: November 4, 2022

SUBJECT: BZA Case No. 20806 – 1016 Rhode Island Avenue NE

APPLICATION

GOJO Inc. (the “Applicant”), pursuant to Title 11 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) (Zoning Regulations), requests a special exception from the matter-of-right uses of Subtitle U § 401 to raze an existing single-family home and construct a 7-unit apartment building. The site is in the RA-1 Zone at 1016 Rhode Island Avenue NE (Square 3871, Lot 55) and is not served by a public alley.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Parking

The overall parking demand created by the development is primarily a function of land use, development square footage, price, and supply of parking spaces. However, in urban areas, other factors contribute to the demand for parking, such as the availability of high-quality transit, frequency of transit service, proximity to transit, connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the development, and the demographic composition and other characteristics of the potential residents.

Subtitle C § 701.5 and § 702.1a of the Zoning Regulations requires one (1) vehicle parking space for a residential building with seven (7) dwelling units. The submitted plans show the Applicant is proposing two (2) surface parking spaces in a parking pad at the rear of the building accessed via the existing curb cut to Rhode Island Avenue NE.

Given DDOT’s desire to improve safety and reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts along Rhode Island Avenue and the site’s proximity to both Metrorail and priority bus service, DDOT requests the Applicant close the site’s existing curb cut. DDOT would support relief from the vehicle parking requirement.

Residential Permit Parking (RPP)

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The site is located on the 1000 block of Rhode Island Avenue NE, which is currently in the DDOT Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program database. Current and future residents are eligible to obtain Zone 5 parking permits from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Bicycle Parking

The Applicant is not required to provide any short- or long-term bicycle parking since the building has fewer than eight (8) units.

Loading

DDOT's practice is to accommodate vehicle loading in a safe and efficient manner, while at the same time preserving safety across non-vehicle mode areas and limiting any hindrance to traffic operations. For new developments, DDOT requires that loading take place in private space and that no back-up maneuvers occur in the public realm. Access to this building for loading and unloading, delivery and trash pick-up is an important consideration, and DDOT expects the Applicant to comply with DDOT's standards for loading.

Subtitle C § 901.1 of the Zoning Regulations states that buildings with fewer than 50 units are not required to provide a loading berth. As such, future residents should obtain "emergency no parking" signs from DDOT to reserve an on-street parking space for move ins/move outs. Since the site has more than three (3) units, the Applicant must contract a private trash collection service. The site does not have alley access, so all loading and trash collection would need to occur via Rhode Island Avenue NE.

DDOT is concerned with the current design of the site that does not accommodate trash trucks with a hammerhead turnaround on private property. It is unlikely that a turnaround could fit on the property without major changes to the proposed building, so DDOT recommends curbside loading where trash bins are rolled to the Rhode Island Avenue curb for collection. Since the driveway will not be able to serve the trash needs, this is another reason in support of closing the curb cut.

STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

All elements of the project proposed within District owned right-of-way, such as the proposed stoop, steps, leadwalk, and curb cut, require the Applicant to pursue a public space construction permit.

Since the project is changing the site's land use from a single-family home to multi-family apartment and increasing density from one (1) unit to seven (7) units, resulting in different operational needs, the Applicant would be required by DDOT to re-apply for use the curb cut. It is unlikely the Public Space Committee (PSC) would approve the curb cut given DDOT's desire to improve safety and remove vehicle and pedestrian conflicts along Rhode Island Avenue. Additionally, any a curb cut would need to be brought up to modern DDOT standards, however, upgrading to modern curb cut flares for this site's driveway would negatively impact the neighboring tree. Once the curb cut is closed, the streetscape should be restored to sidewalk and green space.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has reviewed the application materials and cannot support the requested special exception as the project is currently proposed.

Since the site is changing land use and density, this would trigger DDOT’s requirement to apply for a new curb cut, even if attempting to retain an existing one. Given DDOT’s desire to improve safety and remove vehicle and pedestrian conflicts along Rhode Island Avenue NE, it is unlikely the Public Space Committee (PSC) would approve access for a larger multi-family building in this location. DDOT also has concerns about private trash pick-up operations via the driveway and that bringing the curb cut up to a modern design would negatively impact the adjacent tree.

DDOT requests the Applicant close the existing curb cut and driveway to Rhode Island Avenue and update the plans accordingly. DDOT could then support the requested special exception, as well as support relief from the one (1) required vehicle parking space resulting from curb cut closure.

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