



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: July 12, 2010

FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner

ADDRESS: 1100 New Jersey Avenue SE

APPLICATION: Unenclosed sidewalk café for 3 tables and 12 seats

Site Information

Zone: CG/C-3-C

Historic District: No

CFA: No

Neighborhood Character: Mixed-use

Background:

This application was received by the Office of Planning on June 7, 2010. This café is for an adjacent Subway sandwich shop.

Relevant Policies of Planning Initiatives

Policy T-2.4.4: Sidewalk Obstructions

Locate sidewalk cafes and other intrusions into the sidewalk so that they do not present impediments to safe and efficient pedestrian passage. Maintain sidewalk surfaces and elevations so that disabled or elderly pedestrians can safely use them. 410.8

Policy UD-3.1.8: Neighborhood Public Space

Provide urban squares, public plazas, and similar areas that stimulate vibrant pedestrian street life and provide a focus for community activities. Encourage the “activation” of such spaces through the design of adjacent structures; for example, through the location of shop entrances, window displays, awnings, and outdoor dining areas.

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 property is located in the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood on New Jersey Avenue, SE, between L and M Streets, SE. It is located in an area zoned CG/C-3-C. There is a high level of pedestrian activity during working hours and moderate level of pedestrian activity at other times. This neighborhood is predominantly characterized as mixed-use residential and commercial.

The sidewalk where the proposed café is located is along 2nd Street and 21'-7" wide. The adjacent business has no shop window projection. There are 6 feet at the curb set aside for tree boxes and other street furniture. The proposed seating area includes 3 tables and 12 seats in an area that is 178 square feet.

The café area extends into the sidewalk 6 feet. This leaves 9'-7" of unobstructed sidewalk between the café and the furniture zone at the curb. District regulations require a 10' clear pedestrian path adjacent to a sidewalk café.

The Public Space Committee requires that there be 15 square feet for every seat within a dining area. With an area of 178 square feet, this sidewalk café has enough space for 12 seats; the application is for 12 seats.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Sidewalk cafés are one of the few ways that the District can activate public space in commercial areas. Wherever possible, the Office of Planning supports sidewalk cafés in public space. The proposed sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved as submitted and that this be included on the consent agenda.