

Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B



[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-24-0102

**Noting History of Requests and Calling for Installation of Meaningful
Traffic Calming at the Intersection of 5th Street, NW,
and Underwood Street, NW
Adopted January 22, 2024**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- The District of Columbia has set a goal of having [zero fatalities and serious injuries](#) on its roadways by 2024. The District has “[fallen short](#)” of that goal, however, with [52 fatalities and 360 major injuries in 2023](#), the [deadliest year on record since 2007](#).
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has broadly and at every opportunity supported traffic calming across the Commission area as one of the Commission’s top priorities. *See generally* Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, [Annual Report 2023](#) (Nov. 27, 2023) (“The Commission strongly supports Vision Zero efforts to ensure zero fatalities and serious injuries to users of the District’s transportation systems and has consistently acted to further the government’s own stated goals.”). Traffic safety continues to be one of the top concerns raised by residents across the Commission area.
- The stretch of 5th Street, NW, from Dahlia Street, NW, through Missouri Avenue, NW, raises a number of traffic safety concerns, including speeding and reckless driving. Traffic calming along the street is limited to traffic lights (Cedar Street, NW; Van Buren Street, NW; Sheridan Street, NW; and Missouri Avenue, NW); and stop signs (Butternut Street, NW; Aspen Street, NW; Whittier Street, NW; Underwood Street, NW; Tuckerman Street, NW; Rittenhouse Street, NW; Quackenbos Street, NW; Peabody Street, NW; and Nicholson Street, NW). Commissioners and residents have highlighted poor stop sign compliance along this road.

- The portion of 5th Street, NW, from approximately Van Buren Street, NW, through Rittenhouse Street, NW, is a designated school zone due to proximity to Coolidge High School, Ida B. Wells Middle School, and Whittier Elementary School and is therefore subject to a 15 miles-per-hour speed limit from 6:00 a.m. through 7:00 p.m. See DC Code § 38-3101(10) (defining “school zone” to include any street, block, or intersection within 350 feet of a given school’s building or school grounds); *id.* at § 38-3107 (a)(1) (proscribing school zone speed limit and hours of application).
- A 2022 study of drivers in DC found that [drivers traveling through school zones are not reducing speeds and are getting into crashes at the same rate as along other roadways](#), with about 20 percent of drivers travelling at least 10 miles per hour above the 15 miles-per-hour speed limit in school zones. [Higher vehicle speeds increase the likelihood of accidents and the severity of injury](#): A person hit by a car traveling at 35 miles per hour is five times more likely to die than a person hit by a car traveling at 20 miles per hour. As speed increases, a driver’s field of vision narrows, which makes it more likely that a driver will not see pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users until it is too late to avoid a crash.
- In December 2022, the DC Council passed [legislation requiring the District Department of Transportation to proactively install traffic safety infrastructure around schools](#). See generally [Resolution 4B-22-0101](#), Supporting and Providing Feedback on the Walk Without Worry Amendment Act of 2021 and the Safe Routes to School Expansion Regulation Amendment Act of 2021 (Jan. 24, 2022). Five schools in Ward 4 will be studied this academic year for traffic safety Action Plans under the legislation. Coolidge High School, Ida B. Wells Middle School, and Whittier Elementary School are not included on this list.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has previously requested that the District Department of Transportation comprehensively consider raised crosswalks along the corridor of 5th Street, NW, between Cedar Street, NW, and Missouri Avenue, NW. See [Resolution 4B-22-0401](#), Calling for Meaningful Consideration of Traffic Safety Investigation Requests and Traffic Calming Infrastructure Along 5th Street, NW (“The District Department of Transportation’s responses to traffic calming requests along 5th Street, NW, between Cedar Street, NW, and Missouri Avenue, NW, are a prime example of the lack of meaningful consideration of and action on traffic calming infrastructure within the Commission area.”) (Apr. 25, 2022); [Resolution 4B-21-1001](#), Calling for Crosswalk and Intersection Improvements Within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Oct. 25, 2021) (noting speeding and high crash rate along this stretch of 5th Street, NW, as well as proximity to a library, schools, Metro and Metrobus routes, and a recreation center).

