ANC 6C Transportation and Public Space Committee
Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center
700 2nd St. NE, Room G3-G4
Thursday, May 2, 2019
7:00 pm

REPORT

In Attendance
Mark Kazmierczak, chair
Comm. Mark Eckenwiler
Christy Kwan
Kay Elsasser

1. 40 Patterson Street NE

Concept public space plan for a new mixed-use development. Planned is a by-right, 13-story, 315-unit multi-family residential building with occupied penthouse atop a two level, below grade garage for approximately 90 vehicles. Submitted public space concept design includes:

- Elimination of 2 existing curb cuts
- Incorporation of a single curb cut to provide access to both loading and parking
- Front in/front out loading and servicing
- A 2’ building setback to accommodate a planting strip and a buffer to the ground floor residential units
- Elimination of 2 existing curb cuts
- Short term bike racks
- Installation of a single, multi-space DDOT parking meter
- Incorporation of 5 street trees
- 4 covered utility vaults in the sidewalk
- DDOT required signage

Three electrical transformer vaults and a bus duct vault will provide electric service to the building. The vaults will have solid lids and their widths are 7’4” wide. The District Code requires that the vaults be separated from the curb by not less than 8’. Patterson Street is 30’ wide and the existing sidewalk is 9’9” in width. This limited sidewalk area doesn’t allow the applicant to meet the code required separation; thus, the applicant is submitting a request for public space concept design approval in support of a code modification to allow covered vaults in the sidewalk less than 8’ from the curb and to approve the elimination of 2 curb cuts and the approval of a new single curb cut for loading and servicing.

Representative: Jessica Bloomfield, Holland & Knight; Mehegan Easley, Monument Realty [ANC6C06]

The applicant stated they were seeking support for the utility vaults in public space and the changes to the curb cuts. They stated that DDOT supports vaults in public space when they are covered with cement, as these will be (DDOT does not support vaults covered with grates). The proposed covers will be flush with the rest of the sidewalk. The committee was supportive of the covered vaults and the curb cut changes.

The committee asked about passenger a loading zone. Currently, the curb area is programmed to be entirely metered parking. The applicant stated that DDOT did not support a loading zone. The committee felt strongly

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that given the size of the building (315 units), a passenger loading zone was needed, approximately 2 spaces. The applicant was receptive to the suggestion.

**Motion:** Recommend the ANC express support for the overall concept, including the closing of one curb cut, slight relocation of the other curb cut, and the covered vaults provided that they are covered and flush with the sidewalk. The letter should also urge inclusion of a 2 parking spot passenger loading/unloading zone near the entrance of the building. (Kazmierczak/Eckenwiler)

**Vote:** Passed, 4 – 0.

2. **Verizon – 120 7th St. NE**

Verizon owns a large building at 120 7th Street NE used for telecommunications equipment. On the street in front of the parking lot is signed "Tow Away, No Parking, Loading Zone, 8 am to 4 pm" but there is no driveway between this section of the street and the entrance to the building. Over the last several months, Verizon and/or its contractors have been driving trucks over the curb and unpaved public space to the parking area near the entrance to the building.

In its March meeting, the TPS committee discussed the issues and options for solutions, including bollards and bike racks as options to block trucks from traversing public space. At the ANC’s request, DDOT and Verizon personnel will be in attendance to review options.

Representative: Naomi Klein, DDOT; Mario Acosta-Velez, Verizon [6C01]

Mr. Acosta-Velez (Verizon) provided an update of the matter. Since the March meeting, Verizon has conducted a site survey of the property to know the property lines – the survey has been completed but the results have not been shared yet. Once they have the results, they will consider some of the recommendations. Verizon has also notified contractors who have been using trucks that they are not allowed to do drive over the sidewalk. Mr. Acosta-Velez asked that residents report further infractions to him. In response, neighbors stated that they have not seen further instances of trucks driving over the sidewalk.

Ms. Klein (DDOT) presented the alternatives for addressing the situation:
1. Remove the loading zone. There is another loading zone at the end of the block.
2. Install tree fences around the tree box. DDOT doesn’t install such fences because they don’t maintain them. Maintenance would go to the adjacent property owner (Verizon). There is no legal authority to make Verizon install fences, but they could install it and be a good neighbor. Alternatively, the neighbors could purchase and have installed the fences with Verizon’s cooperation on submitting the public space application.
3. Leave as is.

Residents of the area in attendance suggested another possibility of Verizon installing a fence bordering their parking space and the public space in front of it. The residents supported both this idea and the treebox fences. The consensus was to wait and see what Verizon offers to do. One resident in attendance felt Verizon should be given no accommodations and that the facility may have outgrown the neighborhood and needs to move. Mr. Acosta-Velez responded that the facility is necessary to provide services to the neighborhood.

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An additional option was presented: relocating the loading zone a few spaces to the north so that it can’t be used as an access point for trucks to drive to the parking area, but it still serves the needed function for loading and unloading trucks. **Residents were receptive to the idea but opted to wait on requesting it until other avenues fall through or prove ineffective.**

**No Motion.**

3. **Dave Thomas Circle, Florida Ave NE, and Vision Zero**

On Monday, April 29, DDOT held an open house to present its plans and timeline for reconstruction of the intersection of New York Ave and Florida Ave NE (a.k.a. the Virtual Circle or Dave Thomas Circle). While designs have not changed from when they were last presented in 2017, but DDOT has committed to Alternative 6, which includes removal of the Wendy’s and repurposing of the space. The committee will recap the open house and discuss the proposal.

Additionally, the committee will talk about the Florida Ave Multimodal Project and broader Vision Zero issues and discuss approaches for spurring faster changes to improve safety on the District’s roads.

Representative: Naomi Klein, DDOT [6C06]

**Dave Thomas Circle**

Ms. Klein presented design Alternative 6 for the intersection, which requires taking possession of the land currently containing the Wendy’s and its parking lot. DDOT is looking to move forward with this concept, and further plans themselves are under development. In order to do so, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) needs to approve acquisition of the land. DDOT is looking for community support for the acquisition of the land.

The committee was supportive of the concept but pointed out that removal of the Wendy’s is not itself sufficient to make the intersection safer and that additional, significant changes to the surrounding roadways are needed as well.

**Motion:** Recommend the ANC send a letter to DDOT supporting the broad concept presented in alternative 6, including acquisition of the private property in the center of the intersection, while recognizing that this is merely one step in the process of improving the intersection and that significant other changes need to be made for traffic calming to significantly improve safety. (Kazmierczak/Eckenwiler)

**Vote:** Passes, 4 – 0.

**Vision Zero**

The committee briefly discussed the need for broad, high-level, and significant changes to make safety of roadways a priority and part of routine processes. Commissioner Eckenwiler presented two examples: (1) every time a street gets rebuilt, add hard (curb) bulbouts by default; and (2) when repaving requires removal of infrastructure (including bike protection, lane/crosswalk striping, turn hardening), always reinstall the next day. Due to time limitations and in order to gain input from committee members not present, the committee opted to discuss more specific ideas over email.

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**Motion:** Recommend the ANC send a letter to CM Allen and CM Cheh, copying Jeff Marootian, to make recommendations on big ideas on routine processes to promote Vision Zero.

**Vote:** Passes, 4 – 0.

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