ANC 6C Transportation and Public Space Committee
Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center
700 2nd St. NE, Room G3-G4
Thursday, October 3, 2019
7:00 pm

REPORT

Members in Attendance:
- Christy Kwan, chair
- Elissa McDade, vice chair
- David Abernethy
- Comm. Mark Eckenwiler
- Kay Elsasser
- Mark Kazmierczak

1. Verizon - 120 7th St NE

Follow-up on the Verizon telecommunications building at 120 7th St NE. At previous TPS meetings, Verizon and nearby residents have discussed issues with loading and improper use of public space. In the June meeting, Verizon stated they would follow up with updates on the status of the fences along the property line, tree-box fencing, and other issues at the site.

Representatives: Mario Acosta-Velez and Kendra Seto, Verizon [6C01]

Ms. Seto, Verizon Real Estate Manager for DC, DE, and MD, provided an update on the requested fences along the property line and tree boxes. Based on conversations from neighbors, Verizon intends on submitting plans for a wrought iron fence 3’ along the property line (in the design compatible to the neighboring rowhouses) and tree box fencing for each tree.

Verizon will work with staffs from HPO and DDOT on the specific designs themselves and will be in contact when ready. Pending the historic review and permitting process, Verizon hopes the project can be completed by the end of the year or no later than the spring if there are delays.

No motion.

2. CitizenM Hotel - 1222 1st St NE | Application #336636

The redevelopment of 1222 1st St NE (formerly the Ibiza night club) will include the construction of a 10 story mixed use building. Within Patterson St NE, the existing curb cut will be removed, a new curb cut will be constructed for loading, with new sidewalk, curb, 3 planting pits with 2 new street trees and pavers between the planting pits. Along First St NE, new sidewalk will be constructed with bioretention tree pits adjacent to the street with pavers between the bioretention. Within the bioretention, 3 trees will be

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installed. Additional furnishings are located in the amenity space such as seating, tables, and bike racks are proposed.

Representative: Gordon Fraley, Altus Realty [6C06]

Mr. Fraley presented an overview of the hotel, which will utilize modular construction methods where individual hotel rooms will be constructed in Europe within a shipping container, then shipped to Washington, DC for assembly at the site in NoMa. The hotel features 291 rooms within the hotel’s 9 stories plus penthouse level. No parking will be constructed as a part of this project. Along Patterson St NE, the public space plan includes one 23’ curb cut for a loading dock and Pepco utility vaults with grated tops will be set back on private property and not within public space. Along 1st St NE, the hotel will include a 14’3” planting and seating zone (which includes two large trees and one smaller flowering tree) with permeable paving.

The committee’s review of the public space plans noted a desire for a greater number of bike racks than the sole rack currently planned, adding that developers should choose the more functional inverted u-shaped racks. The committee also inquired about pick up/drop off for patrons using taxis or for-hire vehicles since the site will not include parking. The committee expressed that a proposed pick up/and drop off area should be at least two parking spaces on 1st St, located closer to Patterson St, but not too close to encourage drivers to block the crosswalk for people crossing 1st St at Patterson St.

Motion: Recommend the ANC support the application, adding the recommendations to include at least 5 bike racks that are the standard inverted u-shape and that a designated pick up/drop off zone of at least two spaces on the south end of 1st Street NE. (Kwan, McDade)

Vote: Passed, 6 – 0.

3. Brewpub - 601 New Jersey Ave NW | Sidewalk cafe application pending

The existing building at 601 New Jersey Ave NW is being considered as a potential site for development of a new brewery/restaurant (brew pub) on the ground floor which is intended to include a 3,500 square foot outdoor sidewalk cafe facing New Jersey Ave. The operating company (locally founded and owned) is anticipated to occupy a corner of the building at the intersection of New Jersey Ave and G St.

Representative: Clint Brackman, architecture incorporated [6C02]

A team led by Mr. Brackman presented its early concept for a proposed brewery and restaurant at the listed location. A sidewalk café application has not yet been submitted as the team wanted to gather early input from the community. The team stated that the sidewalk café was fundamental to their proposed operations and would not move forward with the project if there was a lack of community support.

The proposed sidewalk café would use existing space between the sidewalk and the building along both New Jersey Ave and G St NW. There will be no hardscape construction; the team will furnish the existing space that already exists. The 3,500 square feet café would include 156 seats,
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While the zoning code allows up to a maximum of 235 seats. Seating will be of different types, including 2-, 4-, and 6-top tables, picnic tables, and an area with a trellis and string lighting.

