

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



July 9, 2020

Mr. Brook Hailemariam
Traffic Engineering and Signals Division
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

**NOI-20-29-TESD: TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT INTERSECTION OF
FULTON STREET AND WISCONSIN AVENUE NW**

Dear Mr Hailemariam:

I am writing on behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B to support the proposed traffic signal at the intersection of Fulton Street and Wisconsin Avenue NW, in our ANC area. The Commission has long supported improvements in traffic safety on local streets, and particularly safety for pedestrians. The intersection of Fulton Street and Wisconsin Avenue has been a particular focus of our requests for additional traffic safety improvements.

Our area has many residents who walk to school or work or to get to a transit stop, or for exercise, and recreation including families with children, and many senior citizens. We also have bicyclists and joggers. Pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists need to be able to get across streets at crosswalks without risk of injury, and motorists must be able to use local streets without being subjected to extreme hazards at intersections.

In recent years, the Commission has heard repeatedly from constituents about crashes, injuries and “close calls” for motorists and pedestrians at the intersection of Fulton and Wisconsin. Through 2019 and into 2020, residents reported increasing numbers of serious crashes and other incidents at that intersection. Close calls and “fender benders” are generally not reported to police, as they are not categorized as an emergency requiring a call to 911 or a police report, so there are undoubtedly far more incidents at Fulton and Wisconsin than the police records show. The frequency of those incidents also indicates the risks for pedestrians and motorists.

Our constituents often report that the nearly continuous flow of vehicles on Wisconsin Avenue through much of the day provides almost no “gaps” in traffic sufficient for someone to come onto Wisconsin or to make a left turn from Wisconsin, especially during peak hours. That is true for vehicles and it is particularly true for pedestrians, especially anyone who is moving at a slow pace, including those walking with a child or stroller, portable shopping cart or bags.

Motorists seldom stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks at Fulton and Wisconsin. Often pedestrians or motorists hoping to cross Wisconsin at Fulton move toward or actually into a driving lane on Wisconsin in order to see the approaching vehicles and have the best chance to find a gap in the traffic. Vehicles frequently back-up on Fulton, waiting to turn or cross Wisconsin, and the queuing can put additional pressure on the lead motorist to advance into the intersection and attempt to proceed when there is not a sufficiently long gap in the traffic on Wisconsin, creating increased risks of crashes and rapid stops.

The Commission supported moving the Metrobus stops on Wisconsin at Fulton to Garfield, to reduce the number of people trying to cross Wisconsin at the uncontrolled intersection at Fulton Street. The high volume of vehicle traffic on Wisconsin makes crossing the street at Fulton extremely difficult and dangerous at many times of day.

With the nearly solid line of parked cars on Wisconsin Avenue especially on the west side of the street, sight lines are very poor and motorists often do not see people attempting to step into the crosswalk. The Commission asked for a few parking spaces to be removed on the west side of Wisconsin, in the space formerly used for the Metrobus stop, as a way to improve sight lines. DDOT did promptly remove two parking spaces. But that made only minor improvements in safety.

As part of DDOT's Rock Creek Far West Livability Study in 2019, ANC3B recommended that DDOT carry out a full traffic safety investigation of the intersections and blocks on Wisconsin from Massachusetts Avenue south to at least Fulton Street. The Commission was pleased that the Final Report of the Livability Study, issued in October 2019, included that recommendation, and also added a call for a Traffic Signal Warrant Study at the intersection of Fulton and Wisconsin. As a result, DDOT commissioned a Traffic Signal Warrant Study and is now strongly recommending a full traffic signal at that intersection, to provide protection for pedestrians and bicyclists trying to use the crosswalks at that location, and to allow vehicles to use the intersection safely.

The proposed traffic signal, with associated walk signals on each corner and improved streetlighting, represents significant improvements to the safety of this uncontrolled intersection, for pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using motor vehicles.

For all those reasons, the Commission strongly supports installation of a full traffic signal as DDOT is proposing, which will be a significant improvement for residents and everyone who uses Wisconsin Avenue and Fulton Street in our area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail
Chairman

This letter was approved by the Commission by a vote of ~~5-0~~ at a duly noticed public meeting on July 9, 2020, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.) By this vote, the Commission also designated the Chairman or his designee to represent the Commission on this matter.