

Memorandum

Government of the District of Columbia

TO: D.C. Zoning Commission
Department,
Agency, Office: Planning

FROM: Fred L. Greene, Director
Office of Planning
Date:

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 86-26 (Connecticut Avenue);
Supplemental Memorandum, "Net" vs. "Gross" Floor Area
Requirement

At the July 7, 1988 public hearing on this case, the Zoning Commission asked the Office of Planning (OP) to provide further explanation of the change from "net" floor area to "gross" floor area requirements in the Cleveland Park and Woodley Park Commercial Overlay zones. This memorandum responds to the request.

The original proposed text for advertising utilized the term "net floor area" which is used in some other retail-emphasis zones in other cities.

Fifty percent of the net floor area of the ground level represents a higher requirement, e.g., in the range of 0.7 FAR, than does fifty percent of gross floor area, due to building efficiency factors. Using net floor area also represents a more accurate measurement of actual retail and service uses achieved in the building.

Another related issue is that we originally advertised a less stringent requirement for existing buildings (25% of net floor area) than the 50% required of new construction. Further field work confirmed that quite a high percentage of the ground levels of older buildings is being used commercially. Therefore we became convinced that a 50% requirement would be reasonable for existing as well as new buildings, especially if the requirement were for gross square footage rather than net.

ZONING COMMISSION

CASE No. 86-26

EXHIBIT No. 552

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ZONING SECRETARIAT

ZONING COMMISSION

APR 29 1988
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4/28/88

On balance we concluded that a reasonable approach would be to have a 50% requirement for both existing and new buildings, but to base it on gross floor area. Enforcement and administration would be more efficient, since this is the normal type of floor area computation.

The attached memorandum of January 21, 1988 originally made OP's recommendation for utilizing the same standard for both existing and new buildings. It does not reflect the recommended change from net to gross floor area, which we believe was made orally at a later hearing in the case and during the proceedings on the Macomb-Wisconsin overlay zone. We have concluded as a matter of policy that gross floor area is the preferred method and have used it in all subsequent zones which have a ground floor retail requirement.

Attachment