

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



September 12, 2019

Mr. Theodore Van Houten
Project Manager
Livability Study Rock Creek Far West
Planning and Sustainability Division
Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Van Houten:

On behalf of ANC3B serving Glover Park-Cathedral Heights, I want to thank you for the work that you and your team have done on DDOT's Livability Study for Rock Creek Far West. Our constituents and Commissioners have greatly valued the many chances to learn about the study and to participate with comments and questions at three community workshop meetings, informal "pop ups," Citizens Advisory Group meetings, email and online portals for being in touch with the study team. We have reviewed the Final Recommendations you circulated at the third community workshop, sharing the items that the initial phase of the study identified as top locations for transportation safety improvements in the study area. In this letter, we summarize our response to that List and suggestions for priority attention in the next phase of the study.

We are pleased that the top priority items we and our constituents recommended for attention in our Commission area are included in the Final Recommendations for transportation safety improvements. The recommendations largely echo the concerns and requests expressed by the ANC3B and our constituents.

The recommendations range from projects that could be done in the very short-term to much longer-term studies involving comprehensive investigation of an entire corridor, multiple intersections, and multiple modes of travel. Among the short-term items, DDOT recommends several important pedestrian crosswalk improvements along Cathedral Avenue that the ANC has been seeking, as well as sidewalks in a couple of locations where many residents would like to walk but there is no safe footpath for pedestrians on one side of the street. We strongly endorse the recommendations for making those improvements and hope that DDOT can move expeditiously to implement the recommendations for improving crosswalks at the Cathedral West Condominiums located at 4100 Cathedral Avenue and installing the sidewalks on 42nd Street and along the front of the Cathedral West Condominiums if feasible.

P.O. BOX 32312, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20007

WEBSITE: WWW.ANC3B.ORG

EMAIL: ANC3BMAIL@GMAIL.COM

3B01
N. GLOVER PARK-CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS
ANN L. MLADINOV

3B02
E. GLOVER PARK
JACKIE BLUMENTHAL

3B03
W. GLOVER PARK
MELISSA LANE.

3B04
CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS
MARY C. YOUNG

3B05
S. GLOVER PARK
BRIAN TURMAIL

We and our constituents are also very grateful for the inclusion of a recommendation for a full Corridor Study of Cathedral Avenue from 39th Street to New Mexico Avenue.

We look forward to continuing to work with DDOT and constituents on the implementation of other items in the Final Recommendations for the longer term, including the corridor studies, multi-intersection studies, and analysis of potential new bicycle facilities to improve transportation safety and access in our Commission area.

Many of the recommendations involve additional data gathering, analysis, and public review and comment, and we want to be supportive of that process, participating in discussion and evaluation of options and hosting presentations and community meetings as appropriate. We hope that as the livability study moves into the next phase, DDOT will maintain the high level of outreach and community engagement efforts that have characterized the first phase of the work.

We understand that DDOT intends to conduct additional community presentations to share findings and potential designs as part of the studies recommended in the livability study, and meet with affected residents and ANCs as the studies proceed and more detailed data and options are developed. DDOT also has stated that it expects to issue Notices of Intent (NOI) for each proposal where that is normally required, and will also give "great weight" to comments submitted by ANCs per the DC Municipal Code. Those are important elements of the livability project and we hope to see them carried out.

We are enclosing our specific comments on individual items affecting ANC3B in the Final Recommendations.

Please be in touch with the Commission if you have any questions.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail
Chairman

This letter was approved by a vote of 4-0 at a duly noticed public meeting of ANC3B on September 12, 2019, at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five members constitute a quorum.) With this vote, the Commission also designated the Chairman or his designee to represent the Commission on this issue.

cc. Mary Cheh, Ward 3 Councilmember, DC Council (mcheh@dccouncil.us)
 Jeff Marootian, Director, District Department of Transportation (jeff.marootian@dc.gov)
 Eileen McCarthy, Ward 3 Representative, Pedestrian Advisory Council (dcpedcouncil@gmail.com)
 Warren Gorlick, Ward 3 Representative, Bicycle Advisory Council (dcbicyclecouncil@gmail.com)
 Chuck Elkins, Chairman, ANC3D (3D01@anc.dc.gov)
 Nancy MacWood, Chairman, ANC3C (3c09@anc.dc.gov)

**ANC3B COMMENTS ON FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
DDOT LIVABILITY STUDY - ROCK CREEK FAR WEST
September 12, 2019**

SHORT TERM ITEMS

1. Crosswalk Improvements (PC-09, PC-10) Cathedral Avenue

We enthusiastically support improvements in all the crosswalks on Cathedral Avenue in ANC3B, which we and our constituents have been requesting for several years. We request that the recommended crosswalk improvements on Cathedral Avenue near Cathedral West Condominiums be given top priority for immediate action.

We urge that as soon as possible DDOT redo the white striping on all the crosswalks on Cathedral Avenue from 39th Street to New Mexico Avenue, including bright wide “zebra” striping, to make the crosswalks more visible. We also recommend that DDOT consider making other short-term safety improvements on those blocks, such as additions or modifications to the signage that could reduce the risks to pedestrians in the short term, even before DDOT’s full investigation of safety improvements in that corridor is completed.

