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No of pages:
Date: March 14, 2005

To: Ms Carol Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission
Fax: 202-727-6072

From: Faith Wheeler
Commissioner, ANC 4B02
Fax 202-882-7565

Subject: Takoma Overlay Zone, case no 04-16
ERRATA for Preference Survey results.

Reference. Building height:

A total of 71% preferred a height limit of 50' maximum. That figure dropped to 65% if Zoning Commission approval might be delayed for 6 months, for example.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-16
EXHIBIT NO. 43

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-16
EXHIBIT NO.43

FAX

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To: Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission
Fax: 202-727-6072

From Frank Wheeler
Commissioner, ANC 4B02
Fax: 202-882-7565

Subject: Takoma Overlay Zone, case no. 04-16
Preference Survey results

Please see attached

PREFERENCE SURVEY
- TAKOMA OVERLAY ZONE -

	GENERAL PREFERENCE			IF ZONING COMMISSION APPROVAL WERE DELAYED FOR 6 MOS, for example		
	CURRENT LIMITS	Planning office Proposal	OPTION "C"	CURRENT LIMITS	Planning office proposal	Option "C"
1) Ground Floor retail	9%	18%	73%	7%	43%	50%
2) Building height	12%	29%	59%	16%	35%	48%
3) Setback	-	15%	85%	-	42%	58%
4) Buffer	i) 8' set-back	ii) 4' stepped back	iii) Compatibility	i) 8' set-back	ii) 4' stepped back	iii) Compatibility
	85%	79%	88%	74%	65%	71%

For each of the three provisions presented by the Office of Planning Takoma Overlay Zone proposal, Option "C" recommendations were selected as the general preference by an overwhelming majority of respondents. Even in the event that Zoning Commission approval were delayed, respondents still preferred Option "C" recommendations over the Planning Office proposal and Current limits

Ground Floor retail: 73% generally preferred Option "C" These are the Office of Planning requirements PLUS a conversion clause in case the retail space remains vacant more than 6 months If inclusion of the conversion clause would mean that Zoning Commission approval might be delayed for 6 months, for example, then the percentage of respondents that preferred Option "C" dropped to 50%

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-16
EXHIBIT NO. 42

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Building height: A total of 71% preferred a height limit of 50' maximum. That figure dropped to 55% if Zoning Commission approval might be delayed for 6 months, for example.

Setback: 85% of the respondents preferred Option "c": 15' setback from curbline. If Zoning Commission approval would be delayed for 6 months, for example, that figure dropped to 58% (One respondent specified that if the Zoning Commission approval were delayed for 3 months, his/her preference would change to a 13' setback.

Buffer: ci) 85% of the respondents preferred a minimum 2' setback from the shared property line where the residential and commercial zones abut. 74% preferred this recommendation if there were a 6 month delay in getting Zoning Commission approval.

cii) 79% of the respondents preferred a minimum of 4' step-back from the building line of the commercial building, above the roofline of homes in the adjacent residential zone. This figure dropped to 65% if Zoning Commission approval were delayed for 6 months, for example

ciii) 88% of the respondents preferred compatibility of the commercial building facade, landscaping, streetscaping, sidewalk treatment, street furniture, etc. with the adjacent residential zone. If Zoning Commission approval were

TAKOMA OVERLAY ZONE
~ PREFERENCE SURVEY ~

Name: PRINT Lowell Ungar	Name: SIGN	
Address: 6827 4th	**Phone:**	**Email:**

For each of the four provisions, please indicate your preference for "Option a" (Current Zoning Requirements), "Option b", or "Option c" or, regarding the Buffer question, "Options c-i, c-ii, and c-iii".

Provision:	a.	b.	c. & c-i.	c-ii.	c-iii.
1. Ground Floor Retail			X		
2. Building Height					
3. Setback			X		
4. Buffer			X	X	

Follow the same instructions as above, but consider the possibility that Zoning Commission approval might be delayed for 6 months, for example, for any of the Option c provisions. (Note that plans to construct other buildings are under way.)

