



## Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

*By Electronic Mail*

October 26, 2020

Jeff Marootian, Director  
DC Department of Transportation

RE: Proposed Improvements to Traffic Safety Assessment Process

Dear Director Marootian:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, at a duly noticed public meeting, with a quorum being the “majority of the total number of commissioner positions currently filled in Commission 4B,” at its October 26, 2020, meeting voted with \_\_\_ Yeas, \_\_\_ Nays, and \_\_\_ Abstentions to send this letter regarding proposed improvements to the District Department of Transportation’s traffic safety assessment process.

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has committed to making our city’s streets safer, including by addressing Vision Zero traffic-related safety issues throughout the city. In furtherance of these goals, DDOT has implemented a Traffic Safety Assessment process where a resident, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, or other community member or organization can submit a questionnaire detailing traffic safety concerns within the public right-of-way. As provided by DDOT, “[t]he intent of the [Traffic Safety Assessment] process is to ask residents to identify traffic safety concerns, whether along a roadway segment or at an intersection, and focus on the definition of the safety concern(s) rather than on a proposed solution or mitigation measure. Based on the nature of the request, DDOT will determine the type of assessment necessary to investigate the extent of the traffic safety concern.” DDOT’s Transportation Operations and Safety Division will then evaluate the extent of the safety issue and determine if any action is needed and develop and implement recommendations, if appropriate.

Over the past two years, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has worked with residents and supported more than 30 Traffic Safety Assessment requests. Based on our experiences, we suggest the following improvements to DDOT’s Traffic Safety Assessment process:

- DDOT’s [“Traffic Safety Assessment”](#) website is the primary source for information on the Traffic Safety Assessment process. It includes links to DDOT’s [“How to Request a](#)

[Traffic Safety Assessment](#)” flyer and DDOT’s [“Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire.”](#) We find the introductory language in the Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire regarding the intent of the process as focused on the definition of the safety concern(s) rather than on a proposed solution or mitigation measure useful and recommend that it be included on the Traffic Safety Assessment website. We believe it is important for residents to understand the experts at DDOT are tasked with evaluating all traffic safety options and proposing the best solution(s), and that residents need not propose a solution when seeking a Traffic Safety Assessment. An additional document detailing all (or the most common) traffic safety measures DDOT can implement would be helpful to both residents and Commissioners in understanding what solutions DDOT might propose. In addition, since residents often think the previous petition process is still in place, we encourage additional information on the website regarding how the previous petition process is no longer in place, as well as when and why DDOT implemented the current procedures.

- DDOT’s [“How to Request a Traffic Safety Assessment”](#) flyer details the general process. We find the introductory language in the Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire regarding the intent of the process useful and also recommend that it be included on this flyer. Calling or visiting 311 online is listed as Step 1 in the flyer, but a 311 request is not required to begin the Traffic Safety Assessment process. We believe calling or visiting 311 online is an extraneous step and should not be listed, in part for the reasons noted below. The flyer also implies a letter of support from an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner is not required, as it is only “requested” and “[r]equests with a completed questionnaire and letter of support from the ANC Commissioner will be prioritized.” We recommend clarifying that Step 1 involves completing a [“Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire”](#); Step 2 involves obtaining a required letter of support from an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner; Step 3 involves submitting both to DDOT; Step 4 involves DDOT evaluation of the traffic safety issue; Step 5 involves DDOT communication back to the applicant regarding the evaluation; and Step 6 involves DDOT implementation, if appropriate.
- We believe submitting Traffic Safety Assessment requests via 311 is an extraneous step, and residents should instead be directed to DDOT’s [“Traffic Safety Assessment”](#) website, DDOT’s [“How to Request a Traffic Safety Assessment”](#) flyer, and DDOT’s [“Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire.”](#) In our experience, residents are confused by the 311 process as related to Traffic Safety Assessments and often think they have successfully requested an evaluation when they have not. Where residents do begin the Traffic Safety Assessment process via a 311 request, the service request type is listed as “Traffic Safety Investigation.” DDOT’s automated response to a 311 request for a “Traffic Safety Investigation” provides: “COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE WILL NOT BE PROCESSED **IF NOT SUBMITTED WITH ANC ENDORSEMENT**.\* DDOT received your 311 request. You MUST have endorsement from your Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner & follow all steps here: <http://bit.ly/SafetyInstr>. The request will close in 40 days if we have not received all information including ANC support.” Based on our

experiences, residents often express confusion over whether a 311 request constitutes a Traffic Safety Assessment and consider the 311 request itself the equivalent of the Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire. If DDOT continues to use 311 for Traffic Safety Assessment requests, we recommend (1) re-naming the 311 service request type as “Traffic Safety Assessment”; and (2) clarifying that the request requires both a completed Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaire (including [link](#)) and an ANC “letter of support” (and not “endorsement”).

- In our experiences, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners do not receive updates or information regarding Traffic Safety Assessment requests once submitted, even though some Commissioners request them from DDOT. In addition, residents often only receive very truncated comments in response to their requests. We believe all communications regarding a Traffic Safety Assessment request should be communicated to the resident and the relevant Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, including the underlying DDOT evaluation (measures considered, assessment of those measures, and data collected).
- In our experiences, constituents underestimate timeframes for evaluation and implementation of traffic calming measures. We believe the Traffic Safety Assessment process would benefit from informing residents in more detail regarding an anticipated timeline, both to manage expectations and to keep them informed as to the arduous nature of the process. DDOT could provide approximated timelines to applicants that include estimated dates for evaluation and data collection, as well as implementation of any recommendations.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B greatly appreciates and has learned a significant amount from recent Commission meetings with DDOT regarding Traffic Safety Assessment requests within our Commission boundaries. We encourage DDOT to work toward a public-facing database that includes all Traffic Safety Assessment Questionnaires on a searchable map, along with information regarding DDOT’s safety evaluation findings, status of implementation, and relevant dates. We believe this information would greatly benefit the public in terms of understanding DDOT’s processes and how Traffic Safety Assessment requests are acted upon and prioritized.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns and for addressing traffic safety issues and working to ensure our neighborhood streets are safe for all road users.

The Commission also voted with \_\_\_ Yeas, \_\_\_ Nays, and \_\_\_ Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer, and the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B01, Evan Yeats, or any member of the Executive Committee in their absence, to be authorized to communicate this letter and represent Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B in communication with your agency regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner

Evan Yeats, ANC 4B01 Commissioner

cc: Mary M. Cheh, Chair, Committee on Transportation & the Environment  
Sayra Molina, Program Analyst - Community Engagement, DC Dep't of Transportation  
Anovia Daniels, Community Engagement Manager, DC Dep't of Transportation

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