During discussion, a committee member expressed desire for a wider sidewalk width (7’ instead of the proposed 6’) along G St and that the development team should consider reducing the number of tables along that edge. The committee also noted that Central Union Mission is located across Massachusetts Ave from the proposed site and requested the project team reach out to the Mission to ensure that proposed plans are respectful and mindful of the Mission’s community services. Lastly, the committee encouraged the development team to reach out to the ANC 6C Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Committee to discuss any potential concerns there.

Overall, the committee was supportive of the concept and was encouraged by the early outreach from the project team, but requested that the project team conduct additional outreach to Central Union Mission as a part of its planning process for the sidewalk café application.

No motion.

4. Union Station West Loading Dock Security Enhancement project

Amtrak seeks to improve safety along First St NE and is engaged in a design effort to add 2 new street signs in both directions on First St: before and after the Amtrak loading docks. The new signs will warn of exiting vehicles from the loading docks.

Representative: Charles Jones, Amtrak [6C04]

Mr. Jones from Amtrak presented conceptual plans to improve security at Union Station’s west loading docks along 1st St NE. The two loading docks serve the station’s food court and Amtrak’s shipping services. Amtrak plans to add quick mesh roll-up doors to both loading docks that would require card access:

- The roll-up door at the north loading dock would be closed at all hours and could be opened by either security card or through a telephone that communicates with a security guard stationed at the south loading dock.
- The roll-up door at the south dock would be open during daytime hours, and vendors servicing the station would need to reverse their vehicles into the dock.
- Larger delivery vehicles would continue to utilize the loading zone along 1st St NE instead of using the loading docks.
- In addition to the change in operations, Amtrak proposes to add exiting vehicle signs that light up to alert people walking, bicycling, and driving along 1st St that vehicles intend to exit the loading docks.

Commissioner Eckenwiler noted his concerns related to trucks backing into the loading docks as hazard especially for people who use the 1st St bike lanes. Amtrak responded that they will have someone stationed outside the loading docks for the first couple of months, but not for the long term, to help coordinate traffic. The committee expressed a desire for longer term solutions to improve safety at this specific location. This includes requesting DDOT to implement more serious measures to prevent people driving into the bike lane, particularly now that trucks may
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need to reverse into the loading docks. The committee came to a consensus that DDOT could add 2 or 3 center flex-posts that lead up to a metal center post that flanks both ends of the loading dock. The metal center post would deter people driving vehicles from entering, while the center flex-posts provide a warning to bicyclists to slow down in the bike lanes.

No motion.

5. Louisiana Ave Bike Lanes

Proposed letter regarding the plans for a protected bike lane on Louisiana Ave from Columbus Circle to Constitution Ave.

Representative: Joe McCann, ANC 6C EPE Committee [6C02]

Mr. McCann requested the committee to recommend the ANC to send a letter to the Architect of the Capitol and the Mayor requesting an update on: (1) the status of the Louisiana Ave bike lanes; and (2) the purpose of a newly constructed surface parking lot on New Jersey Ave near Constitution Ave and its impact on the Louisiana Ave bike lane project.

Motion: Recommend the ANC to send a letter. (Eckenwiler, Kazmierczak)
Vote: Passed, 6 – 0.

6. 629-631 Florida Ave NE | Application #327395

Public space application to add stoops for entrance access and upgrade utility work in front of new construction building of 629-631 Florida Ave NE.

Representative: TBD [6C06]

The committee discussed this application as submitted in the DDOT TOPS system. The applicant did not respond to requests to appear at the committee meeting. The committee noted:

- The application’s traffic control plan does not provide safe accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, despite approval from DDOT;
- Construction work in the past few weeks have included pickup and dump trucks on the sidewalk and bike lane/floating bus stop, which puts pedestrians and bicyclists at risk;
- The traffic control plan also fraudulently indicates that sidewalks along Florida Ave NE are 12’ wide; and
- DDOT did not properly deconflict this application with the new improvements along Florida Ave NE.

Motion: Recommend the ANC to send a letter to DDOT Director and cc DDOT Associate Director for the Public Space Regulations Division to revoke the applicant’s existing public space permits and to request DDOT to improve its process to review and approve traffic control plans. (Kwan, Eckenwiler)
Vote: Passed, 6 – 0.