



Coalition for Smarter Growth

DC • MD • VA

November 24, 2014

The Hon. Anthony Hood, Chair
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th St. NW #200
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: **Support** for case no. 14-13 (Office of Planning–Text Amendments to Chapters 1, 4-9, 12, 15, 19, 26, 27, 29, and 33: Definitions, Use Permissions, and Size Restrictions for Rooftop Penthouses)

Dear Chairman Hood & members of the Zoning Commission:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG). The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization working locally in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region dedicated to making the case for smart growth. Our mission is to promote walkable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities, and the land use and transportation policies and investments needed to make those communities flourish.

We want to express our support for the Office of Planning's (OP) proposed amendment to allow occupancy of rooftop penthouses, and to increase the maximum height of penthouses from 18 feet 6 inches to 20 feet. The amendment has the potential to increase housing availability and affordability, and we believe it will have little impact on a building's overall appearance or on adjacent land uses.

Housing availability and affordability is an increasingly pressing concern as the city continues to grow and attract new residents. Allowing the occupancy of rooftop penthouses contributes to accommodating future demand for housing, and will provide some relief on pressure on existing housing prices.

In addition, the proposed amendment will help generate much needed affordable housing units—either directly, through construction of new units, or through in lieu contributions to a housing trust fund.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth also supports the modest increase in density the amendment would entail. We believe that these changes are steps in the right direction toward a more dynamic and inclusive city which enhances sustainability for the District and region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Cort
Policy Director