

Universities band together to oppose proposed Interim Zoning District

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Loyola University
504-865-5210

Leaders of higher education institutions in New Orleans are voicing strong opposition to an Interim Zoning District (IZD) proposed by District A Councilmember Susan Guidry. Under the proposal, construction on certain college campuses could be stalled for a year or more, as well as be subjected to singular review and regulations.

Download Councilmember Guidry's motion
for a proposed Interim Zoning District [here](#).

A coalition of presidents from Tulane, Loyola and Xavier universities believes the motion is an unnecessary, unfair and discriminatory reaction to complaints from a neighborhood organization that is really focused on Tulane's planned on-campus football stadium. The new stadium will be built entirely on the Tulane campus, not far from the site of the old Tulane Stadium, which was a treasured icon in New Orleans for 50 years. The new stadium complies with all zoning laws and does not require a variance. It is scheduled to open in 2014.

Councilmember Guidry's motion could adversely impact Tulane, Xavier and Loyola and other universities. It applies only to colleges and universities, and not other kinds of business or nonprofit operations (for example, a church or secondary school). It attempts to impose on colleges and universities regulations and processes that have not been thoroughly vetted, much less passed into law.

"The proposed IZD basically tells our universities that they are being singled out to conform to restrictions not being applied to other entities in New Orleans. The motion does not represent progressive or sound public policy, and is inconsistent with the very principles and processes it purports to advance," says Tulane President Scott Cowen.

The IZD could delay planned construction at the affected universities for extended periods of time. Once a motion for an IZD is passed, no building permits can be filed until the matter is heard by the City Planning Commission, is reported to the Council and acted on by the Council. Even though the draft motion sets forth a one year time period, it can be extended pursuant to the Home Rule Charter.

The universities potentially impacted by the motion were not consulted on its content and were only told about it after the motion was filed. The proposed IZD is scheduled for discussion at this Thursday's City Council meeting, before Tulane has had an opportunity to complete its parking and traffic studies, as well as the overall design of the stadium. Tulane has been open and transparent with neighbors, holding more than a dozen meetings and pledging to share that information.

Media Contacts: Mike Strecker, Tulane University 504-865-5210
Meredith Hartley, Loyola University 504-722-6078