

How to testify in support a progressive update to the DC zoning code before the DC Zoning Commission



Sign up to testify in advance

1. **In person:** call to get on the list –DC Zoning Commission at: 202-727-6311. You can also sign up to testify by arriving by 6:00 pm at the Zoning Commission hearing room on the hearing date. Hearings will start at 6pm and continue until everyone has testified or 11:30 pm.

Sign up to testify for specific topic, including case number, subtitle & date:

- **Parking:** Zoning Commission (ZC) Case Number 08-06A, Subtitle C – Parking (Nov. 12 or Nov. 19, 6 pm)
 - **Accessory Apartments & Corner Stores:** ZC Case No. 08-06A, Subtitle D -- Accessory Apts & Corner Stores in old R-3 (Nov. 6, 6pm)
 - **Corner Stores:** ZC Case No. 08-06A, Subtitle E -- Corner Stores in old R-4 (Nov. 7, 6 pm)
 - **Parking – Downtown –** Eliminate downtown minimums - ZC Case Number 08-06A, Subtitle I – Downtown - Parking (Nov. 14, 6 pm)
2. **Submit written comments:** If you are not testifying in person, you must mail or fax your comments by hearing date to the Zoning Commission (fax number: 202-727-6072). You can email comments but *only* if you sign your comments and send as a [PDF not more than 10 pages](#). Email your signed PDF at: zcsubmissions@dc.gov. You can also upload testimony by logging into their site at: <http://dcoz.dc.gov/news/2013/news091613a.shtm>

What to expect

You have three minutes to testify.

- State that you generally support what’s being proposed. If you want to make suggestions for how something can be better, be sure to always declare your overall support, and then say you have suggestions to make it even better.
- Always be polite and formal, and only speak for your allotted 3 minutes.
- Only answer questions if the commissioners ask you something directly. You don’t get to ask questions of the commissioners or anyone else. But it’s not likely that you will be asked questions.
- It’s a formal proceeding but the commissioners are very respectful of all the people who make the effort to come out to testify and they generally listen attentively to what you have to say and occasionally have questions for you.

You may see requests to bring multiple copies of your testimony to the meeting. Don’t worry about this if it’s a burden. If you can make multiple copies – make 5 or 6 copies, because there are 5 Zoning Commissioners who can then read along while you are testifying. We strongly encourage you to submit written testimony but it’s not essential.

General talking points to be effective



- **Header for statement:** Testimony in SUPPORT of Case 08-06A, Subtitle C (Parking) / Subtitle D (Accessory Apartments &/or Corner Stores) / Subtitle E Corner Stores / Subtitle I Downtown (Parking) by Your Name, Address.
- **Opening paragraph: Who are you?** Good evening, my name is Jane Q. Resident. I live in the Columbia Heights neighborhood at 1400 Park Road NW. I am here to express my strong support for the proposed update to the DC zoning code.
- **Overall statement of support for proposal (parking/accessory apts/corner stores):** I urge the Zoning Commission to revise DC's 1950s-era zoning regulations and help to take a great city with great neighborhoods and turn it into an even more vibrant, walkable, and inclusive place. Better options for creating an accessory dwelling unit, reducing parking minimums, creating reasonable allowances for corner stores, and simplifying the zoning code to make it more accessible will help make this city that I love even more vibrant and inclusive.
- **Why am I here? What motivates me?** Say something about how you feel about the city or your neighborhood or why this issue is particularly important to you personally. "I love living in my neighborhood because I can walk to store, the Metro, my job, etc., that's why I thought it important to speak up for the zoning update," "I love living in the city because I hardly ever need to use a car," "I don't have a car because walking, bicycling and riding transit are convenient options," "I like living in my neighborhood because I don't need to own a car and I can always rent a Zipcar if I do."
- **Explanation:** Our zoning code from 1958 does not befit a modern, dynamic city like DC, nor does it respect the form of our historic neighborhoods. Our current zoning code is based on dated concepts of what a city is and how it should grow and contains no emphasis on sustainability. 50 years of accumulated amendments have made the code far too complicated and hard to navigate. We need to modernize our zoning code to better accommodate the needs of current and future DC residents.
- **Details:** I support the proposed zoning update items -- specifically the reduction of minimum parking requirements, easing restrictions on accessory apartments and corner stores, and simplifying the overall code -- for the following reasons:
 - Better options for homeowners to create an accessory dwelling unit without a long and burdensome process means more residents will be able to rent out a basement or garage to help pay the mortgage, give a young person the opportunity to live in the neighborhood, and let seniors age in place in their own homes. This means more affordable housing options throughout our city giving more people the opportunity to live where they want.
 - Easing parking requirements in downtown areas and along busy transit corridors will help to create and preserve walkable, vibrant neighborhoods by increasing the use of transit and not mandating more parking than is actually needed by new residents. It will also provide accessible housing options for more people by making buildings less expensive to build.
 - The ability to walk just a short distance to local, neighborhood-friendly amenities enriches our neighborhood fabric. Reasonable allowances for local corner stores in residential areas will make that a reality for more neighborhoods.
 - A simplified zoning code with clear rules that can be followed by your average resident. We want to make sure the zoning code is accessible to everyone -- not just land use lawyers.