


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Jim Sebastian
Associate Director 

DATE: May 29, 2018

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 18-01 – 1925 Vermont Avenue NW (African American Civil War Museum)

PROJECT SUMMARY

Community Three Development (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone a 37,926 SF property from the RF-1 zone to the ARTS-2 zone. The subject property is located in Ward 1 at 1925 Vermont Avenue NW (Square 361, Lot 827) and is bounded by the 9½ Street alley to the east and properties fronting T Street NW, Vermont Avenue NW, and U Street NW to the north and south. The site currently contains the historic Grimke School and its associated gymnasium. While the school is currently vacant, the African American Civil War Museum currently occupies the gymnasium. As noted in the Applicant’s Pre-Hearing Statement, the Applicant’s Map Amendment will allow for the renovation of the existing school structure to contain approximately 30,000 SF of office space, 11,000 SF of museum space, and 4,000 SF of cultural space. The Applicant also plans to develop 40 residential units, which will either be located in the renovated gymnasium or newly constructed in the same location. Approximately 12 of the 40 units will be reserved for households making 50% and 80% of median family income. DDOT notes that this property is currently owned by the District of Columbia, and the development proposal is the result of a competitive solicitation process. The Applicant will seek additional relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) to facilitate its development proposal.

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 capacity impacts of the proposed map amendment on the District's transportation network. After review of the case materials submitted by the Applicant, DDOT finds:

Travel Assumptions

- The proposed zoning change from RF-1 to ARTS-2 would increase the maximum development density allowable on the site by approximately 2.7 FAR (accounting for inclusionary zoning and use bonuses in the ARTS-2 zone);
- The difference in FAR could hypothetically yield an additional 99,700 SF of development;
- Per the Applicant's pre-hearing submission, the Applicant intends to provide approximately 45,000 SF of non-residential development and 40 dwelling units, of which 12 are affordable units;
- The Applicant's anticipated development proposal would generate approximately 90 morning and 223 evening peak hour person trips, yielding a net difference of approximately 49 morning and 168 evening additional person trips from what is currently permitted by right;
- DDOT notes that the majority of the additional evening trips are attributable to the museum and cultural uses, for which trip generation projection data is limited;
- Because the site is in a highly walkable location and is directly across from the U-Street/African American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo Metrorail Station, DDOT anticipates that approximately 76% of trips generated by the site will be made via transit, walking, or bicycling; and
- Despite the high non-auto mode split, the Applicant still meets DDOT's threshold for a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR), which will be required during the public space permitting or BZA process.
 - CTRs are used to assess the impacts associated with relief requests from District standards or zoning requirements, and, when necessary, are used to recommend mitigations based on a proposal's impact. CTRs are not required for Map Amendments because, unlike this case, development proposals are generally not yet solidified prior to approval of a requested Map Amendment. This makes it challenging to develop sound transportation study assumptions. Additionally, Map Amendment decisions do not have applicable triggers—such as withholding a building permit or a certificate of occupancy—to enforce conditions of approval because they are not tied directly to development.

Zoning Requirements

- Based on Metrorail proximity, the anticipated future development would be required to provide approximately 20 vehicle parking spaces, which is roughly five (5) spaces fewer than what would be required in the RF-1 zone if the site was developed at maximum capacity;
- Dedicated bicycle parking is not required for residential uses in the current RF-1 zone. DDOT estimates that the anticipated development in the proposed ARTS-2 zone will be required to

provide roughly 33 long-term and 29 short-term bicycle parking spaces, two (2) showers, and seven (7) storage lockers;

- Dedicated loading is not required for residential uses in the RF-1 zone. Based on the Applicant's pre-hearing statement, DDOT anticipates that future development in the proposed ARTS-2 zone will be required to provide one (1) loading berth, one (1) loading platform, and one (1) service delivery space; and
- The zoning requirements for loading, bicycle parking, and vehicle parking will vary depending on future proposed uses and their magnitude.

Recommendation

DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested map amendment.

