

November 12, 2013

Matthew Steil
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Washington DC 20011

Anthony Hood
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th St. NW Suite 200S
Washington DC 20001

RE: Subtitle C: General Procedures

Dear Chairman Hood and the DC Zoning Commission

Ward 4

My name is Matthew Steil and I'm here to testify on behalf of my family, in support of lowering mandatory off street parking minimums, as currently proposed by the DC Office of Planning.

While I wish the reductions in parking minimums would go even further, the current zoning proposal is a significant step in the right direction of allowing for the market to better set the amount of parking built and not the government. While there are certainly many instances where government regulations are necessary, obligating off-street parking minimums as part of any new development is not one of them. Building parking spaces where they are not needed adds significant costs to any development; costs which are then passed on the eventual renter, homeowner, and restaurant patron or office leaser.

Commissioners, I understand that reducing minimum parking requirements is not the same thing as saying that developers will build zero parking spaces, but rather that they will build fewer unneeded spaces, that consume valuable real estate and resources – costs that are then passed on to you and me whether or not we drive to that destination. I do not mind paying my fair share for parking if I decide to drive, but I sure as heck do not want to have to pay for unnecessary parking

spaces when I arrive, whether via car or otherwise, through an extra hidden charge on the pizza or running shoes that I buy.

In a city where space is increasingly at a premium and affordable housing is becoming scarcer by the day, we need to be doing everything we can to increase access to housing and not tacking on additional, unnecessary parking charges to development that will only succeed in further raising housing costs.

My wife and I have a combined 15+ years in DC and plan to stay here for the foreseeable future, raising our family. For the majority of our time here, we've lived car free. While it may not have occurred to us at the time, we were partially able to afford living in apartment buildings close to the Metro, because those buildings were not built under the now obligatory parking minimum requirements and thus didn't need to charge tenants for the additional parking costs. Now, we have a house and a car, but most of our trips are done using our feet, bikes, metro and bus. We love living in DC, and we support policies such as the ones proposed in the current zoning update that will help make the city a healthier and more affordable place to live for all current and future residents.

Commissioners, the current proposal to reduce off street parking minimums does not mean getting rid of parking or cars in this city. Rather it is a common sense approach to significantly reduce the burdensome cost of building unneeded parking – the result of which we will all benefit from, whether we choose to drive or not.

I would like to thank you for your time and commitment to make DC a better place.

If extra time

→ Anecdote on handicap mobility

→ Need to have choice to age in place

→ Support for greater bicycle parking + facilities