

November 12, 2014

Mr. Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Jerrily R. Kress Memorial Hearing Room at One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 220-S
Washington, DC 20001.

Re: District of Columbia Proposed Zoning Changes Case No. 08-06A (Title II Zoning Regulations - Parking Requirements)

Dear Chairman Hood:

We are 32-year residents of the Takoma DC (Ward 4) neighborhood in the District of Columbia. Both of us have been active in community activities for this entire period with Tony serving as the President of Plan Takoma, Inc. (now the Takoma DC Community Neighborhood Organization) from 1984 – 1998. Additionally, Tony has served on both the Washington Convention Center Citizens Advisory Committee for the past 17 years and on the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for the past 6 + years first as an Alternate Director from the District of Columbia, and now an alternate director representing the federal government. Alice most recently was an appointed member of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Redevelopment Authority Citizen Advisory Board after having served as a citizen member of the LRA. We have live a block and a half from the Takoma Metrorail station.

To provide a little context, when we moved here in 1981 the neighborhood contained empty trash strewn lots and retail businesses that were not community serving - we had vacant lots, two auto parts stores, a strip club, car repair facilities, and a used car lot.

We petitioned our Councilmember at the time, Charlene Drew Jarvis, to ask the Planning Office to study our commercial area and develop a plan around the Takoma Metrorail Station as a guide for new development. These initiatives eventually resulted in the development of the Takoma Small Area Plan, one of the first in the District of Columbia.

One of the things that did not get included in the Takoma Small Area Plan was a requirement for lessened parking around the Metrorail Station. At the time, we strongly felt that people would always need and have their own cars and therefore we pushed each developer to provide one-for-one parking.

In the ensuing years several new residential buildings have been constructed, both apartment and condo and another is nearing completion with several more in the planning stages. The additional density has brought only good things to the neighborhood- young people who have become involved in the community and retail that serves the community including many new restaurants.

It also brought what we had not thought of- a new type of short-term car rental or car-share in the form of Zip cars and greater bicycle use. As a result of this parking spaces in the new developments are not fully being used.

So - we were wrong. People live near transit because they do not own nor want to have a car. There is no longer need for the now outmoded parking requirements. We came here today to tell you - times change, people change and it's time for the zoning to change. Therefore we would suggest that parking requirements around and within a half of a mile from Metrorail stations need to be minimal and certainly no more than .33 cars per unit of housing.

In summary we support the parking proposals to:

- Eliminate minimums downtown.
- Allow the reduction of parking minimums in commercial or mixed-use zones with frequent rail or bus service or within transit zones, however, using a .33 minimum requirement (1 space to 3 units).
- Retain parking minimums in neighborhood corridors without frequent transit.
- Eliminate parking minimums for buildings under 4 units.
- Retain parking minimums for churches, schools, and other non-residential uses in residential zones.

Finally we strongly recommend that the Zoning Commission support the proposed zoning change noted above.

Sincerely,



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Copy:

The Honorable Vincent Gray, Mayor District of Columbia
The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Councilmember Ward 4