

I'm writing to express to you my urgent desire that the main provisions of the DC Zoning Update be adopted as speedily as possible.

Two provisions require particular urgency and I would like to speak in some detail about them.

Accessory Dwellings

The accessory apartments rule should be a win-win-win for homeowners, renters, and disinterested city residents alike. For homeowners, the opportunity to garner additional rental income is a win.

For those homeowners who choose *not* to lease out an accessory dwelling it will still be a win because the mere *option* to use their property in this way will increase its value in the event of a sale.

For renters, it is a win because an increase in the supply of rental options will act to mitigate city-wide rent increases and afford renters more options about which neighborhoods to live in.

Last, for people like myself who own properties that are not directly impacted by the change it is still a win. Accessory dwellings mean more residents for the city, which means a broader tax base and more customers for DC businesses. That means improved services citywide and more options for shopping and leisure activity.

Parking Minimums

Reducing regulatory parking minimums should be a no-brainer. The only flaw in this proposal — and I should hasten to add that it is a significant flaw — is that it is far too timid and has been excessively watered-down do to objections that do not withstand scrutiny.

A place to park a car is a wonderful thing to have. I own a car myself, and like everyone else's car it is parked somewhere a majority of the time. Hence I deeply appreciate that there is demand for parking spaces in the city and that under any sensible policy framework our city will include many locations in which one can park a car.

By the same token, smartphones are extremely useful and the vast majority of DC households own a smartphone. And just as car-owners need places to park their cars, smartphone owners need places to charge their phones. The way we handle this, as a city, for phones is simple — everyone owns as many smartphone chargers as they care to pay for. On occasion this leads to a frustrating situation in which someone's phone runs out of batteries, but on the whole it works well.

By contrast, when it comes to cars we not only have all the parking spaces that people wish to pay for, we have a regulatory apparatus designed to produce *more parking spaces* than that. There are several problems with this approach:

1. Subsidized parking advantages car-owners over non-owners, even though in DC car-owners are on average more affluent.
2. Subsidized parking encourages additional driving which generates pollution.
3. Subsidized parking reduces the amount of scarce urban space available for housing, which reduces affordability.

On all these grounds, I think the proposed relaxation of parking requirements should be adopted but I would go considerably further if it were entirely up to me.

Sincerely,
Matthew Yglesias
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