

ANC 6C Transportation and Public Space Committee
Kaiser Permanente Capitol Hill Medical Center
700 2nd St. NE, Room G3-G4
Thursday, February 2, 2017
7:00 pm

REPORT

In Attendance

Mark Kazmierczak (chair)
Emily Diamond-Falk
Comm. Heather Edelman
Josh Linden
Comm. Mark Eckenwiler

1. K St. NE Traffic Study

At the request of ANC 6C, DDOT has performed a traffic study on the K St. NE corridor. Results of the study will be discussed.

Representative: Emily Dalphy, DDOT. [6C05/06]

Ms. Dalphy presented some preliminary results of a new traffic study along the K St. NE corridor, from N. Capitol St. to Florida Ave NE. The study was a new type of effort for DDOT, with a complexity greater than the block-by-block traffic calming assessments but less extensive than a full area livability study. The goal of the study, as stated by DDOT, was to identify improvements that strike a balance between needs of residents of the area (i.e., safety) and throughput of vehicular traffic, given that K St. NE is designated a minor arterial (a designation that is provided by federal agencies and cannot be changed). Measurements taken during the study period include traffic volume, points of congestion, crash data, and speed data. These measurements were taken during peak (rush hour) periods as well as school dismissal time.

Crash data analysis focused on high-frequency areas west of 2nd St. (at the underpass), the intersections of 7th and 8th Streets, and the K/12th St./Florida Ave intersection. Analysis of speed data had not been concluded at the time of the meeting, and will continue over the next month. Based on the current assessment, DDOT made several “quick fix” recommendations, including:

- Upgrades to signage corridor-wide (placement, tree trimming, replacing hard-to-read signs)
- Adding an additional traffic signal in the underpass
- Removing two parking spots at 2nd St. to resolve conflicts with eastbound vehicles emerging from the underpass
- Relocating a bus stop closer to J.O. Wilson school
- Adding another crossing guard at J.O. Wilson

Additional possible mitigations that would require additional study were mentioned, including removing rush hour parking restrictions and adding bulbouts to intersections. Committee members stated that such changes are highly desired, and urged further study of their feasibility. Members also felt that the analysis of speed data is one of the most important aspects of this study, and anxiously await those results. The committee will revisit the study as more results are released.

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The preliminary results of the K St. study can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/2jyvMqo>

No Motion

2. Union Station – Update to First St. NE entrance

DDOT and WMATA have developed designs to improve the First St. NE entrance to Union Station to make it more accessible and inviting. In the plans, the opening in the exterior wall is shifted and enlarged, and stairs and an ADA-compliant ramp will be constructed on the outside of the station to allow for expansion of the block of faregates inside. A steel and glass canopy will also be constructed above the stairs and ramp outside.

The TPS Committee performed a preliminary review of the project in December 2016, and came up with several questions for the design team.

Representative: Sam Zimbabwe, DDOT. [6C04]

Mr. Zimbabwe presented a proposed plan to redesign the First St. entrance to Union Station. The rationale for the effort is to reduce conflicts among people utilizing the station, who are coming from and going to several different locations, as well as increase the number of faregates in the Metro mezzanine to alleviate some crowding during peak times.

The main point of contention was the obstruction of the sidewalk as a result of the new stairs and ramp; the ramp is eight feet wide, and at its narrowest point the sidewalk would be constricted to less than five feet. Alternative designs were mentioned (although not favored by DDOT and WMATA) that narrowed the ramp or completely eliminated it, instead adding only the external staircase and leaving the existing ramp in the mezzanine (and therefore not allowing for expansion of faregates).

Motion: Recommend the ANC write a letter to DDOT and WMATA opposing the design as presented. The committee would consider a new design that either narrowed or eliminated the ramp on the sidewalk.

Vote: Approved, 5 – 0.

3. Vision Zero - Second Rulemaking

DDOT has released their revised (second) rulemaking to implement DC's Vision Zero. Vision Zero is a citywide plan to eliminate all traffic deaths in the district. The TPS Committee and ANC 6C reviewed the first Vision Zero rulemaking in January 2016. The ANC supported the plan, and made suggestions for increased penalties for certain traffic violations. The ANC also requested additional attention be paid to the K St. NE corridor and the issue of dirt bikes/ATVs on city streets.

