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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF PLANNING



## PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

**DATE:** August 16, 2010

**TO:** Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner

**ADDRESS:** 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

**APPLICATION:** New paving, landscaping, bike racks and fixed tables and chairs

### APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

**Location:** The property is located on Massachusetts Avenue between 16th and 17th Streets, NW, and is within the boundaries of the Dupont Circle Historic District.

**Proposal:** The applicant is requesting to install new paving, landscaping, bike racks and fixed tables and chairs.

### BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 4, 2010. The site is located within the Dupont Circle Historic District and has been reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Office staff.

### 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. 603.7

### **KEY ISSUES**

The location of the proposed paving, bike racks, landscaping, and fixed tables and chairs is within an area considered a destination for retail and restaurants. The addition of plants and trees will further the goals of the District to create an attractive and active sidewalk atmosphere in this part of the city. Additional street trees should be added at the curb. Standard streetscape requirements in the District call for a continuous row of street trees at the curb. This is of particular importance along Massachusetts Avenue, which is a major thoroughfare in the District. In addition, this site lies within the Dupont Circle Historic District and the street trees are critical to maintaining the historic character of the area. Plans for the site do not indicate any street trees being planted at the curb.

The introduction of bike racks, landscaping, and tables and chairs will add an active use to the block. There are a proposed total of 12 new bike racks, 11 new trees and 2 new tables with 4 chairs each.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

The improved paving, landscaping, bike racks and tables and chairs are a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

**The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the condition that street trees be included at the curb.**