



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



June 15, 2018

Director Jeff Marootian  
District Department of Transportation  
55 M Street, SE, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20003

Re: C Street NE 65% Revised Design

Dear Director Marootian:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting<sup>1</sup> on June 14, 2018, our Commission voted 5-0 (with 5 Commissioners required for a quorum) to send this letter expressing our opposition to DDOT's updated C Street NE design proposal of April 26, 2018. This letter serves as an extension of support for the letter from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D of May 8, 2018.

The DDOT designs presented at the April 2018 community meeting, based on a recalibration of the volume and traffic models for the corridor: a) present greater risks to residents and students; b) focus on peak-hour conditions to the detriment of all other times; c) do not adequately improve current conditions; and d) subvert a decade-long public consensus-building process. In response to the community opposition, DDOT posted a June 2018 revision, which reinstates many, but not all, of the safety features of prior designs. The June designs also rely on new calculations for traffic volume in 2040, which do not reflect the Mayor's long-term commitment to improved transit or the principles of VisionZero and Move DC. Furthermore, our Commission remains concerned regarding the April and June designs, for the following reasons:

### **Greater risk to Residents, including Children and Youth**

Thousands of residents live and transit through the C Street NE project area, which transects two Single Member Districts (7D and 6A) and is adjacent to another (6B). Many of those residents have long-endured the 1960s street design which prioritizes the rapid movement of vehicles over the safety and well-being of residents, pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, there are five schools (Apple Tree Early Childhood Center, Eliot-Hine Middle School, Eastern High School, Monument Academy and Friendship Public Charter School) in the vicinity that are impacted. The revised designs, when compared to prior versions, represent a substantial reduction in safety for residents as well as the more than 2,000 school children and their teachers, staff and families who regularly transit through the area. Children and elderly pedestrians are the most vulnerable to severe injury or death; according to the CDC, pedestrians ages 65 and older accounted for nineteen percent (19%) of all pedestrian deaths and an estimated thirteen percent (13%) of all pedestrians injured in 2015, while one in every five children under the age of 15 who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians.<sup>2</sup> Slowing speeds saves lives, particularly for the elderly: a 70 year old hit by a car going 35 miles per hour (mph) has a 50/50 chance of survival.<sup>3</sup>

### **Focus on Peak Hour conditions to the detriment of all other times**

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<sup>1</sup> ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on the [anc6a-announce@yahoo.com](mailto:anc6a-announce@yahoo.com), [anc6a@yahoo.com](mailto:anc6a@yahoo.com), and [newhilleast@yahoo.com](mailto:newhilleast@yahoo.com), at [www.anc6a.org](http://www.anc6a.org), and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pedestrian\\_safety/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/pedestrian_safety/index.html)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/article/unsafe-at-many-speeds>

In DDOT's plans and justification for the changes, a recurring focus is the impact to peak hour conditions, which are primarily the 7:00–9:00 am period during weekdays, a total of ten (10) hours per week. Reducing delays during this period will lead to increased speeding at all other times, which are typically not congested. Specific choices like moving the bus bulb at Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE are related to this focus on peak hours. In all instances, we favor the decision which will slow traffic the most, create the shortest crossing distances for pedestrians, and the fastest boarding and alighting for transit riders, as opposed to catering to rush hour flows into and through this corridor. It is important to remember that rush hour commuters have many choices of routes and decide their route based on what is fastest and poses the least friction for their trip. For our neighborhood, we choose to not be the fastest route or the one with the least friction, and are comfortable with the consequences DDOT has described, including the "F" level of service during some peak hour times. We expect that such slowing would result in changed behavior and would encourage drivers to select another route (most likely Route 295) or another method of transit.

