

Testimony of Jeffrey Norman for DC Zoning Update Hearings

Telephone No. 202-966-0739

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To the attention of: Donna Hanousek

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Testimony of Jeffrey Norman before the Zoning Commission on November 12, 2014

My name is Jeffrey Norman; and I live at 5410 Connecticut Ave. NW #717, Washington, DC 20015. Tonight I would like to discuss the issue of Parking. I live in one of the 37.5% of households with no car or other motor vehicle. I support the proposals of the Office of Planning to sharply reduce the number of required parking spaces for new residential buildings that are close to either a Metrorail station or a bus line with frequent service.

DC already has many buildings in which very few or none of the residents have cars such as: dormitories, nursing homes and assisted living homes. Many of these buildings do have some parking for staff. I think it is perfectly reasonable to reduce the minimum number of parking spaces, as requested by the Office of Planning, for other new residential buildings whose residents are healthy adults who do not have cars.

Who are these people who seem to get along just fine without cars? Some are young people who can't afford cars because they are paying off costly student loans; some are people of any age who are saving up for a down payment on a house or condominium apartment; some are elderly people whose poor eyesight or other physical infirmities makes it impossible for them to drive anymore; and some are people like me who believe that we should be able to live without a car in a neighborhood that has good public transportation and has plenty of stores that sell groceries, drugs, clothing, etc. as well as services like restaurants, doctors, etc. all within walking distance or a short transit ride from our homes. In fact, we do have many such neighborhoods in Washington, DC like my neighborhood of Chevy Chase in upper Northwest DC.

I have lived in Chevy Chase DC for almost 40 years without difficulty even though I never had a car during that time. How was that possible? I do 90% of my shopping on foot; and almost all of my doctors and dentists are within walking distance of where I live on Connecticut Ave. I can take the bus or the train downtown to buy the few items that I can't find within walking distance in my immediate neighborhood. I live about about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from Friendship Heights Metrorail station, an easy 15 minute walk for me plus the Ave. has fairly reliable bus service; the nearest bus stop is only about 100 or 200 feet from the front door of my building.

If there are items that I can't carry in my hands, I can put them in my backpack. If they are too big for my backpack, I can put them in my shopping cart. Such carts are on sale at many drug or variety stores. And for items that are too large to put in a shopping cart, I can have them delivered. Over the years, I have purchased many pieces of furniture and appliances like stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers, etc. Every furniture and appliance store that I have dealt with in the 40 years that I have lived here has been willing to deliver; some stores deliver for free and others charge a small fee.

I am 67 years old; and except for walking a lot, I am one of the least athletic people you will ever meet. I don't have a bicycle; I don't work out at any gym; and I don't play any sport including golf, tennis, or jogging. It is no big deal walking to nearby shops, stores and offices just as many people have done in many cities in many countries for many centuries.

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