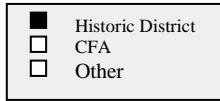


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: March 12, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 1440 P Street, NW (Whole Foods) – Sidewalk Cafe

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: John Long (Authorized Agent)

Location: The property is located in front of a Whole Foods grocery store on the south side of P Street NW between 14th Street NW and 15th Street NW. It is located in a commercial area zoned ARTS/C-3-A. This area is a bustling neighborhood commercial area with high levels of pedestrian activity and shoppers coming and leaving the adjacent grocery store. The proposed seating is in an area along P Street, NW. Drawings submitted with the application show the sidewalk width along this block of 14th Street is 25'; the adjacent clear sidewalk width is approximately 6'. The property is located in the Logan Circle Historic District.

Proposal: The applicant is requesting an unenclosed sidewalk café area with 20 tables and 80 seats. The proposed seating area has a total square footage of 1,282.

BACKGROUND

The application was submitted to the DDOT public space permitting office on February 25th, 2010. The application has been reviewed and approved by HP.

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-3.1.7: 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-3.10: 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 compliment the street environment, and should not impede pedestrian movement.

KEY ISSUES

The proposed unenclosed sidewalk café has an area of 1,282 square feet and proposes 20 tables and 80 chairs. The 80 seats is less than the 85 that would be allowed in an area 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 and may impact the number of seats allowed.

Whole Foods already has street furniture and bollards in the sidewalk that should be taken into consideration when determining the location of the sidewalk café. An existing street light in the middle of the sidewalk is shown on the application, but there are also bollards at the entrance that are not included on the plan. The sidewalk café area should align with the existing street furniture.

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 sidewalk café area should also align with other street furniture that already exists at the site.

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;**
- 2. The number of seats be recalculated based on the revised seating area; and,**
- 3. The location of the sidewalk café align with existing street furniture.**