



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember, Ward 3
Chair, Committee on Transportation and the Environment

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December 6, 2013

Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
Marcie Cohen, Vice-Chairman
Robert Miller, Commissioner
Michael G. Turnbull, Commissioner
Peter G. May, Commissioner
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210S
Washington, D.C. 20001

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Dear Chairman Hood, Vice-Chairman Cohen, and Commissioners:

I very much appreciate your consideration of an amendment to the Zoning Regulations that would require universities to include commercial properties they own in the Campus Plan process. This issue was raised several years ago when over 1,000 students were excluded from a university's enrollment cap because their classes were located in a commercially zoned building that the university owned. Including all students and academic programs in the Campus Planning process, I believe, will help the Commission and the public to be better able to fully view a university's effect on a neighborhood.

However, I am concerned that one variation of the proposed amendments is overbroad. As I understand it, the current draft amendment would require a university to seek approval from the Zoning Commission whenever there is a change of use a commercial property it owns. This seems too broad. Sometimes universities purchase commercial property not for academic use, but instead as an investment or administrative office space. Whether or not a university signs a lease with a law firm or a grocery store in commercial building that it owns, for example, does not affect its academic program or its students. Therefore, in my view, the amendment should be tailored so that only commercial property that is owned by a university and used for academic or student purposes, or that is converted to such uses during the period of the Campus Plan, is included in the Campus Plan process.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Cheh
Councilmember, Ward 3

cc: Harriet Tregoning, Director, Office of Planning

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.08-06A
EXHIBIT NO.456