- Community members have repeatedly highlighted traffic safety concerns along 5th Street, NW, including at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW. Specifically with regard to the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, residents have noted the following:
 - A resident expressed concerns via email on September 14, 2023, about speeding and reckless driving, including failure to stop at the stop signs at this intersection: “I am concerned about cars frequently speeding down 5th Street and through the stop signs at Underwood Street. As you know that is a busy intersection where students from Coolidge High School and Ida B. Wells Middle School cross the streets throughout the day. It’s also the location of two bus stops. I watch cars fly through that intersection daily and especially at night.... The reality of the danger hit home for my family a few weeks ago when a car slammed into the front of our house at the corner of 5th and Underwood Streets. The car, which was stolen, rammed through our wrought iron fence and slammed into our brick home, causing damage to the fence, exterior of the house and landscaping.... Beyond the trauma of a car crashing into our home, we still witness cars continuing to speed through the stop signs.”
 - A resident expressed concerns via an email on January 4, 2024, again highlighting speeding and reckless driving: “Today, I came home to four police cars outside my house because ANOTHER stolen car was crashed into our two family cars parked outside our home. That’s twice in less than six months. Our fence and exterior of our home and landscaping have just been repaired from the last crash. We’ve paid thousands in deductibles. Our insurance rates have gone up and could be cancelled. We’ve lived in this house for more than 25 years. We’ve never had these experiences. We’ve loved living here. Something needs to be done.... My daughter had just gotten out of the car 10 minutes earlier. Students from Coolidge and Ida B. Wells crowd the bus stop where the car turned the corner.”
- The intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, presents specific concerns, in part, due to the downhill slope at all approaches, which encourages speeding and lack of compliance with existing stop signs.
- Following the aforementioned resident email on September 14, 2023, Commissioner Erin Palmer (4B02), in coordination with Commissioner Zurick T. Smith (4B03), submitted a traffic safety input request noting “speeding and reckless driving in a school zone that has resulted in vehicles crashing into residences.” The request was assigned Service Request No. 23-00490111. The District Department of Transportation’s

[Traffic Safety Input Dashboard](#) lists this request as one of its prioritized requests for the second quarter of 2024.

- The Commission strongly encourages consideration of the following as part of the District Department of Transportation's evaluation of Traffic Safety Input Service Request No. 23-00490111, as appropriate:
 - raised crosswalks at all three crosswalks at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, to prevent speeding and reckless driving, as well as ensure better compliance with existing stop signs;
 - raised stop bars at all three stop signs at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, to prevent speeding and reckless driving, as well as ensure better compliance with existing stop signs;
 - a flashing beacon for pedestrians crossing 5th Street, NW, to provide additional needed protections (a similar installation exists at the intersection of Dahlia Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW);
 - reinforcement of stop signs via flashing stop signs, flashing red lights, supplemental stop signs (double-sided), stop-ahead signage and, and/or a stop sign enforcement camera;
 - rumble strips and visibility measures along stop sign approaches to increase notice of approaching stop signs;
 - curb extensions or daylighting with street art or murals to improve the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other, reduce pedestrian crossing distance, and reduce the time pedestrians are in the street; and
 - a bus shelter at the southeast corner and at the northwest corner of the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, space permitting, to provide additional protection, comfort, and convenience to bus users.
- At root, the Commission seeks physical traffic calming to slow speeding drivers and better ensure the safety of all road users, and not simply signage. The Commission further notes that mid-block vertical traffic calming to the exclusion of intersection traffic calming can have the effect of worsening street light and stop sign compliance at intersections as drivers speed once passing the mid-block speed hump or speed table. The Commission specifically seeks traffic calming at the intersection of 5th Street and Underwood Street, NW.

- While this Resolution addresses a specific prioritized traffic safety input for the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW, the Commission notes there are a number of other dangerous intersections along 5th Street, NW, including several within the school zone. The Commission has repeatedly requested consideration of traffic safety infrastructure along this entire stretch of road and is disappointed at the overall lack of action from the District Department of Transportation. See, e.g., [Resolution 4B-23-1006](#), Providing Feedback on Proposal for Intersection of 6th and Butternut Streets, NW (NOI 23-200-TESD) and Reiterating Requests for Meaningful Traffic Calming (Oct. 23, 2023) (“Similar requests for traffic calming – including repeated requests for installation of four-way stop signs at 6th Street, NW, and Whittier Street, NW, and installation of raised crosswalks along 5th Street, NW, including at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Cedar Street, NW – have received little-to-no engagement and action.”).
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B’s Vision Zero Committee reviewed and analyzed this Resolution at the Committee’s January 17, 2024, meeting.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls for the District Department of Transportation to swiftly evaluate Traffic Safety Input Service Request No. 23-00490111 and install traffic safety infrastructure to slow speeding drivers and prevent reckless driving, including installing the following with an emphasis on physical traffic calming:
 - raised crosswalks at all three crosswalks at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW;
 - raised stop bars at all three stop signs at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW;
 - a flashing beacon for pedestrians crossing 5th Street, NW;
 - flashing stop signs, flashing red lights, supplemental stop signs (double-sided), stop-ahead signage and, and/or a stop sign enforcement camera at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW;
 - rumble strips and visibility measures along stop sign approaches to increase notice of approaching stop signs;
 - curb extensions or daylighting with street art or murals at the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW; and/or
 - bus shelters at the southeast corner and northwest corner of the intersection of 5th Street, NW, and Underwood Street, NW.

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Transportation to assess and implement school zone signage that may be missing or misplaced around Coolidge High School, Ida B. Wells Middle School, and Whittier Elementary School, including south of 5th Street and Sheridan Street, NW.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B encourages inclusion of Coolidge High School, Ida B. Wells Middle School, and Whittier Elementary School in the development of a traffic safety Action Plan that includes traffic patterns, pick up and drop off plans, crossing guard allocations, and physical changes to the streetscape, followed by swift action on any such Plan.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Zurick T. Smith, ANC 4B03, Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, Commissioner Alison Brooks, ANC 4B08, and Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioners 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 _ members was present) on January 22, 2024, by a vote of _ yes, _ no, _ abstentions.