### **Inadequate response to current unsafe conditions**

As a community that already bears the burden of traffic congestion, noise, vibrations, and crashes, our ANC objects to the continued prioritization of traffic flows over the health and safety of our residents. Recent incidents include: crash of a vehicle into the yard of the ANC Commissioner for 6A08, a fatal accident adjacent at Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) and E Streets NE, a crash at Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) and C Streets NE, four (4) high speed crashes in as many years at 258 Fourteenth (14<sup>th</sup>) Street NE as well as the chronic problem of speeding as documented by MPD's recent enforcement activities in which more than thirty (30) drivers were ticketed for speeds in excess of 25 mph above the speed limit. Drivers speed on both Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) and Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Streets NE to catch the lights, resulting in crashes and numerous near-misses. Even with the recent changes to Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE, the absence of a signalized left turn cycle from Westbound C Street to Southbound Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE and signage permitting dual turning lanes generates aggressive driving and threats to pedestrians crossing Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE (south side of C Street). The February designs represent a much safer approach to remedy these challenges and we ask that DDOT continue to make efforts to revert to those designs.

### **Subversion of a ten (10) year public process**

Two separate designs from trusted engineering firms, as well as considerable community input over the course of a decade, led to the proposal as presented in February 2018. The April 2018 version represented a step backward as it proposed to: eliminate nearly all of the curb extensions on the north side of C Street NE, increase the number of westbound traffic lanes, permanently eliminate on-street parking on the 1600 and 1900 blocks of C Street NE, introduce an additional lane of traffic in the form of a right-turn signal to direct traffic from C Street to Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Street NE, and eliminate numerous other safety features. If the changes as proposed in the April 2018 designs were to be put into place, the Mayor's initiatives of MoveDC and VisionZero would be threatened in the area. Furthermore, undermining ten (10) years of research and data with no credible rationale (the April design was presented without sufficient explanation), subverts the public process and erodes DDOT's ability to act as a trusted public service agency. Instead, DDOT should be a model for good public policy which relies on evidence to generate the greatest amount of benefit for the most number of people at the least cost.

### **June 2018 65% Design Comments**

The following are specific comments related to the June Design:

1. Correct Speed Calculations to Reflect School Zone Limits. The posted speed limit on C between Eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) and Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Streets NE is 15 mph during school hours;

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Table 1 states that the posted limit is 25 mph. Please amend analysis on page 7 to reflect speeding during times when the posted speed is 15 mph.

2. Sidewalks at Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE. Sidewalks should not zig-zag through intersections. The June 2018 design dictates that C Street pedestrians will zig-zag when crossing Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE.
3. No Turn on Red. Safe Routes to School guidance suggests that school zones ensure there is No Turn on Red posted throughout the corridor. Please amend.
4. Signalized Left Turns. Left turn signals for Eastbound at Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Street NE and Westbound at Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Street NE would improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Please consider a left turn signal at these intersections.
5. Lane Width: Lane width has been shown to directly correlate with speeding vehicles. The wider the lane, the more a vehicle is likely to travel at high speeds. Because this is a school zone with a high volume of pedestrians and cyclists, we request that each vehicle lane be no more than ten (10) feet wide. The June 2018 plan shows an inner WB lane to be eleven (11) feet wide, while the other through-traffic lanes and right-turn lanes are ten (10) feet wide. Once Westbound vehicles get down to Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>)/Sixteenth (16<sup>th</sup>) Streets NE, the two lanes widen to eleven (11) feet. Please keep ten (10) foot lanes throughout the entire corridor to reduce speeding.
6. Reallocation of Westbound Lane Width (1900 block of C Street NE). On the 1900 block of C Street NE, the right turn and center through-traffic lane are ten (10) feet wide, while the left-most through traffic lane is eleven (11) feet wide. After reducing the inner Westbound lane from eleven (11) feet to ten (10) feet, we request that the “leftover” foot be applied to the protected bike lane. On the Westbound 1900 block of C Street NE, the protected bike lane is currently five (5) feet wide, which is one (1) foot less than other parts of the corridor. Please reduce the left-most through-traffic lane by one (1) foot and increase the bicycle lane by one (1) foot. This reallocation will also give turning vehicles a slightly longer sight line when crossing pedestrian/cyclist lanes.
7. Raised Bicycle Lane and Permanent Barrier between Parking and Bicycle Lane (1900 block of C Street NE). On the 1900 block of C Street NE, DDOT has proposed a row of flex-posts to separate the bicycle lane from the parking lane. To increase safety for cyclists, we request that the bicycle lane be raised above the parking lane, creating a permanent barrier between cyclists and parking/traffic. This will also help make the cyclists more visible to vehicles that are moving through the corridor.
8. Raised Crosswalks. The new design does not indicate any intention of raising crosswalks, despite being recommended in the *C Street Multimodal Corridor Study*. Please consider raised crosswalks in the school zone as well as throughout the corridor.
9. Textured Crosswalks. In locations where raised crosswalks were not recommended in the *C Street Multimodal Corridor Study* (Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) and Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Street NE intersections), we recommend bumpy textured crosswalks be implemented as a traffic calming measure.
10. Eastbound Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>)/C Street NE Bus Stop: Align with School Entrances. Please keep the bus stop in its current (2018) location at the southwest corner of the intersection. This will improve safety because children who use the bus to get to school will not need to cross the street to enter Eliot Hine and Eastern High. The location of the current (2018) bus stop was due to be moved from the southwest corner to the southeast corner to accommodate the elimination of the Twenty-First (21<sup>st</sup>) Street NE bus stop. Now that the Twenty-First (21<sup>st</sup>) Street NE bus stop has been reintroduced, there is no need to move the Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Street NE bus stop across the street from the schools.
11. Bike Box at Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) and C Streets NE. The southern part of the C/Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>)

