

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here in support of the proposal to strengthen inclusionary zoning by making IZ units more affordable – at 60% MFI. This is my first time speaking before the Zoning Commission, but affordable housing is something I care deeply about. I'm not sure when my interest in equity and social justice began, but it led me to write a paper that was later published – the paper highlights the need for improved public transit, supermarket access, and job opportunities in Baltimore for low income individuals. This is mainly an issue of location. Areas with supermarkets and transit access to jobs are desirable, so rents are high, and high rents prevent low income families from accessing those amenities.

My wife and I live in Eastern Market, which is a great neighborhood, as many of you know. Everything you might need or want is within walking distance and anything else is a quick metro or bus ride away. Both of us have college degrees and with two incomes, we can live in a great neighborhood. But I want that opportunity for others too. Unfortunately it's not possible for many people, considering our booming housing market. However, such a booming market also provides the opportunity to strengthen IZ – because the market can support increased affordability requirements. We all know that metro stations attract development—right now there is a large mixed-use building under construction across the street from the Eastern Market metro station on the old Hine School property. All this new construction happens around metro stations because people want to live near transit – while it might seem cliché, WMATA's slogan “metro opens doors” is fairly accurate because their service enables access to shopping, jobs, and school. Of course, the issue is that high demand for housing near transit means high rent, leaving lower income families out of luck.

With so much new housing in neighborhoods that offer so much, we have an opportunity to support families who truly need it. I'd like to commend the commission for requiring all IZ units to be permanently affordable, but we can do more. Restricting IZ units to 80% MFI is just not fulfilling the area's need for affordable housing – I urge the zoning commission to require all IZ units be affordable at 60% MFI. This will go a long way to enabling all members of our community to live in places where they can thrive. Thank you.

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 04-33G  
ZONING COMMISSION  
EXHIBIT NO. 194  
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