City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Office of the City Council

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7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

The Honorable Joy Austin-Lane
Councilmember, Ward 1

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March 9, 2005

Carol J. Mitten, Chairperson
D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Ms. Mitten,

I was interested to learn about the DC planning process underway that will affect the Takoma DC commercial area and Takoma Park residents near the boundary with DC. I appreciate that this overlay zone is based on recommendations in the June 2002 Takoma Central District Plan. The City of Takoma Park was invited to participate in the review of that document by former ANC Sara Green and the City Council provided comments and recommendations after hearing from our residents. We subsequently collaborated with the DC government to fund and carry out the Takoma Transportation Study. Given this recent working relationship between our two jurisdictions, I want to provide my comments on the latest proposal that will have shared impacts on Takoma Park, Maryland.

The provisions of the overlay zone appear to advance the pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood retail feel desirable to the community. It specifies that new development or additions to buildings require a 13' sidewalk width, retail on the first floor of mixed use buildings, and a maximum height. There are some aspects of the proposal that will have a direct impact on residents on the Maryland side of the Metro tracks. One is that residential development is encouraged in the area to support neighborhood retail and the other is that certain buildings may be up to 55 feet high (4 to 5 stories). However, without the overlay zone, the existing provisions would allow uses and site designs that are not desirable.

My one concern will possibly be addressed in other levels of review for proposed developments. It pertains to the transition from commercial properties that abut residential properties. I believe there needs to be a stepping down in height, as well as landscape buffering to lessen the impact of commercial development on residential areas. Unfortunately, the proposed overlay zone does not specify the appropriate transition from commercial to residential that would show sensitivity to residential properties.

Residents in Takoma Park, Maryland are generally very supportive of the development projects that are underway in the area around the Takoma Metro station. They support revitalization of our shared business district and improved relations with the DC government. With the

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CASE NO. 04-16
EXHIBIT NO. 37

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-16
EXHIBIT NO.37

exception of the development on the Metro green space, the consensus in the community is that things are moving in the right direction. I appreciate the role that the DC Office on Planning and the Zoning Commission have played in that improvement.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my remarks. Please include them in the public record.

Sincerely,

Joy Austin-Lane

Joy Austin-Lane
Takoma Park City Councilmember, Ward 1

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Takoma Park, MD 20912

The Honorable Joy Austin-Lane
Councilmember, Ward 1

The City of Takoma Park

To:	Carol J. Mitten, Chairperson
Fax:	202-727-6072
From:	Suzanne Ludlow for Joy Austin-Lane
Subject:	Takoma/DC Commercial Area
Date:	March 9, 2005
Pages:	3, including cover sheet

Re: Case #04-16

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