

SPECIAL JOINT ANC TPS MEETING TO DISCUSS H STREET NORTHEAST

Minutes

Tuesday, February 16th at 7:00 pm

Joint Meeting of ANCs 6A & 6C Transportation and Public Space Committees to Discuss Speeding and Safety Issues Along the H Street Northeast Corridor and Proposed Solutions

Via WebEx

Public Meeting - All are welcome. Residents and H Street corridor business owners encouraged to participate and share proposed solutions.

I. Meeting called to order.

TPS 6A Committee Members Present: Marc Brumer (Chair), Andrew Burnett, Hassan Christian, Maura Dundon, Jeff Fletcher, Matthew Frutig, Shaun Lynch.

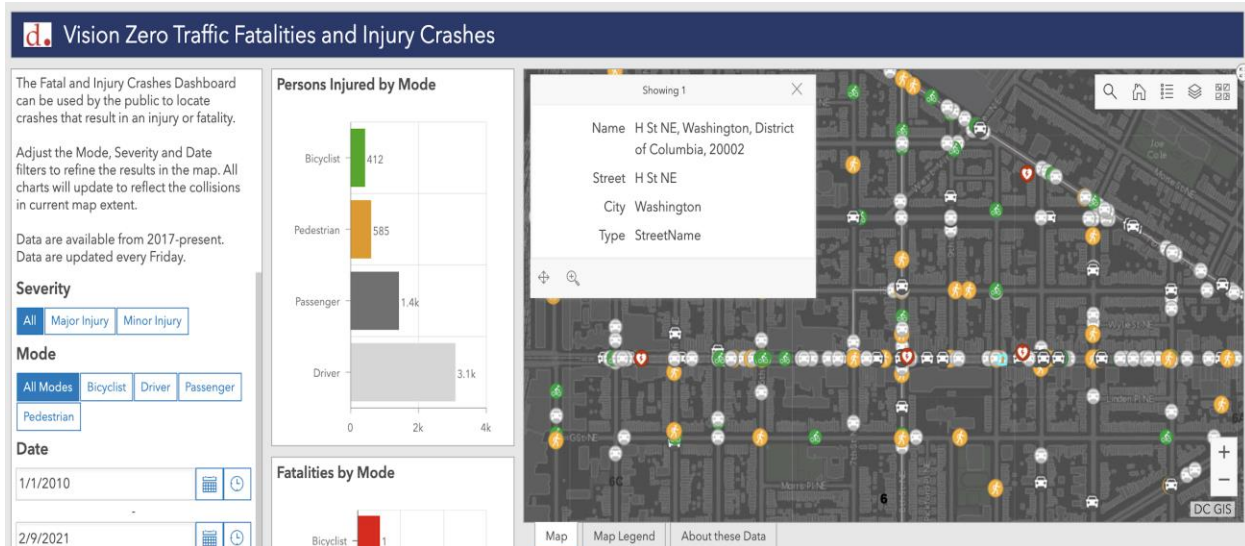
ANC 6A Commissioners Present: Amber Gove (Chair), Keya Chatterjee, Robb Dooling, Laura Gentile, Phil Toomajian.

ANC 6C TPS Committee Members Present: Christy Kwan (Chair), Tony Goodman (Vice Chair), David Abernethy, Mark Kazmierczak, Andrew Turner.

ANC 6C Commissioners Present: Jay Adelstein, Drew Courtney, Mark Eckenwiler, Christine Healey, Joel Kelty. (Commissioners Adelstein and Eckenwiler are also members of the 6C TPS Committee).

II. Introductions & Announcements:

Mr. Marc Brumer, ANC 6A TPS Chair, opened the meeting with an overview of the importance of the H Street NE corridor to the neighborhood. H Street is a unique area and community anchor. It is also a vital transportation artery for people to commute to jobs, businesses, and community locations. Many modes of transport use H Street, including cars, buses, street cars, pedestrians, bikes, and scooters. H Street car traffic poses a serious safety concern, with a recent history of serious crashes, injuries, and deaths caused by cars, as indicated by the map included with the meeting agenda:



Commissioner Amber Gove, ANC 6A Chair, recognized three pedestrian and bike fatalities on H Street NE: Ms. Jewel Lewis Hall, Mr. Oren Dorrel and Mr. Malik Habib. In honor of these losses, Commissioner Gove acknowledged that the ANCS and their TPS Committees have a lot of work to do to improve safety on H Street NE.

Christy Kwan, 6C TPS Committee Chair, summarized the efforts taken so far by the ANC 6C to improve safety on H St NE in 6C. The 6C boundary on H St runs from North Capitol to 8th Streets NE. ANC 6C has previously weighed in on H Street NE safety issues with DDOT, including H and 3rd Streets (the location of where Mr. Malik Habib was fatally struck) and H and 6th Streets NE. These efforts include a letter sent by ANC 6C to DDOT in February 2020, available at <https://anc6c.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ANC-6C-H-Street-NE-safety-concerns.pdf>. Safety along the H Street NE corridor will also be impacted by the Union Station Expansion Project. This is a very important issue for 6C in light of the fatalities and safety concerns. Ms. Kwan also noted Mr. Brad Hinds, who was fatally struck from a hit-and-run at H and North Capitol Streets.

