

MINUTES

ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting
Capitol Hill Towers (900 G Street, NE)
February 22, 2016 at 7:00 pm

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm.
- II. Introductions
 - A. Committee members: Commissioner Omar Mahmud (co-chair), Lara Levison, Andrea Adleman, Todd Sloves (co-chair), Jeff Fletcher, Elizabeth Nelson, Hassam Christian
 - B. Additional Commissioners present: Phil Toomajian, Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, Calvin Ward.
 - C. Leif Dormsjo, District Department of Transportation (DDOT) Director and several DDOT staff
- III. Announcements - none
- IV. Community Comment
 - A. Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert has received complaints about a speed trap at an exit from 295 into the District via Bladensburg or Benning Roads. Several different speed limits are posted. People are paying large fines. She asked how to approach DDOT to receive an assessment or review of this arrangement. Leif Dormsjo, DDOT director, replied that he knows exactly what you are talking about; I received a ticket of \$100 myself when I got off at Benning Road exit. It is very difficult to understand the posted speed limit. We will talk to the police department about it since they run this program.
 - B. Stacey (Maryland Avenue resident): Thank you to everyone who helped get Capitol Bikeshare at Tenth (10th) Street and Maryland Avenue NE.
- V. DDOT Director Dormsjo's update on Maryland Avenue redesign and other local concerns
 - A. Mr. Mahmud congratulated Director Dormsjo for his work on the streetcar, for getting it over the finish line.
 - B. Mr. Dormsjo provided an update regarding the Maryland Avenue redesign. DDOT is advancing on the design contract for Maryland Avenue. They held a specific briefing on the topic in May 2015 at the Northeast Library where they talked about the steps to get it to completion. Last year, DDOT was working on some final Federal approvals, getting the funds obligated, ironing out issues with stakeholders like the Architect of the Capitol, and getting a scope of work done to bring on an engineering firm. They will develop a design document, taking the information from the studies that have been done. They will do an exhaustive inventory of every physical feature and come back to us with a 30% design document, early in the summertime. At that point, DDOT will lay it out for the community in a workshop or forum. At that time, they will want to reach resolution on any controversial aspects of the project. Then the designer will do the rest of the design work. DDOT will also come back at the semi-final phase (for community review) of about 90%. We are following same roadmap as used on Kennedy Street NW in Ward 4.

- C. The Streetcar will be launched for passenger service on Sunday, February 28, 2016 at 10:00 am. There will be a Ceremony at Thirteenth (13th) and H Streets NE, followed by the maiden voyage of the streetcar with passengers. DDOT wanted to get through the certification and testing process and have good, reliable, on-time performance from the beginning. They will launch with service six (6) days per week and give the operator Sunday to do maintenance for now. At the six (6) month mark, DDOT will consider a number of options: Reduce wait time from 15 to 12 minutes between streetcars; the goal is 10 minutes. Add Sunday service: it is not uncommon to get streetcar service running, and then enhance it. In Dallas, they run only on weekdays.
- D. Regarding questions about Seventeenth (17th) Street NE/SE: DDOT is very coordinated with DC Water and Washington Gas. DDOT will have their contractor come behind them as they make improvements from the north. DDOT will make their own improvements coming up from the south (streetlights, sidewalks, tree boxes). The project is sequenced to take into account the utility work. The entities involved will be working almost simultaneously.
- E. Question about new traffic signal at Tenth (10th) Street and Maryland Avenue NE: Initially the signal was installed so that pedestrians had to press the button in order to activate the pedestrian crossing. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires buttons; DDOT puts them on all crosswalks now. Unless there is a certain amount of pedestrian volume, we want the traffic to move safely and smoothly without disruption of traffic flow when there are no pedestrians. Because of the ANC's resolution, DDOT tested the signal and determined there are enough pedestrians to put it on a cycle (pre-timed sequence). There are many signals that have low pedestrian counts that have to be activated with the button.
- F. Traffic calming requests from June 2014 through January 2015. DDOT is working on at least one of them. Some of the applications were not completed with resident's petitions; DDOT wants to hear from the people affected that they want a traffic calming measure. In the past, ANC resolutions may have substituted for petitions. However, because DDOT knows the petitions will come to us, we are moving forward with the assessments. Still, it would be good for us to have the complete documentation so that we know there is broad concern. DOT wants to avoid getting in the middle of a neighbor-on-neighbor dispute over traffic calming measures.
- G. Residential parking. DDOT has some regulations under consideration by the City Administrator's office and Mayor's office. Under consideration is whether the city will develop a new policy for residential parking only. In Ward 1, the ANCs can opt into a structure where they limit parking on certain blocks to residents of that block. We are weighing whether to do that, or have a petition process. There appears to be a movement toward the Ward 1 model. The proposal will be rolled out for public comment fairly soon. It is in final review before being made public.
- H. Questions
 - i. Commissioner Mahmud commented that the westward-eastward expansions of streetcar will determine the ultimate success and asked about the budget planning for this year for expansion? Mr. Dormsjo stated that the Environmental process is almost done for extension to Benning Road NE. DDOT wants to have a public meeting soon to discuss the alternatives we

