

My name is Tom Millar and I have lived in northwest DC for eleven years, currently in a condominium unit at 14th and W streets. My wife and I are both federal employees, we have a daughter who recently turned 3, and I am here to testify in support of the lower minimum parking requirements for Subtitle C.

I am from a military family, have served in the US Air Force, and so I've spent a great deal of my life in suburbs or on bases where possession of an automobile was a necessity. When my enlistment was ending, I spent about a week in Manhattan on leave, and I realized at the end of that week I hadn't seen my car in nine days and I had not missed it, had not needed it, and had yet been able to go see and do just about anything in the world I wanted. I made the decision then that I would move into DC proper, not stay in the suburbs. About seven months after signing the lease to a studio apartment in Columbia Heights, I sold my car and haven't looked back. In the last couple of years, I've even cancelled my car sharing membership.

The point of my anecdote is to illustrate how owning a car is becoming less and less necessary for many DC families, and the new parking requirements should reflect this fact. There are a lot of beliefs and assumptions about car ownership and the necessity of parking that simply aren't true, like the idea that if you have children, you have to have a car. I understand. I used to be incapable of imagining being an independent adult without a motor vehicle. As a federal supervisor, I hire young people from all over the country who come to DC and can't fathom the idea that my family doesn't need a car. They really have a hard time figuring out how somebody could buy groceries without having a trunk to load everything into. But I do it all the time.

My family doesn't need a car. We see no reason why this would change, with all the options DC already offers for public transit, biking, car sharing, and walking. I don't believe that my family is an anomaly. The more people realize that living car-free is not a hardship, the more people are going to be abandoning personal vehicle ownership, not just young single people but couples and families as well. The zoning changes should reflect that by reducing the minimum parking requirements.

Thank you for your time.