III. Community Comment

Mr. Brumer noted that public comment would be limited to 3 minutes per person, if necessary, to allow all participants the opportunity to speak. The public was given the opportunity to submit additional public comment or materials can be submitted for the record in writing via email.

Multiple community members, TPS Committee members, and ANC Commissioners made comments.

Mark Sussman, community member, stated that he represents the 25 H Street NE businesses that he organized, together with some ANC Commissioners on the call, to send a letter to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) requesting safety improvements to H Street NE. The letter made specific requests for dedicated bus/streetcar lanes adjacent to curb, wider sidewalks, and replacing parking with pick up/drop off zones. The letter was sent in January 2021, and is available at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYckRwMff5Aniyzr5umwdKhPu1dRltZ13S6xZMHn8OX9dIZA/viewform>

Roy Gross, community member and Director of Operations for Atlas Performing Arts Center (1333 H Street NE) described a recent very serious car crash on H Street NE. A car going 70 mph crashed into the entire front of the Atlas Theater. It was 10:15 pm on a Tuesday. On normal nights, there could have been 100 people standing on the sidewalk exiting a show. Debris went into the studio, where there could have been children in dance classes. This could have been a mass casualty event. Mr. Gross stated that his business has requested to Deputy Mayor for Public Health and Safety that the city install bollards, but has not been able to get traction with the Mayor or DC Council. ANC 6A Commissioner Phil Toomajian stated that he had recently visited that area with DDOT and Council representatives, and Councilmember Charles Allen was aware of the bollard request. Mr. Toomajian suggested that Mr. Gross follow up with Councilmember Allen.

Bill Vigen, community member, suggested that restricting left turns onto H Street from 3rd Street NE and making 3rd Street NE one-way could improve safety at that intersection. He stated that he had discussed the idea with the owner of the Beer Cellar on H and 3rd Streets NE

and she did not have an issue with the idea and agreed that safety is a concern at the intersection.

Jay Adelstein, ANC 6C Commissioner, noted that ANC 6A had already met with DDOT and Charles Allen and gotten some commitments for the east end of H Street NE. He posed the question of whether we should approach H Street NE intersection by intersection, or as a corridor spanning both ANCs. 6A Commissioner Toomajian responded that DDOT had agreed to install bulb-outs at some 6A intersections in response to 6A requests, but that the intention and purpose is for ANC 6A and 6C to coordinate a corridor-based approach.

Victoria Lord, community member, discussed pedestrian safety issues at the 3rd and H Street intersection. She stated that the problem is the extended green light for traffic moving east on H street (proceeding off the Hopscotch Bridge) which causes confusion for pedestrians. The red lights are differently timed on H Street: there is a red light for pedestrians crossing H Street on 3rd Street for traffic moving west on H Street, at the same time there is a green light traffic moving east on H Street. People who are standing on the corner assume that that red light that is going west is also going east and step out into the street. It is incredibly dangerous.

Joel Kelty, ANC 6C Commissioner, noted that 6C has made many inquiries to DDOT over the years, and they feel they have never gotten adequate responses. There is a need for more direct communication. Mr. Brumer agreed with that sentiment.

Mark Eckenwiler, ANC 6C Commissioner, noted that the DC Council was receiving testimony on DDOT oversight for a DDOT oversight hearing on February 26, 2021. Details, including instructions on signing up or submitting written comments, are at <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2.10.2021-2020-2021-Performance-Oversight-Schedule-with-Instructions.pdf>

Tony Goodman, ANC 6C TPS Committee Vice Chair, spoke in favor of a corridor approach coordinating both ANCs, rather than proceeding intersection-by-intersection.

Alka Patel, community member: Ms. Patel asked about the impact of proposed changes on H Street NE would have on neighboring streets. Commissioner Kelty responded that there would be some negative impact, but the problem is that H Street is both a residential neighborhood and a business area, with business customers that drive from elsewhere and need parking. Keya Chatterjee, ANC 6A Commissioner, stated that a corridor treatment that includes better transport could reduce parking demand. Mr. Brumer noted that a potential area of research would be to identify percentage of H Street customers that arrive by car.

Christy Kwan, ANC 6C TPS Committee Chair, stated that we need to put continued pressure on DDOT. What the ANCs are putting out there is not being meaningfully considered. ANC 6C has submitted many letters to DDOT and there has not been a satisfactory response despite all the efforts. Mr. Brumer agreed that DDOT has not been responsive to concerns raised about the corridor as a whole.

Commissioner Gove noted (via chat) that there is a planned Safety and Mobility corridor review for Near NW DC (Logan, Shaw, Cardozo, Columbia Heights, Mt Pleasant), and asked what would it take to get a corridor review for H St NE. <https://ddot.dc.gov/release/near-northwest-iii-safety-and-mobility-study%C2%A0public-meetings>.