have identified which are Center line alignment, or curb-running alignment like H Street NE. DDOT is doing the work on this through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and will be eligible for federal funds for the extension. DDOT did not use federal funds for H and Benning line and so did not have as much rigor around the operational design. Once an alternative is chosen, design work will begin. Eventual build-out will be a significant investment. DDOT will have much better information once an alternative is chosen and the design process is started. The connection will make the line between U Station and Benning road more valuable. The Union Station to Georgetown line is behind the other. DDOT needs to have a public meeting. They have met with some of the Federal agencies to try to resolve concerns with viewsheds and big institutions such as the DC Convention Center. They have made a lot of progress, though we have been quiet about it. DDOT feels pretty good about the Union Station extension; they may be able to have a streetcar that runs on a catenary wire for a while, then runs off the wire on a battery for a while. Both those extensions are in a good place.

- ii. Commissioner Mahmud asked for an update on the Hopscotch Bridge. Mr. Dormsjo responded that it is part of a much bigger public-private project at Union Station. Amtrak's yard configuration will be changed. There is a need to replace the bridge and move the piers. DDOT is participating in an environmental process there. They have interviewed consultants to build the new hopscotch bridge. For the streetcar extension, the Union Station connection needs to be addressed.
- iii. Co-Chair Sloves commended DDOT for their work in replacing the alley of Linden Court NE. This could be a model for other alley replacements.
- iv. Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert asked about the streetcar fare and the effect on the X bus. Passengers are concerned that the streetcar will limit the number of buses and be more expensive. Mr. Dormsjo responded that Metro has no plans to make any changes to bus service. There will be a promotional period for the streetcar of at least six (6) months with no fare. This is very common in other systems, such as Dallas. Atlanta - free for a year. Portland - free downtown for 10 years. Bus rapid transit in downtown Denver is free. When we do propose a fare, it will be at parity with the Circulator (One (1) dollar) with discounts for elderly and students. DDOT will look at that at the six (6) month mark, and let people know when the fare will start. The payment will take place off-board. Vending machines at the stations with a ticket for proof of payment or mobile payment. An attendee asked if this means the streetcar will not accept Metro farecards. It will not. Metro is struggling to figure out how to replace SmarTrip technology. It would cost the streetcar \$3 million to integrate with Metro. When Metro replaces SmartCard, Metro's board wants it to integrate with all the regional services.
- v. Commissioner Toomajian commended DDOT for the streetcar. The Union Station to the west connection is very important. He is excited to hear about the work moving forward on the Maryland Avenue project: He wants to schedule a date for the community meeting. Residential parking: if we do not have the regulations in a couple months, and we come to you and want to expand resident-only parking to more blocks, can we do that? Dormsjo: we would rather have the regulations.