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Street NE intersection, facing north, needs to have a bike box placed on the left side of the street rather than the right side because the bicycle lane on the northern side of Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Street NE is located on the left.

12. Bus Stops Throughout the corridor, we believe the bus stops in the westbound direction should load in the travel lane, rather than pulling-in to a bus stop. This will have the slight positive effect of slowing traffic through the corridor, and speeding bus service as compared to pulling into a lay-by stop.

In summary, we ask that DDOT build for the future that our public leaders proclaim they want to see: a safer, greener, healthier C Street corridor that can be used by residents, students and commuters, whatever their form of travel. Such a future must de-prioritize single occupancy vehicle traffic in favor of transit, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly infrastructure. In addition to the well-known societal and environmental benefits, there are direct health benefits to changing behavior: one recent study showed that more active patterns of commuting (defined as transit, walking or bicycling) compared with exclusive car use were associated with an eleven percent (11%) lower relative risk of developing heart disease or stroke and a thirty percent (30%) lower relative risk of death from heart disease or stroke.<sup>4</sup>

Transit-rich cities are also more equitable and most benefit residents on the lower end of the income distribution; in areas where cars are the only transportation option, low-income households bear a disproportionately high burden of the costs of owning and maintaining a vehicle. The design proposed in February 2018 is a step forward in meeting DC's vision for the future. Accordingly, we ask that DDOT reject all of the changes proposed in the April 2018 design and consider the above comments regarding the June 2018 design.

Thank you for giving great weight to the concerns of ANC. Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, please feel free to reach out to me to Commissioner Amber Gove at [amberanc6a@gmail.com](mailto:amberanc6a@gmail.com) and Commissioner Calvin Ward at [cward6a08@gmail.com](mailto:cward6a08@gmail.com).

On behalf of the Commission,



Phil Toomajian  
Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

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<sup>4</sup>[https://theconversation.com/ditching-the-car-may-reduce-your-risk-of-dying-from-heart-disease-and-stroke-by-almost-a-third-96817?utm\\_campaign=Echobox&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Twitter#link\\_time=1526981475](https://theconversation.com/ditching-the-car-may-reduce-your-risk-of-dying-from-heart-disease-and-stroke-by-almost-a-third-96817?utm_campaign=Echobox&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#link_time=1526981475)  
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