



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 16, 2010
TO: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
ADDRESS: 1201 1st Street, NE
APPLICATION: New benches

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: The property is located at the intersection of 1st and M Streets, NE.
Proposal: The applicant is requesting to install new benches.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 3, 2010. This site is located within the area covered by the NoMa Vision Plan and Development Strategy streetscape guidelines.

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 as part of completing this report:

Policy UD-3.1.7: Improving the Street Environment

Create attractive and interesting commercial streetscapes by promoting ground level retail and desirable street activities, making walking more comfortable and convenient, ensuring that sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic, minimizing curb cuts and driveways, and avoiding windowless facades and gaps in the street wall.

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 E-1.1.3: Landscaping

Encourage the use of landscaping to beautify the city, enhance streets and public spaces, reduce storm water runoff, and create a stronger sense of character and identity.

KEY ISSUES

The location of the proposed benches are outside of a new commercial building in NoMa. The addition of benches will further the goals of the District to create an attractive and active sidewalk atmosphere in this part of the city. The introduction of benches will add an active use to the block.

NoMa is a part of the city lacking in parks and open space. The NoMa streetscape guidelines call for the creation of a linear green space along 1st Street, NE, between K Street and New York Avenue, as a way to provide outdoor space for workers and residents in the area. There are a proposed total of 6 new benches within a newly landscaped area. The benches are 5' in length and either 18'' or 32'' in height. These benches will be an amenity that furthers the District's goal of creating a linear park and open space along 1st Street in NoMa.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposed benches are part of an overall streetscape plan for this new commercial building. The benches will help to activate the street, further the goals for the District's NoMa Vision Plan and Development Strategy, and are a welcome addition to this neighborhood.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved.