

**TO: Mayor and City Council**  
**FROM: Judy, Orias, President, Allied Neighborhoods Association**  
**SUBJECT: Upper State Street Study and Preparation of Design Guidelines**  
**DATE: 9 October 2007**

Dear Mayor and City Council:

Allied welcomes the present attempt to bring the Upper State Street Study to a conclusion. We trust that public participation will continue to be encouraged in all remaining phases of the endeavor. For example, we urge that all meetings of the proposed Working Group consisting of two ABR members and a planning commissioner be open to the public.

We also request an opportunity for the public to meet key members of the consultant team before they begin work on the Design Guidelines. Such a meeting would make clear to the consultants the community's commitment to the goal of living within our natural and infrastructural resources (including traffic capacity, air quality, and scenic views among others).

To help us reach that long-standing goal, the consultants should be charged and motivated to implement the first and probably most important general principle stated in the April 2007 Upper State Street Study Report:

"Maintain and enhance the character of Upper State Street, including the public streetscape, open space, creeks, views, site design, and building aesthetics."

The work on the USS Design Guidelines should also be guided by another important principle stated in the Report:

"Maintain, enhance and create open space where feasible."

To this environment-friendly end, it is vital that the Guidelines and other conclusions of the Upper State Street Study challenge rather than take for granted at least three questionable planning practices prevalent today in the downtown area:

- (1) the routine failure to exclude the commercial component's square footage when calculating the permitted base density of a mixed-use project's residential component;
- (2) the routine inclusion of the square footage of private roads, *de facto* public easements, and other uninhabitable portions of a property when calculating the permitted base density of the project's residential component;
- (3) the routine permission to turn into building bulk all surface space that is freed up by the undergrounding of required onsite parking.

Until such time that the city's zoning ordinance is clarified or changed to rule out the planning practices just mentioned, a 1.0 floor/area ratio should be adopted for Upper State Street mixed-use developments in cases where the existing setback, parking, and building height requirements of the SD-2 ordinance fail to impose even stricter limits.

We thank you for your attention.

Judy Orias, President, for

Allied Neighborhoods Association