Gordon Chaffin, community member, stated that the Near Northwest Study is more for quick fixes, whereas our goal is for a comprehensive H Street NE solution. He also stated that he submitted a comprehensive plan for H St NE to DDOT and has received no response. He encourages a whole corridor-based approach.

Jon Crisafi, community member: Mr. Crisafi (via chat) noted that there is a Livability Study in 2022 coming up for Capitol Hill, which could be the chance to bring up the H St NE corridor. https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/page_content/attachments/DDOT%20Livability%20Study%20Priority%20List.pdf

Kim Tomadjoglou, community member, stated that she has been involved in H Street NE traffic and safety issues for a long time, and feels that the DC government does not care about Northeast. There are many safety issues, including a car that flipped over recently near her house. She believes that drivers come from out of the area to smoke marijuana in DC and drive impaired. An urban planner needs to be engaged to improve safety, and the Mayor needs to take it seriously. The community is not supposed to be doing the urban planning.

Talib Shakir, Mayor's Office of Community Relations (MOCRS) Ward 6 Liaison stated that he understands the frustrations and they have tried to work some issues one at a time. The Mayor's office is actively engaged on issues. He agrees that it is better to look at it as one unit/one corridor. He can be reached at talib.shakir@dc.gov.

Mark Kazmierczak, ANC 6C TPS Committee member, stated that he agrees with the whole corridor approach. He asked whether the ANCs/TPS Committees could consider jointly supporting the H St Business letter to DDOT organized by Mr. Sussman (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYckRwMff5Aniyzr5umwdKhPu1dRltZ13S6xZMHn8OX9dIZA/viewform>).

ANC 6C Commissioner Kelty discussed the need for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to enforce existing traffic laws, as opposed to handling all traffic violations with red light cameras. Mr. Shakir stated that they have contacted MPD about enforcement and that the focus needs to be on MPD enforcement versus ticketing everyone.

Robb Dooling, ANC 6A Commissioner agreed with the idea of a joint ANC/TPS resolution, possibly supporting the H Street NE business letter.

Shaun Lynch, TPS 6A Committee member, the question raised whether dedicated bus lanes on H Street would have an impact on other streets in the neighborhood.

Roy Gross, community member, stated that he has 20 years of personal experience on H Street as part of the Atlas Theater. His experience is that unless residents and businesses come together, this does not end up going anywhere.

David Abernethy, ANC 6C TPS Committee Member, spoke in favor of a comprehensive H Street study, especially in light of the Union Station Expansion Project.

- IV. ANC 6A and 6A TPS and Commissioners' discussion of action items and next steps.
Drew Courtney, ANC 6C Commissioner, suggested that a joint subgroup be established to draft a letter to DDOT from both ANCs.

ANC 6A Commissioner Gove made the motion: *That the TPS 6A and 6C Committees recommend to their respective ANCs that ANC 6A and 6C send a joint letter to DDOT requesting a comprehensive review of safety and traffic concerns on H Street NE from North Capitol to 15th Street NE. Our commissions have received valuable and informative input from H St businesses and Mr. Chaffin, which we attach for your consideration.*

ANC 6A Commissioner Dooling seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, with all ANC Commissioners and TPS Committee Members present voting yes.

TPS 6A Committee member Maura Dundon made the motion: *That the TPS 6A and 6C Committees recommend to their respective ANCs that ANC 6A and 6C establish a special joint committee on H Street NE Transportation Safety which will draft the letter to DDOT described in the first motion. The TPS Committees recommend that the joint committee membership be: Robb Dooling, Keya Chatterjee, Laura Gentile, and Marc Brumer from 6A; Christy Kwan, Tony Goodman, and Commissioner Jay Adelstein from 6C.*

Mr. Dooling seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, with all ANC Commissioners and TPS Committee Members present voting yes.

VI. Adjourn meeting

Appendix of Documents Discussed at Meeting

ANC 6C letter to DDOT on safety concerns at 3rd and 6th Streets, February 14, 2020:

<https://anc6c.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ANC-6C-H-Street-NE-safety-concerns.pdf>

Letter to DDOT from 25 H St NE businesses, January 10, 2021:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdYckRwMff5Aniyzr5umwdKhPu1dRltZ13S6xZMHn8OX9dlZA/viewform>

Information on DC Council DDOT oversight hearing, scheduled for February 26, 2021:

<https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2.10.2021-2020-2021-Performance-Oversight-Schedule-with-Instructions.pdf>

Near Northwest DC Corridor Review information: <https://ddot.dc.gov/release/near-northwest-iii-safety-and-mobility-study%2%A0public-meetings>

Upcoming DDOT Livability Study for Capitol Hill:

https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/page_content/attachments/DDOT%20Livability%20Study%20Priority%20List.pdf

ANC 6A - Traffic Safety Investigation Service Request 20-00447271

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CK8w2cHew2wMVgnIB7yuMEjJA7STMLLeU/view?usp=sharing>