- vi. Commissioner Ward thanked DDOT for its assessment on the 400 block of Nineteenth (19th) Street NE. The DDOT letter stated that construction would start in spring 2016. He asked Mr. Dormsjo to elaborate. Mr. Dormsjo stated that we need some better weather to make those changes.
- vii. A resident thanked DDOT for the Residential Parking Permit status for their block on Florida Avenue NE and asked about the status of Florida Avenue improvements. DDOT staff member, Mr. Ali Shakeri, responded that they are in the process of negotiating to get a consultant to begin the design; this will take sixty to ninety (60-90) days. The first phase of the design (30%) will take six (6) months. The next phase (90%) will take another nine (9) months. Mr. Mahmud commented that the Committee will start pestering DDOT in six (6) months.
- viii. A resident asked about residential parking, Registration of Out-of-State Automobiles (ROSA) exemptions and visitor parking permits (VPP). She saw someone posting a VPP for sale on a website. There are so many agencies involved in overseeing parking. She feels like she is the only person on her block with a registered car with a residential parking permit. Mr. Dormsjo responded that DDOT has recently hired a new COO; he has asked the COO to take a look at this issue. He doesn't understand why DC does not charge a fee for a visitor parking permit. DDOT wants to have some features of the parking program changed by 2017. They want to get a handle on what is under DDOT's control and to talk to the other agencies. Mr. Mahmud asked when the Committee should follow up. Mr. Dormsjo responded June/July 2016.
- ix. A resident asked about the construction work on Seventeenth (17th) Street which is noisy and has created bad road conditions. DDOT responded that DC Water will be done by the end of April 2016. Washington Gas just got started; they have to do a lot of main line work - the whole street. Then they have to replace everyone's connection from F Street toward Potomac Avenue. DDOT's project is from Benning Road NE to Potomac Avenue SE. and plans are to start close to June 2016. Then Washington Gas should be ahead of us. We will add bulb outs, new drainage, and new signals. The DDOT Contractor will do underground work while Washington Gas is doing their work. Then DDOT will go behind them, do pedestrian crossings, handicapped cuts, etc.
- x. A resident asked a question regarding a business on Eighth (8th) Street NE. Neighbors and the owner want to change the traffic signs from "No parking anytime." When will construction begin on Maryland Avenue? Spring 2018.
- xi. Dr. Madden, a property owner, asked when the Seventeenth Street project be at Benning Road. He has a lot there that has does not have a water connection and would like to do it before construction goes past there. Mr. Shakeri advised him to start the application process. Dr. Madden asked whether eminent domain, which was mentioned during the DDOT presentation, applies to Seventeenth (17th) Street. Mr. Dormsjo clarified that eminent domain was in association with streetcar project. The area would be on Benning Road east of the river.
- xii. A resident expressed concern that on Seventeenth (17th) near F Street NE. there is not a sidewalk connection. Children are walking in the street. Mr. Shakeri responded that they can look at the issue under safe ways to school/asset management.
- xiii. A resident asked when DDOT will be at 90% regarding Maryland Avenue project. They saw the design and kind of liked it. Is DDOT opening that up to

changes? Mr. Dormsjo responded that what the public saw was a conceptual design; it will become much more detailed. According to Mr. Shakeri, the first phase (30%) should be available by summer 2016. It will be another nine (9) months to get to the next phase (90%). DDOT will need three to four (3-4) months to advertise the project and get a contractor on board. The contract will be ready to be awarded in late 2017. Construction is anticipated in spring 2018 and will last fifteen (15) months. It should be complete in the middle of 2019.

- xiv. A resident asked what will happen to the artwork and the mural at the hopscotch bridge. Will it be included in the redesign? Mr. Dormsjo responded the DDOT has made a commitment that the artwork will be preserved, and either included in the new bridge, or used for a community purpose.
- xv. A resident asked whether has there been an assessment of how the Maryland Avenue project will affect the traffic? Mr. Dormsjo responded that DDOT has done an extensive analysis of the issue. DDOT made a presentation about it last year. They do not think there will be congestion caused by the reduction in lanes. DDOT will address the speeding problem. There are 9,000 vehicles on average that use the road daily. The road is overbuilt for the traffic on the road. You see a lot of platooning = speeding. There will be reasonable traffic flow.
- xvi. A resident commented that it is clear DDOT get the concerns about the need for traffic calming and safety along Maryland Avenue. It sounds like the schedule is slipping a bit. If you can move it along, we would certainly appreciate it. There were lots of community meetings in 2010, 2011 and 2012. We hope that will form the basis for the ultimate plan.
- xvii. A resident asked about the status of C Street project and traffic calming. There was recently a crash into someone's house. Mr. Shakeri indicated the concept study is completed. The Office of Planning starts the project and creates a concept. Then it comes to DDOT. They scope it and hire a consultant to do the design. Construction is scheduled for 2018. Mr. Mahmud asked whether there is some date by which when we can expect progress.
- xviii. Committee member Adleman asked whether DDOT can really critically about why we need to push pedestrian buttons in the first place? Mr. Dormsjo responded that DDOT has to make sure they think about signal timing and traffic. Even if you do not care about cars, buses have to move.

