

Testimony in SUPPORT of Case 08-06A by Jeremy Van Ess of 1465 Florida Ave NW, Before the DC Zoning Commission

Good evening. My name is Jeremy Van Ess. I live in the U Street/Shaw neighborhood on the 1400 block of Florida Ave. I am here to express my strong support for the updates to the DC zoning code

In particular, I'd like to add my voice to those calling for the long overdue updates to DC's parking requirements. I'd also add my support for provisions regarding accessory apartments and corner stores - - two things that along with parking updates will make our city more livable, accessible and friendly.

I understand the Zoning Commission is nearing the finish line on these updates. I urge you to push ahead without delay. While I would have preferred the commission's original proposals, these revisions are still a promising step in the right direction.

On the issue of parking, in particular, there is no excuse for our city to cling to 1950s era regulations in a world where ZipCar, Bike Lanes, Walk Scores, Car2Go and Bike Shares exist

I want to live in a City that embraces the future - - and that I was I am here tonight. One of the many things I love about DC is not being tied to one form of transportation. I can bike to work. Bike to the grocery store. Walk to the restaurants. Metro to the movies or to a baseball game. And if I ever want to leave town, I can get a Zipcar to do it.

I want every DC resident to have these same choices. None of us should be tied to car ownership because the Zoning code forces or otherwise incentivizes us to pay for parking in our Condos, apartment buildings or homes.

In many ways the current zoning parking requirements work against the interests of many - - if not the majority - - of DC residents who live downtown and in high-density areas close to transit. It is not surprising that over 200 requests were made for variances to current requirements in the last 10 years.

Current regulations, which force a minimum number of parking spots on builders, only serve to make housing more unaffordable and our neighborhoods less interesting.

I recognize there is some fear that my generation and those younger will some day return to car ownership. And there are some in the community suggesting that we should not mess with parking regulations in the unlikely event that all of us carless families decide to buy cars in the future and we need a place to park.

That argument just does not resonate. My family and I live in the City BECAUSE we can get by without a car. It is what draws us here - - and what will keep us here.

Besides, the DC Zoning code should work for everyone. The zoning code should not seek to protect the interests of the car owners of today or tomorrow. The code should work for all of us - - including the growing third of us that prefers not to own a car and enjoy living in neighborhoods that encourage a variety of transportation options.

In closing, I thank you for your time and urge you to press ahead into the future by adopting updates regarding parking, accessory apartments and corner stores without delay.