

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. **Online:** – Use our handy form to sign up online:
http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/2041/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=14565
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.

What to expect

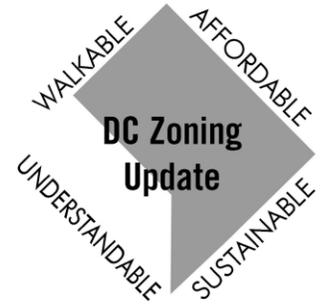
You have three minutes to testify.

- State that you generally support what’s being proposed. If you want to make suggestions for how something can be better, sign up as a “proponent”, and 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.
- 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 (though that’s not very common if there are many people testifying).

You may see requests to bring multiple copies of your testimony to the meeting. Don’t worry about this, especially if it’s a burden. Just be sure to bring at least one written copy of what you plan to say.

We strongly encourage you to submit written testimony but it’s not essential. Start your written statement with: “SUPPORT Case 08-06A.” Once we have the details and specifics, we’ll give you sample format for testimony so you know how to include the essential information.

General talking points to be effective



- **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:** 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, reevaluating 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. You can also note that you never testify but think it's important that the Zoning Commission hear from regular DC residents like yourself, etc. "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 my 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 / discussion:** 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 elimination of most parking minimum requirements, easing restrictions on accessory apartments and corner stores, and simplifying the overall code -- for the following reasons:
 - Say you support the "alternative language" that matches the September version of zoning update on parking around bus corridors and accessory apartments in carriage houses. Talk about where in the city you live and why these proposals matter to you.
 - 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 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.