

Support for ZC No. 08-06A Subtitle C - Parking

**Bradley Green
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My name is Bradley Green, and I live in the Takoma DC neighborhood. I have lived in DC since moving here for a job in 1976. I gave up my car in 1990, which by that time was seeing more action collecting parking tickets than in getting me around town.

Since then, I have been happily getting around on foot, bike, or Metro. In fact, I regularly bike from Takoma to Dupont Circle in about the same time as it would take me to drive and find a parking space.

I am not against cars. By all means drive, if that is your preference. I rent cars when needed and, after Capital BikeShare, I think Car to Go is the greatest thing since sliced bread.

I just don't want the way we build our infrastructure for cars to effectively limit our ability to get around without one.

Apart from my own decision to not own a car, cities that enable residents to go car free or car light are simply more desirable places to live.

Opponents of the zoning changes would have you believe that a ready supply of cheap or free parking is one of a neighborhood's most important amenities. The market, however, tells us that walkability, not "parkability," is the amenity that is most in demand. Indeed, neighborhoods with the worst parking are also some of the most sought after.

Why? Because there is an energy – not to mention convenience – that is only found where businesses, restaurants, and homes open onto sidewalks filled with people, rather than lots filled with cars.

These pedestrian and transit-friendly neighborhoods are, in fact, why many of us choose to live in cities like DC instead of the suburbs.

These alternatives to driving are also healthier, more environmentally friendly, and a lot cheaper. A key part to making this increasingly expensive city more affordable is, in fact, providing its residents with affordable alternatives to cars.

What does all this have to do with the proposed zoning changes? How we build our cities largely determines the choices we have for getting around in them.

It is for these reasons that I support the changes to the zoning code as proposed by the Office of Planning. These proposed changes are an important step toward making it easier to get around this great city without a car.

In fact, I wish the proposals did away with parking minimums entirely, as it seems to me that the market is a much better judge of parking demand than the government.

The proposed easing of the parking minimums, however, is at least a step in the right direction.

Parking spaces add considerably to the cost of a housing development -- a cost that is borne by all the residents -- whether or not they own a car. It goes without saying, therefore, that building more parking than can be absorbed by the market, needlessly makes the housing less affordable in a city where affordability is already a major issue.

It is in support, therefore, of a livable, walkable, and affordable city that I urge you to adopt the zoning changes proposed by the Office of Planning.

Thank you for your time.