



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-21-0303

**Supporting Proposed Improvements to Intersection of Piney Branch Road,
Whittier Street, and 8th Street, NW (NOI #21-6-TOA)
Adopted March 22, 2021**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B takes note of the following:

- On January 14, 2021, the District Department of Transportation published a [Notice of Intent](#) for proposed safety improvements to the intersection at Piney Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW. As stated in the Notice of Intent, the intersection presents a number of safety concerns, including “non-local traffic cutting through the intersection along Whittier Street NW,” “intersection skew,” “misalignment along Whittier Street NW approaches,” and an “intersection angle [that] allows for left-turning maneuvers at high speeds onto 8th Street NW for vehicles travelling southbound along Piney Branch Road NW,” all of which pose safety concerns for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and other road users.
- To address these concerns, the Department has proposed the following:
 - installation of flexible delineator posts and painting the median area along Piney Branch Road, NW, at this intersection, which will close the median and prohibit left turns onto and from Piney Branch Road, NW, and through movement along Whittier Street, NW, across Piney Branch Road, NW;
 - installation of painted bicycle lane extensions through the intersection along Piney Branch Road, NW (northbound and southbound);
 - refurbishment of 20-foot double yellow centerlines on the northbound approach along 8th Street, NW;
 - installation of 20-foot double yellow centerlines on the westbound approach along Whittier Street, NW, and the eastbound approach of Whittier Place, NW; and

- installation of gore areas (painted boundaries) along the east and west curbs of Piney Branch Road, NW, to reinforce the parking restriction within 25 feet of a crosswalk.
- In addition, the Department has proposed two alternative configurations for the connection of Piney Branch Road, NW, with Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, on the east side of the intersection:
 - installation of flexible delineator posts and a painted curb extension on the northeast corner of the intersection, which would reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians crossing the north side of the intersection and reduce the turning angle and speed for right-turn maneuvers from westbound Whittier Street, NW, and northbound 8th Street, NW, onto Piney Branch Road, NW;
 - installation of flexible delineator posts and a gore area (painted boundary) along the east curb of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, which would close off access to Piney Branch Road, NW, from Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, and reduce the crossing distance and pedestrian conflict with turning vehicles while crossing the north and south sides of the intersection.

According to the Department, the second alternative, which would close off access to Piney Branch Road, NW, is safer: “The closure will eliminate all turning maneuver conflicts between northbound Piney Branch Road and the side streets approaches, *providing the maximum safety benefits for all road users including pedestrians, bicycles, and drivers.* Additionally, this configuration will potentially remove all non-local traffic from Whittier Street and 8th Street NW” (emphasis added).

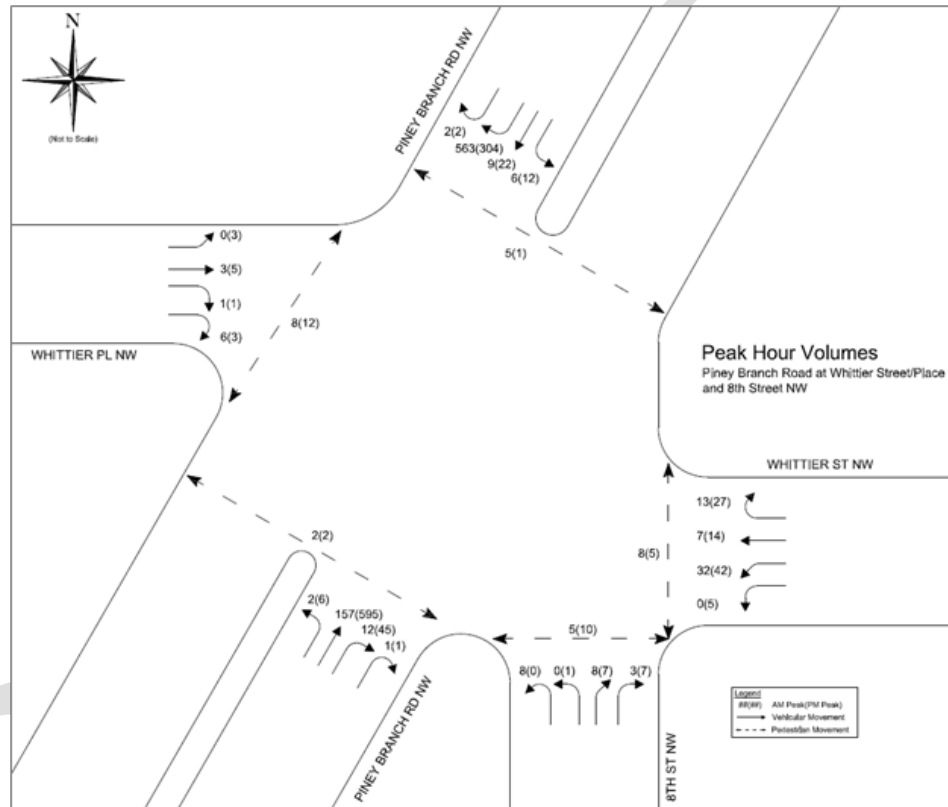
- The intersection at Piney Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, along with the broader stretch of Whittier Street, NW, from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW, has posed persistent safety hazards for local residents and others. The 6700 and 6800 blocks of Piney Branch Road, NW, are [hot spots](#) within Single Member District 4B02 for crashes (ranked fifth and sixth highest in crash data out of 47 individual blocks in Single Member District 4B02). Whittier Street and Whittier Place, NW, have the [highest number of crashes](#) for a [non-minor arterial and non-collector street](#) within Single Member District 4B02. Neighbors routinely communicate with Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, regarding crashes at the intersection at Piney Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, (with at least three in the last six months) and the broader stretch of Whittier Street, NW, from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW. There is regularly car crash debris in the streets at this intersection.

- Neighbors have sought traffic calming at the intersection at Piney Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, along with the broader stretch of Whittier Street, NW, from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW, for years. Neighbors have noted Whittier Street, NW, experiences commuter traffic and is used as a thoroughfare for cars traveling from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW.
 - On October 24, 2019, Marc Meisnere (residing at 604 Whittier Street, NW) submitted a Traffic Safety Assessment questionnaire to the District Department of Transportation for Whittier Street, NW, between 5th Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW. Marc Meisnere noted in the questionnaire there are no speed control measures on this stretch of Whittier Street, NW, creating an extended stretch of residential road without speed calming, and calling attention to the particularly problematic intersection of Whittier Street, NW, and 6th Street, NW, which lacks four-way stop signs. Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, submitted a letter in support, noting the affected area is residential with significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic, including children and seniors, who are more vulnerable to traffic injuries and fatalities, as well as that Takoma Education Campus, the Takoma Metro, day cares, the Takoma Aquatic Center, the Takoma playground, and several additional schools are located in close proximity, and many residents walk or bike to these facilities. The Department acknowledged the questionnaire on October 30th, 2019, and assigned the request service number 19-00955033.
 - On June 9, 2020, Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, submitted a service request specifically for four-way stop signs at the intersection of Whittier Street, NW, and 6th Street, NW. As detailed above, Marc Meisnere noted this problematic intersection in his October 24, 2019, Traffic Safety Assessment questionnaire. The Department acknowledged the service request on June 9, 2020, and assigned the request service number 20-00200557.
 - On July 20, 2020, Aida Cavalic (residing at 6629 Piney Branch Road, NW) submitted a Traffic Safety Assessment questionnaire to the District Department of Transportation for the intersection of Whittier Street, NW, 8th Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW. The questionnaire noted the high frequency of cars speeding off of Piney Branch Road, NW, onto Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, which creates significant confusion and danger for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, submitted a letter in support, again noting the significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic along Whittier Street, NW, and the proximity to schools and other community hubs. The Department

