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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF PLANNING



**PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW**

**DATE:** February 19, 2010  
**TO:** Public Space Committee  
**FROM:** Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner  
**SUBJECT:** 1825 14th Street, NW

**APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF**

**Applicant:** Steve Merchant (Authorized Agent)  
**Location:** The site of the proposed unenclosed sidewalk café is on west side of 14th Street, NW between S Street, NW and T Street, NW. It is located in a ARTS/C-3-A zoning district. It is an active commercial area with moderate pedestrian and vehicular activity.  
**Proposal:** The applicant is requesting to install an unenclosed sidewalk café with 4 tables and 14 chairs.

**BACKGROUND**

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on December 29, 2009.

**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 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 consists of 4 tables and 14 chairs. The sidewalk café area is listed in the application as 228 square feet, which allows for a maximum of 15 chairs. A 40'' high belt barrier is proposed to separate the sidewalk café from the pedestrian walkway. The total sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is 20' – 6''. The proposed café has a width of 6' – 6'', which leaves a remaining 14' width to the curb. There is 8' of clear pedestrian walkway and a 6' furniture zone.

This area of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW will be subject to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Streetscape Plan.

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

The sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. The maximum number of chairs allowed for this café space is 15. The belt barrier needs to be removable in order to open up the café space when it is not in use. An 8' clear pedestrian walkway is acceptable for this area and has been allowed at other nearby establishments such as Café Salsa at 1712 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW.

**The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved.**