



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E

Representing the communities of Burleith, Georgetown, and Hillandale
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December 6, 2022

Mr. Elliott Garrett
Chair, Public Space Committee
District Department of Transportation
1100 4th Street SW, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20004
PublicSpace.Committee@dc.gov

RE: Public Space Application by the Georgetown BID for the Extension of the Widened Sidewalks Program (DDOT #404852)

Dear Chair Garrett,

On November 29, 2022 ANC 2E held its regularly scheduled public meeting, which was properly noticed and attended by five commissioners, constituting a quorum. At this meeting the Commission adopted the following resolution by a vote of (5-0-0) with regard to the above-referenced matter:

In the summer of 2020, in response to COVID public health needs, ANC 2E supported the temporary widened sidewalks pilot so that our businesses could safely accommodate their customers. The ANC stated to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) the following with regard to the pilot application: “The ramifications of the pilot on Georgetown will be significant, and thus this resolution is not intended to create a permanent solution.” Over the past two years, our community has experienced both positives and negatives regarding the widened sidewalks’ impact, while evolving its thinking regarding the uses of public space.

Using these lessons, the applicant, ANC 2E, DDOT, and others are collaborating on the long-term design of Georgetown’s public realm, streetscape, and transportation functions. Collaborative activities that will occur in 2023 include:

- **Community-Wide Analysis:** DDOT, with management support from the applicant, will conduct a Georgetown Transportation Access and Circulation Study. The study will focus on making our streets and sidewalks safer, more accessible, and less congested while honoring the historic character of the neighborhood. Community input will be a critical part of this study.

COMMISSIONERS:

Kishan Putta, District 1 Jenny Mitchell, District 2 Rick Murphy, District 3
Lisa Palmer, District 5 Gwendolyn Lohse, District 6
Elizabeth Miller, District 7

- Citywide Streatery Guidelines: The District’s temporary program for streateries will end on December 31, 2023. A set of proposed permanent guidelines will be issued for comment sometime in 2023. Many of the applicant’s sidewalk extensions house temporary streateries.

As previously communicated to DDOT, outdoor dining, which many of the applicants’ wider sidewalks host, has been well received. ANC 2E, however, continues to have concerns regarding the impact of the wider sidewalks on aesthetics, traffic flow, and safety, including:

- Aesthetics: The pilot materials, especially the cement barriers required by DDOT, are not in keeping with Georgetown’s historic character. The aesthetic is especially unappealing in places where there is limited use of the widened sidewalks. Guidelines and enforcement for what sits on the wider sidewalks are not consistently applied. ANC 2E strongly believes that beyond this application, should there be a more permanent design for sidewalk extensions proposed in the future, any such application must be more in keeping with the historic character of Georgetown.
- Traffic Flow: M Street NW and Wisconsin Avenue NW are principal arterials per DDOT’s functional classification map. Many necessary functions, including people and package delivery, bus stops, shared rides, loading and unloading, and trash management now frequently use traffic lanes, thus causing inefficient traffic flow. Illegal parking is frequently seen near retail establishments. Long-term proposals should better incorporate the necessary functions of a busy commercial area.
- Safety: Long-term proposals must address safety issues for more crowded roads and sidewalks. For example, the application increased the amount of bike and scooter parking on the widened sidewalks; however, attracting more bikes and scooters to these major roads with no integration plan means riders are squeezed between the cement barriers and big trucks, or ride among pedestrians and strollers on the sidewalks.

While ANC 2E supports another year-long extension of the pilot given 2023 planning activities, the ANC does request that DDOT and the Georgetown BID considers short-term solutions to improve the above-noted traffic flow and safety concerns. Options may include closing underutilized widened sidewalks where dining is not occurring. Additional aesthetic enforcement is expected. The ANC looks forward to long-term planning regarding our community’s valuable public spaces.

Commissioner Gwendolyn Lohse (2E06@anc.dc.gov) and Elizabeth Miller (2E07@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard G. Murphy, Jr.

Rick Murphy
Chair, ANC 2E