

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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## **PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW**

**DATE:** April 9, 2010  
**TO:** Public Space Committee  
**FROM:** Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner  
**SUBJECT:** 1099 New York Avenue, NW – Sidewalk Cafe

### **APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF**

**Applicant:** Joe Spinelli (Authorized Agent)  
**Location:** The property is located on the north side of New York Avenue between 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW and 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW. It is located Downtown along a busy commercial corridor. It is located in a DD/C-3-C zoning district.  
**Proposal:** The applicant is requesting an unenclosed sidewalk café area with 10 tables and 40 seats. The proposed seating area has a total square footage of 507.5.

### **BACKGROUND**

The application was submitted to the DDOT public space permitting office on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

### **BASIS OF REPORT**

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site conditions, and completed research on the site to prepare this report. OP also referred to several policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other District regulations as part of completing this report:

#### **Policy UD-3.1.2: Management of Sidewalk Space**

Preserve the characteristically wide sidewalks of Washington's commercial districts. Sidewalk space should be managed in a way that promotes pedestrian safety, efficiency, comfort, and provides adequate space for tree boxes. Sidewalks should enhance the visual character of streets, with landscaping and buffer planting used to reduce the impacts of vehicle traffic.

#### **Policy UD-3.10: Sidewalk Cafes**

Discourage the enclosure of sidewalk cafes in manner that effectively transforms them into indoor floor space. The design of sidewalk cafes should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the adjoining buildings, should complement the street environment, and should not impede pedestrian movement.

## **KEY ISSUES**

The proposed unenclosed sidewalk café has an area of 507.5 square feet and proposes 10 tables and 40 chairs. The 40 seats is more than the 34 that is allowed in an area of this size. However, the café as proposed does not provide an adjacent 10' clear pedestrian walkway, the preferred clear sidewalk width in an area with significant levels of pedestrian activity. The café should be reduced in size to maintain the minimum 10' clear pedestrian walkway. This will result in a smaller seating area of 367.5 square feet and will reduce the number of seats allowed to 25. The sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is approximately 21'. This includes a 6' furniture zone. The sidewalk café as proposed would only leave an 8' clear pedestrian walkway. A minimum of 10' should be maintained in this busy Downtown commercial corridor.

The application also includes a removable fence to further separate the café from the sidewalk. Because the proposed café is located in an area with high pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic and the application seeks to maximize the space available for seating, it may be advisable to remove the fence from the café to allow more room for seating.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

The sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood, but the proposed area needs to be reduced in scale to allow for an appropriate amount of clear pedestrian walkway. This may impact the number of seats allowed as part of this application.

**The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the following conditions:**

- 1. The applicant reduces the size and scale of the café and provides a minimum 10' adjacent clear pedestrian walkway; and**
- 2. The number of seats be recalculated based on the revised seating area**