People in our area face risks every day trying to cross the street to reach a bus stop on Cathedral or to take a walk or visit friends. We do not want injuries or deaths to occur at that location or any location while residents await the results of a study. It is very important for DDOT to take action, especially if improvements could be made immediately using existing supplies and resources to reduce the danger to people at those crossings.

2. Sidewalk Installation (SW-14) 42nd Street (Tunlaw Road to Edmunds Street)

We support the installation of a sidewalk on the west side of 42nd Street along the side of the Victory Gardens. That area has considerable foot traffic to get to and from the garden or provide a walkway for people who use that block for parking or are walking along the park with their dogs or strollers or other wheeled vehicles. There has never been a safe paved footpath for them to use, which contributes to jay-walking and dangerous conditions for pedestrians.

LONGER TERM ITEMS

3. Corridor Study (Proposed CS-04) Cathedral Avenue from 39th to New Mexico Avenue and Sidewalk Installation (SW-12) Cathedral Avenue from Glover Archbold Trail to Cathedral West Condominiums

We particularly appreciate DDOT’s decision to recommend a full Corridor Study to identify transportation safety improvements on Cathedral Avenue, and we look forward to seeing that recommendation in the Final Report. We also support installation of a sidewalk on the south side of Cathedral Avenue from the Glover Archbold Trail across the Cathedral West property, though we recognize that will require study over the longer term.

Safety for pedestrians and vehicles users on those blocks of Cathedral Avenue serving and traversing ANC3B have been a major and pressing concern to the ANC and to our constituents for years. It is vital that DDOT and its safety and traffic engineering experts take a comprehensive look at that important route serving and traversing our ANC, taking a “system” approach to improving safety on that critical corridor, as the livability study is designed to do.

That section of Cathedral Avenue presents unique challenges including hills and curves as well as several hundred yards through Glover Archbold Park where there are overhanging trees but no structures along the right-of-way to provide motorists cues that they are driving on an urban street. In that context, the ANC and our constituents urge DDOT to take into account the full range of factors that make those blocks of Cathedral a very high risk location for pedestrians, bicycles, and motorized vehicles: limited sight distance, poor signage, blind entrances from several large apartment/condominium buildings, pedestrian crossings at the curves where residents have to cross to reach Metrobus stops (see PC-09 and PC-10), absence of a sidewalk on the south side between the eastbound bus stop and the Cathedral West Condominiums (see recommendation SW-12), traffic that often goes above the legal speed limit, and lack of stop signs on Cathedral at Idaho Avenue to get motorists to slow down as they approach, stop at the intersection, and wait for pedestrians to cross.

As the ANC and residents have requested over the previous months and years, we strongly support the recommendation that DDOT conduct a comprehensive traffic safety investigation of that section of Cathedral Avenue as a top priority and begin that work as soon as possible. We urge that this be done at the same time that DDOT proceeds immediately with short-term improvements to increase safety at crosswalks, through pavement striping, improved signage, and other improvements that DDOT can make over coming months to reduce the serious risks to people along that section of roadway day to day.

4. Multi-Intersection Study (MI-04) Wisconsin Avenue/Calvert Street/37th Street

We support the investigation of potential safety improvements at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue, Calvert Street, and 37th Street. That intersection has been the site of a pedestrian fatality in recent years, and numerous close calls and we will be interested in working with DDOT to see what options it might develop to improve safety and movement of people and vehicles through that area, particularly as the Kindercare child care center facility comes into operation on the southeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Calvert Street.

5. Multi-Intersection Study (MI-03) Massachusetts Avenue from 38th to Fulton, Wisconsin Avenue from Massachusetts to Fulton, and to the intersection of Fulton and 38th

We are very pleased that the Final Recommendations include a Multi-Intersection Study of the triangular area formed by Massachusetts Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, and Fulton Street extending to the intersection of Fulton and 38th Street. Wisconsin Avenue is the major arterial running through ANC3B, and the intersection of Massachusetts and Wisconsin affects pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle drivers for many blocks around it, so the safe function of that intersection is of top importance for our area.

The Commissioners and residents also strongly support inclusion of a review of transportation safety at the intersections at Wisconsin with Fulton and Wisconsin with Garfield. We also support the recommended review of the Wisconsin Avenue-Fulton Street intersection under the federal and local standards for installing a traffic signal or HAWK device. That is a high-risk intersection where the crossings are unprotected, on a major arterial used by a large number of personal vehicles, buses, commercial vehicles, particularly at morning and evening rush hours, and also bicycles, e-scooters, and pedestrians.

Since the livability study was launched, residents have reported numerous crashes as well as incidents causing injury to pedestrians and motorists at both the intersections of Fulton with Wisconsin and Garfield with Wisconsin. We urge DDOT to move without delay to gather the data needed to conduct a comprehensive safety investigation, recommend solutions to the problems identified, and begin to make safety improvements as soon as possible. We would also urge DDOT to make near term changes in signage, pavement marking, crosswalks, or reductions in parking spaces in that block if they are identified as good prospects for increasing safety for pedestrians, bicycles, or motorized vehicles in that area, even if the full investigation is not complete.

