

**DC Council Considers
Bike Parking
Legislation for
Residential Buildings**

*Mandates parking spaces in
buildings with 8 or more units*

Councilmembers Tommy Wells (Ward 6), Harry Thomas Jr. (Ward 5), and Kwame Brown (At-Large), introduced legislation that would, among other bike-related actions, “require the Mayor to add residential buildings to those buildings required to provide bicycle parking spaces.” The legislation is to be considered in October.

If passed as written, Bill 17-90, “Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007,” would require the Mayor to “issue rules within 90 days of this legislation taking effect to amend the existing DC Municipal Regulations to include a requirement for bicycle parking spaces for residential buildings with eight (8) or more units. The number of bicycle parking spaces provided shall be at least equal to five percent (5%) of the number of automobile parking spaces required.”

To learn what our members were already doing regarding bicycle parking and storage, the Coalition surveyed its members in August.

Over half of our members responded.

The Coalition Board of Directors considered that information during its September Board meeting to provide input to Councilmember Phil Mendelson (At-Large) who had asked several different rental, condominium, and cooperative housing associations for their assistance. The Coalition’s letter and the results of the member survey can be found on page 2, “*Mendelson Letter.*”

Member Web Page

*Have you submitted your
information?*

In a July letter to our members, we announced a new, additional benefit: a dedicated web page for each member located on our web site. Every Coalition member now can have its own web page as an additional membership benefit—there is no extra charge for this new members-only benefit.

With this page, members will be able to share contact information, a bit of history about their co-op, and a photo. By clicking on the co-op’s name currently listed on our web site, you will be taken to a separate page with more information about that particular co-op, and that co-op alone. We are very excited about this new

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 23, 7PM

**Registration & refreshments
from 6:30 – 7PM**

The Broadmoor

Guest Speaker:



Scott Seligman

Coalition’s Webmaster

“Building your web site”

electronic directory. Until now, it has been difficult to keep a paper-based directory current and up-to-date. Now with a web-based capability, we can keep things as current as our members give us their updates.

Whether a co-op currently has a web site or not, this will put our member co-ops’ information in one location, easily accessible for everyone to share.

(From page 1)

Mendelson Letter

(September 25, 2007)

Dear Councilmember Mendelson:

The DC Cooperative Housing Coalition is pleased to provide input to Bill 17-90, "Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007." To inform our response, we surveyed our members to gather the information called for by the legislation as well as to obtain their opinions. The survey with results is attached.

The Coalition's Board of Directors considered the proposed legislation and the results of our member survey during its September Board meeting. In general, we commend the Council's support to accommodate and promote bicycling in the District. Based on the results of our survey, we believe our members have demonstrated their support for biking by providing both permanent and temporary bicycle parking accommodations for their residents. The real support for bicyclists will be the City's leadership and action to provide safe and secure public bicycle parking throughout the city.

We surveyed our members in August using the proposed legislation as the basis for our questions. As housing organizations owned and operated by its members, it was no surprise that our survey showed housing cooperatives provide bicycle

parking and storage for their residents. First, no one prohibits bicycles. Secondly, regardless of the number of units in a building, the majority had secure bike storage rooms (68%). The difficulty faced by bicyclists is not where to keep their bikes at home, but rather, once they arrive at a destination away from home, where can a bicyclist park and safely secure their bike?

Instead of the Council attempting to increase bicycle storage capacity on private property, the Council might first consider its commitment to bicyclists by increasing bike-parking capacity in public space at areas of work and play. The Council might also use its stand to encourage the National Park Service to partner in the effort by providing bike racks at museums and along the Mall.

Defining new requirements for bicycle parking spaces in existing buildings may be problematic because it would entail taking finite amounts of existing common areas and re-allocating these limited areas to include the new, required use. In responding to our survey, several members provided comments that helped us to understand the extent they have found creative ways to provide bicycle parking and storage areas. If there were a need, our members would undoubtedly find space to park and/or store bikes.

During our discussions, our Board raised several issues that it believes the Council must address

before the Council takes final action on bicycle parking and storage affecting existing residential buildings. These issues include the age of structures and their ability to be modified or reconfigured; the size of buildings and their building to land ratio or building footprint on the land; and the age of the resident populations in buildings and the appropriate need of residents for bike parking and storage.

In conclusion, a mandate to increase bicycle storage in existing residential buildings is unnecessary and is a matter best left to tenants and their management companies, or in the case of cooperative and condominium owners, their Boards of Directors. Legislation is best used for new construction to amend parking requirements for motor vehicles and to introduce criteria for the parking of bicycles, scooters, and motorcycles.

