



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director

DATE: January 24, 2014

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Report for ZC #13-16

Review of Parcels A, F and G for Temporary Uses to include Open Space, a Temporary Parking Lot and a Trapeze School within the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC), pursuant to the SEFC Overlay District and Section 3104.1 Special Exceptions

I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The applicant has demonstrated compliance for Special Exception approval to permit a temporary parking lot on Parcel F and a trapeze school on Parcel G at the Southeast Federal Center, for a period of five years.

II. APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: Southeast Federal Center, Parcels A, F and G

Ward 6, ANC 6D

Applicant: Greenstein DeLorme & Luchs, P.C. on behalf of Forest City SEFC, LLC

Zoning: SEFC/CR

Site Description: This request includes Parcels A, F and G in the Southeast Federal Center Overlay District.

- Parcel A is a square-shaped property that consists of 136,997 square feet of area. The parcel is located on the south side of M Street, S.E. between 1st Street, S.E. and New Jersey Avenue, S.E. There would be no driveway access to this parcel, as the proposed temporary use would be open space.
- Parcel F is a square-shaped property that consists of 74,535 square feet of area. The parcel is located at the northeast corner of N and 1st Streets, S.E., and would be accessible via a proposed curb cut on N Street, S.E. The proposed temporary use would be a parking lot consisting of 208 parking spaces.
- Parcel G is a rectangular-shaped property consisting of 50,585 square feet. The parcel is located at the northwest corner of N Street, S.E. and New Jersey Avenue, S.E. The proposed temporary use of this

parcel would be a trapeze school, which would be accessible from a proposed curb cut on N Street.

Proposed Development: The applicant proposes to remove the former National Geospatial Intelligence Agency building and redevelop the site with three temporary uses, where Parcel A would serve as open space, Parcel F would be a temporary parking lot, and Parcel G would be the new location of the Trapeze School. It is requested that the temporary parking lot and Trapeze School uses are approved for a term of five years.

Review Sought: In accordance with DCMR 11 Section 1803.2 (m) and 1803.2 (o), Zoning Commission review of proposed Trapeze School and temporary parking lot within the SEFC Overlay District.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A thorough history of the establishment of the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Overlay District has been provided by the applicant. Most recently, the Zoning Commission approved the continued use of existing temporary parking lots in SEFC on Parcels H/I and L, and a new temporary parking lot on Parcel Q, all for a period of five years. The current application requests a temporary parking lot on Parcel F for a period of five years, pursuant to the provisions set forth in sections 1803.2 (o) , 3104.1 and 1808.

A Trapeze School was permitted on Parcel O as a matter of right by a text amendment approved by the Zoning Commission (ZC 09-09). The use was authorized until December 31, 2014, at which time the applicant would be required to obtain a special exception to continue the use on the parcel or move it to a different location. This application proposes to move the Trapeze School to Parcel G pursuant to the provisions set forth in sections 1803.2 (m) and 3104.1. The review of the Trapeze School is pursuant to standards set forth in section 1808.

IV. SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The property included in SEFC is comprised of 42 acres and is bordered by M Street S.E. and Tingey Street, S.E. to the north, 1st Street, S.E. to the west, the existing Washington Navy Yard to the east and the Anacostia River to the south. A District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority Pumping Station facility lies adjacent to the south and west sides of the property. Also adjacent to the property is the U.S. Department of Transportation Headquarters building located at the corner of M Street and New Jersey Avenue, S.E. The baseball stadium is located across 1st Street, S.E. and directly abuts the SEFC site. A PUD for parcels located east of 1st Street, S.E. and south of N Place, S.E. was recently approved by the Zoning Commission, which includes two mixed-use buildings and a movie theatre.

The following map identifies the parcels that would be impacted by the proposed developments, and includes references to parcels that have been developed, are currently under construction, or have received approval for development.



V. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SEFC neighborhood has been experiencing growth since the establishment of the overlay in 2007. The developer of SEFC, Forest City, has completed several projects in the area that have increased both residential and retail opportunities, including Foundry Lofts, The Boilermaker Shops and Lumber Shed. A mixed-use development is currently under construction at the southeast corner of 4th Street, S.E. and M Street, S.E., and projected to be completed in spring 2014. Parcel N, which was previously a temporary parking lot, is currently under construction and will provide additional retail and residential to the area. Finally, Parcel H is in the RFP process for the selection of an architect. Development of Parcel O is anticipated to begin in 2014 and has prompted the need to relocate the Trapeze School as proposed to Parcel G. The applicant also seeks to provide an additional temporary parking lot on Parcel F for the use of employees, residents of the Navy Yard, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and visitors to the area.

Parcel A – Open Space

Parcel A is the site of the building formerly used by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA). The building will be razed in early 2014, at which time the developer intends to use the site as open space. A Special Exception is not required for the proposed open space. While it is not requisite, OP would encourage the applicant to provide additional landscaping along the 1st Street, S.E. property line, similar to what has been proposed along 1st Street, S.E. for Parcel G. A landscape strip would serve to provide screening from the traffic on 1st Street, and would provide improved pedestrian areas.

Parcel F – Temporary Parking Lot

The applicant has proposed the development of a temporary parking lot on Parcel F that would replace the existing surface parking located around the former NGA building. Currently, the property provides 230 parking spaces, where the proposed temporary parking lot would provide 208 parking spaces, 22 spaces fewer than currently provided. The temporary parking lot would be accessible from N Street, S.E.

Order No. 13-03 approved a total of 789 parking spaces in the SEFC. These spaces are located on several parcels, including Parcel H/I, Parcel L and Parcel Q. The spaces identified on the subject property have never been part of the parking calculation for the area, but they have also not been open to the public for daily use, as the applicant has indicated they are only open for events at the Ballpark.

The following calculation of parking spaces in temporary parking lots was provided by the applicant.

	Existing Parking Spaces	Proposed Parking Spaces
Parcels A, F & G	230 ¹	208
Parcel H/I	394	394
Parcel L	196	196
Parcel Q	199	199
Total	1019	997

The applicant has indicated that the number of spaces provided by Parcel H will be reduced due to DC Water's need for 50 spaces to store development trailers. Once DC Water has finalized the plans for the trailers, the applicant intends to modify the approved temporary parking lot on Parcel H through the Zoning Commission. In addition, the application indicates that there is currently an RFP in process to acquire an architect for the development of Parcel H, and it is anticipated that construction will begin on this parcel in 2015.

The summary of parking spaces above indicates that the proposed temporary parking lot would increase the number of spaces beyond what was approved in Zoning Order 13-03. The applicant has proposed a total of 997 parking spaces, which would be 208 more spaces than the 789 approved by the Order.

Square 701, located west of 1st Street, S.E., south of M Street, S.E. and north of N Street, S.E., is currently a temporary parking lot that provides 296 parking spaces. The applicant has confirmed that development approved by the Zoning Commission by Order No. 12-19, known as Capitol Riverfront Hotel, is scheduled to begin in 2014, resulting in the loss of 296 parking spaces that are currently used by residents, employees and visitors to the area. While these spaces have never been accounted for in the parking total for SEFC, the closure of this lot will have an impact on the area. Once Square 701 is developed, sufficient parking will be provided on that property to accommodate its uses.

The proposed temporary parking lot on Parcel F would comply with the surface parking lot landscaping standards specified in Section 2117 of the Zoning Regulations. The application notes that 7,852 square feet of the proposed parking lot would be landscaped, which is in excess of ten percent required by the regulations. The landscape plan demonstrates that the end islands of each row of parking will be landscaped and that trees will be provided in accordance with the regulations. In addition, the temporary parking lot would be maintained by the same landscape company that has been retained to maintain other temporary parking lots in the SEFC area.

