

Testimony in SUPPORT of Case 08-06A, Subtitle I (Removing Parking Minimums – Downtown)

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Good evening, my name is Zachary Smith and I am resident of the Fort Totten neighborhood in Ward 5. I am here to express my strong support of the proposed update to the DC zoning code to remove parking minimums downtown. Now is the time for the district to move beyond its outdated zoning policies to reflect the current and plan for the future needs of its transportation and development patterns.

Every morning I commute from my home to Farragut North, about 5 miles, so I'm somewhat familiar with the traffic patterns downtown. Before I moved to DC about two years ago, it was difficult to imagine ever getting to work without a car or think that a commute using other forms of transportation would be as simple as it is. That isn't the case in most places, but in DC it is. I recently bought a bike, so with the Met Branch trail and the 15th and L Street bike lanes, cycling is much more efficient than driving for me. On days when the weather isn't so nice, it's good to have other options like car2go or the many buses and metro that lead to downtown as well. Because downtown DC is one of the most transit-rich and walkable parts of the city, the zoning code should be updated to reflect that and maintain it.

While the Office of Planning is recommending removing parking requirements, it is important to note that it will not remove parking. I support the update because it will allow developers to determine the amount of parking that they need to attract companies and or offices to their buildings. Removing parking minimums can also lead to more affordable rents in our downtowns. For instance, developers in San Francisco estimate that the city's one-space-per unit requirement adds 20 percent to the cost of affordable housing (Donald Shoup, The high cost of parking). As we look for ways to improve the city's affordable housing stock, requiring developers to add expensive parking spots is a detriment to those efforts.

Our zoning code from 1958 is not in-step with the direction that DC is going in the future, especially our downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. We also need to modernize the zoning code to better accommodate future DC residents.

I support the proposed zoning update items -- specifically the reduction of downtown minimum parking requirements because removing parking requirements in downtown areas will help to create and preserve walkable, vibrant neighborhoods by increasing the use of transit. Our zoning code should be about improving quality of life for all and not only drivers. You know, we aren't requiring new buildings to supply transit cards or parking spaces for car share or bike share if we're worried about attracting tenants and residents, so why cater to this one form of transportation?

Please vote in favor of the proposed revisions to the zoning code to ~~facilitate the creation of more~~ ^{remove parking minimums} ~~accessory apartments.~~ Thank you for your time.

downtown