Continued Coordination

The Applicant should continue to work with DDOT on the following matters:

- Scope and provide a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study to DDOT during the public space permitting or BZA process:
 - During the CTR process, DDOT will review any proposals associated with changes to public space, including proposals for site access, a raised mid-block crosswalk over Vermont Avenue NW, elements such as benches, plantings, projections, and the potential closure of the existing median break on Vermont Avenue NW; and
 - Due to the bus layover zone and its associated median break, any physical improvements such as a raised midblock crossing and a potential median closure will require coordination with WMATA and DDOT;
- Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures commensurate with the land use and scale of future development;
- Develop an on-site loading design in which trucks do not back into or out of the site across public space; and
- Submit public space applications for short-term bicycle parking and other elements within public space, as applicable.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Travel Assumptions

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of hypothetical development in the current RF-1 zone against the anticipated development within the proposed ARTS-2 zone. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the maximum development potential of the site based on current zoning. Because the RF-1 zone does not define a maximum FAR and instead uses lot size, lot occupancy, and height to constrain development, DDOT generated development assumptions based on the entire lot. This allows for a conservative estimate of development potential—in reality, some space on the lot would need to be dedicated to roads, alleys, and open space. Table 1 demonstrates the maximum development potential in the existing RF-1 zone both with and without Inclusionary Zoning (IZ).

| RF-1 Development Potential Assumptions | RF-1 (without IZ) | RF-1 (with IZ) |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Total Lot Area | 36,926 | 36,926 |
| Minimum Lot Size | 1,800 | 1,500 |
| Maximum Number of Lots | 21 | 25 |
| Maximum Units per Lot | 2 | 2 |
| Hypothetical Development Potential in RF-1 Zone (Units) | 41 | 49 |
| Lot Occupancy Percentage | 60% | 60% |
| Lot Occupancy SF | 1,080 | 900 |
| Assumed Number of Stories | 3 | 3 |
| Assumed GFA Per Structure | 3,240 | 2,700 |
| Assumed Total Development Potential | 66,467 | 66,467 |
| Hypothetical FAR | 1.8 | 1.8 |

Table 1 – Assumed Development Potential under Existing RF-1 Zone

Next, DDOT used the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ (ITE) *Trip Generation* (10th Edition) and an average vehicle occupancy of 1.13 to estimate the person-trips that could be hypothetically generated by the site under current zoning, as shown in Table 2. Table 2 only shows the trip generation potential for the RF-1 zone with the IZ development bonus because this yields a greater number of trips than the non-IZ option. Based on proximity to Metrorail, DDOT applied a 76% non-auto mode split (30% transit, 44% pedestrian, and 2% bicycle) to the estimate to determine the number of vehicles entering and exiting the site.

| RF-1 Hypothetically Development 49 IZ Dwelling Units ¹ | ITE Trip Generation Estimate ² | Person Trips (1.13 Assumed AVO) | Vehicle Trips 24% | Transit Trips 30% | Pedestrian Trips 44% | Bicycle Trips 2% | Vehicle Trips (converted from person trips) |
|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|---|
| Total AM Peak Hour Trips | 36 | 41 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 1 | 8 |
| Total PM Peak Hour Trips | 49 | 55 | 12 | 15 | 20 | 1 | 11 |

¹Trips estimates listed in table are +/- 1 trip due to rounding
²ITE Land Use Code 210 (Single-Family Detached)

Table 2 – Trip Generation Potential under Existing RF-1 Zone

Table 2 illustrates that, under current RF-1 zoning, the site would generate approximately 41 morning and 55 evening person trips with 8 morning and 11 evening vehicle trips.

To understand the impacts under the proposed ARTS-2 zoning, DDOT repeated the trip generation assessment using the future development assumptions in the Applicant’s Pre-Hearing Statement, which anticipates 30,000 SF of office development, 11,000 SF of museum space, 4,000 SF of cultural space, and 40 residential units. As detailed in Table 3, the anticipated ARTS-2 development would generate approximately 90 morning and 223 evening person trips with 19 morning and 47 evening vehicle trips.

ITE’s “Library” land use data were used to generate trip projections for the museum and cultural uses. While limited, the “Library” sample pool was larger than that of ITE’s “Museum” data, and substituting “Shopping Center” data would likely inflate projections. Still, the PM person-trip estimate may be high. Because Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) studies are not typically required for Map Amendments, DDOT was not able to review current driveway counts at the existing African American Civil War Museum and/or similar facilities for confirmation. According to DDOT’s estimates, the development will generate approximately 47 vehicle trips during the evening peak hour and will likely trigger a CTR. DDOT will scope a CTR study as appropriate during BZA or public space review.

