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CASE NO. 08-06-2 (Comprehensive Zoning Regulations Rewrite: Parking)

I'm a DC resident, business owner and parent of school-age kids, and I support the Fenty administration in quickly implementing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These goals were discussed at length and these proposed zoning rules will slowly but surely move our city towards greater walkability, efficiency and safety.

I've heard people asking you to stop or slow down any changes to the zoning regulations. But there's an urgency to bringing these improvements to DC. It seems we all agree that DC can and should be a more walkable, and economically healthy environment. No one is denying an essential truth: that when parking is provided, more people with choices will choose to drive. We can also all agree that when individuals choose to drive because they think parking will be available, they are adding to vehicle congestion, lost time, spillover parking, air pollution.

The costs to the residents of DC when those with choice choose to drive, is high. Then add even more indirect costs. Money that must be spent to meet parking minimums pushes up the cost of housing. Making the choice to drive when other choices are available (hoping there will be parking available) keeps money out of the fareboxes, money that would support faster and more reliable transit service that would serve the entire community, not just those with cars.

As I said, I support the recommendations of the Office of Planning, but I'm afraid they don't go far enough to make the difference in the choice to drive.

1. Keeping parking minimums in 'transition zones' in order to keep cars from circling neighborhoods is self-defeating. The minimums just encourage the choice to drive, and the parking infrastructure reduces vibrancy and walkability of the city. With these minimums, we will see more interrupted sidewalks, more pavement, more blank walls shielding cars from view, and more trees/greenspace lost to bring more cars into our neighborhood commercial areas.

2. Limiting the definition of Transit-oriented Neighborhoods to those near a metro station fails to recognize high-quality non-rail transit. In Georgetown, the Circulator has headways and convenience that match that of metro. As our transit grid improves, we will regret the car infrastructure we have allowed, or worse, required to be built.

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3. I urge you not to allow parking minimums to be used as a way to put the brakes rampant development pressure, *especially* in sensitive historic districts. How unfortunate to induce even more driving, and lose even more green space to parking because parking minimums were used to limit development, in lieu of carefully tailored physical parameters for developments.

Though I would like to see the parking minimums go away altogether, I want to say I'm thrilled to see my city heading in the right direction with these zoning changes.

Thank you,



Louise Brodnitz