

**Testimony of Patty Rose
Greenspace, NCR, Executive Director**

Presented to the DC Zoning Commission

Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Zoning Commission Case No. 08-06A Subtitle C (Parking)

Good evening Commissioners, my name is Patty Rose. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. I have been the executive director of Greenspace, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit with the mission of making real estate, economic and community development, green in the District for the past ten years. I have also been a mayoral appointee for the past 7 years to the District's Green Building Advisory Council. I am here today to express my support for reducing or eliminating parking minimums.

The 2006 Green Building Act is one of the foundational laws of the District's transformation to a greener, healthier community. Since 2006 we have enacted legislation and policies that target reducing our energy consumption and increasing the use of clean and renewable energy sources, adopted stringent stormwater management requirements that will clean our rivers making them swimmable and fishable and reduced trash by encouraging use of reusable bags and making recycling common place. ~~There have always been questions that pit the convenience of the few with investments that benefit the many.~~ Reducing parking minimums belongs in this category.

Greenspace's original mission was to make affordable housing and its neighborhoods green, or sustainable. I have worked with real estate development professionals to improve the performance of the District's affordable housing design, construction, finance and operations. While we also worked with commercial and retail development professionals it is the affordable housing residents that will benefit most from the significant reduction of minimum parking requirements for higher density mixed use areas that are well-served by transit. Riding public transportation, walking, and biking is

not only healthier for one's body but also for one's pocketbook since not owning a car saves, on average, \$10,000 a year.

Most residents of affordable units don't own cars and cannot afford to *or* prefer to not have to pay for parking they don't need. Parking requirements unnecessarily increase housing costs. Parking requirements subsidize car ownership, causing more people to own cars than would if they were making a trade-off between the full costs of different transportation choices.

Reforming parking mandates recognizes that more than half of all renters in the city don't own a car. The District's zoning policy should support those households that don't own cars and developers and property owners should not have to be forced to go through a Board of Zoning Adjustment process to reduce their parking requirements.

Fact: The cost of off-street parking is almost never paid for by the user, but instead is subsidized by everyone in the building because the market price is below the actual cost. This is unfair to people who want to live without a car.

One U Street developer estimated that the cost of a parking space is about \$480 per month per space. The market price however, is on average \$221 per month. The huge gap in cost is made up in higher housing costs for everyone.

We are all better off as DC residents if new housing can right size the parking supply to meet the demand of residents rather than build to a government mandated minimum. Rather than subsidizing parking and driving, we should let the market build parking for those who want to pay for it.

There is a growing realization that the dysfunction caused by poorly conceived parking policies is a major impediment to creating an effective and balanced urban transportation system. We don't want the District to be designed around parking. Let's leverage our city's parking policy's to affect positive environmental objectives and productive economic outcomes.