

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



### RESOLUTION RE PROPOSED PERMANENT GUIDELINES FOR STREATERIES

We thank the DC Department of Transportation for developing new long-term guidelines for “streateries” to provide more effective provisions covering restaurants’ choices for using public street space for outdoor dining in the District.

We also appreciate the extension of time to submit comments on the proposed guidelines to the Public Space Committee.

Beginning during the COVID-19 emergency in 2020, ANC 3A had two streateries adjacent to multiple businesses at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Macomb Street NW, which together served four local restaurants: Raku, Barcelona, 2Amys, and Cactus Cantina.

The ANC has been in touch with those establishments to seek their feedback on the proposed new guidelines and also with District Bridges, the non-profit organization that manages the Cleveland Park Main Street and submitted the applications for the temporary permits for the two streateries in our area. Those permits were initially approved when the blocks in question were part of ANC 3C serving Cleveland Park. (ANC 3A was established in the redistricting of 2022 and went into operation in January 2023, serving the areas in Cathedral Heights and Cathedral Commons that were previously part of ANC 3C.)

Only one of the streateries is currently in active use in ANC 3A, located on Macomb Street in front of 2Amys and Cactus Cantina.

Some members of the community have been highly pleased with the availability of additional outdoor dining space in the area that was made possible by the streateries program. Others have expressed concern about the reduction in on-street parking or curbside driving space during rush hour, as well as criticisms of the appearance of the streateries as a detraction from the look of the streetscape.

Some of the restaurant owners in our area expressed an interest in continuing to use streateries space after the temporary permits expire.

However, a number of local restaurants have shared concerns about specific aspects of the proposed permanent guidelines:

- new fees on applicants for use of streateries spaces, including a \$260 permit application fee and an annual \$20/square foot rental fee,
- a prohibition on streateries in the curbside lane if there are rush hour parking restrictions on the street in question (or were, prior to COVID-19 and establishment of temporary streateries).

Both of those proposals create potential obstacles for restaurants in our ANC area.

While it is difficult to calculate exactly what the fees would mean, many restaurants are concerned that the rental fees could make streateries uneconomical, especially if a restaurant has a long street frontage or is using a large share of a streateries adjacent to multiple businesses that extends beyond the area immediately adjoining the establishment.

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**Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (January 1, 2023-December 31, 2024)** [www.anc3a.org](http://www.anc3a.org)

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In addition, all the blocks of commercial development on Wisconsin Avenue in the blocks where there are restaurants in our part of the District are currently posted with rush hour parking restrictions, so no streateries would be allowed on that street after July 31, 2025, if the proposed guidelines are adopted. That would mean the streateries that were formerly in use on Wisconsin Avenue at Macomb Street to serve Raku, Barcelona, and Cactus Cantina could no longer be used. Only the streatory on Macomb Street near the intersection with Wisconsin Avenue would be permitted under the proposed guidelines.

The draft guidelines allow for applicants to appeal the prohibition on streateries in blocks with rush hour restrictions, but DDOT staff members have indicated in meetings/listening sessions that the policy would be not to allow curbside space to be used for streateries in any part of a continuous street unless the entire length of the street were approved for that use.

We would like to offer a few recommendations to supplement the proposed guidelines:

- 1) One option going forward would be to conduct an annual evaluation of the streateries program including opportunities for public review and comment.
- 2) DDOT also could provide for making adjustments of the fees if experience shows that the level of the fees is out of line with the program goals.
- 3) The proposed guidelines state that curbside space could be removed from the streatory program if the travel lane or parking lane is later needed for other transportation purposes such as a bus priority lane or a protected bike lane. DDOT has also suggested that residents or communities could submit comments for consideration by DDOT during its annual review of the program, to provide an opportunity for individuals or organizations to share concerns about congestion, safety, or other public interests adversely affected by streateries. That seems like a sound approach.
- 4) Would it be possible for streatory spaces to continue to be used in curbside lanes that are signed for rush hour parking restrictions if DDOT and/or the community have not identified parking issues or traffic congestion that would require returning those lanes to their previous use as rush hour traffic lanes and/or non-rush hour parking spaces?
- 5) One compelling justification for allowing streatory space to be used for outdoor dining even where there are signs showing rush hour parking restrictions could be where there is a lane drop on the street approaching that block and/or a bus stop in the parking lane such that motor vehicles are already diverted away from the curbside lane, for example, just south of Calvert Street on Wisconsin Avenue NW. That could create a unique condition that might justify treating the curbside lane differently than in other portions of the arterial.

The proposed guidelines on page 6 under Location Guidelines, 3.1 Parking Lane Streateries, "If you cannot meet the requirements listed above, you must seek relief from the Public Space Committee (PSC)." It appears that if a proposed streatory is not consistent with the guidelines, the process would follow the course on page 17 and go through a PSC hearing. Some of the above-noted factors could be considered in that process.


It could be helpful if DDOT indicated some standards or indicators for considering relief from the prohibition on use of curbside space with rush hour parking restrictions, such as some of the elements listed on page 19 under Required Documents: Streatory Block Permit, in section 2, Curbside Management and Delivery Plan. In the current proceeding on the proposed guidelines, we encourage the Public Space Committee to review all comments submitted and specifically consider the feedback from establishments about the proposed level of fees, to assess whether they are on one hand too low to adequately reflect the value of the public space for transportation uses or on the other hand so high that establishments would be deterred from participating in the program because of cost, even if they

want to make use of streatory space and contribute to the vitality, foot traffic, and customer base of local business.

It will be important for the agency to continue to pay attention to input from business establishments, ANCs and members of the public to ensure that the streateries program or individual streateries in local neighborhoods are meeting public purposes including health, safety and general welfare or are interfering with overall public interests.



Chair



Secretary

This resolution was approved by the Commission by a vote of 3-0 at its duly-noticed public meeting on November 13, 2024, at which a quorum was present. (Two of the three sitting Commissioners constitute a quorum.) By the same vote, the Commission designated the Chair or Commissioner Ann Mladinov, ANC3A05, to represent the Commission on this matter.