



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



March 16, 2004

Doug Noble
Associate Director
Traffic Services Administration
2000 14th Street NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Noble,

On March 11, 2004, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A voted unanimously to request that the District Department of Transportation conduct a traffic signal and stop sign warrant study for the intersection of 10th Street, NE and Constitution Avenue, NE.

As nearby residents can attest, this intersection is the scene of frequent accidents involving cars on 10th Street, NE attempting to cross Constitution Avenue, NE. This intersection has a two-way stop on 10th Street, NE. Visibility is often impaired at this intersection, especially on the weekends, by vehicles that are parked illegally close to the corners. Similar signal-controlled intersections of Constitution Avenue, NE with 9th Street, NE and 11th Street, NE seem to be less prone to accidents.

ANC 6A urges that you initiate this study as soon as possible and inform us of the schedule for completion. The residents of the surrounding area are concerned for the safety of themselves, their children, and pedestrians and motorists who pass through this intersection. Attached to this letter are letters and emails from residents describing the problem.

Thank you for your attention and prompt action on this request.

Sincerely,

Joseph Fengler
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
fengler6a02@yahoo.com, (202) 423-8868

cc: Sharon Ambrose, Ward 6 Councilmember
Leslie Hotaling, Director, Department of Public Works
Rachel MacCleery, Ward 6 Transportation Planner
Peter Jones, Ward 6 Neighborhood Services Coordinator
Lt. Renato Caldwell, Police Service Area 511

Attachment

LETTERS FROM CONCERNED RESIDENTS

Regarding 10th and Constitution

To Whom It May Concern:

Over the few years I have witnessed or heard about dozens of accidents near the corner of 10th and Constitution NE. Beyond the accidents there are several 'near misses' a week.

All of the neighbors I have spoken with are in agreement that there should be a light at that corner to help prevent the senseless and unnecessary injury and damage.

The accidents are remarkably varied in scope - there have been hit-and-runs, people hitting parked cars, head-on collisions, dogs being hit by cars and a number where people are taken away in stretchers.

Although the types of accidents vary significantly, the common factor for the majority of accidents has been people going south on 10th street not seeing oncoming traffic on Constitution. The collisions occur when people try to cross Constitution and cannot see the cars traveling down Constitution.

Due to the parking patterns and the difficulty of seeing around the parked cars on Constitution it is often extremely hard to know if there is oncoming traffic. Combine that with speeding cars on Constitution and it makes for a corner where even careful drivers have a tough time avoiding collisions.

I hope that something is done to remedy this public hazard.

Sincerely,

Michael Shoag
203 10th St. NE

I am concerned about the number of traffic accidents that occur on the corner of 10th and Constitution. While I know that there were only 5 reported accidents last year, in my experience there is at least one accident a week and oftentimes more. There were two serious accidents last weekend alone. Two years ago, my parked car was hit by a commuter from Maryland and my dog was hit on that corner as we were crossing the street by a speeding driver at the end of January. Can you imagine if that had been a child? I am sickened by the amount of accidents and the speeding. Motorists regularly drive far in excess of the posted 25 miles an hour. I would like either a traffic light or stop sign placed on that corner. I understand that the first step is to request that the Department of Transportation conduct a study of the corner of 10th and Constitution. I am in strong support of this study.

Please feel free to contact me regarding this issue.

Jennifer Gustafson
910 Constitution Ave. NE

Some of my neighbors have been working to get the city to install a stop light at the corner of 10th and Constitution, NE. I want to express my support for this effort.

This corner has to be one of the most accident prone on Capitol Hill. It has become so commonplace for auto collisions on this corner that I come to expect them. For example, this past Saturday, I was on my

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porch talking with someone and two cars collided. I bearly leaned off my porch to know where the accident occurred.

I know that stop lights are never popular by neighbors because they inconvenience us more than anyone, but there is a need for one at this corner before someone is killed. As a neighbor, I want to lend my support for the installation of a stoplight at the corner of 10th and Constitution.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kerry Suttten
906 Constitution Ave., NE

As you know, the corner of 10th and Constitution is extremely dangerous. It is in great need of a traffic light, or other traffic calming measures. Nearly every weekend, one can hear the screeching of wheels and often the crash that follows. I have also heard screaming when someone was injured there. I worry that someday it will be my family (me, my husband or one of my two young children) that is involved, because even though we are careful, it is sometimes impossible to see oncoming traffic.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that large vehicles, most with out of state plates, park illegally on the northeast corner of Constitution. Rarely are these vehicles ticketed. Indeed, even after a crash on Sunday, March 7, 2004, and even though it was pointed out by one of my neighbors, the officer at the scene of the accident declined to ticket the illegally parked truck on the corner. The accident on Saturday, March 6, 2004 where there were two people taken to the hospital in an ambulance the illegally parked cars were merely given \$30 tickets each. I feel that they should have been towed.

The speed at which cars travel down Constitution Avenue is also a problem. The race to make all the lights leads cars to travel at speeds that are dangerous and thus when these accidents occur are made only worse by the speed of the vehicle traveling on Constitution.

