

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
Associate Director 

DATE: November 18, 2022

SUBJECT: ZC Case No. 22-19 – 4950 South Dakota Avenue NE (McDonald's)

PROJECT SUMMARY

McDonald's Corporation (the "Applicant") seeks approval of a Map Amendment to rezone a 21,000 SF property from MU-3A to MU-7B to build a fast-food establishment with a drive-through. The subject property is located at 4950 South Dakota Avenue NE (Square 3786, Lot 1) and bounded by South Dakota Avenue to the north, Delafield Street to the west, a public alley to the south, and a commercial property to the east. The site is currently a fast-food establishment without a drive-through.

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 Applicant participated in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with DDOT on May 24, 2022 to review proposed site plans for a raze and rebuild of the existing McDonald's to include a drive-through, which is a by-right use for MU-7B and not allowed under current zoning;
- DDOT does not support drive-throughs because they create a less safe condition with more opportunities for conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles;

- The fast-food use generates significantly more traffic than a residential mixed-use project. Addition of a drive-through lane is projected to further increase the amount of vehicle trips to the site;
- The site currently has access to an existing 16-foot rear public alley. All loading, trash pick-up, and vehicle parking should take place from the public alley or Delafield Street. DDOT will not support any new curb cuts or reuse of existing curb cuts to the property from South Dakota Avenue when the site redevelops; and
- During the public space permitting process, a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study with a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) to determine impacts to the transportation network and to optimize site circulation for the specific development proposed will be required. If a fast-food with drive-through is proposed, a post-occupancy study will be required to ensure drive-through queues do not impact adjacent streets.

RECOMMENDATION

DDOT has reviewed the Applicant's request and determined that based on the information provided, the Applicant intends to construct a new fast-food restaurant with a drive-through, which will be a by-right use if the rezoning is granted. DDOT discourages construction of drive-through lanes since they negatively impact pedestrian safety and increase impacts to the transportation network. Therefore, DDOT objects to this Map Amendment application since the Applicant does not intend to increase existing uses or density on the site, and is using the rezoning solely for the purpose of adding a drive-through.

Instead, DDOT recommends the Zoning Commission consider a different zone, with similar densities to the MU-7B, but which does not include a drive-through by-right. DDOT is in support of higher densities and mixed-use potentials of the site to support adjacent Priority Bus Routes and generate foot traffic for nearby businesses.

CONTINUED COORDINATION

Given the achievable matter-of-right density possible on the subject property, it is expected that the Applicant will coordinate with DDOT through the permitting process on the following actions to minimize impacts of a future development proposal on 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 will be required to scope and provide a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study with traffic impact analysis (TIA);
- Develop and implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures commensurate with the land use and scale of future development, as appropriate;
- When the property ultimately develops, the site should be designed so that all vehicle and loading occurs via the adjacent alley without trucks performing backing maneuvers through sidewalk space. Also, coordinate with DDOT on an appropriate Loading Management Plan (LMP), if necessary;
- Submit a detailed curbside management and signage plan to DDOT, consistent with current DDOT policies. If meter installation is required, they will be at the Applicant's expense;

- Coordinate with DDOT's Urban Forestry Division (UFD) and the Ward 5 arborist regarding the possibility of any existing Heritage Trees or Special Trees on the property; and
- Continue coordination with DDOT on the public space design elements noted in the Streetscape and Public Realm section of this report.

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

Mode Split and Trip Generation Comparison

DDOT conducted a trip generation analysis for the site to compare the transportation impacts of several residential development scenarios under the existing MU-3A and proposed MU-7B zones. To complete the analysis, DDOT first assessed the theoretical maximum development potential of the site based on current and proposed zoning.

The existing MU-3A zone allows for the site to be developed with low- to moderate-density development, including detached dwellings, rowhouses, and low-rise apartments. If rezoned to MU-7B, the site could potentially achieve a 4.8 FAR for a mixed-use development assuming an inclusive zoning (IZ) bonus. It is estimated that a maximum of 93 residential units and 16,800 SF retail could be constructed on-site if the rezoning to MU-7B is granted, as compared to approximately 14 dwellings with 12,600 SF first-floor retail under MU-3A.

To determine the number of trips generated by each scenario, DDOT utilized the rates published in the *ITE Trip Generation Manual, 11th Edition*, webtool. For mixed-use redevelopment, a 60% non-auto mode share was assumed for residential and a 75% non-auto mode share was assumed for retail, based on the site's proximity to Priority Bus corridors. DDOT also estimated trips generated by the existing 3,100 SF fast food restaurant without a drive-through window and the proposed 3,100 SF fast food restaurant with a drive-through window (based on designs shared with DDOT during the May 24, 2022 PDRM). Due to these being auto-centric uses, the non-auto mode share is 10% for the existing restaurant and 5% for the restaurant with drive-through. Tables 1 and 2 below present a summary of DDOT's estimate of vehicle trips for each development scenario.

As shown below, redevelopment of the site with a drive-through would generate significantly more traffic than a mixed-use development permitted in the MU-7B zone. Since the MU-7B allows for significantly more density than MU-3A (4.8 FAR vs 1.20 FAR) a residential mixed-use development would generate an addition 12 vehicle trips in weekday morning and 16 more vehicle trips in the weekday evening period. This would equate to approximately an additional 41 person trips in the morning and 63 person trips in the evening, mostly by non-auto modes, to help support nearby transit and businesses.

