



To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: September 8, 2016
RE: **Signage & Awning Encroachment at 202 S Robinson Street; UDC No. 2016-38**

I. APPLICANT

Patrick Farley, Watershed PC

II. LOCATION

City right-of-way on the west side of Robinson Street at 202 S Robinson Street.

Property Owner:

Kenzie Korman

III. PURPOSE

The application is for review of a metal awning with attached projecting signage at 202 S Robinson Street for a new business use on the ground floor of the property.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

Currently, the Department of Public Works is working with the Permits & Inspections to determine whether the attached signage will require a code modification due to its height; however, due to the time-sensitive nature of the project, the UDC is making a recommendation on the aesthetics of the project, subject to the eventual determination.

Staff finds the project to be well-considered and attractive, achieving the need for sun and weather protection and signage while not cluttering a tight sidewalk and streetscape at the site. Additionally, staff finds that the project is accommodating the low elevation of the storefront, and complies with Urban Design Guidelines to compliment the rest of the building. Staff also acknowledges that the sign encroachment may require a code modification to move forward, but is satisfied that the aesthetics of the project meet the Urban Design Guidelines. Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Department of Public Works grant approval of the encroachment request subject to other approval and regulatory permission.

Staff Contact:

Kathleen Onufer, (804) 646-5207

V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

This is a property zoned R-63 that faces the Robinson St frontage. To its south is a restaurant and alley access, and to the north a residential property that faces Parkwood Ave.

b. Scope of Review

The project involves the provision of a metal awning and attached projecting signage that encroach into the public right-of-way over the sidewalk of S Robinson Street.

The encroachment process is administered through the Department of Public Works, which has requested that the Urban Design Committee (UDC) provide design advice on certain types of encroachments. The UDC does not have the authority to approve encroachments, but rather provides advice to the Department of Public Works.

c. Project Description

The intent of the project is to provide weather protection in the form of an awning for the business as well as signage while minimizing encroachments and clutter on the façade. The awning is minimalist form of painted steel that will match the cladding of fenestrations. Functionally, it is designed to be self-bracing to resist wind loading, primarily through to vertical end plate. This end plate is then used to provide an integrated sign-mount that is visible from both direction of the sidewalk. The awning also provides for downcast lighting in the form of recessed LEDs integral to the canopy. It will have steel rod supports and braces. The property is undergoing a full storefront renovation.

The awning will encroach 2' into the right of way; the sidewalk is just over 8' wide. The awning itself will be mounted at elevation 9'5" on the building. A requirement of the code is that if a sign projects more than 4" into the right-of-way that it must allow for a minimum clearance of 8' above grade. The wooden signage is 2' by 2', and is bolted to both faces of the awning brace at elevation 9'1". Because of the 2' length of the sign, this means that the sign will be below the 8' minimum clearance height.

d. UDC Review History

Staff was unable to identify any prior projects involving the subject rights-of-way.

e. Master Plan

The Master Plan highlights that commercial uses can be found along Robinson Street, and identifies conflict between residential and commercial uses over traffic, parking, noise, and housing deterioration as a long-term issue for the district (page 227, 229). The plan also encourages creative reuse strategies for vacant commercial properties (page 229).

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Guidelines have this to say about signage: Signs encroaching into the public right-of-way should be compatible in scale, style, and composition with the building or storefront design as a whole. Signs should not obscure a building's important architectural features and details that define a building's design, particularly in the case of older buildings" (page 27). And also: "Durable materials and quality manufacturing should be used for all signs. If a sign projects more than four inches into the public right-of-way, it must allow for a minimum clearance of eight feet above grade." (page 27). They recommend that "awnings and canopies respect the shape of the storefront, door, or window opening" and that materials, size, and color should be "coordinated with the overall building" (page 29).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**

c. Plans