

Council Gives Final Approval to Bike Parking Expansion

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The Council of the District of Columbia gave unanimous final approval to the "Bicycle Commuter and Parking Expansion Act of 2007" on Tuesday, November 6th. The bill expands secure bicycle parking at public, commercial and residential buildings and calls for detailed reports and infrastructure planning for bicycles across the city.

"At the end of the day, this bill represents a significant step forward to create more secure bicycle parking in the city. Whether running an errand, getting to work or simply getting some air, everyday thousands of people choose to enjoy, commute and travel through the District on a bicycle. We can create all the bike lanes in the world, but if we don't create a secure place to park your bicycle at the beginning and end of the ride, those lanes will stay empty," commented Councilmember Wells.

Under previous law, commercial office, retail and service buildings were required to provide bike parking at 5% of the number of car spaces created (i.e., if there are 100 car spaces, 5 spaces for bicycle parking must be provided). This legislation increases the requirement to 10%. The legislation also creates for the first time a requirement for secure bicycle parking in residential buildings and does so based on the number of units in the building.

"For too long, we've had a car-based view of development and the number of bicycle parking spaces was based on how many car parking spaces we built. With this legislation, we flip the way we approach it and base the number of bicycle parking spots on the number of units in a building; not the number of cars," added Mr. Wells. The legislation requires that new residential buildings create one secure bicycle parking space for every three units.

Wells added, "Over the last several months, I have worked with my colleagues to create a demand-based and tailored system for residential buildings to provide adequate bicycle parking for residents. Hardship and use-based exemptions were included in the bill -- for example senior living facilities were exempted.

"By expanding bike parking facilities throughout the city, we will be supporting and encouraging visitors, commuters, and residents to take advantage of the fact that Washington, D.C. is a wonderful city for biking," commented Councilmember Wells. He added, "Several of the steps taken with this legislation move DC to be one of the more progressive American cities in regard to promoting bicycle use and sustainable living."

The bill also calls for a Mayor's report on bike parking at District-owned buildings such as government office buildings, recreation centers, public schools and libraries. The report will include information on: 1) the number of existing bicycle and car spaces currently provided at all District buildings; 2) a strategic plan to bring the ratio of bike to car parking up to at least 10% and to provide additional bicycle parking above the minimum at those buildings where demand is higher; 3) an evaluation of bicycle travel lanes leading riders to and from District facilities and parks; 4) a detailed report on the bicycle parking plan for the new baseball park in Southeast DC.

To complement this legislation, Mr. Wells has also introduced the "Bicycle Registration Reform Act of 2007," which would replace the little used system of mandatory bicycle registration at local police stations with a voluntary system of bicycle registration with a national registry. A hearing was held on June 28th by the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary on this legislation, but no further committee action has been taken.