

Meeting Report
SPECIAL JOINT ANC TPS 6A and 6B PUBLIC MEETING

On

17th ST. and 19th STREETS NORTHEAST and SOUTHEAST (From Benning Rd. to Barney Cir.)
Monday, November 15, 2021 at 7:00 pm

On Monday, November 2021, ANC6A and 6B met jointly with District Department of Transportation (DDOT) representatives Will Handsfield and Linda Bailey to discuss traffic safety improvements on 17th Street and 19th Street, from Benning Road to Barney Circle, including improvements to cycling infrastructure and other measures such as raised speed tables and crosswalks. Mr. Handsfield stated that DDOT is looking into speeding, unsafe drivers in this corridor in response to Traffic Safety Investigation requests; and the need to provide safety for people transiting to schools in the corridor; recreation centers; and amenities such as the RFK Fields. Improving the corridor by narrowing the vehicle travel lanes and installing new bike infrastructure meets the mayor's Vision Zero, Move DC, and sustainability goals by getting more people to cycle and reducing vehicle traffic speed.

Mr. Handsfield presented DDOT concept drawings on the new bike infrastructure (attached). He stated that other tradeoffs to be considered are relative need for parking, sightlines, changes to rush hour lanes. Mr. Handsfield noted that existing bike infrastructure and design in this corridor did not reduce speed or make people feel safe using the lanes/sharrows.

There was robust discussion by Commissioners, who noted general concerns with speed in the corridor, and specific concerns about: the 17th and C Street NE intersection; bike safety on Potomac Avenue at 18th Street SE; the intersection north of Benning Road with heavy vehicles causing increased danger at any speed; the need to create low-stress routes tailored to each area that allow bike connections around the city to increase bike trips; Barney Circle; the need for traffic enforcement in addition to safety design.

After Commissioner discussion, the floor was opened to members of the public to comment. Speakers touched on issues including: a major goal for safe routes to school; the need to protect children (one speaker noted her child had recently been the victim of a hit and run in the corridor); the need to increase pedestrian safety by Historic Congressional Cemetery for people walking there; and a preference for protected bike lanes over buffered bike lanes; an inquiry about speed cameras; and the need to make the roads safer for pedestrians, bikes, and drivers.

Commenters (including an ANC 7D Commissioner) also raised the issue of enhancing safety on 19th Street by extending the protected bike lane north of C Street to Benning Road NE.