Accidents seem to increase in the warmer months, perhaps because foliage is an issue. Even though there are no large trees during the summer months it is more difficult to see the traffic signal at 11th St.

If the Department of Transportation finds that there is no need for a traffic signal then perhaps a mirror could be placed on the southwest corner of Constitution and 10th so that motorists on 10th can see oncoming traffic.

I fully support a traffic study for this corner.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Elisabeth Urfer
203 10th St. NE

As I'm sure you've already been informed, the intersection of 10th and Constitution NE is extremely hazardous; this weekend alone there were two traffic accidents. There should be a light at this corner.

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I should also point out, if you weren't aware of it, that on C Street, at the other end of 10th NE, there was a man killed a few months ago in one of the many accidents that occur in that intersection. Something should be done about 10th and C NE, as well.

I also feel obligated to ask why the police turn a blind eye to vehicles that park illegally on in these intersections on church days, obstructing visibility and increasing risk to life and limb. Because we're one block from a Seventh Day Adventist Church with a large congregation, cars are illegally parked on Saturday as much as Sunday. It's a frightening and dangerous challenge on weekends to inch out in that intersection when cars are parked up to the corner and you can't see around them. Tickets are rarely if ever given; cars are never towed.

I represent one of at least nine families with small children on 10th between Constitution and C, NE. Presumably, the District wants these families to stay on our street, raise our children here, and pay the (skyrocketing) taxes on our homes and incomes. We will do so gladly, if in return the District will do everything to ensure that we and our children are as safe as possible.

You know the alternative.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

David Theis
234 10th Street, NE

I also am in favor of having DDOT do a study to see if a signal is warranted at this corner. While there always have been accidents at this intersection, the number of serious accidents has grown rapidly over the past five years. The accidents mostly seem due to 1) line-of-sight problems caused by cars parked illegally too close to the intersection (a much more serious problem now that the church is in session virtually every night as well as all day Saturday); 2) drivers disregarding the stop signs on 10th; and 3) excessive speed by drivers on Constitution.

While it may seem odd to ask for a signal at 10th when there are already signals at 9th and 11th, I think it would help, especially for those of us on 10th. Basically, there are no signals on 10th from North Carolina on north for numerous blocks. Drivers know this and use 10th as a "fast" way to move northbound and southbound, especially in non-rush-hour times, and they often speed, run the stop signs, and have difficulty seeing traffic on Constitution.

In any event, I certainly support a study. DDOT does and can use federal highway money for purchasing and installing traffic signals. If we are unable to get a signal, I would urge that the timing of the signals on 9th and 11th be modified in non-rush-hour times so that drivers are not able to race down Constitution at 45 mph in a desire to "make" all the lights.

Jeff Fletcher
113 10th NE

I am writing in support of the need for a traffic light at 10th & Constitution.

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As a resident living on 10th street, I regularly have to bring my car fully into the oncoming lane of traffic, simply to see past the parked cars. Any car within 15 feet would have to stop suddenly to avoid a collision. As you know in the morning both lanes of Constitution are one-way and move swiftly, to cross the street presents a significant danger.

I understand that you are aware of the numerous accidents which occur at this intersection, and close calls are something we hear on a daily basis.

Please know that I regard this not as a convenience issue, but a SAFETY issue for myself, family and neighbors, and would appreciate this guiding your decision.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Glenn Hoburg
208 10th Street, NE

Thanks for helping us with this issue. Having small kids playing in such close proximity to numerous accidents (not to mention the drivers speeding down 10th St) is very worrisome. For the DDOT study do you have to meet all 8 criteria or just some of them? Just from my observations I believe 10th and Constitution has more accidents than 10th and C Sts, so maybe it would meet at least one criteria.

If getting a light is not possible (or our kids would be grown and off to college by the time anything was installed) is there any other option that we could consider? Could we work with the city to make the lights at 11th and 9th timed so that you never hit a green at both corners? Maybe that would slow some of the people down and cut down on some of the accidents.

Tricia Loveland
207 10th St, NE

As residents of 10th Street, N. E., we are writing in support of placing a traffic light at the intersection of 10th and Constitution, N. E. There have been a high number of accidents at this intersection over the past several years, far more than can be attributed to normal driving patterns. Several accidents have been especially severe, and we are concerned that there will be more of them unless the situation is remedied. It appears that poor sight lines, among other problems, increases the likelihood of accidents. We advocate placement of a traffic light at this intersection. If necessary to assure traffic flow, the light at 11th and Constitution, N. E. could be replaced by a stop sign on 11th.

We hope the ANC concurs that forwarding this request to the District DOT is appropriate.

Lawrence Finfer & Judy Jashinsky
115 10th Street, N. E.

