

Testimony in support of Case No. 08-06A, Subtitles C, D, & E

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Good evening, Chairman Hood and members of the Zoning Commission, and thank you for this opportunity to testify

My name is Lyn Stoesen and I have lived and worked in Washington, DC, for almost 25 years. I have called Ward 1 home the entire time, and have lived in Park View since 2000. I am here to express my support for the updates to the Zoning Code. The proposed changes are timely, important, and necessary.

The Subtitle C Parking proposals that lower minimum parking requirements make sense for DC. One of the things I love about DC is the fact that you don't need a car to live here. I lived in DC for ten years without a car, biking most places, or taking buses or Metro. The carless lifestyle in DC has gotten even easier recently (I love Capital BikeShare) and the increase in local, easily-reached retail, restaurants, and community amenities make DC better than ever for residents like me.

I think the parking proposals can be good for *all* DC residents. My wife Anne Stom owns Annie's Hardware in Petworth and the majority of her employees live in Ward 1 or Ward 4. One of the biggest challenges her employees face is finding affordable housing near their jobs. Most of her staff do not have cars and rely on public transportation to get to work. Reductions in parking minimums will help slow increases in housing costs and can provide more residential options near jobs.

Affordable housing is also good for our older citizens who want to stay in DC, like many of my neighbors. Our city is actually a great place to age in place. Many seniors don't have cars, don't want to drive, or are no longer able to drive, but in DC it is easy to get to services and stores without a car. Our connected neighborhoods help seniors maintain community, avoid isolation, and stay independent. Ensuring that we are prioritizing housing, and not parking, will help us remain a great place to grow old.

These are reasons I also support the Subtitle D and E proposals on accessory dwellings and corner stores. Increasing accessory housing in the city will make a difference, both for homeowners in an increasingly expensive area, and for those who can live in these units. Integrating small retail into our residential areas also makes sense. I'm lucky to have several corner stores close to my house, where I can pick up a bag of ice, buy an emergency roll of paper towels, or other items. There's no reason to prevent new stores from serving our neighborhoods and the proposals are modest and reasonable.

I love DC and I think we are moving in the right direction. Making changes to these Zoning Regulations can help ensure that I can stay here, even if I don't have a car, and maintain an integrated, active, connected lifestyle as I age. And it will help DC's diverse workforce, like those employed at Annie's Hardware, enjoy the benefits of our city.

As you can imagine, in my 25 years in DC, I have seen enormous change. I believe that cities are organic and they will change with or without regulation. But thoughtful regulation like these proposals can help changes make sense for a city and can move us forward in directions that will benefit all residents, both current and future.

Thank you again for your time.