

Statement in Support of Amendment: Z.C. Case No. 02-381

My name is Stephen Hudson, and I am testifying in favor of repurposing the lots at 375 M St SW and 425 M St SW as primarily residential zones. I believe that more businesses and residences will strengthen our Southwest community, reduce upward pressure on rent, and favorably use the land in question.

These two spaces occupy transit-accessible space in the center of our neighborhood. More residences and more density mean more vibrancy and businesses in our community. Whereas neighborhoods in far Northwest DC have fought development, only to see their customer base move eastward to other neighborhoods. Storefronts in once popular areas, such as Cleveland Park, sit vacant, as business moves to denser, more central locations. Southwest Waterfront is not Logan Circle (and nor do we want it to be!), but as the District's population expands, there is no reason why our neighborhood shouldn't benefit from the growth.

I also would like to mention that there are not many vacant real estate spaces located next to a Metro station in the core of DC. If we plan to meet the District Government's goal of meeting the Paris Agreement, then we must utilize more high density, transit accessible buildings that will reduce our carbon footprint as a city. Many people in our neighborhood are concerned about the impact of increased traffic, which is understandable. But a far better strategy to mitigate traffic in our community is to stop incentivizing car use through mechanisms like parking minimums, and improve our pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure. Southwest is centrally located in the heart of Pierre L'Enfant's original grid for Washington, and I hardly think we showcase Washington's greatness by using central, transit accessible land as parking lots.

I additionally support this change to the zoning because there is a large mismatch of office space and residential space in our region. While the District's residential population is booming, office space around the region sits vacant. Rent for most of us is already expensive enough, so pushing to build more office space that we don't need at the expense of residential units isn't going to help our affordable housing crisis. I think we should always push for more affordable housing units from those developing our precious land (especially in PUD applications, such as this), but broadly opposing housing hurts all of us.

We in Southwest are also blessed with a plethora of green space. Accordingly, many of the activities that take place at the Southwest Market can relocate to other areas. Further, adding more residents to the neighborhood will mean more customers for businesses and more participants for events. I would like to note that I personally utilize events such as the Saturday market, and I think they are great; I just also believe that we can place them in other spaces in our neighborhood.

Lastly, I would like to promote a message of acceptance. I have lived in Southwest DC for three years, which is a lot less than many. So I do not want to come off as ungrateful towards those today who are speaking out against the proposed changes. Many of them are who make Southwest a welcoming and friendly community. Instead, I would like to extend that same invitation to others: to come and live in an inclusive Southwest. I see a number of signs throughout our neighborhood that say 'all our welcome.' Let's live by those words. The District of Columbia grows by nearly a month, and everyone has to live somewhere, so why don't we showcase Southwest as the great neighborhood it is?

Sincerely,



Stephen Hudson
933 6th St SW
Washington, DC 20024