

Testimony by Brenna Barber, Capitol Hill/H Street Resident
In Support of Case 08-06A, Subtitle C (Parking)
Nov 19, 2013

My name is Brenna Barber and I live and work on Capitol Hill. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here. ~~share my support for the proposed updates to the DC zoning code.~~

I strongly support easing off-street parking minimum requirements in areas with good transit, allowing accessory dwelling units, and more corner stores.

When I graduated from college and was determining where to go I chose to come to DC in part because it's a vibrant, walkable city and I knew it would be easy to live without a car. I've lived in DC for five years now, and I absolutely love living here in no small part because of its dense, walkable neighborhoods, many of which have the added benefit of being beautiful and historic.

For transportation, I commute by bike, I'm a 15 minute walk to Union Station, I walk a lot, and I regularly use the many different bus lines that service Capitol Hill and H Street (the X2, the 90s, and the D6). My girlfriend and I live together and she owns a car that I sometimes use as well. I would describe myself not as 'car-free' but as 'car-lite'—I say this because sometimes advocates of greater density and fewer parking minimums are portrayed as people who hate cars, want to get rid of all of them, or who just want to make life hard for car owners, and I want to be clear that those aren't my views.

I'm here tonight because I want to express my strong support for the current proposed updates to DC's zoning code. I would like to see parking minimums eased because they end up requiring more parking than people need and raise the cost of housing. Additionally, parking minimums often damage the historic and walkable form of many District neighborhoods.

I really love living in DC, but I am negatively affected by the high cost of housing and I'm worried that long-term I may never be able to afford to buy a house in a walkable, transit-connected part of the District. I think we need more walkable, vibrant neighborhoods not fewer. Easing parking requirements in certain areas will help achieve those goals.

My support for affordable housing is also why I strongly support accessory dwelling units and allowing homeowners to create an ADU without undergoing a long and burdensome process. I'm someone who would happily rent a carriage house or renovated garage.

I also want to express my support for local corner stores in residential areas. I regularly patronize my local corner stores and I find that the ability to walk or bike just a few blocks to a neighborhood-store enriches my quality of life and the social fabric of my neighborhood.

In sum: I strongly support the current proposed updates to the DC zoning code that ease off-street parking minimum requirements in certain areas, allow accessory dwelling units and more corner stores. Thank you.

