

**Testimony in SUPPORT of Case 08-06A
by Elizabeth Zgoda, 850 Quincy St., NW,
before the DC Zoning Commission**

Good evening, my name is Elizabeth Zgoda, and I live in the Petworth neighborhood on Quincy Avenue, NW. I would like to express my strong support for the proposed update to the DC zoning code proposed September 9, 2013. I especially support updating DC's outdated parking requirements to reduce parking minimums along all transit lines, including bus routes.

I urge the Zoning Commission to revise DC's car-subsidizing zoning regulations that require parking minimums. By eliminating and reducing parking minimums, we can make our vibrant city even more walkable and inclusive.

I love living in DC because many of its neighborhoods, particularly in NW, have a walkable design that predates the 1958 zoning code and the dominance of the automobile. I didn't bring my car with me when I moved to DC in 2007 because I knew I could do without it here. I thought it would feel like a sacrifice and that my move here would be temporary. But instead of being a sacrifice, it has been a liberation. I have the freedom to go wherever I want, whenever I want, and I never have to worry about my car. I can achieve most errands in record time just by walking or bicycling in my neighborhood or adjoining neighborhoods. I have discovered the joy of living a life where I don't have to depend on using a car every time I leave the house. It is this freedom that has made me want to be a lifelong resident of DC.

There are many others like me, and rising rent prices are reflecting that demand. Even though I have a graduate degree and decent income, I live with a roommate so that I can afford to live in a walkable neighborhood.

By requiring developers to put in a certain amount of parking, the zoning regulations are raising rents. For large buildings, developers must spend upwards of \$30,000 per space to build structured parking, then they spread that cost across all tenants, even to those without cars. Smaller buildings don't have enough units across which to spread those costs; so developers raze adjacent buildings to put in a surface lot. Not only do surface lots add significant costs that the developers pass on to the tenants, but they create neighborhood eyesores, increase the city's impervious surface and stormwater problems, worsen the deadly heat-island effect, and reduce the city's tax revenue.

Nearly 40% of DC households are car-free, and over half of all renters are. Why must car-free households subsidize households with cars? Because a 56-year-old zoning regulation says so? The outdated 1958 minimum parking requirements are no longer appropriate for our city.

I understand that change, including elimination of parking minimums, is frightening to people. Being priced out of the city is scarier. A good start is to eliminate or drastically reduce minimums where there is transit access, including train, streetcar, bus, or even bikeshare. Let's make room for more people, not more cars.