

Minutes
ANC 6A Transportation & Public Space Committee Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.
- II. Introductions & Announcements.

Committee members present: Shaun Lynch (Chair), Caitlin Rogger (Secretary), Jeff Fletcher, Paul Angelone, and Patrick Bloomstine

Commissioners present: Keya Chatterjee (6A01), Mike Velasquez (6A02), and Amber Gove (6A04).

- III. Old Business.

- A. DDOT update on the [Florida Avenue NE Streetscape Project](#). Mr. [Nandlal Gevaria](#) (Project Manager) updated the committee and community on progress on the Florida Ave NE Streetscape Project. DDOT began milling from 6th to 9th Street NE and will soon follow with new asphalt. The current challenge is for DC Water to get the water main energized and then sidewalk work will continue. Chair Lynch noted that DC Water personnel on site indicated that they would not be done until October 2024, but Mr. Gevaria reemphasized that the entire project would be complete by October 2024. Community member, Pam Hill, asked about the schedule for completing the intersection with West Virginia Ave, and Mr. Gevaria responded that Washington Gas was in the area longer than expected; the section between 9th and 10th Streets NE will ultimately be completed last. Ms. Hill also asked for a project schedule for the awareness of residents on Florida Avenue NE. [Mr. Gevaria emailed the sidewalk construction schedule after the meeting.] Commissioner Chatterjee asked about the status of the crosswalk at M Street. Mr. Gevaria responded that the project team had received no direction from DDOT regarding reinstallation of the crosswalk in that location. [Commissioner Chatterjee subsequently provided the letter DDOT sent to the ANC and Mr. Gevaria responded that the crosswalk would be reinstalled.] Committee Member Patrick Bloomstine asked about integration of prior 12th Street NE requests into the project, and Commissioner Chatterjee noted that DDOT had previously responded that 12th Street safety issues will be dealt with after completion of the Florida Avenue project (in the same letter regarding the crosswalk at M Street NE.
- B. [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(NEVI\)](#) Program. [Tasin Malik](#), DDOT Transportation Planner, presented updates to DDOT's Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Deployment Plan. Ms. Malik was joined by Ms. Meredith Soniat from DDOT and Mr. Al Carr from DOEE. DC's program is being funded by part of bipartisan infrastructure law. DDOT prefers fast chargers not installed on public right of way, but has to be within a mile of major routes. DDOT is looking at business and restaurant parking lots as possible locations. The DC fast chargers have to be publicly available 24/7 (i.e., not behind a paid parking garage gate). They are currently working on a survey to connect potential site hosts/applicants and coordinating the effort with DOEE. DDOT has planned to host a virtual public meeting on March 28, 2024, and to publish an RFA on March 29, 2024. Applications will be due to DDOT in May 2024. DDOT will finalize application evaluation over the summer and awards will be granted in the fall. DDOT expects the first DC fast

- chargers to be available in 2025. Mr. Carr added that DOEE has applied for other federal grants, did get a repair grant for a charger on Benning Road. DOEE put out an RFP today in Wards 7 and 8. DOEE will apply for future CFI grants, and also one through Clean Cities organization. DOEE is discussing city-owned sites in neighborhood (i.e., libraries, etc.). Committee Member Caitlin Rogger asked if this project is integrated with MoveDC at all. Ms. Soniat responded that MoveDC is mostly about mode shift, but DDOT recognizes there is a balance. She added that DDOT wants to ensure curbside charging does not impact MoveDC: bike lanes and bus lanes are moot if we install a curbside charger, and it will remain as automobile-only parking/charging for a long time. DDOT is deprioritizing public street spaces for that reason. Committee member Rogger also asked if DDOT would be considering gas stations as possible locations, and Ms. Malik confirmed that DDOT would.
- C. DDOT West Virginia Avenue NE Traffic Safety. Commissioner Chatterjee updated the committee on community input and DDOT responses to traffic safety issues on the 800-block of West Virginia Avenue NE. Since the previous TPS Committee meeting, she has received many emails with many different perspectives and considerations, including from DDOT. DDOT is planning to install a raised crosswalk on West Virginia Avenue at 9th Street. Additionally, DDOT's traffic light study is continuing to move forward. There are many outstanding questions about the traffic signal study and the impact of a one-way with bike lane configuration. It does seem like they are planning to put a traffic signal at 8th Street and West Vu; that is unusual as it is so close to 8th and K Streets. Commissioner Chatterjee is concerned with what that will do to pedestrian safety. She has also asked DDOT that with so many Maryland drivers commuting through the neighborhood, is there any displacement of some of this traffic onto buses that is happening? And can DDOT work with Maryland to get more bus routes and bus frequency? Community Member Adam Ezring asked if we can wait to see what the raised crosswalk does to traffic before proceeding with a one-way conversion. Commissioner Chatterjee responded that she does not expect the raised crosswalk to slow down the southbound traffic as much as the northbound traffic. She also noted that the traffic exhibits diurnal behavior in this location where nearly all of the traffic in the morning is southbound and nearly all of the traffic in the afternoon/evening is northbound. The study is moving forward because DDOT is unable to accommodate vertical traffic calming for the southbound direction.