acknowledged the questionnaire on July 20th, 2020, and assigned the request service number 20-00250650.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B supported traffic calming along Whittier Street, NW, from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW, in [Resolution 4B-20-0901](#), adopted September 28, 2020, calling for prompt installation of speed humps along this stretch of Whittier Street, NW, and installation of four-way stop signs at the intersection of Whittier Street, NW, and 6th Street, NW. In addition, the Commission supported traffic calming along the broader stretch of Piney Branch Road, NW, from Eastern Avenue, NW, to Georgia Avenue, NW, in [Resolution 4B-20-0601](#), adopted June 22, 2020, calling for consideration of “the full suite of available options including lane width and roadway width reduction, construction of permanent roadway narrowing, raised crosswalks or speed humps, speed limit reduction, ... protected bike facilities, reconsideration of roadway geometry at unusual intersections, removal of parking for oversized vehicles to ensure sight lines for vehicles, and additional traffic control devices including stop signs and signals.” The Commission has broadly and at every opportunity supported traffic calming across the Commission area as one of the top priorities of Commission residents and will continue to do so.
- Following issuance of the District Department of Transportation’s [Notice of Intent](#) on January 14, 2021, Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, held a Single Member District meeting on February 25, 2021, to gather feedback on the proposals. In anticipation of that meeting, Commissioner Palmer worked with the Department to flyer the surrounding streets regarding the meeting and the Notice of Intent, as well as advertised the meeting on the neighborhood listserv and social media. Approximately 20 neighbors attended the meeting and the vast majority voiced strong support for traffic safety improvements at this intersection.
- Feedback in response to the proposals – both via Commissioner Palmer’s Single Member District meeting and separate communications to Commissioner Palmer – has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly from neighbors who live directly at or in the immediate vicinity of the intersection. The vast majority of neighbors who have contacted Commissioner Palmer have expressed support for the proposals, with a preference for the second alternative for the connection of Piney Branch Road, NW, with Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, on the east side of the intersection as “*providing the maximum safety benefits for all road users including pedestrians, bicycles, and drivers*” (emphasis added). In addition, neighbors emphasized the need for traffic calming along the broader stretch of Whittier Street, NW, and not just limited to the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW.

- A few neighbors voiced concern regarding the possible diversion of traffic to other streets. These neighbors also noted that traffic light timing modifications at the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW, and the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Aspen Street, NW, may address this concern. In addition, District Department of Transportation data shows modest traffic flow along Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, at the intersection with Piney Branch Road, NW. The following image shows morning and evening peak hour turning movements collected on September 8, 2020.



A signalized turn – like those nearby at Piney Branch Road, NW, and Aspen Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW – is significantly safer, and the Department has mechanisms available to absorb and mitigate a modest addition in traffic to those streets. In addition, as noted above, the second alternative for the connection of Piney Branch Road, NW, with Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, on the east side of the intersection is definitively the safest option for all road users.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B recognizes community support for proposed safety improvements to the intersection of Piney

Branch Road, NW, Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, including the second alternative for the connection of Piney Branch Road, NW, with Whittier Street, NW, and 8th Street, NW, on the east side of the intersection as *“providing the maximum safety benefits for all road users including pedestrians, bicycles, and drivers,”* and calls on the District Department of Transportation to promptly implement these safety improvements.

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Transportation to promptly install speed humps along Whittier Street, NW, from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW, and promptly install four-way stop signs at the intersection of Whittier Street, NW, and 6th Street, NW, as requested in [Resolution 4B-20-0901](#).
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Transportation to coordinate consideration of traffic light timing modifications at the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Van Buren Street, NW, and the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Aspen Street, NW; lane spacing along Piney Branch Road, NW, at these intersections to facilitate traffic flow and turns off of Piney Branch Road, NW, onto other streets; and better placed and more prominent “Do Not Enter” signs on the west side of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, to ensure a safer flow of traffic.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ADOPTED by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of **[NUMBER]** members was present) on March 22, 2021, by a vote of **X** yes, **X** no, **X** abstentions.

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