The applicant has identified that there is a need for the temporary parking lot. The existing spaces located on Parcels A, F and G are currently used for Ballpark events, but are otherwise closed to the public. However, the loss of parking on Square 701 and the reduction of parking spaces on Parcel H may result in the need for additional parking while several properties in the area are under construction. The traffic study supplied by the applicant indicates that the parking lot would not have an adverse impact on traffic.

¹ This parking calculation, provided by the applicant, has not been included in previous requests for temporary parking lots. Rather, the parking lot has existed since the establishment of the SEFC Overlay District, and the developer has used the lot for event parking at the Ballpark.

Parcel G – Trapeze School

The applicant has proposed relocating the existing Trapeze School located on Parcel O, toward the eastern boundary of SEFC, to Parcel G, located east of the proposed temporary parking lot. The lot would be accessible via a proposed shared driveway on N Street, S.E.

The Trapeze School was permitted by a text amendment that was approved by the Zoning Commission on November 9, 2009, which permitted the establishment of a temporary Trapeze School and performing arts facility use on Parcel O without the need for a special exception. The amendment stated that the Trapeze School would expire after December 31, 2014, at which time the use would have to be approved by the Zoning Commission, which would determine if on-site parking would be required.

The Trapeze School would consist of an indoor and outdoor trapeze rig. The indoor trapeze tent would have a footprint of 50 feet by 140 feet and would be constructed of metal trusses, a fabric cover and vinyl windows. Lighting would be contained within the building. The outdoor rig, used during the summer months, would be constructed of steel cables, aluminum poles and netting. The height of both rigs would be 48 feet. The outdoor rig would be enclosed by a ten foot high temporary fence.

The current site of the Trapeze School, Parcel O, is expected to be developed in 2014 through 2015, with construction completed by 2016 or 2017. As a result, the Trapeze School has agreed to relocate to the new location on Parcel G. The applicant has indicated that the majority of the Trapeze School students arrive by Metro, so additional parking would not be necessary to accommodate the facility.

VI. CRITERIA OF THE SOUTHEAST FEDERAL CENTER OVERLAY

The applicant has requested Zoning Commission review pursuant to the Southeast Federal Center (SEFC) Overlay District Section 1800. The following is an analysis of relevant sections of Section 1808 of the SEFC Overlay District.

Section 1808.1: In addition to proving that the proposed uses, buildings, or structures meet the standards set forth in § 3104.1, the applicant for Zoning Commission approval of a use or structure within the SEFC Overlay District shall further demonstrate conformance to the following standards:

- (a) The use, building, or structure will help achieve the objectives of the SEFC Overlay District as set forth in § 1802;***

The proposed temporary parking lot would allow for parking in the SEFC area. The lot would be enhanced with landscaping, which would improve the visual appearance of the lot and provide pedestrian-oriented streetscape. In addition, the lot would include bio-retention areas that improve the permeability of the property.

The proposed Trapeze School would provide a use complimentary to existing retail and residential uses in the area, attracting additional visitors to SEFC. The parcel would be landscaped and would provide bio-retention areas that would also improve the water quality along the Anacostia waterfront.

- (b) The proposed building or structure shall be designed with a height, bulk, and siting that provide for openness of view and vistas to and from the waterfront and, where feasible, shall maintain views of federal monumental buildings, particularly along the New Jersey Avenue, S.E. corridor;***

The proposed Trapeze School would have a height of 48 feet, and would be set back from New Jersey Avenue approximately 40 feet. The structure would be shorter than the existing NGA building, and would be set back a greater distance. The siting and bulk of the structure would not interfere with views and vistas to the waterfront.

- (c) On or above-grade parking adjacent to, or visible from, the street shall be limited. Where parking cannot be placed underground, other uses such as retail or residential shall separate parking areas from the street, or where this is not possible, green landscaping or architectural treatment of facades shall adequately screen parking from the street and adjacent development.***

The proposed temporary parking lot would be landscaped around the perimeter of the site and would be adequately screened from the street and adjacent development. The applicant has ensured that landscaping will be restored and maintained by hiring a professional landscaper.

