

Tips for testifying in support of an inclusive neighborhood

This is your guide to testifying virtually at the DC Zoning Commission for:

Case No. 23-02: Chevy Chase Neighborhood Mixed Use Zones on April 29, 2024 at 4pm

How to sign up to testify:

In order to testify at the hearing, you **MUST** sign up to testify **at least 24 hours in advance** of the hearing date.

- **Sign up to testify virtually by April 28 at 4pm** at <https://dcoz.dc.gov/service/sign-testify>
- To sign up you need to search for the hearing date -- April 29, state that you are a “proponent” and swear to tell the truth.
- **Submit written comments (if you haven’t already sent a letter)** in advance of the hearing date. Send an email of your comments to zcsubmissions@dc.gov
- Note: The hearing is 100% virtual. There is no in-person testimony. You can either call or appear on video for your testimony.

What to expect when testifying

- After signing up to testify, you will be sent a link from the D.C. Office of Zoning with the information to log in to view the hearing, and testify when your name is called.
- On April 29, the hearing will start at 4pm, but plan on 5pm to start with proponents’ testimony. At 4pm, the Zoning Commission will discuss preliminary matters, and hear a presentation from the DC Office of Planning. It’s possible that this case could require several public hearings and will not hear from all proponents at the first hearing date.
- Your testimony:
 - Prepare to speak for three minutes.
 - 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 recommendations to make it even better.
 - Always be polite and formal, and only speak for your allotted 3 minutes.
 - It’s a formal proceeding but the commissioners are very respectful of all the people who make the effort to testify and they generally listen attentively to what you have to say and occasionally have a question for you.

For more background information, check out our [Chevy Chase Zoning Explainer](#).

Talking points

Header:

Testimony in SUPPORT of Case 25-02, Chevy Chase Neighborhood Mixed Use Zones, by [Your Name & Address], before the DC Zoning Commission, April 29, 2024

- **Opening paragraph: Who are you?** Good evening, my name is [name]. I live in the [neighborhood name] neighborhood at [DC address]. I am excited to be here to express my strong support for the proposed rezonings for Chevy Chase.
- **Overall statement of support for the proposal:**
 - I urge the Zoning Commission to approve the proposed zoning changes for Chevy Chase, especially for the civic core. This rezoning is a rare opportunity to add dedicated, deeply affordable and mixed-income housing to the Chevy Chase neighborhood.
 - These zoning changes to Chevy Chase's main street would allow for more housing, more affordable housing, better streetscapes, and welcoming public spaces. It will also guide the redevelopment of a better library, community center and outdoor public space.
 - This rezoning implements the Comprehensive Plan and Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, and will build a more inclusive Chevy Chase.
- **Why am I here? What motivates me? Make it personal.**

Do you live nearby? Talk about what it means to you to have a more inclusive neighborhood. Mention if you participated in the planning for the area - the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, planning for the library site, ANC meetings, other discussions.

Do you live somewhere else? Talk about how Chevy Chase offers great opportunities that should be more accessible to moderate and low income families, especially African American residents. The city is seeking to become less racially and economically segregated to expand opportunity for all of our residents. The citywide comprehensive plan update and Chevy Chase small area plan have each set out goals and policies to make the neighborhood more inclusive.

More talking points: Here are examples of additional things you could say that relate to the Chevy Chase rezoning, but personalize it!

- Through the new zones, redevelopment can be guided along the avenue to meet the District's goals of increased housing, affordable housing, enhanced building design, and improved public spaces.
- I support these zoning changes which will implement the Comprehensive Plan, Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, and the Housing Equity Report. All of these documents call for increased affordable housing opportunities in Chevy Chase. Currently, Ward 3 has the smallest share of dedicated affordable housing in the city, with less than 1% of D.C.'s dedicated affordable housing. The zoning changes are also intended to support moderate density, mixed use development that creates an active, pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor with a convenient mix of neighborhood serving shops and services.
- I especially support the increased potential for affordable housing through this rezoning. The proposed zoning changes will increase the potential for new housing, which could add affordable housing through Inclusionary Zoning, and at the civic site, through a public land disposition which requires, at minimum, 30% affordable homes at deeply affordable levels (at 30% & 50% median family income).
- Rezoning the civic site offers the most meaningful opportunity in Chevy Chase to include dedicated affordable homes for very low income individuals and families. The public site can provide free land to make building affordable housing less costly in this expensive neighborhood. We need to ensure that there's enough room in the zoning to build a feasible amount of affordable housing, along with a new library, community center, and outdoor public spaces.
- Providing the zoning capacity for a new civic center that includes a state-of-the art library, community center, and new affordable homes will be a great benefit to the neighborhood, and the District as a whole. The proposed changes are modest, though surprisingly contested. To do less would be to ignore the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and Small Area Plan, and a basic commitment to a more equitable community and city.
- I ask you to support these zoning changes, at minimum, to expand mixed income and affordable housing opportunities in Chevy Chase. The proposed zoning will also enhance the quality of public life by guiding building designs that support a vibrant, pedestrian-scale street and inviting public spaces.

End: Thank you for your consideration.