

In SUPPORT of Case 08-06A, Subtitle C (Chapter 19: Parking)

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November 12, 2013

DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 220

Commissioners:

Good evening, my name is Geoffrey Hatchard, and I'm a homeowner in the Trinidad neighborhood at 1218 Oates Street NE. I've come before you today to state my strong support for the proposed changes to the DC Zoning code, particularly regarding parking requirements.

This is not the first time I've been before the commission to discuss this issue. Nearly 3 years ago to the day, November 15, 2010, I was here to discuss parking requirements. I think it's possible to view the past 3 years of growth in the city as a kind of teaching laboratory. It has showed us that an increase in population and density can occur without the need for a parallel increase in the amount of space we reserve for the storage of automobiles.

Thankfully, developers have learned their lessons and seen the importance of a well-designed, truly urban neighborhood. Places like the Babes Billiards site in Tenleytown, or future condos on Church Street near Logan Circle are foregoing parking in new construction, realizing there is a strong market out there that can't afford to absorb the cost of owning space to store an automobile.

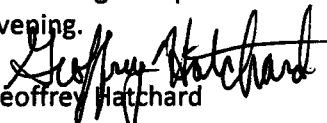
D.C. is lucky that it has many neighborhoods that were designed for people during a period of time when walking was the primary way to get from their homes to work, to shop, to worship, and to socialize. Those neighborhoods have retained their popularity and desirability for more than a century in some instances. Their basic layout has stood the test of time, but would, in some ways, be impossible to build in today's D.C., due to outmoded parking requirements.

I am excited to see that the ability to share parking between adjacent sites with differing uses has been retained in the current proposal. This is a common sense idea that everyone in the city can surely support. Why build parking that sits unused most of the time when multiple businesses, churches, or community organizations can team up and share spaces? It's efficient, elegant, and a brilliant idea.

I was attracted to live in DC for many reasons, with one of the biggest being that I knew I would be able to live without a car. As I've testified before, I grew up in Michigan, where the thought of an existence without a car is entirely foreign, but once I saw that I could save money and live a healthier lifestyle by using transit, a bicycle, and walking, I knew I wanted the opportunity to try that. No place looked more likely to give me that chance in this area than right here in D.C.

My wife and I found our *home* in Trinidad, which is an amazing, friendly, welcoming community. We are on the edge of the L'Enfant city, close to so many of the benefits of a walkable city I spoke of earlier, and we can see new development sprouting up all around. It's heartening to see this growth happening in a way that leverages the advantages of our city in a smart way.

I encourage adoption of these changes to the zoning regulations, and thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.


Geoffrey Hatchard