

THE ZONING REGULATIONS REVIEW (ZRR) ZONING COMMISSION CASE No. 08-06A

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2013 AT 6:00 P.M.

Subtitle C: General Procedures (includes Parking, bike parking, loading)

Good evening Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission. My name is Bénédicte Aubrun. I thank you for your time regarding this important topic. I have lived in Adams Morgan since 1996 and I have been a homeowner since 1997.

Minimum parking standards in the R4 and R5 zone

1901.5 should be changed to keep the current R4 and R5 requirement with at least one per owner occupied dwelling. This allows some residents the ability to work outside of the district. Reducing parking so radically impacts lower and middle-income residents the most since it means, in most cases, they cannot have a car, which severely limits their job opportunities in and out of the city Adams Morgan should be exempt from waiving the minimum parking requirement due to lack of parking space the area is already experiencing.

This is especially so since metro does not run late at night and this unfairly impacts those who work in the food and liquor service industries during operating hours and those who clean these building after hours.

1902.1 Reduces the minimum by 50% for units within ½ mile of a metro stop or transit corridor.

But the ordinance says that off site parking must be within 400 feet of a structure. If 400 feet is good enough walking distance for off site parking, then it is good enough for transit uses. Either reduces the transit requirement to 400 feet or increase the off site parking distance to ½ mile to be consistent. By the way, the 400-foot rule should be to the pedestrian entrance of any building.

The Comp Plan asks that each area be individually analyzed; we don't want "one-size fits all". For example, a Metro stop where residents have access to few buses and just a Metro going N/S is different from one that has access to several lines and lots of buses. Many Metro stops don't always substitute for cars for a large part of the population, and I would

say even downtown, one couldn't assume that it replaces cars for everyone because of hours of service, lack of frequency, and of course it doesn't go everywhere you need to go to work. So rather than saying just pick a different number, I would say that you can't define an area where you change the parking requirements without studying the area, as required in the Comp Plan, and determining what the actual need for parking is there.

Reducing parking requirements would prove disastrous to the Adams Morgan (18th Street, NW) business community, which depends on outside visitors for its commercial success.

Businesses on U Street/14th Street already are feeling the impact that the lack of parking has on patrons as customers complain to the managers and staff of stores and restaurants about the difficulty finding parking. No one running a business wants to test how long customers will tolerate an inconvenience before those customers take their business elsewhere.

Planning and zoning should meet the needs of the surrounding community. There is zero evidence that there are fewer vehicles in DC now than in the past. In fact the number of registered vehicles, according to the DMV, increases every year.

The minimums should not be changed and developers should not be penalized for creating parking spaces in excess of the minimum, there is already a major deficit in city parking and the idea of penalizing a developer for doing a good thing is very wrong.

1910.3 Repeats the inconsistency of 1902.1.

Restricting parking has been a disaster for lower and middle-income residents everywhere it has been done. Let's not repeat this failed experiment in DC!

DC should base zoning changes on real numbers and learn from others' experience with ideologically driven anti-car decisions. Portland is the perfect example of failure in parking policies. After disastrous effects on commercial areas, Portland opened up their restrictive parking requirements but they are finding it is too late to undo the damage.

Let's not reiterate this failed experiment in DC! We won't be able to erase what the City will have done!

Action:

- Maintain existing minimum parking standards
- Remove penalties for providing in excess of the minimum number of parking spaces.
- Celebrate the provision of a scarce resource, i.e. parking.

Office of Planning is claiming it doesn't want to turn DC into a city only for rich people! But who can afford DC at the present with those high rent and land costs? People who will be able to own a car and park them will be the ones who are financially wealthy at the expense of the rest of the population.

The aging of the population must also be taken into consideration; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), tourists and families must also be taken into consideration. It is just not about the Millennials; one day, they will become old as well, and will realize their mistakes. It is not about "one size fits all"; DC cannot become a zoning cookie cutter. Zoning and planning analyses should be done by neighborhood to identify neighborhood specific needs. DC has and hopefully will continue to have diverse neighborhoods. This diversity makes DC unique.

Consequences of lack of parking will entail the following: (most of them based on looking at the current situations in Paris and Portland):

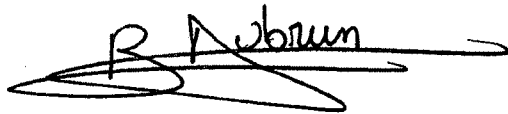
- Increase in pollution
- Increase of congestion on top of what we have now
- Increase of noise
- Decrease in pedestrian safety
- Delay in Fire/EMS response
- Loss of income for stores, many of which are marginal now. Reason: people will go back to shopping in the suburbs, like before, because suburbs make parking a friendly service
- Discrimination in who can afford parking space rental. As you know, the more a product becomes rare, the more expensive it gets
- Psychological impact on people's behavior: more stress and aggression due to frustration
- Corporations will start to flee the city to accommodate employees, clients and executives

For the sake of the DC residents, we must avoid repeating past urban development mistakes.

We must consider the impact of all those developments on the long-term residents of DC, as well as new comers, most of who stay for a short period of time and move out of the city.

As Edward T. McMahon said in his recent article for ULI, "I will also acknowledge that every city needs more compact, walkable, and dense development, but today, density is being promoted as an end in itself rather than as one means to building better cities"; and "Land use planners spend too much of their time focused on numbers —.....— and not enough time focusing on the values, customs, characteristics, and quirks that make a place cherished".

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Aubrun', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

Bénédicte Aubrun
Resident in Adams Morgan
Ward 1