

My name is Alice Speck. I am a DC Ward One resident who lives at 990 Florida Avenue NW. I am not used to public speaking, so I hope you will forgive my reading a written statement. If it's any consolation, I will not use up my full 3 minute allocation.

I am a full time mom who finds it more convenient NOT owning a car. I have nothing against cars, car ownership, or car owners, but it so happens that life in this city, at least in my neighborhood, is easier without the cost of car ownership and the other burdens that it presents.

My husband Jeff and I live in the U street neighborhood, which is well served by both buses and Metro. For more distant trips and major grocery shopping, I use Zipcar, which is truly a godsend, and eliminates any excuse I would have to go out and buy my own vehicle. We literally have 20 Zipcars within a ten-minute walk of our house.

We thought that having a baby might change our feelings about the need for car ownership, but it has only resulted in a little more Zipcar use. We have chosen doctors, pharmacies, and other services based on their accessibility via metro. If you multiply our situation by the number of families in the district, you can see how encouraging transit use and walking over driving and parking results in residents spending more of their money locally, to the benefit of DC's businesses and tax base.

And of course, not owning a car has allowed us to invest more money in our home, our garden, and in the many ~~restaurants~~ stores and restaurants in our neighborhood. Other people's car payments are our disposable income.

I can speak personally about the burden imposed by the DC's current suburban parking requirements. When my husband and I designed our house, for an empty lot on Florida Avenue, we had to petition the Board of Zoning appeals to waive the requirement that we provide an off-street parking space on our tiny 500-square-foot building lot. This lot was in a block of two-dozen historic homes, not one of which has an off-street parking space.

The existing city code required us to remove an historic granite curb and eliminate a public on-street parking space in order to create our own private parking space. You can understand that we didn't want to do this. Luckily, our petition was successful, but our decision to go before the board of zoning appeals delayed the construction of our new house by NINE MONTHS.

Not all people who want to build houses in this city have the patience, the resources, or the desire to wait nine months to waive this anti-urban, anti-transit, and anti-pedestrian on-site parking requirement. Our neighborhood has its share of new houses that, following the rules, have blighted the historic streetscape with driveways and garage doors.

We can argue about whether such incompatible construction should be legal. All I'm saying is that it shouldn't be required. Thank you for your time.

ZONING COMMISSION
CASE NO. 08-06-2
EXHIBIT NO. 40
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 08-06-2
EXHIBIT NO. 60