

Government of the District of Columbia


Department of Transportation



d. Planning and Sustainability Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sara Bardin
Director, Office of Zoning

FROM: Anna Chamberlin, AICP 
Neighborhood Planning Manager

DATE: June 30, 2020

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 19-28 – 1840 7th Street NW

PROJECT SUMMARY

Square 417, LLC (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone an approximately 42,751 square-foot property from RF-1 to ARTS-3. The subject property is located at 1840 7th Street NW (Square 417, Lots 53 and 54) and bounded by 7th Street NW to the east, T Street to the north, a 10-foot public alley to the west, and S Street NW to the south. The site currently has a three-story office building occupied by Howard University with two surface parking lots.

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

- The proposed ARTS-3 (Mixed-Use Uptown Arts) zone would allow for approximately 84 more residential units on the property than the maximum allowed in the existing RF-1 zone (109 units versus 195 multi-family dwelling units per the RF-1 density calculations in the OP Set Down Report);
- All the redevelopment alternatives under ARTS-3 are projected to generate a comparable amount of person and vehicle trip generation. The proposed rezoning is only expected to yield 8 additional morning vehicle trips and 10 additional evening vehicle trips as compared to max build-out under the existing RF-1;

- The additional trips generated by the site are expected to have a minimal impact on the transportation network;
- DDOT concurs with the proposed up-zoning in order to further support nearby transit and generate additional foot traffic to support nearby businesses. This is consistent with DDOT’s approach to infill sites which should be dense, compact, transit oriented, and improve the public realm;
- Since the site is within a ½-mile of a Metrorail station, ZR16 allows a 50% vehicle parking reduction. DDOT strongly encourages the Applicant to minimize the amount of vehicle parking provided if and when the site redevelops;
- Per the off-street parking guidelines in the 2019 *Guidance of Comprehensive Transportation Review*, DDOT would expect a maximum parking ratio of 0.30 spaces/residential unit parking ratio since the site is adjacent to the Shaw-Howard University Metrorail Station. DDOT will review the parking ratio when a development is reviewed during EISF and public space permitting, and mitigation will be required, as necessary;
- Any development proposals for the site will need to account for a long-term bicycle parking storage room, either below- or at-grade in an easily accessible location from the lobby, as well as short-term bicycle parking, as required by ZR16; and
- The site currently has access to an existing 10-foot rear public alley. If and when the site develops, it is expected that all loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking will take place from the public alley. DDOT will not support any new curb cuts to the property.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant’s request and determined that based on the information provided, the proposed rezoning would likely not lead to a significant increase in the number of peak hour vehicle trips on the District’s transportation network if developed with the most intense matter-of-right uses. Therefore, DDOT has no objection to the approval of the requested Map Amendment.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the achievable matter-of-right density possible on the subject property, it is expected that the Applicant will work with DDOT through the permitting process (e.g., public space permitting and EISF) if and when a development proposal is put forth, on the following actions to minimize impacts to the transportation network:

- Depending on the ultimately proposed development program and if any future relief is requested from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) or Public Space Committee (PSC), the Applicant may be required to scope and provide a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study or some other analysis;
- Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures commensurate with the land use and scale of future development, as appropriate;
- The redeveloped site should be designed so that loading occurs from the alley without trucks performing backing maneuvers across the public realm surrounding the site. Also, coordinate with DDOT on an appropriate Loading Management Plan (LMP), if necessary;
- Coordinate with DDOT’s Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 1 arborist regarding the possibility of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property; and
- Continue coordination with DDOT on the following public space design elements:

- Submit a public space permit application for any proposed changes within the public right-of-way (ROW);
- DDOT expects development projects to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines. This includes curb and gutters, street trees, landscaping, streetlights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the ROW adjacent to the site;
- All vehicular site access to the site, as well as loading facilities and trash pick-up, must be via the existing rear public alley network. The alley entrances are located on T Street NW and S Street NW;
- No new curb cuts to the property from S, T, or 7th Streets NW should be proposed. The existing curb cut on 7th Street NW at the northern parking lot should be closed;
- Submit a detailed curbside management plan, if any changes to existing curbside restrictions are proposed. DDOT will require the Applicant to fund the installation of new multi-space parking meters, if needed; and
- DDOT encourages the Applicant to participate in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with the Office of Planning and DDOT to discuss the public space design if and when a future development is proposed.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Vehicle Trip Comparison

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of several residential redevelopment scenarios under the existing RF-1 and proposed ARTS-3 zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on existing conditions and the current and proposed zoning districts.