6. Corridor Study and Bicycle Facility (CS-02 and B-08) New Mexico Avenue/ Tunlaw Road/37th Street

We support the ongoing review and improvement of bicycle routes through our area. Tunlaw and 37th Street are a major route between the American University and Georgetown University areas, with large numbers of people traversing the route by motor vehicle, bicycle, and other alternatives. When DDOT proposed installation of a bicycle facility on that route, ANC3B supported DDOT's plan. At that time, DDOT's Bicycle Planners adopted a route that included a designated bike lane on Tunlaw where the existing roadway offered sufficient space, and "sharrow" sections where the roadway was narrower. We appreciate DDOT's willingness to work with all members of the community to continue to review options for the safety of bicycle movement, and look forward to participating in the further review along with members of the community. It will be important for DDOT to engage with the community as the investigation proceeds. From DDOT's discussions with us to date, we anticipate that the agency will share design alternatives as well as its analysis of all the options, and provide assessments of the effects on the traffic lanes and parking along the route. That will be essential so residents and affected ANCs can have full information, review the options, pose questions, submit comments, and otherwise participate in developing effective solutions for that corridor in the interest of transportation safety for all users.

7. Corridor Study and Shared Use Path (CS-01 and SU-01) Massachusetts Avenue

We are encouraged that DDOT is proposing to widen the sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue to improve the safety for pedestrians and individuals using bicycles, e-scooters, strollers, wheelchairs, or other assistive vehicles. That is a high-volume corridor in our area that is very important for people using all modes of transportation, and it affects our residents even if the street is not primarily within our ANC. With the heavy vehicle traffic on the street, the present configuration does not offer safe options in most blocks for bicyclists (or e-scooters) to use the roadway. The proposal for a wider sidewalk that provides more space for a variety of uses seems like the best alternative at this point. We will be interested to see the details of the proposal and will monitor how the wider sidewalk works for users. Of the 3.3 miles of Massachusetts Avenue from Westmoreland Circle to Whitehaven Street, about 1.7 miles are in ANC3D and about 1.4 miles in ANC3C, while about 0.2 miles is in ANC3B from Macomb Street to Idaho Avenue. We will coordinate with the other ANCs on this matter.

DDOT Livability Study Rock Creek Far West Final Recommendations and ANC3B Recommended Priority and Timing. 9-12-19

DDOT RECOMMENDATION (Item number and description)

ANC3B PRIORITY/TIMING

CROSSWALK IMPROVEMENTS

- PC-09 Pedestrian crossing improvement on Cathedral Avenue at each side of Glover Archbold Trail
- PC-10 Pedestrian crossing improvement on Cathedral Avenue at Cathedral West Condominiums

Top priority; near term
Top priority; near term

SIDEWALK INSTALLATION

- SW-12 Cathedral Avenue (Glover Archbold Trail to Cathedral West Condominiums)
Install sidewalk on south side.

Important; longer term study to assess street width, topography, slope stability, DC Water infrastructure along street

- SW-14 42nd Street from Tunlaw Road to Edmunds Street

Important; near term

MULTI-INTERSECTION STUDIES

- MI-03 Massachusetts Avenue from 38th to Fulton, Wisconsin Avenue from Massachusetts to Fulton, and to the intersection of Fulton and 38th)
Look at the cluster of intersections to improve safety and perform a traffic signal warrant at Wisconsin and Fulton.

Top priority; launch study in near term

- MI-04 Intersection of Wisconsin, Calvert and 37th Street
Reconfigure intersection, examine feasibility of closing 37th Street between Calvert and Wisconsin.

Priority; launch study in near term

CORRIDOR STUDIES

- CS-02 New Mexico//Tunlaw/37th Street
Examine opportunities to widen sidewalks and improve existing bike network in conjunction with on-street parking removal (See also B-08 below)

Important for safety in whole area; launch study in near term, coordinate with ANC3D as priority

New addition at ANC3B request: CS-04 Corridor Study Cathedral Avenue (39th Street to New Mexico Avenue)

Top Priority; launch study in near term

BICYCLE FACILITY INSTALLATION

- B-08 New Mexico/Tunlaw/37th Street from 42nd Street to the project boundary (south end of Ward 3)
Options include
 - a – Wide sidewalks and two-way separate bike lanes
 - b – 2-way separated bike lanes with parking on one side
 - c – Uphill one-way bike lane and downhill sharrow with parking on one side.

Important for safety in whole area; launch study in near term, coordinate with ANC3D as priority

Option 1 would eliminate parking on both sides of the street. Options 2 and 3 would eliminate parking on one side.

CORRIDOR STUDY AND SHARED USE PATH

- CS-01 AND SU-01 Massachusetts Avenue (Westmoreland Circle to Whitehaven Street)
Widen sidewalk on one side to be a multiuse path (*including pedestrians and bicycle*)

Valuable to all users and residents; located mostly in other ANCs so ANC3B will coordinate with them.