| Proposed Development AM Peak Hour ¹ | ITE Vehicle Trips | Converted to Person Trips (1.13 AVO) | Vehicle Person Trips 24% | Transit Person Trips 30% | Pedestrian Person Trips 44% | Bicycle Person Trips 2% | Vehicle Trips (converted from person trips) |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| AM Peak Hour Office Trips ² | 35 | 40 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 1 | 9 |
| AM Peak Hour Museum & Cultural Trips ³ | 15 | 17 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| AM Peak Hour Residential Trips | 30 | 34 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 1 | 7 |
| Total AM Peak Hour Trips | 80 | 90 | 22 | 27 | 40 | 2 | 19 |
| Proposed Development PM Peak Hour ¹ | ITE Vehicle Trips | Converted to Person Trips (1.13 AVO) | Vehicle Person Trips 24% | Transit Person Trips 30% | Pedestrian Person Trips 44% | Bicycle Person Trips 2% | Vehicle Trips (converted from person trips) |
| PM Peak Hour Office Trips ² | 35 | 40 | 9 | 12 | 17 | 1 | 8 |
| PM Peak Hour Museum & Cultural Trips ³ | 122 | 138 | 33 | 41 | 61 | 3 | 29 |
| PM Peak Hour Residential Trips | 40 | 45 | 11 | 14 | 20 | 1 | 10 |
| Total PM Peak Hour Trips | 197 | 223 | 53 | 67 | 98 | 5 | 47 |
| ¹ Trips estimates listed in table are +/- 1 trip due to rounding ² ITE Land Use Code 710 (General Office) ³ ITE Land Use Code 590 (Library) ⁴ ITE Land Use Code 210 (Single-Family Detached) | | | | | | | |

Table 3 – Trip Generation of Anticipated Development under Proposed ARTS-2 Zone

Table 4 shows the difference in density and number of trips generated between the hypothetical maximum capacity in the current RF-1 zone and the proposed development anticipated for the ARTS-2 zone.

| Zoning District | Maximum Floor Area Ratio ¹ | Maximum Potential GFA | AM Person Trips | PM Person Trips | AM Vehicle Trips | PM Vehicle Trips |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Zoning: Maximum Potential (RF-1) | 1.8 | 66,467 | 41 | 55 | 8 | 11 |
| Proposed Zoning: Anticipated Development Program (ARTS-2) | 4.5 | 166,167 | 90 | 223 | 19 | 47 |
| Difference | +2.7 | +99,700 | +49 | +168 | +11 | +36 |

¹There is no regulatory FAR in the RF-1 Zone, which constrains development based on lot occupancy, minimum lot area, and height; see Table 1 regarding effect FAR of 1.8; ARTS-2 FAR of 4.5 includes inclusionary zoning and use bonuses.

Table 4 – Density & Impact Summary Comparison

Zoning Requirements

Table 5 presents a comparison of the zoning requirements for vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and loading. The table shows requirements based on the maximum development potential in the existing RF-1 zone, assuming all residential consistent with the main intent of the zone, and the anticipated development within proposed ARTS-2 zone.

| Scenario | Anticipated Development Mix ¹ | Vehicle Parking Spaces §701.5 ² | Bicycle Parking Spaces §802.1 | Loading Berths / Delivery Spaces §901.1 |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Current Zoning (RF-1): Hypothetical Maximum Development Potential | 49 residential dwelling units, housed within single-family and flat structures | 25 spaces | None | None |
| Proposed Zoning (ARTS-2): Anticipated Development | 30,000 SF office; 11,000 sf of museum; 4,000 sf of cultural space; and 40 residential dwellings | 20 spaces | 33 Long-Term; 29 Short-Term | 1 Berth; 1 Delivery Space |

¹ The zoning requirements in this table are DDOT estimates for scenarios based on existing potential under current zoning and anticipated development under proposed zoning. Actual by-right development programs may differ based on the mix of uses proposed by the Applicant. The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) will make an official determination as to the required number of vehicle parking spaces, bike parking spaces, and loading berths if and when a specific development program is proposed.

²The site is within a half mile walk from the U Street/African American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo Metrorail Station and thus is eligible for a 50% vehicle parking space reduction in the ARTS-2 zone (§702.1). Uses developed in the RF-1 are not eligible to receive the credit.

Table 3 – Zoning Requirements for Vehicle Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading

The current zone generates a requirement of five (5) more vehicle parking spaces than what would be required for the anticipated development under the proposed zoning. This is largely because development in the RF-1 zone is not eligible for the 50 percent (50%) vehicle parking space reduction allowed under Subtitle C § 702.1.

Dedicated bicycle parking and loading is not required for residential uses in the RF-1 zone. As such, the proposed rezoning would result in a substantial increase in amount of bicycle parking required by zoning. DDOT notes that clothes lockers and showers would be required for non-residential uses in the proposed ARTS-2 zone. Additionally, the office use anticipated within the proposed zone generates a requirement of one (1) loading berth, one (1) delivery space, and one (1) associated loading platform.

