Development Review in the District of Columbia

Transitioning from a Traditional TIS to Comprehensive Multi-Modal Transportation Review

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Introduction & Background

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) is the agency responsible for the comprehensive transportation network and public right-of-way within the District of Columbia. As part of its mission to deliver more sustainable travel practices, safer streets, and access to goods and services, DDOT evaluates public and private development proposals that come before the District of Columbia Office of Zoning. These reviews ensure that proposed alterations and impacts to the transportation network are consistent with transportation policies and practices and do not adversely impact multi-modal strategic objectives and the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Prior development review practice was predicated on the impact of vehicular traffic on the District’s roadway network; however, this focus on automobile impacts and mitigation came at the expense of investments made in other modes of transportation that compete for the same shared space. The District’s recent booming population growth and increase in development are consistent with transportation policies and do not adversely impact multi-modal practices, safer streets, and access to goods and services, DDOT evaluates public investment and policy, DDOT has transitioned away from the traditional Traffic Impact Statement to a Comprehensive Transportation Review.

DDOT’s Role in Development Review

Changes from Standard Transportation Impact Study

1. Planning Documents
   - Requires Developers to reference program in city-wide planning context and local area planning context

2. Vehicle Roadway Network
   - Prior art retained. In addition, site access is to be complementary to non-vehicle modes. Auto Mode split higher than DDOT goals. Mitigation cannot effect other modes.

3. Bikes & Pedestrians
   - Requires mapping of pedestrian & bike through routes near site. Said routes are reviewed quantitatively (capacity, delay, safety) and qualitatively (quality, barriers, network gaps, lighting, etc.) Pedestrian/bike counts

4. Public Transit
   - Transit trip generation estimates required. Existing/proposed stops with headway, span of service and ADA compliance data are required. Larger developments must look at potential impact to capacity of local bus network

5. Site Access and Loading
   - Site access for all modes is required. Curb cuts are to be located in alleys first, then secondary streets, as a last resort. Delivery loading on-site is not allowed to incorporate backing maneuvers in public space

6. Parking
   - Curbside utilization rates and parking schemes are required for large developments and those seeking relief from zoning required parking. No leasing of extra parking spaces is allowed

7. Safety
   - If bike, pedestrian or vehicle exposure increased where existing safety deficiencies noted, then partial mitigation required. Horizontal and vertical sight distances are to be measured. Conflicts points are shown

8. Streetscape
   - Intended public use space for private business must be documented. Ramping of underground garages is not allowed to begin in the sidewalk. DDOT pedestrian clear zones must be maintained

9. Transportation Demand Management
   - Reduction of single vehicle trips is a policy goal. Incorporation of TDM measures required for large developments. Assumptions of TDM effectiveness must be validated

10. Performance Monitoring
    - For large-scale developments or those that are heavily reliant on TDM, performance monitoring of trip generation is required to and provides an enforcement mechanism to increase future TDM measures

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Common TDM Strategies

- Unbundling Parking from Lease
- Capital Bike Share Membership
- Capital Bike Share Docking Station
- Pre-paid SmarTrip Card
- Dedicated Car Sharing Space
- Real-time Transit info Display in Lobbies

Benefits

1. Review Process Improvement
   - Smoother Transparent Review Process
   - Early Engagement with DDOT and Developer
   - Coordination site access (public space) with site design (private space)

2. Incorporation of TDM Strategies by Developers to reduce vehicle trips and take advantage of investments made in public transit.

3. Performance Monitoring Requirements
   - Monitoring Trip generation to correlate TDM performance with vehicle trip reduction and to enforce adherence to vehicle trip generation estimates

4. Higher quality Site Design and Public Amenities

Vehicle egress Thru Alley

Widened sidewalk