



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1A
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December 17, 2025

via electronic mail

Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW
Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Z.C. Case No. 25-06 — Alley Lots Text Amendment — Support with Enhancements

Dear Chairperson Hood and Members of the Commission,

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A (ANC 1A) writes to support the Office of Planning’s (OP) proposed text amendment to modernize regulations for alley lots and to respectfully urge the Commission to adopt targeted improvements so these homes can actually be built at meaningful scale. According to the OP setdown report, ANC 1A has 34 alley lots, 30 of which are greater than 450 square feet.

Alley homes are a gentle, neighborhood-scale way to add the starter homes and small apartments DC is missing. OP estimates there are about 1,900 alley lots distributed citywide—many in high-opportunity, transit-rich neighborhoods. Activating these underused lots will add more attainable homes, improve alley safety through regular use, and strengthen neighborhood character without changing the look and feel of street-facing blocks.

We urge the Commission to strengthen the setdown text by:

1. **Allowing parking flexibility for alley homes.** Many alley lots are below 1,000 square feet. These lots are perfect for the sort of small, starter homes that DC currently lacks, but they may never be built because of expensive parking mandates. DC should give homebuilders the flexibility to determine parking based on their specific site and needs, rather than forcing arbitrary mandates that waste space and increase costs for renters.



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2. **Aligning unit limits with the underlying zone.** Allow the same number of homes by right on alley lots as on street-facing lots in the same zone (e.g., two in RF zones; more in RA and MU apartment zones). This removes unnecessary case-by-case hurdles, reduces costs and delays, and in larger projects can trigger Inclusionary Zoning to deliver income-restricted, affordable homes.
3. **Aligning height limits with the underlying zone.** Where the zone anticipates apartment-scale buildings (RA/MU), alley homes should be allowed compatible height so that additional homes are feasible. This change, in combination with aligning unit limits with the underlying zone, will result in the creation of more income-restricted, affordable homes.

We note that ANC 1A has several RA-2 alley lots that are currently poorly maintained parking lots. The second and third changes, in particular, could allow these lots to become homes for many families.

We respectfully ask the Commission to adopt OP's proposal with the refinements above. These three changes are narrow, practical, and pro-housing. They remove outdated and unnecessary barriers that suppress production and raise costs. Doing so will help DC meet its housing goals, broaden affordability, and welcome more neighbors into walkable communities across all eight wards.

ANC 1A, at a properly noticed meeting and with a quorum present on December 17, 2025, voted (YEA 10 NAY 0 ABS 0) to formally approve this letter.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the District.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Jeremy Sherman
Chair, ANC 1A



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