

Testimony by Megan McConville, 806 North Carolina Ave SE, Unit B, Washington, DC 20003
Before the D.C. Zoning Commission
RE: ZC No. 08-06A, Subtitle C—Parking
November 19, 2013

Good evening. My name is Megan McConville. I live on Capitol Hill at 806 North Carolina Ave SE. I am here to express my strong support for the proposed update to the DC zoning code, specifically the reduction of minimum parking requirements.

Ten years ago, I moved to DC for a job and was immediately captivated by city living. I loved the vibrant, walkable neighborhoods; the convenience of having stores and restaurants blocks from home; and the historic character. Having grown up in an auto-dependent suburban community, I particularly enjoyed the newfound freedom of being able to live easily and affordably without a car. I still appreciate DC's high quality of life every day. Our rich variety of transportation options remains one of my favorite aspects of living here. I own a car now, but I get around primarily on foot, by bike and metro, and sometimes by car-share. My husband and I want to stay in the city and raise our family, but we're concerned about the high cost of housing, especially in the transit-accessible neighborhoods in which we'd like to live.

Reasonable parking requirements are critical to supporting the transportation options I value and improving housing affordability. Current parking requirements are based on 1950s assumptions of an automobile-oriented city with no metro, separated uses, and cheap energy. They incentivize the provision of parking whether it's needed or not, adding tens of thousands of dollars per space to the costs of development. These costs are passed on to homeowners, renters, and customers, regardless of whether they own a car. And almost 40% of DC households do not own a car.

Removing parking requirements in downtown and easing them in areas well-served by transit makes sense in today's DC, a city with world-class transportation choices but badly in need of affordable housing, especially near transit. Allowing developers to build the amount of parking that the market demands rather than forcing them to meet artificial requirements will reduce the costs that get passed on to homeowners and renters while promoting transit use and decreasing congestion. Additionally, allowing shared parking, encouraging the provision of car-share spaces, and requiring that projects with excess parking provide elements like Capital Bikeshare stations, tree planting, and electric car charging all support city goals of increasing sustainability and livability.

DC's future prosperity depends on its ability to preserve and strengthen its assets—including its walkability, its public transit system, and its vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods—and to continue to be a place of opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds. The proposed changes to the zoning code are key to making our city even more attractive, inclusive, and economically competitive, and I urge you to support them. Thank you.