

Ken Archer
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Nov. 15, 2010

DC Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning Hearing Room
441 4th Street, Suite 220 (Via fax: 202-727-6072)

RE: Support for Case 08-06 – Parking (Comprehensive Zoning Regulations: Chapters B-15, B-16)

Dear Commissioners:

Good evening, my name is Ken Archer. I live in Georgetown at 1626 33rd Street. I am here to express my strong support for the proposals to largely remove parking minimums and institute meaningful maximums such as the 1 per 1,000 sq ft maximum in transit areas initially proposed by DDOT, and to enable shared parking and require carsharing spaces.

My wife and I have chosen to live in Georgetown because it is livable, walkable, and it is possible to make nearly all of our trips without driving. I take the Circulator and the 15k to my job in Tyson's Corner where I own a software company, and my wife and 2-year-old son take the D6 to my son's playgroup in the Palisades Rec Center and to my wife's work at Sibley Hospital. Like 1 in 5 Georgetowners, we own no car, and rely on Zipcar for the few times that we need to drive.

While Georgetown is increasingly made up of residents seeking a livable, walkable neighborhood, some of my neighbors continue to express a windshield perspective of our neighborhood that is neither historic nor sustainable. In a letter to this Zoning Commission in 2008, opposing these zoning changes, my friends at the Citizens Association of Georgetown had this to say:

"Parking is a problem we must frequently address because of the scarcity of curbside or even paid parking. We have supported and will continue to support expansions of public transportation that will enable residents of and visitors to Georgetown to travel by efficient, reliable... transit... But we are unable to avoid the conclusion that such a system does not yet exist to serve our community."

The truth, however, is that the 77% of Georgetown households who own 1 or no cars would disagree with this assessment of our transit options. Furthermore, this argument confuses zoning and on-street parking management. Since this 2008 letter, DDOT has taken great steps towards better managing on-street parking. This includes a Georgetown pilot of a performance-pricing meter system that extends into the neighborhood that DDOT is planning and CAG has said it supports.

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CAG went on to object in its 2008 letter, "Several large, new residential complexes have been built in the last few decades, and each provided substantial parking for the new residents. The thought that such projects in the future might not be required to provide parking at all...or might be prohibited from providing what the developer believes to be an adequate amount of parking ... is deeply troubling."

The truth, however, is that developers only build 2 parking spaces per residential unit in Georgetown because the Citizens Association of Georgetown exerts great pressure on them to do so. Developers are well-aware that only 23% of Georgetown households still own 2 or more cars. So of course developers have to be pushed and cajoled to build multiple spaces per residential unit.

CAG pushes developers to overbuild parking due to fears that owners of new condos will take up on-street parking. But, again, to the extent that this is even a problem, it should be solved through better on-street parking management, not through zoning.

In order to ensure that decisions concerning off-street parking are made based on market demands and public policy goals, and not based on developers currying support from vocal minorities of neighbors, meaningful parking maximums are clearly required. Just as parking minimums expressed the public policy of the 1950s, parking maximums express the public policy of 2010.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Archer