



Urban Design Committee

Report to Department of Public Works

UDC 2022-11	Final Review	Meeting Date: 3/10/2022
Applicant/Petitioner	David Johannas, Johannas Design Group	
Project Description	Request encroachment to allow the legal use of unaffixed tables and chairs along the City sidewalk on the Stuart Avenue side of the corner Starbucks coffee shop at 400 N. Robinson Street.	
Project Location		
Address: 400 North Robinson Street		
Property Owner: DIRADOUR THE LLC		
<p>The applicant proposes to install an outdoor dining area in front of the Robinson Street Starbucks on the sidewalk within the public right-of-way along Stuart Avenue.</p> <p>The outdoor dining area will not be enclosed.</p> <p>Outdoor seating will include metal tables and chairs.</p>		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Ray Roakes, raymond.roakes@rva.gov , (804) 646-5467	
Previous Reviews	None.	
Conditions for Approval	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The property owner is responsible for ensuring that a clear path of access is maintained on the sidewalk adjacent to the subject property outside of the approved encroachment area as shown on the Plans. 2) The plans shall be amended to provide a minimum of 8 feet between any tables and chairs and the existing bike rack along the Stuart Avenue frontage, updated plans to be approved by Staff. 	

Findings of Fact

Site Description	The subject property is located on the northwest corner of Stuart Avenue and North Robinson Street. The adjacent neighborhood is developed with small scale commercial uses immediately adjacent to the subject property with primarily residential rowhouse uses in the greater neighborhood.
Scope of Review	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.
Project Description	<p>The existing restaurant use, Starbucks, would like the ability to encroach into the right-of-way to provide an area for outdoor dining along Stuart Avenue. The encroachment would extend into the sidewalk, leaving a minimum of 4 feet clear for pedestrians on the sidewalk adjacent to the encroachment, but at least 5 foot clear of any obstructions that might be beyond the extent of the sidewalk. Approximately seven sets of tables and chairs will be provided. Staff believes that the outdoor dining will contribute to the vitality of the popular neighborhood corner.</p> <p>Public Works Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails has provided the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables next to the bike racks create potential pinch points. • Scooters are also often left along the adjacent sidewalk creating difficulty to navigate the sidewalk. • With the current layout, chairs are parallel to the sidewalk and do not encroach into the needed space for pedestrian access, but if chairs are moved into the sidewalk or a third chair is added to a table, the sidewalk will be impaired. • A sandwich board sign is commonly provided in front of the front door to the restaurant and at the top of the ADA access ramp from the intersection. This sign location impedes ADA and pedestrian access. <p>In relation to these comments, Staff recommends the following conditions of approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property owner is responsible for ensuring that a clear path of access is maintained on the sidewalk adjacent to the subject property outside of the approved encroachment area as shown on the Plans. • The plans shall be amended to provide a minimum of 8 feet between any tables and chairs and the existing bike rack along the Stuart Avenue frontage, updated plans to be approved by Staff.

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
Richmond 300 Master Plan	Goal 4: Richmond 300-Urban Design: Establish a distinctive city comprising architecturally significant buildings connected by a network of walkable urban streets and open spaces to support an engaging built environment.	Staff believes that outdoor dining establishments, such as the one being proposed, increase the amount of usable space for citizens to enjoy, specifically patrons of restaurants that have limited capability to utilize outdoor space without encroaching into the public right-of-way. Furthermore, outdoor dining increases the amount of activity on the street, creating an engaging space between buildings and passerby and increasing the vibrancy of the streetscape.
Urban Design Guidelines	“Outdoor dining facilities that encroach into the public right-of-way should only be considered when there is adequate sidewalk width to accommodate both the dining facilities and the pedestrian.” Also, “the outdoor dining furnishings should reflect the character of the restaurant while respecting the spirit of the street design” (page 29).	The proposed outdoor dining area will extend approximately 2 feet from the south face of the building into the sidewalk right-of-way, for roughly 62 feet along the façade. Roughly 4 feet of useable sidewalk remains for pedestrian use on the existing sidewalk. The proposed encroachment is a minimum of five feet from permanent obstructions that might exist beyond the extent of the sidewalk. Approximately seven sets of tables and chairs are proposed. Staff finds that the color and material of the outdoor seating matches existing bicycle parking located adjacent to the encroachment. The proposed color and material will also match existing Starbucks building design elements and is similar to design elements in the surrounding commercial uses.