The existing RF-1 zone allows for the site to be predominately developed with rowhouses up to two dwelling units per lot. DDOT assumed a 3.0 FAR for the RF-1 zone, which is documented in the OP Set Down report. If rezoned to ARTS-3, the site could potentially achieve a floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0 (up to 4.8 with inclusionary zoning), of which no more than 2.5 FAR can be dedicated to non-residential uses. Therefore, a potential redevelopment of this site for a project that includes affordable housing could result in a development up to 205,205 square feet.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the trip rates for residential, office, and retail land uses published in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), *Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition*. Mode split assumptions were based on other similar projects adjacent to a Metrorail Station. Table 1 below presents a summary of DDOT's estimate of vehicle trips for each development scenario.

Table 1 – Vehicle Trip Generation Comparison (DDOT Estimates)

Development Scenario	Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
Existing Conditions	50,000 SF Office	68	68	29	29
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in RF-1 Zone 128,253 SF	109 Residential Units 30,000 SF Retail	98	265	14	29
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in ARTS-3 Zone 205,205 SF	195 Residential Units 30,000 SF Retail	134	309	22	39
Applicant Proposal Under ARTS-3 Zone - Option 1	160 Residential Units 21,000 SF Retail	104	229	17	30
Applicant Proposal Under ARTS-3 Zone - Option 2	147 Residential Units 43,000 SF Retail	136	374	19	41

As shown by Table 1, redevelopment of the site with the maximum number of allowable units (estimated 195 units) allowed under the ARTS-3 zone will add approximately 36 person trips in the weekday morning commuter peak hour and approximately 44 person trips in the weekday evening commuter peak hour, as compared to the trips generated by max build out under the existing zoning. Person and vehicle trip generation are expected to be comparable under any of the redevelopment scenarios. Any of the redevelopment options under consideration are not expected to yield any net new vehicle trips, as compared to the existing office building on-site.

Zoning Requirements

Table 2 below details DDOT’s estimates of the theoretical zoning requirements for each of the evaluated development scenarios. Note that the exact requirements would be determined by the Zoning Administrator and would be based on the specific development ultimately proposed.

Since the site is located within ½ mile of a Metrorail station (directly adjacent to the Shaw-Howard University Metrorail Station), DDOT encourages the Applicant to take advantage of the 50% reduction in the parking minimum, per ZR16 Subtitle C, Section 702.1(a), if and when the site develops. Additionally, DDOT encourages the Applicant to meet or exceed the bicycle parking and showers/lockers requirements of ZR16.

According to the off-street parking guidelines in the DDOT *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, it is expected that the development will provide no more than 0.30 vehicle parking spaces per residential unit given the proximity to the Shaw-Howard University Metrorail Station. Lower parking ratios encourage transit usage and reduce auto-dependency. The presence of extra parking spaces has the potential to induce additional demand for driving. DDOT will review the parking ratio at EISF and public space permitting and require any mitigation, if necessary, at that time.

Table 2 – Zoning Requirements for Vehicle Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading Facilities

Development Scenario	Development Program	ZR16 Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT Maximum Vehicle Parking Spaces	ZR16 Long-Term Bicycle Spaces (Minimum)	ZR16 Short-Term Bicycle Spaces (Minimum)
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in RF-1 Zone	109 Residential Units 30,000 SF Retail	35	63	39	14
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in ARTS-3 Zone	195 Residential Units 30,000 SF Retail	50	88	68	18
Applicant Proposal Under ARTS-3 Zone - Option 1	160 Residential Units 21,000 SF Retail	38	69	55	14
Applicant Proposal Under ARTS-3 Zone - Option 2	147 Residential Units 43,000 SF Retail	50	87	53	20

PUBLIC SPACE

If the site redevelops or there are any substantial renovations to future buildings, the property owner will be expected to rehabilitate streetscape infrastructure between the curb and the property lines, in line with District policy and practice. This includes curb and gutters, street trees and landscaping, streetlights, sidewalks, and other appropriate features within the public rights of way bordering the site.

The Applicant should be aware of the following elements to continue to coordinate with DDOT on, if and when the site redevelops:

- All vaults on 7th Street NW should be moved out of the sidewalk zone and onto private property;
- The pedestrian clear path on 7th Street NW should be a minimum of 10-foot wide;
- All vehicular site access to the site, as well as loading facilities and trash pick-up, must be via the existing rear public alley network;
- No new curb cuts to the property should be proposed. The existing curb cut on 7th Street NW should be removed. Vehicular access should be through the existing alley;
- Ensure building entrances are at-grade with the sidewalk to avoid the need for ramps and stairs in public space;
- Ensure the existing Capital Bikeshare stations adjacent to the site are protected and operational during construction and designed into the final streetscape plans in their current locations. If it is necessary to relocate a station, it will be at the expense of the Applicant;
- Install missing street trees on all sides of the site; and
- Determine final locations of short-term bicycle spaces (inverted U-racks).

In conjunction with the *District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR)*, *DDOT’s 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.

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