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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF PLANNING



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: August 20, 2010
TO: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
ADDRESS: 3660 Alabama Avenue, SE
APPLICATION: New paving, landscaping, retaining wall, flag pole

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Location: The property is located on Alabama Avenue between 36th Place and 38th Street, SE.
Proposal: The applicant is requesting to install new paving, landscaping, retaining wall and flag pole at the Francis P. Gregory Library.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on August 4, 2010.

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, landscaping, retaining wall and flag pole is for the new Francis Gregory Library currently under construction. The addition of plants and trees will further the goals of the District to create an attractive and active sidewalk atmosphere throughout the city. The improved landscaping and streetscape will add an active use to the block. There are some minor changes to the landscaping that should be made to ensure easy access to bike racks in front of the public facility.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The improved paving, landscaping, retaining wall and flag pole are a welcome addition to the neighborhood as part of this new library project. Minor changes may be needed to the landscape to ensure adequate access to bike parking.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be approved with the condition that minor changes be made to the landscape to provide adequate access to bike parking.