



January 15, 2015

Secretary of the Zoning Commission  
Office of Zoning, Suite 210, 441  
4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

**Testimony to the Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 14-11 (Office of Planning – Text Amendments to Chapters 1, 3, and 4, Definitions,  
Maximum Height and Minimum Lot Dimension Requirements in Residence Zones, and R-4 Zone Use  
Permissions)**

**Jerrily R. Kress Memorial Hearing Room 441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 220-S Washington, D.C. 20001  
Thursday, January 15, 2015**

Good evening. My name is Latishia Allen and I am here today representing the DC Preservation League, a citywide nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the historic resources of our nation's capital. For over forty-four years, DCPL has invested significant time, effort, and funds to work with local agencies and stakeholders on preservation-related issues across the District of Columbia.

DCPL would like to express its support for the Office of Planning's text amendments to the Zoning Regulations as proposed in their June 2014 report. Zoning codes and other forms of land use regulation are powerful tools that shape the quality of life, look, and productivity of a city. More specific controls are provided through the Historic Preservation Ordinance, building on the zoning codes to protect the integrity of irreplaceable resources as individual landmarks and historic districts across the city. These historic resources of Washington are generally the focus of the DC Preservation League, but we would like to highlight here the value we see in the proposed amendments to all of city's neighborhoods, whether designated historic or not.

Neighborhoods need not be determined historic to contribute to the character of our city and support the quality of life here. All of our neighborhoods are valued by those who call them home, and zoning is the most basic tool for reinforcing their desirable qualities by managing the scale and use of buildings. For neighborhoods without the controls of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, zoning is the only available tool to prevent incompatible alterations and new construction and it is critical that it be consistent with the current building stock.

While neighborhoods that are designated as historic benefit from additional review to protect historic character, the added review is not an effective substitute for appropriate zoning. A variety of land use regulations must work in tandem to ensure continuity with measured variety in Washington's neighborhoods.

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 14-11  
EXHIBIT NO. 112

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The text amendments as originally proposed by OP, including the reduction of the matter-of-right height in the R-4 zones to 35 feet and provisions that of-right conversions be limited in the future to nonresidential structures and that any further conversions of houses to multi-unit dwellings be subject to review as variances, seek to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment in the city's neighborhoods. In historic districts the proposed amendments will move some of the burden of maintaining the consistency of the building stock from the historic review process to the more appropriate realm of zoning. In addition these amendments help to alleviate negative reactions from residents frustrated and discouraged by the frequency of "pop-up" constructions that diminish the integrity of streetscapes throughout the city.

Historic preservation has proven to be an effective tool in Washington's designated neighborhoods for a variety of public goals including sustainable and economic development. This amendment will further encourage the preservation of our neighborhoods. As our organization continues to advocate for the city's historic resources we urge the Zoning Board to retain the text amendments as originally proposed by the Office of Planning.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller  
Executive Director