Section 1808.2: In evaluating the application, the Commission also may consider:

- (a) Compatibility with buildings in the surrounding area through overall massing, siting, details, and landscaping;***

The existing proposed landscaping includes a variety of trees, shrubs, perennials, roses, and grasses that will screen the parking lots and provide four-season interest through the use of color, foliage and textures.

The overall massing and siting of the proposed Trapeze School would be compatible with existing structures in SEFC. The indoor structure would be set back from New Jersey Avenue, S.E., and would have a small footprint, ensuring that the structure would not obstruct views of the waterfront.

- (b) Use of high standards of environmental design that promote the achievement of sustainable development goals;***

Most of the plant materials existing and proposed are native to the region and should provide a relatively low-maintenance landscape screen. In addition, stormwater management for Parcels A, F and G will be through the use of bioretention areas for water quality control. During construction, a sediment and erosion control plan will be provided.

(c) Façade articulation that minimizes or eliminates the visibility of unarticulated blank walls from public spaces;

The proposed Trapeze School indoor structure is a temporary structure and would not have an articulated façade. However, the structure has a minimal height of 48 feet and would be set back from the street at least 40 feet, reducing its visibility from New Jersey Avenue, S.E.

(d) Landscaping which complements the building;

The landscape provided on Parcels A, F and G would be a substantial improvement over the existing development. These sites currently consist of a large, abandoned building and accessory parking. The structure and parking lot would be removed and replaced with landscape, increasing the permeability of the area. Parcel G, where the Trapeze School would be located, would be planted with grass and a bio-retention area. The landscape compliments the temporary nature of the building.

Sections 2115 SIZE OF PARKING SPACES; 2117 ACCESS, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION; and, 2301 PARKING LOTS

The proposed temporary parking lot would comply with all provisions of §2115, §2117, and §2301. The full-sized parking spaces are 19' x 9' (§2115.7) with the compact spaces being 16' x 8' (§2115.3). A maximum of 40% of the parking spaces on each lot would be compact spaces (§2115.2) and would be located in groups of at least five spaces and clearly marked (§2115.4). Each drive aisle width would be a minimum of 20' (§2117.5).

In addition, the parking lots will be paved with an all weather surface; will be designed so that no vehicle or part of a vehicle extends over any lot line or building line; no entrance or exit is within 40' of a street intersection; and, lighting would be arranged so that all direct rays of lighting are confined to the surface of the parking lot (§2301.1).

Section 3400: GREEN AREA RATIO

The proposed request complies with the requirements of Green Area Ratio (GAR). The GAR standard for properties located in the SEFC/CR District is 0.20. The applicant has indicated that 112,879 square feet of Parcels A, F and G will be landscaped areas with a soil depth of 24 inches or greater, which results in a GAR score of 0.259. Additionally, approximately 5,000 square feet of these parcels will be used for bio-retention facilities that comply with all requirements of DDOE.

Section 3104.1: DOES THE APPLICATION MEET THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION TEST?

(a) Will the special exception be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

The proposed parking lot and Trapeze School would be temporary, as allowed in the SEFC Overlay District. Temporary parking lots and schools are allowed in the SEFC/CR District for a maximum of five years at which time they may be renewed by the Zoning Commission.

(b) Will the special exception tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps?

The subject properties have historically been used for parking and institutional uses. The parcels are currently paved or will be repaved to current standards and will have landscaping that will improve their appearance. The Trapeze School will continue to add to the variety of recreational activities available in the SEFC area, attracting visitors to the waterfront. The temporary parking lot would not adversely impact neighboring properties, as confirmed by the traffic study provided by the applicant. Based on this plan of action, granting this special exception will not tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring properties in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Maps.

VII. ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION (ANC) COMMENTS

ANC 6D reviewed this proposal at its meeting on January 13, 2014 and voted to support the application.

VIII. DISTRICT AGENCY COMMENTS

As of the date of this report, OP has not received comments from any other District agency or department. DDOT will file a report under separate cover.

JLS/be