

September 8, 2014

Ryan Donahue
1719 Franklin St NE
Washington, DC 20018

Anthony Hood
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re Zoning Case No. 08-06A, Subtitle C & D

Dear Chairman Hood and the D C Zoning Commission:

My name is Ryan Donahue I live in Ward 5 at 1719 Franklin St NE I am here to strongly voice my support for the "alternative text" that reduces parking requirements in areas well-served by transit, and which also makes it easier for homeowners to build and rent accessory apartments

Parking

40 percent of DC residents do not own a car. That number is higher in the areas under consideration for reduced parking requirements I myself live in a 4-person house with one car My girlfriend lives in an 8-person house with one car In fact, the vast majority of my peers neither own cars, nor aspire to own them These trends clearly point to less need for parking, especially in areas with good transit service Adding unnecessary parking is a self-fulfilling prophecy it makes transit slower, it dramatically reduces walkability, and it makes it harder to build housing – thus generating more driving and even more pressure on parking. I hope the zoning code recognizes this and reduces parking requirements

Accessory Apartments

There is no denying that there is a housing affordability crisis in DC. By any measure, DC and its suburbs are among the most expensive places in the country. Median rents in the city are approaching \$1,500 That means that the median rental unit is now unaffordable for half of DC residents.

These astronomical and rising prices are not an inevitable result of DC's recent growth The city's current zoning code, which unnecessarily hinders housing development, is a major contributor More and more people are competing for fewer and fewer houses and rentals, which leads to higher and higher prices. Nor is this limited to certain trendy neighborhoods I live near Langdon Park, hardly a hotbed of gentrification, and rather modest houses on my street are selling for well over half a million dollars The same thing was happening in Trinidad when I left in 2012

Will accessory apartments solve this issue? Far from it But what they will do is offer more housing options in more neighborhoods for DC residents of all income levels. They will allow current homeowners to offset some of their own high housing costs And they will allow families

the freedom to live near aging parents while providing them a measure of independence. And they will do all of this in a way that does not fundamentally alter the character of neighborhoods, especially given the restrictions on lot size and number of occupants.

The city's continued growth and the inability to build upwards means that DC's zoning code must embrace creative ways to make better use of the existing housing stock. Accessory apartments are a perfect way to do that, and making it more difficult to build them would be a major step backwards.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Ryan Donahue