

July 31, 2008

Anthony Hood, Chairman
D.C. Zoning Commission,
Suite 210, 441 4th Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: **Support** for Case No. 08-06-2 (Comprehensive Zoning Regulations Rewrite: Parking)

Dear Chairman Hood:

I would like to express my strong support for the proposed parking regulations. I have chosen to live in Georgetown because it is attractive, walkable, and it is possible to make all of our trips without driving. My wife and I walk or ride the bus for all of our shopping and entertainment and take the bus to work, and this October when our first child is born we will bring him home on the D6 bus from Sibley Hospital to Georgetown. And we are not alone. Georgetown is increasingly made up of young families looking for the attractive and walkable character that is unfortunately only available to those who can afford to live in one of the few neighborhoods built before parking minimums were imposed in 1958. Since the 1958 parking minimums effectively made neighborhoods like Georgetown illegal, newer neighborhoods developed since then have been unable to provide the benefits that draw people to the city, ensure long-term commitment to neighborhoods and thus ensure the stable property values we enjoy in Georgetown. Given the many benefits that my neighborhood offers because our space is not consumed by large amounts of parking, I wholeheartedly support the proposals to remove parking minimum requirements from residential and most forms of commercial development and enact parking maximums.

1958 parking minimums not only turn people away from the city by making future Georgetowns, Dupont Circles and Kaloramas illegal, they turn away even more people from the city because of the contribution of residential parking minimums to the lack of affordable housing in DC. DC's 1 parking spot per apt or condo policy adds 10-20% to the cost of housing. Such artificial rent inflation and mortgage inflation hits the people who need to save money by living in non-car dependant neighborhoods the most. There are few actions that would show the commitment of the DC Government to affordable housing more than by rejecting residential parking minimums and enacting residential parking maximums.

Continuation of the 1958 parking minimums would not only continue to make walkable, attractive neighborhoods illegal and out-of-reach to most residents, it would also lead to the erosion of the historic neighborhoods that we have left in DC by forcing infill of surface parking into our neighborhoods. My wife and I plan on taking our children on long walks throughout Georgetown and neighboring areas as we have done for 10 years in this city. If DC policies increasingly turn those walks into walks across curb cuts and surface parking lots, requiring even more dodging of cars in crosswalks, then we will see that DC doesn't want our family and others like us here.

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Some residents, and some of my Georgetown neighbors, are worried that adoption of the parking recommendations of the Office of Planning will move more parking into our neighborhoods. This is a reasonable concern, but ultimately an unnecessary one, because free or cheap parking always leads to more traffic, not less. Furthermore, not addressed in this recommendation is the need for parking meters in the neighborhoods, exempt for zone residents, so that neighborhood parking is no longer free. I fully support meters on my street, one block off of Wisconsin Avenue, and many of my neighbors would as well.

Eliminating parking minimums is not about privileging walkers, bikers and transit riders over cars, it's about privileging people by allowing the largest number of people possible to enjoy attractive residential and commercial options that one only finds in the city. *How* people chose to access our city neighborhoods is a *choice*, not a given. Increasingly, of course, we see people choosing to take forms of transportation other than driving. Let's not lock people into the choice of driving that our zoning laws have encouraged for 50 years. The large number of very inexpensive parking garages and existing parking spaces will continue to permit people to choose to drive. City policy, though, should focus on people, whatever their choice may be, and beautiful city neighborhoods are available to the most people when they are not torn apart by curb cuts and surface parking lots, when walkers don't have to dodge cars and when housing in our neighborhoods is more affordable. First, of course, you must make such neighborhoods legal, and that can only be done by enacting the proposed regulations on parking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Archer
1626 33rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007