

Testimony on Case No. 04-33A
Inclusionary Zoning for the District of Columbia
Oct. 5, 2006

Good evening Madam Chairman and Commissioners. My name is Tad Baldwin and I've resided at 3507 Morrison St., N.W. for the past 35 years. I am testifying tonight on behalf of Ward 3 Vision, a growing group of over 200 Ward 3 residents who strongly support affordable housing, including inclusionary zoning, and all the other key components of Smart Growth. I also live in the Chevy Chase ANC, 3/4 G that has gone on record as supporting the inclusionary zoning law the Zoning Commission recently adopted. At least one Wisconsin Avenue ANC has requested that the Avenue be exempted from the IZ program. This is an isolated and regressive response, not at all in line with the Smart Growth platforms of all the nine Ward 3 Council candidates who advocated for inclusionary zoning and affordable housing in general. We may have absurdly high housing prices in our Ward but there is genuine interest in welcoming all income levels to our communities; the IZ program is one of the very few ways this can be done. Despite the good intentions of providing affordable housing in our ward, as stated in the 1984 Comprehensive Plan, no new units of affordable housing have yet to be created in the 35 years I've lived here. Regency House, public housing for the elderly on Connecticut at Board Branch Rd., is our only below market rate development. A meager number of new affordable units are finally nearing completion as part of a new PUD at The Point in Friendship Heights.

There are several major elements of the IZ law that make great sense.

1. First, that fact that it is applied equitably to specific zones over the entire city simplifies the public and developer understanding and is eminently fair. Consistent application is very important; neighborhoods or areas with the same qualifying zoning classifications should not be exempted.
2. Secondly, the applicable areas are focused on Metro Stations, transportation corridors, and multi-family and commercial/mixed use zones that will not have negative impacts on the nearby low density residential neighborhoods. It will be very hard for critical citizens to quantify how an extra story for bonus and affordable units could possibly impact the character of their neighborhoods.

Since I have been a member of the technical committee of the Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning in DC for the past four years and worked with a similar program in Montgomery County for the past 30 years, I do have a few suggestions to strengthen the effectiveness of the program.

1. Submit PUDs to the same requirements as other developments. There will still be the opportunity for the community to seek other benefits from the developer in most cases. But requiring that these units are produced

- should be the starting point, especially since few other needs are as great in the city as well located affordable housing.
2. Reconsider the exclusion of the Downtown District. It has been our understanding of OP research that residential units have lower ceiling heights so that developing residential rather than office space can provide an extra floor for bonus and affordable units. And there will be redevelopment over the next 100 years in this largely developed area; mixing residential uses with office and retail has finally gained acceptance in DC and affordable housing should be a welcome addition in this prime location. With the proposed three year delay for applicability in this district, real estate prices would be given time to adjust to this new and important program.

One additional thought I'd like to add does not relate to the mapping program. That is:

1. The DCHA has a first right to buy or rent 25% of the units produced. The Campaign had always proposed that "qualified" non-profits would have the ability to buy or rent this same 25%. This concept was dropped for no clear reason. This can be a useful tool, especially in providing diverse locations for special needs housing.

Thank you.