

Dear Chairman Hood and Commissioners:

I wish to voice my support for modernizing the long-overdue DC zoning code. After eight years of thorough public outreach and discussion, it is time to act. I urge you to update to the DC zoning regulations to:

1. Reduce parking requirements,
2. Permit accessory apartments in low density residential neighborhoods, and
3. Allow corner stores.

While these are modest changes to our woefully outdated 1958 zoning code, they are meaningful ways to make our city more affordable. Affordable housing is such an urgent issue in this city – recent studies have shown that it is the #1 most expensive city in the country in which to raise children – more expensive even than New York or San Francisco. Failure to take action to improve housing affordability (and thereby economic opportunity) by allowing accessory dwelling units would be a true missed opportunity. The city also needs to enable the private sector to make goods such as healthy foods more available transit-dependent residents (e.g. corner stores). I therefore want to state my support the provisions to allow an accessory apartment in residential zones and corner stores, as described in Subtitle U.

As the housing supply in the city increases and the availability of alternative transportation options (metro, bus, circulator, walking, biking, cab/Uber, etc.) expands, it is not realistic or beneficial to require a significant amount of parking (the private sector can determine the need for parking based true costs and price it accordingly). As such, I wish to express my support for the parking reforms in Subtitle C, which significantly reduce parking requirements near transit, including bus priority corridors.

These three critical areas of reform to the zoning code will help make DC a more sustainable, walkable, and inclusive city. I urge you to move forward with the long awaited update to the zoning code. There is a need to rise above the criticisms of specific individuals (who often have narrow economic interests in preserving the status quo) to look at what's best for the entire city, and particularly what is best for traditionally underserved residents. The ability to turn our city into one of the most desirable in the nation depends on your action.

There is also an urgent need to expand high frequency and high capacity “express” bus services that do not stop at 1-2 block intervals, to enable residents to efficiently take buses around the city. Dedicated bus lanes would be a huge improvement to the current bus system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alanna McKeeman
Ward 2 Resident (400 Massachusetts Ave NW)