

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: April 9, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 2036 G Street, NW – Sidewalk Cafe

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

- Applicant:** George Washington University (GW)
- Location:** The property is located on the south side of G Street NW at the east corner of 21st Street NW. It is located in a R-5-D zoning district. The site is located on the George Washington University campus. The cafe is located in the area covered by a Streetscape Plan developed for GW.
- Proposal:** The applicant is requesting the expansion of an unenclosed sidewalk café area with 17 tables and 56 seats. The proposed seating area has a total square footage of approximately 725.

BACKGROUND

The application was submitted to the DDOT public space permitting office on March 5, 2010. EEK developed a Streetscape Plan for GWU in 2006 and it was approved by the Zoning Board in 2007. The GWU Streetscape Plan does not specifically address sidewalk café uses on G Street NW, but it does identify the need to maintain at least an 8' clear pedestrian walkway.

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-3.10: 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 proposed unenclosed sidewalk café has an area of 725 square feet and proposes 17 tables and 56 chairs. The number of seats allowed in an area of this size is only 48, 8 less than what is proposed. The sidewalk width from the property line to the curb is approximately 27'. The seating is located within a landscaped area and the existing adjacent clear sidewalk will remain unchanged.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The expanded sidewalk café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood and adheres to public space regulations. However the number of seats appears to exceed the amount allowed in a café area of this size.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the condition that the applicant reduces the number of seats to a maximum of 48.