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Collegetown plan and guidelines get committee's approval

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Ithaca Common Council's planning committee voted 4-1 late Wednesday night to adopt the Collegetown Urban Plan and Design Guidelines.

The controversial and greatly debated plan calls for allowing taller buildings on a few sections of College and Linden Avenues and decreasing building heights in some areas deemed the periphery of Collegetown. It also calls for implementing a parking in-lieu fee that would allow developers to build less on-site parking in exchange for paying money that would be used for things like mass transit improvements or a remote parking garage.

Alderpersons Jennifer Dotson (I-1st), Dan Cogan (D-5th), Svante Myrick (D-4th), and Eric Rosario (I-2nd), voted in favor. Alderwoman Mary Tomlan (D-3rd), voted against.

Before the final vote, Tomlan introduced numerous amendments to further decrease allowable building height, to require a parking study before implementing the in-lieu fee, and to wait for adoption of the plan until after the city completes a revision of its city-wide comprehensive plan.

Ultimately, Tomlan said she voted against because she didn't want the Collegetown plan to be seen as superceding the comprehensive plan.

Myrick, the most vocal advocate on Common Council for taller, denser buildings in Collegetown, said he strongly considered voting against, because so many of the height increases initially proposed by the city's consultant were stripped from the plan. He said he voted in favor in an effort to move forward on the many positive aspects of the plan.
