

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



February 11, 2021

Ms. Haley Peckett  
MoveDC 2021 Coordinator  
District Department of Transportation  
55 M Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

RE: ANC3B Comments on MoveDC 2021

Dear Ms. Peckett:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft MoveDC 2021 documents as the Department begins the process of updating the District's Long-Range Transportation Plan. By federal law, each state as well as the District must prepare a long-range statewide transportation plan, in accordance with 49 USC 5304(f), that provides for the development and integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system, including transit, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and accessible transportation, so the systems and facilities will work in an integrated way to meet local needs for movement of people and goods. The plan must identify how the transportation system will meet goals for transportation, economic health and development, and sustainability over the next 20+ years, and must also incorporate performance measures and targets for achieving those goals. Federal law also calls for the plan to include approaches for ensuring the preservation and most efficient use of the existing transportation system. We support the purposes of effective multimodal long-range planning and particularly the goal of preserving, maintaining and efficiently using the existing transportation.

When the MoveDC 2014 plan was presented to our ANC, Commissioners and residents had numerous questions and comments about what was in the plan and what was not. One of the main points was that residents wanted to see more attention to how the overall system would work to meet transportation needs, including the modes that are most often used for personal transportation in our area and around the ward and much of the District: motor vehicles, buses, and walking.

In ANC3B, we have a high percentage of residents who are 65 or over and want to remain in the community. We also have an increasing number of families with young children. And available data show that 40 to 60% of people in our Commission area traveled to work using something other than a single-occupant vehicle. Because we do not have Metrorail service in ANC3B, residents, employees, and visitors must rely on buses for public transportation, so that continues to be a priority interest.

In the past few years, many factors affecting the local and regional transportation system have evolved or changed. In 2018, the Mayor introduced a PaveDC plan to ensure that by 2024, no roads in the District are in poor condition. DDOT has continued to focus attention on Vision Zero, with the goal of eliminating all fatalities and serious injuries to travelers in the District transportation system by 2024. DDOT has also established a goal of installing 20 miles of Protected Bike Lanes by 2022. In connection with the Clean

Energy DC legislation adopted in 2016, DDOT has committed to reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in the District by 26 percent below 2005 levels by 2030, and having 75% of all commute trips be made by non-auto modes by 2032. The DC Council, and the Public Service Commission are encouraging electrification of the vehicle fleet and installation of electric charging stations for zero emission electric vehicles. The plans for meeting all these goals have to be brought together in DDOT's overall transportation plans for the District.

We have several recommendations for DDOT as it proceeds with its long-range planning and MoveDC 2021:

- Ensure that the long-range plan is not just a compilation of plans for individual modes, but a comprehensive multimodal plan that brings together all modes and provides for safe, effective function of the transportation system as a whole.
- Give greater attention to planning for pedestrians and motor vehicles -- two of the most heavily used means of transportation across the District -- with a focus on how they relate to other modes and can share the same space.
- Create improved mechanisms for hearing from the full range of residents and stakeholders for transportation in the District, including people who have been difficult to reach through email, online forums, and surveys. Hold listening sessions through faith-based organizations, senior centers, community service organizations, and have open-ended conversations about how people fill their needs for transportation now, where they see gaps or reasons for concern, and what services might be more helpful to them.
- Encourage restoration of previous levels of public transit service, including Metrorail, Metrobus and DC Circulator, as soon as possible as the COVID-19 emergency abates, to help get people back to using transit.
- As DDOT planners look to the future for bus transportation/transformation, ensure that they give adequate attention to services to residential neighborhoods, off the main arterials, where many people are highly dependent on bus service and do not have good transportation alternatives to get where they need to go. Quality local bus services need to be maintained in addition to high-frequency, high-volume, and limited stop services on major corridors.
- Monitor evolving travel demands related to population and job, including growth in commuting to and from Maryland and Virginia, so the District can plan for accommodating future needs for transit and other modes in coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, without overwhelming the local transportation system and budget.

See below for more details:

### 1. Multimodal Planning

The point of a Long-Range Transportation Plan is not only to stretch out the horizon and develop a path to the future, but also to develop a holistic framework for developing and investing in a transportation system that functions effectively, using each mode to advantage in conjunction with all the other modes, to meet overall transportation needs. Many of the priorities, strategies, and performance measures, as well as the maps, shared in the early phases of MoveDC, appear to focus on a single mode. Although DDOT may be intending to bring together all those elements in a synergistic and integrated way, the more that the steps in developing and discussing plans become separated by mode and system, the more difficult it can be to consider options in a holistic way. Taking into account the attributes and roles of the various modes in relation to each other and bringing together considerations of operations and alternatives across the modes can help in achieving a multimodal system that works effectively as a whole.

### 2. Pedestrians and Motor Vehicles

We urge DDOT to give greater attention to the needs and interests of pedestrians and motor vehicles, which are major modes of transportation used by our residents. Phase 1 of MoveDC 2021 included Priority Networks for Transit, Bicycles, and Freight, but it was not clear that pedestrians or motor vehicle movements were getting equal consideration.

We understand that DDOT's materials for MoveDC 2021 now include a map showing sidewalks or gaps in the sidewalk network, which is important, but that is not the same as assessing the needs for investment and improvement in services to pedestrians. The greatest shortcomings and the greatest safety risks for pedestrians come where the sidewalks end and the pedestrian must step into a roadway, across the route of another mode of transportation, whether a bicycle track or the path of a scooter or an automobile or truck.

