04-16

Historic Takoma, Inc.

"Preserving the Heritage of Takoma Park-MD and Takoma-DC"

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2005 MAR -7 PM 12: 42

March 7, 2005

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-16
EXHIBIT NO. 22

Carol J. Minton, Chairperson
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 210

Dear Ms. Minton:

Historic Takoma, Inc. is writing to voice its general support for the Takoma Park Overlay Zone that was developed with a goal of revitalization of our Takoma historic district commercial area with the following provisions. We would like to suggest revisions to the overlay zone language that we believe, upon reading the exchanges our community has had on this issue, to be a balanced way to resolve concerns and provide safeguards.

The Takoma Park Central District Plan was developed with the idea that buildings in our commercial areas would not exceed four stories in height. This was something discussed by community because of the proximity to our historic residential areas, a desire to retain our unique small town atmosphere, and the knowledge that our existing adjacent commercial area on Carroll Avenue is even lower in height. While some have expressed a concern that the overlay zone will allow more than four stories, this can be resolved by simply stating in the overlay zone language that buildings are not to exceed four stories. We believe this language is necessary to be consistent with our Plan.

We would also suggest that because of the way the compliance point for height is measured, that the 55 foot height should not be exceeded anywhere on the property. This would allow a development such as Cedar Crossings, which has a 55 foot fronting on Cedar Street with a 47.9 foot official compliance height to be built without a concern that topography may allow a 62 foot or greater building at the street front. Also, buildings that are already in the "pipeline" such as 235 Carroll Avenue should not be included in this zoning overlay zone because the developer has already had lengthy discussions on height and massing with the community.

We do not agree that a 55 foot height or four story building will be appropriate in all areas you are showing in the map of the overlay zone. While the height of Cedar Crossings works because it is immediately adjacent to the Metro Station platform, many of the other commercial areas are immediately adjacent to our residential historic district. We will vigorously oppose building to the full zoning height in areas we believe should

A Member of the United Way of the National Capital Area
Agency Code 8361

6903 Laurel Avenue ❖ Takoma Park, MD ❖ 20912 ❖ 301.270.2831
P.O. Box 5781 ❖ Takoma Park, MD ❖ 20913 ❖

Historic Takoma is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Maryland and the District of Columbia

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-16
EXHIBIT NO.22

03/08/2005 05:07 13015852117 CPF ASSOC PAGE 02

be sensitive to existing development, particularly along Blair Road, Spring Place, the Metro site, and the corner of Carroll and Cedar, before the Historic Preservation Review Board. The full zoning height may also be problematic for the low historic buildings on 4th Street. We would have preferred that these areas be exempted from the overlay zone height allowance. However, we realize that the proposed setback is desirable in many of these areas. We would like to see language in the overlay zone that states that building to the full zoning height in all of these areas may not be recommended because of the proximity to our residential historic district.

Finally, the requirement that retail space must have a 14 foot ceiling should not be applied to existing historic buildings that are renovated for retail use. This may hamper restoration and the adaptive re-use of these buildings. In addition, we wonder if it would be advisable to allow developers in general to decide whether a given retail space works well with a 10 to 12 foot ceiling height rather than a 14 foot height, and give them the flexibility to determine this.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our comments and for your interest in our community.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Alcorn Baron
President
Historic Takoma, Inc.

Lorraine J. Pearsall
Vice President
Historic Takoma, Inc.



Historic Takoma, Inc.

"Preserving the Heritage of Takoma Park-MD and Takoma-DC"

Fax

To:	Carol J. Minton, Zoning Commission	**From:**	Lorraine J. Pearsall
Fax:	(202) 727 - 6072	**Pages:**	3 including cover
Phone:		**Date:**	March 7, 2005
Re:	Takoma Park Overlay Zone	**CC:**	

x **Urgent** ☐ **For Review** ☐ **Please Comment** ☐ **Please Reply** ☐ **Please Recycle**

• **Comments:**

Please find attached our comments on the Takoma Park Overlay Zone.

Historic Takoma, Inc.

The information contained in this facsimile is privileged and confidential information intended for the sole use of the addressee. If the reader of this facsimile is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivery to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this FAX in error, please immediately notify the person listed above and return the original message by mail to the sender at the address listed above.