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Like the others in the neighborhood, I am alarmed at the number of traffic accidents at the corners of 10th and 11th and Constitution and the vicinity. My wife, daughter, and I live at 1019 Constitution. You may recall me as the applicant for the driveway permit to legitimize the work the previous owner had done - at some point I may bring you up to date on that matter; and during the discussion before the ANC zoning committee last spring, I raised traffic safety as a consideration in approving the application.

I understand, from the flyer left on the porch the other evening, you intend to discuss at the ANC studying whether to install a light at the corner of 10th and Constitution, and I support that. In addition, I would suggest that the city consider other steps, too, that might complement or replace a light.

First, I strongly recommend stricter speed limit enforcement, especially in the mornings. Being a major commuter thoroughfare, traffic on Constitution in the morning, especially, is heavy, and treacherous. Drivers blithely disregard the speed limits, reaching dangerous and alarming speeds. I am sure that fact partially accounts for the fact that so many accidents take place in the morning.

Second, and I presume contributing the above, the lights at 13th, 11th, and 9th are, I presume, timed to expedite traffic flow, especially in the morning. While laudable for helping move traffic, this fact facilitates the excessive speed in this stretch of the street. It might be worth considering altering the timing to slow traffic, an option certainly no less disruptive than adding another light. I might add, too, that if the city adds a light at 10th and times it to synchronize with the others in the immediate area, the seeming solution will not have alleviated the problem.

Third, I do not know the policy of the city on speed bumps, but it might be that a few well-placed ones would contribute to easing the problem.

Most important, as I noted and as I am certain virtually everyone in the affected area agrees, something needs to be done. Not only are citizens and property directly involved in accidents affected, and increasing - barely a week goes by without an accident in that block - residents and visitors are suffering collateral damage. In the accident last Saturday at 10th, a parked car was damaged. A few weeks ago, a parked car at 11th and Constitution was damaged as a result of another accident. I might add that before we moved into our house, our kitchen window and the windows of the address to the east which fronts on 11th were destroyed by debris from an accident at 11th and Constitution. Unfortunately, I fear, as do others, that the law of averages almost dictates that an innocent bystander will be injured by an accident, which particular scares me as the father of a young daughter and in light of the fact that the accident last Sunday occurred right in front of our house.

Finally, I doubt anyone gets as frustrated as do I at traffic in the city and I recognize that all and any of these options will add to traffic delays, at least, and congestion and frustration, at worse. Nonetheless, I believe, as I am sure my neighbors do, the city has a higher obligation to ensuring our safety.

If I can help solve this problem, please let me know. I appreciate your willingness to address our concerns.

Greg Frazier
1019 Constitution Ave, NE

My husband and I are very concerned about the number of traffic accidents at 10th and Constitution. Just last weekend two people required an ambulance after such an accident. Lax parking enforcement on the

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corners of those streets has exacerbated an already difficult traffic situation. Would you please encourage the Department of Transportation to conduct a study of that corner and consider installing a traffic sign.

Martha Brant
209 10th St, NE

My husband Rob and I live two houses down from the intersection of Constitution and 10th St NE. We have witnessed numerous accidents at that intersection in the slightly over a year that we have lived here. We are very concerned about safety at that intersection.

We definitely think there should be either a 4-way stop sign or a traffic light.

Thank you for pursuing this issue.

Kate Winthrop
130 10th St. NE

Thank you for taking the initiative in trying to come up with a solution for this notorious intersection. Saturday's accident was, indeed, terrible. I ran into the house to get ice because it seemed as if the ambulance was taking so long to arrive and the victim in the passenger seat was obviously in awful pain.

Having said this, it is my opinion that a traffic light would not solve the problem. We already have lights at 11th and 9th. Saturday's accident was clearly a situation of blocked vision by illegally parked SUV's (6, in fact) with Maryland plates, obviously owned by people attending services at the 7th Day Adventist Church at 10th and Mass. It is a well-known fact that the police turn the other way on weekends for people attending this and many other churches on Capitol Hill who are illegally parked. The elders came out of Saturday's service when word spread about the accident; at least two church members' cars were also damaged. They are wonderful people and are empathetic to our parking situation but explained they have no alternative, now that the Medlink lot is unavailable. I suggested that perhaps they could park at RFK and bus parishioners, but was told that would not work because people arrive at different times. The illegal parking situation is not confined to that intersection. Mass Ave is also jammed on Saturday mornings with illegally parked cars - including the crosswalk - and intersections for many blocks near the church are also dealing with the same situation. Many of us stayed Saturday (and perhaps you were one of those individuals) until every illegally parked car at the intersection of 10th and Constitution was ticketed.

Of course, numerous accidents have occurred on weekdays, as well, especially during the early hours of one-way traffic down Constitution Avenue. I truly do not have an answer, but perhaps a hidden camera to clock those who are speeding, or a 4-way Stop sign might help.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the ANC meeting, but fully support a study to come up with a solution to the numerous traffic accidents at the intersection of Constitution and 10th Street NE, have full confidence that Cody Rice will do everything within his power to assist us. Please keep me apprised of developments. Thanks

Mary Arrighi
127 10th St, NE