

# 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:** August 28, 2020

**SUBJECT:** ZC Case No. 19-30 – Benning Road NE Map Amendment

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

ANC 5D (the “Applicant”) seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone an approximately 13.5-acre site from the RA-2 Zone to the RF-4 Residential Flat Zone and a 4.3-acre site from the MU-4 Mixed-Use Zone to the MU-5-A Mixed-Use Zone. The subject site is generally bounded by Benning Road NE to the south, H Place NE and the midblock of Square 4495 to the north, 18th Street NE and the midblock of Square 4507 to the west, and 21st Street NE to the east. The proposed RF-4 site currently has predominantly two-story residential row houses, used as either single-family houses or flats, and the proposed MU-5A site has a variety of uses, including two- and three-story residential row buildings, three-story mixed-used buildings, low-rise retail uses, a gas station, and a decommissioned power plant.

#### 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 13.5 acres proposed to be rezoned from RF-2 to RF-4 would not result in an increase in density, therefore the focus of this analysis is on the area to be rezoned from MU-4 to MU-5A;
- DDOT estimates that the rezoning of 4.3 acres along Benning Road NE from MU-4 to MU-5A could increase the max development potential by 224,770 SF from 561,924 SF to 786,694 SF;

- The additional density along Benning Road could yield approximately 216 more residential units as compared to the existing MU-4 zone (637 dwelling units versus 421 dwelling units);
- The additional residential potential along Benning Road is only expected to yield 30 additional morning vehicle trips and 36 additional evening vehicle trips as compared to max build-out under the existing MU-4 zone;
- The additional trips generated by the site are expected to have a minimal impact on the transportation network and thus no Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study was required by DDOT; and
- The increase in density by the proposed rezoning to MU-5A is consistent with DDOT’s approach to infill development as it supports adjacent transit and businesses with additional foot traffic.

## RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant’s request and determined that based on the information provided, the proposed rezoning to the RF-4 and MU-5A zones 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 size of the proposed area and the number of properties to be rezoned, there are no specific items for continued coordination at this time. If and when future development proposals are put forth for any of the properties within the subject site, Applicants shall work with DDOT to comply with District regulations regarding public space, site access, and the following items:

- Several streets in the RF-2/RF-4 neighborhood have Building Restriction Lines (BRL). The area between the BRL and property line is regulated as if it were public space;
- All loading, trash, and vehicle parking access must occur from the alley network. No new curb cuts to Benning Road NE will be allowed;
- All building entrances along Benning Road NE must be at-grade with the sidewalk so that stairs and ramps in public space are not necessary; and
- Ensure that ZR16 short-term bicycle parking minimums are being met and that inverted U-racks are installed in the adjacent public space close to building entrances.

## 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 RA-2 and MU-4 zones and the proposed RF-4 and MU-5A zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based the current and proposed zoning districts.

**RA-2 to Proposed RF-4 Zone.** The existing RA-2 zone allows for the site to be developed with predominately moderate-density residential apartment house uses. The proposed RF-4 zone allows for the site to be predominately developed with row houses of three or more stories and within which may

also exist a mix of small apartment buildings and conversions. DDOT assumed a 2.16 floor area ratio (FAR) for the RA-2 zone; if rezoned to RF-4, the site could potentially achieve an FAR of up to 1.8. Therefore, the proposed rezoning to the RF-4 zone is essentially a wash from a density standpoint, and thus not further considered in this analysis.

**MU-4 to Proposed MU-5A Zone.** The existing MU-4 zone allows for the properties along Benning Road to be developed with moderate-density mixed-use development. The proposed MU-5A zone permits medium-density, compact mixed-use development with an emphasis on residential uses. DDOT assumed a 3.0 FAR for the MU-4 zone; if rezoned to MU-5A, the site could potentially achieve an FAR of up to 4.2, with inclusionary zoning (IZ) bonus taken.

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, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Mode split assumptions were based on TripsDC mode split assumptions. DDOT only conducted a vehicle trip analysis for the proposed rezoning from MU-4 to MU-5A because the proposed rezoning to RF-4 would not increase development capacity. Table 1 below presents a summary of DDOT’s estimate of vehicle trips for the most likely residential over retail build-out scenario after the proposed rezoning to MU-5A.

**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
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-4 Zone	421 Residential Units 140,000 SF Retail 0 SF Office	419	1193	81	165
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-5A Zone	637 Residential Units 150,000 SF Retail 0 SF Office	527	1370	111	201

As shown by Table 1, redevelopment of the site with the maximum number of allowable residential units (estimated 637 units) allowed under the MU-5A zone would add approximately 108 person trips in the weekday morning commuter peak hour and approximately 177 person trips in the weekday evening commuter peak hour, as compared to the trips generated by max build out under the existing zoning. This would also result in a net increase of vehicle trips by 30 trips in the morning peak hour and 36 trips in the evening peak hour. Person and vehicle trip generation are expected to be comparable under any of the redevelopment scenarios, especially given that the adjacent rezoning to RF-4 slightly decreases its development potential.

Zoning Requirements

Table 2 below details DDOT’s estimates of the theoretical zoning requirements for the proposed rezoning to the MU-5A zone. Note that the exact requirements would be determined by the Zoning Administrator and would be based on the specific development ultimately proposed.

According to the off-street parking guidelines in the DDOT *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, it is expected that multifamily residential proposals within the site proposed to be rezoned to MU-5A would provide no more than 0.40 vehicle parking spaces per residential unit and 1.25 spaces per 1,000 SF of retail given that the site is within ¼ mile of the Benning Road Streetcar Line. 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 and Bicycle Parking**

Development Scenario	Development Program	ZR16 Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT Maximum Vehicle Parking Spaces	ZR16 Long-Term Bicycle Spaces	ZR16 Short-Term Bicycle Spaces
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-4 Zone	421 Residential Units 140,000 SF Retail 0 SF Office	161	344	155	61
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-5A Zone	637 Residential Units 150,000 SF Retail 0 SF Office	203	442	227	75

**PUBLIC SPACE**

If the site redevelops or there are any substantial renovations to future buildings, the property owner(s) 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.

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.

DDOT does not have any public space comments on specific parcels within the proposed rezoning areas because there are over 250 parcels spread across various streets, all of which have varying public space requirements, and there is not a proposed redevelopment proposal at this time.

However, future Applicants should be aware of the following general public space considerations as their site within the rezoning area redevelops:

- Several streets in the RF-2/RF-4 neighborhood have Building Restriction Lines (BRL). The area between the BRL and property line is regulated as if it were public space;
- All loading, trash, and vehicle parking access must occur from the alley network. No new curb cuts to Benning Road NE will be allowed;
- All building entrances along Benning Road NE must be at-grade with the sidewalk so that stairs and ramps in public space are not necessary; and

- Ensure that ZR16 short-term bicycle parking minimums are being met and that inverted U-racks are installed in the adjacent public space close to building entrances.

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