Provision :	a.	b.	c. & c-i.	c-ii.	c-iii.
1. Ground Floor Retail					
2. Building Height		X			
3. Setback		X			
4. Buffer					

The Takoma Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District
(Also known as the Takoma Overlay Zone)
*** Case No. 04-16 ***

OFFICE OF PLANNING'S PROPOSALS

The Takoma Overlay Zone, issued by the Office of Planning on October 18, 2004, basically presents three proposals, as follows, to apply to new construction along the "Designated roadways" shown on the attached Exhibit 3:

1) Require ground floor retail with minimum ceiling height of 14' (in at least 50% of the ground floor)
2) Allow a maximum of 55' in total building height over the part of the buildings with ground floor retail.
3) Require a minimum 13' setback from the curbline to the street wall of new buildings

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 4B

DRAFT RESOLUTION
on the
TAKOMA OVERLAY ZONE

1. Ground Floor Retail:

Whereas a minimum 14' ground floor retail ceiling is considered appropriate for current retail standards,

Whereas residents are interested in having additional retail businesses in the neighborhood that will serve more of their needs and interests than currently is the case,

Whereas 3 development sites have already been exempted from the ground floor retail requirement,

Whereas some concern has been expressed about building a surplus of retail space that could result in long-term vacant retail space,

We therefore recommend that the minimum 14' ground floor ceilings, utilizing a minimum of 50% of the ground floor of new construction, as proposed in the Office of Planning's Takoma Overlay Zone be approved, and accompanied by an explicit provision for possible conversion of such space to residential or office use if left vacant for more than 6 months.

2. Height:

Whereas the current height limit is 50' along the "Designated Roadways" shown in the proposed Takoma Overlay Zone,

Whereas adhering to that same height limit of 50' may be able to be approved by the Zoning Commission on March 14,

Whereas the proposal for the Takoma Overlay Zone explicitly states that its purpose is to implement the Small Area Plan for the Takoma Central District,

Whereas the Office of Planning's "Takoma Central District Plan" (January 2002) explicitly recommends that "New commercial and residential development should be neighborhood-driven in scale and approach." and that "New residential and commercial buildings should be no more than 2-4 four stories in height to match existing neighborhood scale."

Whereas buildings 2-4 stories tall are in keeping with the existing architectural character and scale which makes Takoma DC and surrounding neighborhoods unique,

Whereas the community celebrates its unique heritage as a diverse neighborhood and works to preserve its historic character,

Whereas those who support the proposed Overlay as is state that there is no intention for the proposed changes in building height (from 50 to 55 feet) to encourage a fifth story,

Whereas within a 50 foot tall building, 4 stories can be built with a 14 foot ground floor ceiling,

Whereas the minimum 14' ceilings for ground floor retail are required only in a minimum of 50% of the ground floor, thereby allowing for higher ceilings and higher rents or sale prices in 50% of the building,

Whereas, a number of residents support mixed income housing, and the different ceiling heights would lead to a significant difference in range of prices, albeit at the upper end of the scale for this part of the city,

We therefore recommend that the current limit of 50' be adhered to and that the Zoning Regulations be amended to also stipulate that the height of new residential and commercial buildings in the Takoma Overlay Zone be no more than 2-4 stories if either no additional review process is required or an abbreviated review process could be used.

3. Setback:

Whereas a minimum 15' setback from the curbline is considered "better" for residents and enjoys "widespread" support among residents as well as support by the Office of Planning's Development Review Specialist,

Whereas it is our understanding that proposing a minimum 15' setback from the curbline would necessitate taking such a proposal through the review process again,

We therefore recommend that a minimum 15' setback be approved by the Zoning Commission if an abbreviated review process could be used

4. Appropriate Transitions from Commercial to Residential Zones:

Whereas appropriate transitions from commercial to residential zones have been considered in public forum only since February 21 in the ANC 4B02 Single Member District meeting,

Whereas, on the basis of this initial discussion of the subject, the Office of Planning's Development Review Specialist and the Plan Takoma Board were considering including this in its final report and letter, respectively,

Whereas, a number of residents are concerned about this issue,

Whereas the C-2-A proposed Overlay abuts residential zones in several places (See attached Exhibit 3),

Whereas the proximity of a tall, multi-story building next to a single family home or historically "contributing" building may significantly reduce the value of that overshadowed building as well as the light and space around it,

Whereas it is our understanding that approval of such a measure would necessitate taking the proposal through the review process again,

We therefore recommend that the Zoning Commission approve the following measures now if an abbreviated review process could be used.

Recommended measures: that the proposed Overlay be amended to require:

a) an appropriate setback from the property line shared with the adjacent residential zone,
b) a buffer which would provide an appropriate transition in height from the commercial/residential building in the proposed Overlay zone to the home in the adjacent residential zone,
c) a façade -- particularly on the side of the building that faces the residential zone, landscaping and streetscaping, sidewalk treatment, street furniture, etc., that is compatible with the adjacent residential zone in order to help provide an appropriate transition.