

December 12, 2012

Case number 08-06A, Subtitle C - Vehicle parking requirements

Dear Commissioners:

I was very disturbed that Chairman Hood seemed to suggest that lowering the parking minimums was hostile and damaging to elderly people. As many of the witnesses testified, nothing could be further from the truth. Transit-rich environments allow people to age-in-place. People with limited mobility can get around more than relying on a vehicle or a personal driver. Naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs) need higher density and more transit, not car dependency. My grandfather drove until the state of Ohio took away his driver's license at the age of 97 after numerous accidents. He should not have been driving but had no other options.

I testified in support of the proposal on the first panel. I am 47-years-old. I have had five knee surgeries including a full knee replacement in the past year. Having access to Metro and buses allowed me to get to the doctor, the rehabilitation specialist and to work. I can also get to the swimming pool to do my exercises much more easily on the bus or even riding my bike now than driving a car and trying to find parking. Driving can be hard on my knees so I am grateful that I was able to use crutches and walkers to get around on transit. Yes, biking is easier for me to get around than both driving and walking.

I am a AAA member but I could not disagree more strongly with Mr. Townsend's baffling testimony. Most people join AAA so someone will help them when they get a flat tire or get the Trip Tik books. They do not subscribe to the hostility to bicyclists, pedestrians and multi-modal that AAA has long promoted. Lon Anderson and Mr. Townsend's world view is generations behind. Per his example, there is no way that DC can accommodate everyone who wants to drive up to Old Ebbit Grille or any location and park for free. The city is in demand. People can easily walk to Old Ebbit Grille from Metro Center or hop off the 32/36 in front of the restaurant.

I strongly support lowering parking minimums in order to increase housing that is in demand, lowering the cost of housing and reducing congestion and pollution. I also support raising fees on street parking permits. Each household should be required to pay a higher price for each additional car. If we maintain the status quo, we will not be able to provide enough housing to meet the need of new residents, we will increase congestion and pollution. We will also continue to make DC a more expensive place to live with fewer homes affordable to those of modest or extremely low-incomes.

Thank you,


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