Wider sidewalks or shared use paths, raised crosswalks, pavement striping or painting, pedestrian signals or HAWKs, improved signage, speed limit enforcement, and public education all can help. Also it would be valuable to develop and enforce clearer instructions on use of bicycles and scooters and other micromobility devices especially in spaces shared with pedestrians. The interests of pedestrians, along with users of other modes, will be best served if the various plans and strategies are coordinated and integrated into an overall plan for the function of the transportation system as a whole.

### 3. Public Engagement

Reaching members of the public via electronic means can be the quickest and most practical approach during the pandemic, when in-person meetings are not easily possible. But it is still important to try to get input from as broad a range of participants and interests as possible. It is also valuable to get input on broad transportation topics, such as how people are using the system and what they most want from it or what they would like to improve.

Surveys seem to be the most common way for many agencies to conduct “Public Engagement.” Responses to a multiple choice questions can be easy to tabulate, but the responses they produce can be both more narrow and less useful. That is a particular problem if the respondents are not certain what the wording of the questions means, which is frequently the case when the field is fairly technically oriented but the respondents are not. Many transportation terms and concepts are not familiar to the majority of members of the community, so the majority of completed surveys could end up coming from people who already know and have a perspective on the subject. Even for experts, if the choices in a multiple choice question are so diverse that they don’t actually represent a range of options for reaching the same end, people will often not be able to compare and evaluate the options against a single clear standard, but just have to select a favorite word, mode or some technology they favor, as opposed to reflecting on what might achieve the best outcomes.

It would seem more meaningful to step back from the lists of specific operational techniques that DDOT might employ (or probably is already planning to employ) but instead to ask more general questions to get people to talk about what they know and like, or don’t have and want from transportation. Listening sessions could be very effective for getting that kind of input. They also could be organized to reach geographic areas or demographic groups or others in the District who have been underrepresented in survey response to date. Seniors and people without access to a computer or internet connection might be possible to engage via a listening session organized by a faith-based group, a senior center, a social services organization, an apartment or housing development that people are affiliated with. This may not work for MoveDC 2021 but maybe as DDOT plans for succeeding years, approaches like that could be tried as a way to expand participation and also the range and depth of the comments.

### 4. Public Transit

In order for residents in our area to use public transportation for work trips, shopping, recreation or other purposes, it will be essential to have frequent, safe, and reliable bus service. We hope that DDOT planners will give added attention to planning adequate bus service across the District, particularly in local residential areas such as ours. It is very valuable to have high frequency bus service on priority corridors such as Wisconsin Avenue, which continues to be one of the highest volume bus corridors in the city. But many people live some distance from arterial streets, in lower density neighborhoods, often with narrow or winding streets that can be difficult to serve with a standard public transit bus, such as our Glover Park-Cathedral Heights area.

Toward the edges of the city in all directions, the land rises and the terrain becomes hilly, which presents added difficulties not just for buses but for pedestrians and bicyclists. But the people in those local neighborhoods are generally not served by Metrorail and frequently are highly dependent on transit. That includes many essential workers, seniors, families with children, and many households that do not own cars. Yet nearly every year when WMATA develops its draft budget, we see proposals to eliminate or reduce service to our neighborhood and other neighborhoods like ours across the District. We urge DDOT to continue to give attention to local bus services in its planning, in coordination with WMATA, and ensure that adequate funding is provided for those services.

It is also essential to make investments in maintaining the streets, sidewalks and bus stops, so people and buses can move safely, and also to fund enough buses to maintain the frequency and quality of service needed to attract and retain riders. In our ANC, when the Metrobus services were all running before COVID-19, we had buses crowded to overflowing at rush hour and still leaving people waiting at bus stops, because the buses were not large enough or frequent enough to carry all the people who wanted to ride. That is more likely to drive people away from transit than to encourage people to ride. We would like to see increased transit service in our area, not less service. As WMATA and other systems build back up, we hope DDOT will support restoring pre-COVID transit services as soon as possible, to get people back to taking transit.

We also recommend that as DDOT and WMATA discuss the Bus Transformation Project, they recognize that “rationalizing” the bus network and focusing on serving major corridors may generate high-volume bus travel on those routes but that is not the entire job. Public transportation still has to accommodate the large portion of the public that does not live in close proximity to a priority transit corridor.

#### 5. Planning for Emerging Transportation Demand

This year, the major force for change in transportation patterns and questions about future expectations has been the COVID-19 emergency, which has radically altered the way people are living and moving and also getting goods and services. We have far more people working from home rather than using some form of transportation to get to work. Our transit service has been reduced, and some households have decided they have to get an additional vehicle because the work trips or other trips they need to make are either no longer possible, safe or practical by transit. At the same time the number of people walking and using their bicycles in the neighborhood has increased, and we have many more delivery vehicles bringing packages, restaurant meals, and grocery orders. Like most observers of transportation, our community will be monitoring what those changes may mean for travel patterns and longer-range choices for transportation.

We encourage DDOT to keep up with WashCOG and other projections of population and job growth in the region, so you can anticipate where travel demand is likely to be increasing and plan accordingly. We also support ANC3D’s recommendation that DDOT study the evolving pattern of commuting to and through the District, identify where the growth in traffic demand is likely to be greatest, including to and from Maryland and Virginia, and steps the District can take to deal with the demand, via Metrorail and bus as well as other modes.

We appreciate DDOT’s initiatives to include residents and ANCs in your planning efforts as you work to update and improve the District’s transportation plans. We look forward to participating in other MoveDC activities as the planning process continues.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail  
Chairman

This letter was approved by a vote of 5-0 at a duly noticed public meeting of ANC3B on February 11, 2021, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.) By this vote, the Commission also designated the Chairman or his designee to represent ANC3B on this matter.