

February 4, 2024

Anthony J. Hood
Chairman, Zoning Commission
DC Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S,
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Support with amendment for Z.C. Case No. 23-17 (Office of Planning – Proposed Text Amendment to Reduce Parking Requirements for Publicly Assisted Affordable Dwelling Units)

Dear Chairman Hood:

My name is Taylor Phillips, and I am the Director of Public Policy of [HAND](#). HAND is a regional membership collective of over 450 institutions working across the private, public and social sectors to collaborate in the production and preservation of affordable housing in the Capital Region of Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond. With a strong commitment to racial equity in all aspects of our work, HAND envisions a future where Black and brown communities share equitably in the knowledge, wealth and resources uniquely represented in our region. We are committed to catalyzing research and bold solutions that realize the promise of a region where all can thrive.

I am here to express our support for the proposed changes in Zoning Case No. 23-17, but request one modest change: an increase in the number of exempt affordable units from 40 to 50.

A key part of our work is HAND's [Housing Indicator Tool](#), a platform that tracks local jurisdictions' housing production and preservation in the Capital Region to help stakeholders create paths for removing obstacles to opportunity and supporting housing stability. The targets used in the tool for the Greater DC area call for a production of 374,000 net new housing units between 2015 and 2030 to adequately address the region's affordable housing crisis. These targets are benchmarked to locally produced demographic forecasts, generated as part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's 2019 regional housing targets. The District of Columbia has adopted these important targets, in a commitment to meeting the region's unmet housing needs. Further, Mayor Bowser's goal of creating 36,000 new homes by 2025, 12,000 of which are to be affordable below 80% of the District's median family income, speaks to the District's commitment to meeting this critical need.

As HAND members strive to build more affordable housing in Washington, DC, increased operating and construction costs, limited sites, and inadequate funding mechanisms are an increasing challenge. Parking requirements are an important issue for our members. Required levels of parking can be both unnecessary for the future residents served, and can render a project infeasible. This is especially true for smaller projects where margins are thin. In areas well-served by transit, and accessible to services, reduced parking is often a practical option to make a project financially feasible where future residents can rely on transit, walking and biking, and are anticipated to have low parking ownership rates.

While the District has generally low parking requirements, they can still drive up costs or make a project infeasible. Our members have expressed interest in revising parking requirements to allow more flexibility to better fit the unique needs of each site. Specifically, we want to express our support for the proposed change to exempt smaller affordable buildings from the current parking requirements. However, we request that the threshold for smaller buildings be raised to 50 units rather than 40, to better fit typical

small, constrained site conditions. We feel that this amendment to 50 units is a practical solution that will make affordable housing development easier in the District. We urge you to consider the importance of this shift at a time when we simply can't afford to create any additional barriers for our neighbors seeking more equitable, affordable housing opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Taylor Phillips
Director of Public Policy

CC: Courtney Battle, Executive Director