



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 4C

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Request that DDOT Reevaluate Approval Standards for Curb Cuts and Driveways in Residential Neighborhoods

July 10, 2019

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The ANC 4C Commission, at a duly noticed public meeting, with a quorum of 10 present at its July 10, 2019, meeting, voted, with 9 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 1 Abstentions to support ANC 1A's letter on this matter. As the adjacent Commission we feel that their concerns will potentially become concerns for 4C and are signing onto their request in a proactive manner.

"Over the past year, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A has been involved in a number of public space permit applications seeking to install curb cuts and driveways for off-street parking. In reviewing these applications, and in prolonged opposition to one in particular, the Commission has evolved in its understanding of the true impact curb cuts and driveways have on the greater community. Because of this we strongly urge DDOT to reevaluate its process and standards for approval of curb cuts and driveways.

Most significantly, the Public Space Review Board's current standard, both in public space permit review and in Board of Zoning Adjustment cases, is a standard of "no or minimal impact on the community." While this standard may have made sense in past decades when the District of Columbia was a shrinking city, in a growing city that standard must change. ANC1A requests that DDOT and the Office of Planning adopt a **new standard** whereby the applicant **must prove that the applicant will have a clear and well-defined benefit to the community and District of Columbia** if approved. It is not enough to show there is no harm, instead there must actually be a benefit.

In short, rather than assuming that all public space permits for curb cuts will be approved unless a negative impact to the community is identified, DDOT must instead presume that permit applications for driveways and curb cuts will be denied unless there is a clear and compelling reason that such a permit will benefit the community and long-term goals of the District.

We are requesting that DDOT and related District agencies make this change as we have identified the following problems which exist in the current permit review and approval process.

- Equitable access to public resources: In every case where a curb cut is considered, there is a loss of access to public space to allow for private access to personal space. In many cases, the loss of on-street parking spaces is equal or greater to the number of off-street parking spaces created. This has a more severe impact on long term residents, or residents with lower incomes. Developments that privatize public space for private profit should not be permitted – and this becomes yet one more stress on our long-term neighbors that makes it harder for them to remain in their communities;
- Environmental impacts: ANC1A has personally witnessed the removal of mature,

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special trees from private property for the sole purpose of new driveways. This diminishes the quality of life for those living in our neighborhoods and is contrary to the goals of Urban Forestry. Additionally, new driveways increase impervious pavement in the District which in contrary to our efforts to mitigate stormwater runoff and flooding – efforts that currently include the installation of expensive bioretention areas throughout Columbia Heights. Increasing impervious pavement and hastening the remove of mature trees is not sound environmental policy; and,

- Undermining Vision Zero goals: Any time we allow a new curb cut and driveway to be installed, we create new conflicts between pedestrians, cars, and bicycles. As a matter of policy, we should not be creating these conflicts when they are not necessary. Families have come before ANC1A to share their experiences with the impact driveways and alleys have on their personal safety when they are walking their children, or the impact to cyclists when a car pulls out from a driveway unexpectedly. If we are truly committed to achieving zero traffic related deaths, we must change the way we view curb cuts and driveways in the District of Columbia.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission is eager to work with you and our District agencies to implement this policy change, or to work with the Council to amend District law as necessary.

We look forward to moving forward in a collaborative spirit to ensure that our sidewalks and streets are safe, and that access to public space is equitable to all who live in the District of Columbia.”

The Commission also voted with 10 Yeas, 0 Nays, and 0 Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4C10, or any member of the Executive Committee in their absence, to be authorized to communicate this resolution and represent ANC 4C before DDOT related to this matter.

Bennett Hilley
Chairperson, ANC 4C

Jonah Goodman
Vice Chair, ANC 4C