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Mr Anthony Hood
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE Zoning Case No 08-06A

Dear Chairman Hood and the D C Zoning Commission

My name is Larry Martin I've lived in the District since 1986 and work for the Federal Government When I moved here I made little money, and lived in the attic of a group house in Ward 1 I mostly rode my bike where I needed to go, but Metro was also convenient. Today, I live in Ward 4, metro is not convenient, and although I am a member of Capital Bikeshare, I drive more miles in DC than I ride In fact, I have little choice but to start each work day in a car, as I drop my wife off at work, then the kid at school I leave the car in the garage where my wife works and then grab a bike when it's nice to get to my office If it's not nice I take metro Evenings I ride a bike up to Malcolm X Park and then a bus home I'm Mr Multi-Modal But I'm also running counter to what I see the trends in DC to be – where increasing population density is permitting more and more neighborhood shopping and eateries, I moved into a neighborhood that is largely car dependent I wish it were otherwise, but that would not change the fact that there are still quite a few neighborhoods in DC that are more like suburbs then they are mixed-use walkable, with all the with urban amenities I'll return to this

I do believe that the 1950s based zoning code has been in need of updating for quite a while now I'd like to send my respects to outgoing Planning Director Harriet Tregoning for giving DC a very long opportunity to think through what we need I became involved about 5 years ago, and frankly burned out on the number of meetings and reviews I was also chair of the Transportation Planning Board's Citizen Advisory Committee in 2007, and as your aware transportation, land-use and zoning are all intertwined Anyway, the zoning rewrite advanced a lot of different ideas What we have before us now is a very moderate compromise on many of the issues that were most contentious In my opinion it was a good process with a good outcome The kind of growth now occurring needs a code in touch with current trends and is forward looking The key dimensions of this are addressed in the update, and include reduced parking minimums, more accessory apartments, and corner stores To the extent that the update simplifies organization of the code, that is a good thing too

We all know that the price of housing in DC is getting steeper every year If DC does not continue to take active steps to provide affordable housing we're going to out-price low income

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workers, not only low wage, but also folks just beginning their careers DC benefits from having a mixture of economic classes – you know blue collar, artists, activists, along with the lawyers and bureaucrats It makes for an active street life, and keeps our city vibrant. So there is my pitch for accessory apartments – they create affordable housing! I'll add that it can be an important source of income for older residents on fixed income, and will help them age in place – a phase of life I appear to be starting on now Accessory apartments should be zoned in

I seriously doubt if my neighborhood, Crestwood, will ever be walkable, except for the dog – like many neighborhoods in DC, it just isn't designed that way. I know that when I go out for an evening there are some parts of town easier for me to drive to and park in than others I'm glad we're preserving car-based destinations We should, its part of the mix But not everyplace needs to be either a car-based destination or as car dependent as Crestwood With higher density, mixed use zoning and convenient transportation, wasting a lot of space on parking is unnecessary and adds cost to living My understanding is that parking requirements in buildings add \$25-50K per unit cost That does not help keep housing affordable; and when residents are choosing not to own a car in increasing numbers – like me the first 10 years I lived in DC, then the parking minimums from the 1950s are a hard policy to justify We should change it to make our zoning consistent with the trend toward car-lite living, and helping to reduce car use and traffic on our streets There are already plenty of options for folks who own cars and want to park them. We're talking about increasing options for others with this change, and trying to keep down the rising cost of housing in DC Reducing parking minimums in areas well served by transit is a good move

Finally, I want to also voice support for the “corner store” as its quaintly termed I wish Crestwood could qualify I have no choice but to get in my car and drive to a store I have bicycled over to 14th St., but that is not convenient. Neighborhood stores are an asset to a community, it's an ice cream with the kids after supper, or bottle of wine when friends stop in unexpectedly Not only are they just convenient, they create place – people meet there And, once again, it helps reduce car use and traffic on our streets Thumbs up on the corner store

I urge you to accept the zoning revision proposal, which is the product of five years of dialogue and compromise. It is not a dramatic departure from what we know, but it is a modest step in the right decision for DC. Thank you for your commitment to the District's health and welfare