

February 11, 2013

Councilmember Zachary M. Klein
90 W. Broad Street
Second Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Councilmember Klein,

The Columbus Public Health Healthy Places Program has a mission to increase healthy and active living by establishing development policies and practices that reduce negative health impacts and by creating places that foster physical activity as a part of everyday life. The City of Columbus Urban and Commercial Overlays are instrumental in ensuring the future built environment embraces pedestrian oriented form and design.

This letter is to express Columbus Public Health's support for adoption of the Urban and Community Commercial Overlays as provided for in Chapter 3372 of the Columbus Zoning Code for portions of the Sullivant Avenue corridor. This ordinance is tentatively scheduled for a second reading on February 11, 2013. The Healthy Places program has reviewed the overlays and notes that they will support a safe and active built environment through:

- Reduced building setbacks. Buildings that are built closer to the right-of-way are oriented to the pedestrian and make walking feel safe and comfortable in commercial spaces.
- Increased building size on lots. Maximizing the amount of building per lot fosters a mix of uses on the site. Mixed use development encourages walking and biking to daily destinations.
- Rear placement and screened parking. Moving parking to the back of buildings places emphasis on pedestrians and creates safer access points for walking.
- Front door and front glass window placement requirements. Large glass windows and front doors oriented to the street create a sense of "eyes on the street" and enhance the feeling of safety for walking.

Active living is important to Columbus Public Health for a number of reasons. First, there is an increase in obesity and chronic diseases – both of which can be reduced and prevented with physical activity. The Hilltop neighborhood statistics show that 58.3% of neighborhood adults are overweight or obese. As we improve building forms for pedestrians, we make the built environment safer, therefore reducing injuries and fatalities. Finally, walkable urban development is in growing demand and is shown to be an important step in the economic development and revitalization of transitioning areas. Economically strong neighborhoods have better health.

Moreover, it is important to note that the Greater Hilltop Area Commission voted to endorse the proposed overlays at their December 4, 2012 meeting. The fact that Hilltop residents support these overlays shows our community is ready and waiting for commercial areas that support pedestrian activity.

Columbus Public Health looks forward to seeing the overlays implemented.

Sincerely,



Betsy A. Pandora, MCRP
Healthy Places Coordinator
Columbus Public Health

cc: Dr. Teresa Long, Health Commissioner, Columbus Public Health
Vince Papsidero, Administrator, Planning Division, Department of Development
Priscilla R. Tyson, Health and Human Services Chair, Columbus City Council