Public Space

In line with District policy and practice, any substantial new building development or renovation is expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb and gutters, street trees and landscaping, street lights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

DDOT expects that the Applicant work closely with DDOT and the Office of Planning to ensure that the design of the public realm meets current standards and will substantially upgrade the appearance and functionality of the streetscape for public users needing to access the property or circulate around it.

DDOT notes that the Applicant’s plans suggest a raised, midblock crosswalk across Vermont Avenue NW to connect the site to the African American Civil War Memorial and Metrorail Plaza, as shown in Figure 1. The proposed crossing will be reviewed during the public space permitting process. There are concerns with its proximity to the intersection of U Street NW and Vermont Street NW. Additionally, the crossing is located near an existing median break providing access to a WMATA bus layover loop. DDOT will request the Applicant to coordinate with WMATA on the necessity of the median break and may require its closure.

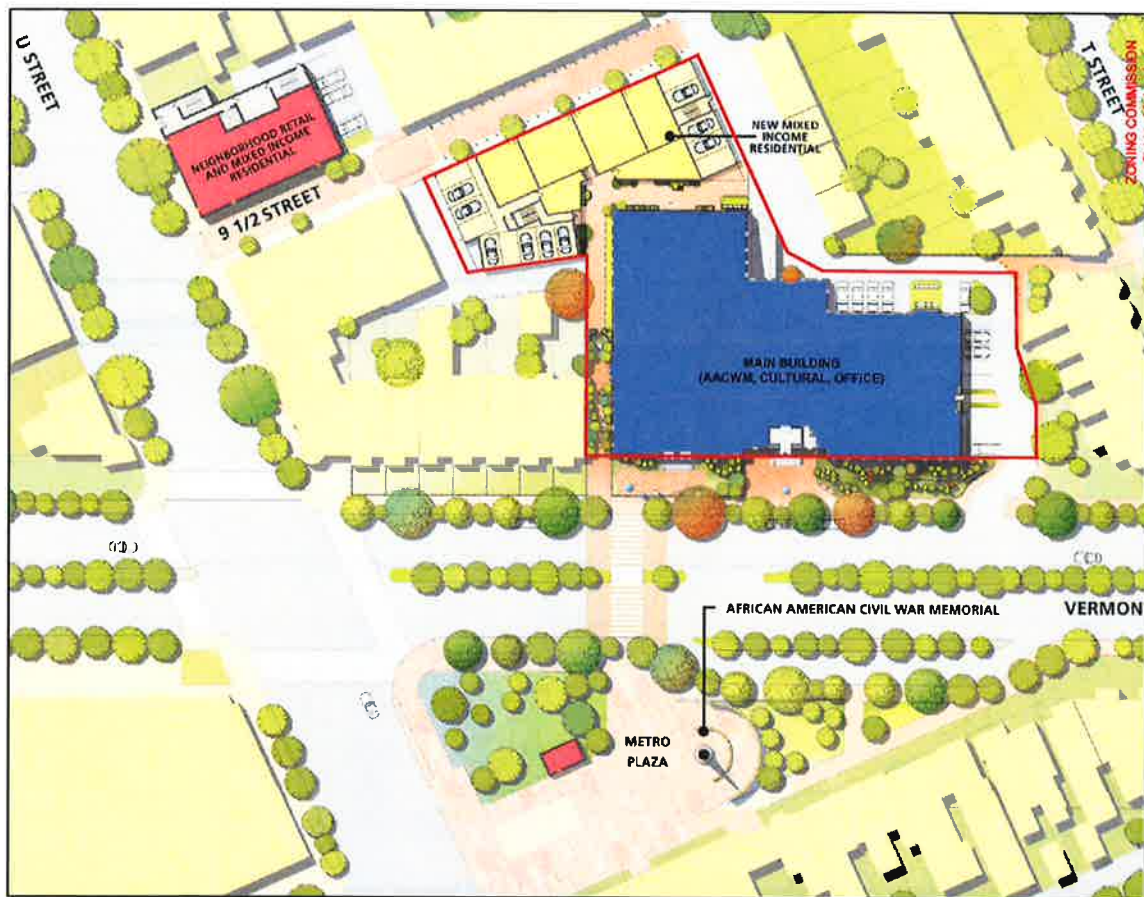


Figure 1 – Site Plan (Source: Exhibit 1E in 18-01 Case Record)

In conjunction with the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, DDOT’s recently released 2017 version of the *Design and Engineering Manual (DEM)* and the *Public Realm Design Manual* will

serve as the main public realm references for the Applicant. DDOT staff will be available to provide additional guidance during the public space permitting process.

JS:pr