

Testimony before the DC Zoning Commission

Regarding: SUPPORT of Zoning Commission Case 08-06A, Subtitle I, J, and K (Parking in Downtown)

By Jonathan Weidman, 3100 Connecticut Avenue NW, Apt 212, Washington, DC

November 14, 2013

Good evening, my name is Jonathan Weidman. Thank you for hearing my testimony on this important topic.

I am here to express my strong support for the proposed update to the DC zoning code for the removal of parking minimums in Downtown DC.

I urge the Zoning Commission to revise DC's 1950s-era zoning regulations to continue transforming Downtown into a more vibrant, walkable, and inclusive place. By reducing parking minimums in Downtown DC, we can make the area a more accessible and economically feasible place to live. If DC is going to attract a fraction of the other 70% of people who are employed here but do not live here, we must offer better quality of life and reasonable housing costs.

It is important for me to testify tonight because I live in DC without a car. Nearly 40% of DC residents do not own cars. I recently sold my car, which helped me to save enough money for a down payment on a primary residence that also has a rental unit.

My primary mode of transportation is my bicycle. I shop, commute, volunteer, and socialize by bike. DC has incredible bicycle infrastructure, and it is one of the primary reasons I chose to move here. I am very proud to live in a city with great streets, Metro, bus, circulator, bike share, and future streetcar service.

The parking minimums for Downtown DC do not befit the modern, dynamic area that Downtown represents. The current zoning code is based on outdated concepts of what a city is and how it should grow. We need to modernize Downtown's zoning code to better accommodate the needs of current and future DC residents.

The affordability of housing in the DC region is the City's largest economic and social justice challenge. DC has incredible infrastructure that allows people to live better, more environmentally sensitive lifestyles by not driving. Removing parking requirements in the Downtown area will help increase the use of transit, walking, and biking by not mandating more parking than is actually needed by new residents and businesses. It will also provide increased affordable housing options for more people by making buildings less expensive to build and operate.

The costs of building parking spaces are enormous. One space in a parking deck costs between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to build. In order to maintain DC's outstanding cultural, racial, and economic diversity we cannot be adding unnecessary and unreasonable costs for parking. It is in all of our best interests to reduce parking. Downtown is especially congested and we should not mandate that space be used for parking when so many other transport options exist.

Although this is not the topic of today's hearing, I also want to express my strong support for the reduction of parking minimums proposed in Subtitle C, for many of the reasons described in my testimony.

Thank you for your time and your service on the Zoning Commission.