The revised rulemaking can be accessed online at <http://dcregs.dc.gov/Notice/DownLoad.aspx?NoticeID=6369134>

Representative: Sam Zimbabwe, DDOT. [District-wide]

Mr. Zimbabwe provided an overview of the changes in the second proposed rulemaking, which include safety measures such as requiring trucks of a certain size to have side guards, but the discussion focused

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mainly on the new proposed schedule of fines. Many of the fines from the first rulemaking were substantially reduced, while maintaining an increase over current fines amounts. Additionally, new fines were proposed that were not in the first rulemaking that cover dangerous walking and dangerous bicycling. (See attached summary for proposed fine schedules.)

The committee largely felt that the reduction of many of the fines was undesirable, and pointed out that in our review of the first proposed rulemaking, the committee argued for increasing some of the proposed fines (such as “dooring” a cyclist). The committee also strongly objected to the lack of proportionality to the fines; for example, the proposed fine for very serious and dangerous events like a driver striking a cyclist or driving on the sidewalk would result in the same or similar fines as less dangerous infractions such as a cyclist striking a pedestrian or stopping a vehicle in a bike lane.

In a particularly contentious example, the proposed fine for “dooring” a cyclist was reduced from the \$100 proposed in the first rulemaking to \$50. Committee members strongly objected, as this infraction can result in very serious injury to the cyclist. Multiple members commented that given the (welcomed) expansion of bike lanes throughout the district—most of which are unprotected and put a cyclist within the “door zone” of parked vehicles, DDOT needs to protect the District’s cyclists and the low fine for this offense does not accomplish that.

Motion: Recommend the ANC send a letter to DDOT *opposing* the proposed regulations, on the grounds that fines are not proportional to the severity of the offense and generally are too low.

Vote: Approved, 5 – 0.

4. NoMa Underpass L St. | Application #199475

NoMa BID is preparing to install an art and lighting project under the train tracks overpass on L St NE. The title is "Lightweave" and consists of chains of lattices of color-changing light tubes.

Representative: Stacy West, NoMa Parks Foundation. [6C06]

Ms. West presented designs for an art installation entitled “Lightweave” which consists of a series of LED-lighted coils suspended above the walkway. The lights are interactive, and can subtly vary intensity in response to movement or sound. The color of the lights may also be changed, although NoMa BID envisions any color changes to be infrequent and curated (for example, a fall color theme). The lighting will be at least as bright as current conditions, and the maximum output capability of the installation is at least twice the brightness of the darkest portion of the underpass. The structure is 10 ft. high, providing sufficient clearance for pedestrians and cyclists, and a constant path between structures at least 9 ft. wide is provided.

The committee liked the designs and had no objections. It was stated for the record that the lighting needs to be much brighter than current levels.

Motion: Recommend the ANC support the public space application.

Vote: Approved, 5 – 0.

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5. 300 Maryland Ave NE | Application #186608

Application for hardscaping, landscaping, and lighting in public parking at 300 Maryland Ave NE. This is the location for the FedEx Governmental Affairs office. The work has already been completed, but DDOT has determined that seat walls were installed that were not approved in the original application. The current application is to retroactively receive a permit for the constructed seat walls.

Representative: Jenny Veater, AMG; Monique Jones Adams, FedEx. [6C02]

The applicants described the circumstance of the application, namely that the seat walls installed in public space were not within the scope of the original permit, was due to a miscommunication as the original plans submitted included the seat wall. Neighbors were present to ask about the landscape lighting and the disturbance they may cause; the applicant explained they are rarely used and when used are generally off by 8:00 pm.

While some committee members did not object to the project as it did not present any disturbances to neighbors, others said that it was wholly inappropriate to cover most of the public parking with pavers and especially structures like the seat wall. Objectors noted that in addition to not being in conformance with the city plan for public parking, the property is in a historic district and the project never should have been approved in the first place.

Motion: Recommend the ANC support the public space application.

Vote: Failed, 2 – 3.

6. DC Water Oversight

Commissioner Eckenwiler presented evidence of DC Water and its contractors misusing emergency no parking signage regularly, and not taking responsibility when challenged on it. He is requesting support to represent ANC 6C at the upcoming Council oversight hearing for DC Water.

Motion: Recommend the ANC appoint Commissioner Eckenwiler as its representative at the DC Water oversight hearing.

Vote: Approved, 5 – 0.

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