Table 1 | Trip Generation Comparison (Fast Food Restaurant)

Development Scenario	Development Program	AM Peak Person Trips	PM Peak Person Trips	AM Peak Vehicle Trips	PM Peak Vehicle Trips
Existing Conditions	3,100 SF fast food No Drive-Thru	244	187	120	93
Applicant Proposal	3,100 SF fast food With Drive-Thru	252	187	131	97
Net Change	+Drive-Thru	+8	+0	+11	+4

Table 2 | Trip Generation Comparison (Mixed-Use Redevelopment)

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-3A Zone 25,200 SF	14 Residential Units 12,600 SF Retail	25	84	5	13
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-7B Zone 100,800 SF	93 Residential Units 16,800 SF Retail	66	147	17	29
Net Change MU-3A to MU-7B	+79 Residential Units +3,900 SF Retail	+41	+63	+12	+16

Zoning Requirements

Table 3 below details DDOT's estimates of the theoretical vehicle parking and bike parking zoning requirements for each of the evaluated development scenarios. Note that the exact requirements will be determined by the Department of Buildings (DOB) and will be based on the specific development ultimately proposed. This also includes any required loading facilities.

Since the site is located within ¼ mile of WMATA Priority Corridor Network Metrobus Route #80, DDOT encourages the Applicant to take advantage of the allowable 50% reduction in the parking minimum, per Subtitle C, Section 702.1(a), when the site redevelops. According to DDOT's January 2022 *Guidance for Comprehensive Transportation Review*, a site this proximate to priority transit should provide no more than 0.35 spaces per unit (1 space per 3 units) and no more than 1.25 spaces per 1,000 SF of retail/restaurant. The presence of surplus parking has the potential to induce demand for additional driving on the roadway network. During public space permitting, the Applicant will be required to conduct a Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) study with a traffic impact analysis (TIA). If the project is a fast-food restaurant with drive-through, then a post-occupancy study will also be required to ensure any drive-through queueing does not impact the adjacent roadways.

While not a zoning requirement, DDOT encourages the Applicant to provide a minimum of 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging station for every 50 spaces. It is noted that a new District law, the Electric Vehicle Readiness Amendment Act of 2020, calls for 20% of all new off-street parking spaces to be EV-ready. At this time, the law has not gone into effect because it has not been funded by Council. The Applicant should be aware that this requirement may go into effect prior to pulling their building permit.

The project must meet all bicycle parking and loading requirements. DDOT encourages the Applicant to meet or exceed the bicycle parking and showers/lockers requirements of 11 DCMR 801 and 18 DCMR 1214. Long- and short-term bicycle parking should be designed in accordance with the 2018 DDOT *Bike Parking Design Guidelines*. As required by zoning, at least 50% of long-term bicycle parking spaces must be located horizontally on the floor or easily accessible on the bottom level of a two-tier rack system. Additionally, DDOT requires at least 5% of spaces be designed for larger cargo/tandem bikes (10 feet by

3 feet rather than 6 feet by 2 feet) and 10% of spaces be served by electrical outlets for e-bikes and scooters.

Table 3 | Requirements for Vehicle Parking and Bicycle Parking (Mixed-Use Redevelopment)

Development Scenario	Development Program	Zoning Minimum Vehicle Parking Spaces	DDOT Maximum Vehicle Parking Spaces	Zoning Long-Term Bicycle Spaces	Zoning Short-Term Bicycle Spaces
Maximum Current Matter-of-Right in MU-3A Zone	14 Residential Units 12,600 SF Retail	8	21	6	4
Maximum Future Matter-of-Right in MU-7B Zone	93 Residential Units 16,800 SF Retail	24	54	33	9

STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

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.

As previously noted, the Applicant participated in a Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) on May 24, 2022 at which DDOT identified the following concerns that will need to be addressed through continued coordination:

- All vehicular site access to the site, as well as loading facilities and trash pick-up, must be via the existing rear public alley or Delafield Street NE;
- No new curb cuts to the property from South Dakota Avenue should be proposed. The existing curb cuts on both South Dakota Avenue must be closed and green space restored with missing street trees installed;
- DDOT encourages the Applicant to orient the future building, whether a fast-food restaurant or mixed-use project, up against the public sidewalks to better interact with the public realm. The building should not be set back with surface parking between building and streets;
- The Applicant should evaluate other restaurant design options that do not include a drive-through lane;
- It is noted that there is a 15-foot Building Restriction Line (BRL) along the Delafield Street NE frontage. The space between the property line and BRL is the building restriction area and is regulated like DDOT public space. The space within the building restriction area is intended to remain as green space and clear of structures and pavement. Vehicle storage in a surface parking lot is not permitted in the building restriction area;
- Protect the existing bus shelter in front of the site on South Dakota Avenue NE and ensure it stays open and accessible during construction. The bus stop and bus pad may also need to be relocated further to the east on South Dakota Avenue NE;
- Increase the size of the sidewalk along the Delafield Street NE frontage from 3-4 feet to 6 feet in width;
- Ensure any pedestrian entrances to a future building are at-grade with the public sidewalk so that no stairs or ramps are required in public space;

- In accordance with the District's policy prohibiting right-turn on red movements at signalized intersections, install No Right Turn on Red signage at each signalized intersection surrounding the site;
- All overhead power lines should be moved to underground at the time of redevelopment so that poles and wires do not clutter DDOT public space; and
- Any existing Cobra Head-style streetlights along the site perimeter should be replaced with either Washington Globe or Decorative Tear Drop-style streetlights. Exact style to be installed will be determined at the time of permitting.

DDOT encourages the Applicant to participate in an additional Preliminary Design Review Meeting (PDRM) with the Office of Planning and DDOT to discuss the public space design and address comments from the May 24, 2022 PDRM.

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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