VI. There was an update from DDOT officials on the Seventeenth (17th) Street and Nineteenth (19th) Street redesign

- A. This topic was covered at points in the DDOT presentation summarized above.

VII. New Business

- A. Sidewalk café permit application for BAB Korean Fusion (1387 H Street NE)
 - i. Justine Choe represented the applicant. We want to clean up the area. We are proposing a four (4) foot seating area for six to eight (6-8) people, on the Fourteenth (14th) Street side of the property because there is more room. People use the benches there to do crazy things. She has done tons of cleanups in the area, called the police regarding people doing drugs. There are no row homes on either side. The restaurant has an application submitted to DDOT, scheduled maybe for May 2016 for the DDOT Public Space Committee. They want to move the trash can (DPW) because it is currently

not in a useful location. They are not applying to go beyond the fifteen (15) foot buffer for the metro bus stop. Seating will be portable. They will not sell alcohol. They are trying to find a spot where they can store the trash. We can bring drawings to another meeting when we have them, including details on fencing. Regarding hours of operation, we will probably pull in the chairs earlier, not as late as midnight. Mr. Mahmud advised Ms. Choe to bring the complete application to the Committee meeting in March 2016. The Committee will send a list of what the things we want typically look like. Ms. Nelson and Mr. Fletcher advised that BAB should be sure they have a plan for management of trash inside the property and/not on public space.

- B. Support for a new Capitol BikeShare station at Eighth (8th) and H Streets NE
 - i. Mr. Sloves stated that a new station would make sense at the location; it is a hub. Mr. Mahmud commented that DDOT still owes us one station. We can let DDOT figure out the exact positioning at that intersection. Ms. Adleman suggested that the developer of the project at Eighth (8th) and H Streets to do the Bikeshare. Mr. Mahmud commented that the Committee did negotiate a station with Rappaport; they may put it on Tenth (10th) Street. The effort should be coordinated with the ANC 6C. Mr. Sloves asked if there would folks support a letter from our ANC. Ms. Nelson commented that she would rather ask DDOT to look at the issue. There is support for more bike shares in that general location.
 - ii. **Motion** (Sloves): Recommendation that the full ANC send a letter asking DDOT and Capitol BikeShare to consider a new location at or near Eighth (8th) and H Streets NE. Second: Mahmud. Passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

- A. Request for truck and bus restrictions on Eleventh (11th) Street NE
 - i. Mr. Sloves commented that this is a request for the 400 block of Eleventh (11th) Street NE specifically. The neighbors have submitted a petition; they reached out in October 2015. wanted to restrict truck traffic on Eleventh (11th) Street NE. He advised them to get signatures, and then we could express Committee support. There were concerns expressed by committee members and community members regarding the alternative truck route. Where are the trucks supposed to go? We do not have empirical evidence about the amount of truck traffic. Mr. Sloves responded that the petition asks DDOT to look at the issue. The issue was tabled for now.

IX. Additional Community Comment

- A. Dr. Madden told the Committee that he opened a daycare center at Eighth (8th) and F Streets NE, and would like to put an additional center at Seventeenth (17th) Street and Benning Road NE. Would there be an objection to putting it there? Mr. Mahmud asked whether a zoning change is necessary. He stated that anything the City has to approve, the ANC would have a say in. It may not be this Committee. Somewhere in the ANC, we would host a way to get input from the ANC.

- X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.