



Government of the District of Columbia

## Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 6C06

February 25, 2019

Testimony for the Performance Oversight Hearing  
On the District Department of Transportation

Chairperson Cheh and Members of the Committee,

My name is Robb Dooling and I am the ANC for 6C06. This is my individual testimony on the performance of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and does not represent ANC 6C. I am here to express concerns about a culture at this agency that values cars over people. Annual traffic deaths have decreased by 33% in New York City while increasing by 38% in DC since these two cities announced their respective Vision Zero initiatives.<sup>1,2</sup> DDOT is reluctant to make changes necessary to save lives. As an example, let me tell you about challenges on Eastern Ave NE:

- March 2017: A driver killed pedestrian Lionel Bruce near Eastern and Nash St NE.
- June 2018: Neighbors and I met DDOT at the site of the tragedy and asked for a safer street.
- August 2018: Another driver killed pedestrian Sherron Pressley a few blocks away at Eastern and Kenilworth Ave NE.
- September 2018: Neighbors and I made videos of Eastern Ave, contacted DDOT, and wrote a Greater Greater Washington article again asking for a safer street, especially regarding the 85-second wait for a walk signal at Eastern and Kenilworth.
- October 2018: DDOT emailed the results of the June site visit in a document saying it would take, quote, “18+ months” to install a crosswalk. Later, Councilmember Gray cited our article and the same issues we raised.
- January 2019: I visited Eastern again trying to get DDOT to act. The 85-second wait for a walk signal is still there.

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<sup>1</sup> NYC went from 298 traffic deaths in 2013 (the year before its VZ announcement) to 200 in 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/02/nyregion/new-york-pedestrian-deaths-are-lowest-on-record.html>

<sup>2</sup> DC went from 26 traffic deaths in 2014 (the year before its VZ announcement) to 36 in 2018.

<https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/traffic-fatalities>

Meanwhile, I frequently visit family in New York City and it is clear as day why the two cities are moving in opposite directions. NYC continuously experiments and converts enormous swaths of its streets into people-centric space. Boulders protect pedestrians, concrete jersey barriers protect bicyclists, and dedicated lanes protect buses.

The main reason I ran for elected office is because I want to help change the culture at DDOT. My ANC 6C and activists repeatedly asked DDOT to install rubber flanges on the DC Streetcar tracks several years ago. Last July, a driver killed Malik Habib, age 19, after his bike got stuck in the streetcar tracks. We continue calling for flanges. Participating in local politics is difficult and sometimes heartbreaking work because DDOT has yet to take meaningful action.

DDOT has broken my heart countless times. I have attended memorial demonstrations for people killed by car drivers and lack of safe infrastructure in DC. I have watched their families weep, causing me to weep along with them. And car drivers have hit me three times in DC. I attend countless public meetings and I cannot find any metrics of pedestrian or bicyclist throughput or safety, only metrics of vehicle throughput and parking spaces. DDOT makes too many decisions based not on safety, but whether it will inconvenience a car driver for a single second. Our city is better than this. I very much look forward to working together to make humane transportation more of a reality than a vision. Thank you.

Robb Dooling

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