IV. New Business.

- A. [DPW Public Restrooms Pilot](#) Program. [Jessica Heinzelman](#), co-Founder and COO of [Throne Labs](#), presented the company's plans for installing "The H Street Throne" at the intersection of 8th and H Streets NE. DPW has financed a pilot consisting of five standalone public restrooms under contract with Throne Labs through September 2024. Throne Labs is currently working through the approval process with DPW and is seeking stakeholder input. The toilets are high tech, touchless, self-contained, and temporary. Users enter unique user ID with a text message or use an app. Throne Labs recognizes that loitering is a concern. Throne has a 10-minute limit and anti-loitering technology. Their system moves 99.6% of people within 15 minutes. It complies with ADA standards and has a baby changing station. Throne has a data dashboard that is available to the DC government and restroom advocacy group. The planned operating hours are from 7:00 am until 10:00 pm. The Throne needs to be installed within 45 feet of where pump truck can park. It

needs to be in a well-lit, high visibility location, and oriented towards busy areas. It will not impact the ability of people to get on and off the bus.

- i. Commissioner Chatterjee noted that the community and businesses have been asking for this for a while and appreciated the presentation to the community. She expressed concern about the placement/orientation of the Throne because it forces people to walk through the cobblestone area of the sidewalk to approach the bus stop. The cobbles make it hard to get to the bus (riders might be running or hurrying), and this layout would make them run across cobbles to catch a bus. At such a busy bus stop it does not seem ideal to block everything but cobblestone. Commissioner Chatterjee also noted that one of the big reasons we have businesses asking for a public toilet is that our businesses have become the default places that have to provide restrooms and that puts a huge burden on them. She asked if Throne Labs could expand the locations where bathroom user cards are distributed (such as HIPS and direct service groups) and noted that a 10:00 pm closure time is too early. Ms. Heinzelman responded that they cannot expand card distribution too much because then they become like burner cards, but she did welcome suggestions on where they should be distributed. Throne Labs would need approval from DPW to operate beyond 10:00 pm.
- ii. Commissioner Velasquez noted concerns that placing public restrooms will encourage bad behaviors, and asked if Throne had any relevant data. Ms. Heinzelman responded that they have not seen increases in negative behavior in existing locations as a result of Throne bathrooms. They use tech and behavioral science to add accountability. After walking in the Throne begins an audio announcement that explains the 10-minute limit and provides other instructions. She also noted there is good evidence that there is less graffiti in Metro stations and elevators and less public defecation where bathrooms exist. There is something about providing a nice facility that people value, giving them dignity. Lots of evidence shows it is critical to keep the facility clean. Commissioner Velasquez asked if the Throne could be moved at a moment's notice if, for instance, it was set on fire or damaged or for any other reason. Ms. Heinzelman responded that they serve at the pleasure of DPW and the DC Council. If the community thinks something shady is happening, Throne can work with the District to fix it. The company is incentivized to ensure it works well.
- iii. Committee Member Bloomfield echoed Commissioner Chatterjee's comment about extending the operating hours. At the intersection of two 24-hour bus routes (92 and X2), there are lots of service workers stuck at a bus stop for 10 minutes at 3:00 am. As for the loitering alarm, there may be folks standing next to it for 10 to 15 minutes and suggested that be dialed back given proximity to bus shelters.
- iv. Chair Lynch repeated a question from the Q&A about the effects of DC's current budget crunch on this program, and how much the maintenance costs will be. Ms. Heinzelman responded that the contract is already signed, so any budget shortfall will not impact this pilot. Maintenance costs are \$3,750/month in low-traffic areas but can reach up to \$6,000/month in higher-trafficked areas. The amortized cost of a permanent "brick-and-mortar" bathroom would be approximately the same cost after 15 years.
- v. Community Member Brian Gehrke expressed significant concern over crime and violence at the intersection of 8th and H Streets NE, including personal impacts,

and asked what would be done to ensure this bathroom does not attract more of such behavior. Ms. Heinzelman responded that one effect of bringing the Throne to this location is that MPD is involved in the conversation already.

- vi. Community Member Patrick Lyden said he understands the project is well-intentioned, but noted this location is a known open-air drug market. He has lived here since 2009 and has noted a constant battle with the District about address that drug market. He suggested moving the bathroom farther down the street, closer to restaurants and questioned the idea of placing it at this intersection in the first place. He suggested Ms. Heinzelman walk the block with neighbors to see what they are concerned about. Commissioner Velasquez asked about the required proximity to the intersection, and Ms. Heinzelman responded that it is supposed to be within 500 feet per DPW.
- vii. Chair Lynch repeated a question from Q&A: Will cameras be trained on the entrance of the bathroom? And has there been evidence of an increase in crime around any Throne locations? Ms. Heinzelman responded that they can direct security cameras at the entrance; they have done that at times. She added that Throne Labs does not have evidence of an increase in crime. The advantage of the unique user ID is that the company knows who is using it. When people return too often or outstay their time repeatedly, they will be sent a warning.
- viii. Ms. Heinzelman closed the discussion noting that they are looking to work with communities and gather feedback. If it is not working at 8th and H Streets NE, we can move it somewhere else.

V. Community Comment.

A. None.

VI. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.