The Coalition would be happy to work with all concerned parties to provide input to the decision and legislative process.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Dell, President

DC Cooperative Housing Coalition



SURVEY RESULTS:**Bill 17-90, "Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007"**

Please enter your Co-op's name: _____

If we need additional information or clarification, with whom should we speak?

Name: _____ Telephone: _____ e-Mail: _____

1. In one version of the proposed legislation, the number of bicycle parking spaces is based on "the number of automobile parking spaces required." Does your co-op have automobile parking spaces available for residents (exclude any guest parking)? *(Circle response)*
 1. **68%** Yes → How many automobile parking spaces are available for your residents? 958
 2. **32%** No
→ **Smaller buildings (fewer than 50 units) are more likely to have little or no parking.**
2. Does your co-op have guest automobile parking? *(Circle response)*
 1. **26%** Yes → How many guest automobile parking spaces are available? 84
 2. **74%** No
→ **No building with 66 or fewer units had guest parking.**
3. Does your co-op prohibit bicycles on its premises? *(Circle response)*

5% No response

 1. **0%** Yes → Skip to item number 7.
 2. **95%** No
→ **No one prohibits bicycles.**
4. Does your co-op register residents' bicycles? *(Circle response)*
 1. **37%** Yes → How many bicycles are currently registered? 343
 2. **63%** No → How many units in your co-op do you estimate have one or more bicycles? 38
→ **Larger buildings (66 or more units) register bikes and, except for one, small buildings do not.**
5. Does your co-op have bicycle storage rooms? *(Circle response)*

5% No response

 1. **68%** Yes → How many bicycles can your co-op's bicycle storage room hold? 434
 2. **26%** No
→ **Size of building is not an indicator of whether or not there are bike storage areas.**
6. The proposed legislation refers to "bicycle parking spaces." Does your co-op currently have designated bicycle parking spaces available for residents (excluding those in question 5, if any)? *(Circle response)*
 1. **21%** Yes → How many designated bicycle parking spaces are available? 64
 2. **79%** No
→ **Larger buildings (194+) have bike rooms but not assigned spaces.**
7. What other issues related to bicycle parking should the Coalition consider?
 - "Bicycle storage room" is improvised from space in the boiler room.
 - Our co-op does not have any additional space in or around our building to be able to provide bicycle parking spaces.
 - We oppose mandated bicycle parking.
 - If we were compelled to designate parking spaces it will be a hardship as almost all of our parking spaces are used for automobiles.
 - Our building is 12 units, and our basement storage unit provides adequate bike storage. Bicycle parking spaces aren't necessary, especially for a building our size.
 - No known bike-parking problems for residents - visitors can bring bicycles temporarily indoors.
 - We have a rack in basement to which bikes can be locked to. This is cheap and effective and allows for many bikes to be stored w/o requiring designated spaces.
 - In addition to bike storage areas, many of our residents prefer to park their bikes in their apartments and townhouses

Board of Directors**President**

Michael O'Dell
Harbour Square, 447 units

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The Cathedral Avenue, 145 units

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The Westmoreland, 59 units

JoAnn Wells

Potomac Plaza Apartments 249 units

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About the Coalition

The DC Cooperative Housing Coalition exists to advance the common interests of cooperative housing associations in the District of Columbia and to promote cooperative housing as a desirable form of home ownership. It is therefore both an advocacy organization that articulates the interests of members before government officials and regulatory agencies and a service organization that provides information and education to members.

Membership is open to all District housing cooperatives, regardless of size. A volunteer board of directors, elected by member co-ops, governs the Coalition. Activities are financed through annual dues.

The Coalition grew out of an ad-hoc group of District cooperatives that formed in response to a judicial ruling that had cast a cloud over many cooperatives by banning proportionate voting. By marshaling the forces of more than 3,000 housing cooperative units, the ad-hoc group persuaded the District's City Council to resolve the matter.

Recognizing the importance to the cooperative housing community of speaking in a single voice and maintaining the ability to respond quickly and knowledgeably to matters affecting cooperative housing, the ad-hoc group decided to form a permanent organization. The Coalition was established in 1984 and was incorporated as the DC/CHC, Inc., a nonprofit, IRS Code Section 501(c)(6) organization in the District of Columbia, in 1993.

OCTOBER IS**Reproducing
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**Does your co-op need
a web site or
one that needs updating?**

CHC is fortunate to have found a talented web designer to create our web site. Luckier still, he is willing to create sites for our member coops at reasonable rates. Go to our web site, www.coopscdc.com, and click on "Contact us." Let us know of your interest and we will pass that information on to him.