

Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B



[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-24-0605

**Calling for Traffic Calming and Safety Infrastructure on the 800 Block of Underwood Street, NW, and at the Intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW
Adopted June 24, 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](#), and [26 fatalities and 152 major injuries](#) less than six months into 2024, with an upward trend in fatalities since 2012.
- 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.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has repeatedly advocated for traffic calming along Piney Branch Road, NW, [one of the most dangerous stretches of road within the area](#). As noted by the Commission: “The unnecessary width and design of the intersections along Piney Branch Road, NW, present a high risk of ‘multiple-threat’ crashes” [Resolution 4B-20-0601](#), Requesting Traffic Calming and Safety Measures on Piney Branch Road, NW, from Eastern Avenue, NW, to Georgia Avenue, NW (June 22, 2020). In addition, the Commission has advocated over many years for the installation of traffic calming along several East-West roads in the neighborhood, including Underwood Street, NW, noting their

propensity to be used as cut throughs for dangerous and reckless driving. *See, e.g.*, Resolution 4B-24-0603, Noting History of Requests and Calling for Installation of Speed Humps for East-West Roads (June 24, 2024); [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 (Jan. 22, 2024).

- The Commission’s past efforts with regard to the intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and the surrounding area include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Resolution 4B-24-0604, Noting Lengthy History of Requests and Calling for Additional Traffic Calming and Safety Infrastructure at the Intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and Dahlia Street, NW, and Around Takoma Elementary School (June 24, 2024) (“Unsafe design of [Piney Branch Road, NW] contributed to the death of 21-year-old Timothy Abbott, who was walking across the street at the intersection at Piney Branch Road, NW, and Dahlia Street, NW, on June 8, 2020, and has contributed to numerous other collisions in this area.”);
 - [Resolution 4B-23-0801](#), Calling for Additional Hardening of Protected Bike Lane on Piney Branch Road, NW, Due to Repeated Damage (Aug. 28, 2023) (“Destruction of traffic safety infrastructure indicates that driver behavior is not changing and that additional infrastructure is necessary. Where such infrastructure is repeatedly destroyed, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls for action to strengthen and improve that infrastructure.”);
 - [Letter](#) Noting Lengthy History of Requests & Calling for Action to Address Illegal Commercial Vehicles (May 22, 2023) (“One area of primary concern is the 6500 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, and the 900 block of Underwood Street, NW, where large trucks unaffiliated with the nearby Safeway regularly take advantage of lax enforcement to park illegally for days or weeks. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has worked since at least 2019 for both infrastructure fixes and enforcement, including everything from submitting 311 requests to communicating with government agencies to working to strengthen the regulations applicable to these vehicles to testifying before the DC Council to formal Commission action.”) (citing multiple additional Resolutions, letters, and Commission action);
 - [Resolution 4B-22-1009](#), Calling for Maintenance & Hardening of Traffic Safety Improvements to Intersection at Piney Branch Road, Whittier Street & 8th Street, NW (formerly NOI #21-6-TOA) (Oct. 24, 2022) (calling on the District Department of Transportation to “harden the traffic safety improvements at Piney Branch Road, Whittier Street, and 8th Street, NW, as soon as possible and to engage with the Commission regarding its plan and timeline for such hardening”);

- [Resolution 4B-22-0303](#), Providing Feedback on Construction of the Metropolitan Branch Trail from Blair Road, NW, to Piney Branch Road, NW (Mar. 28, 2022) (requesting that the “District Department of Transportation carefully consider and design all intersection crossings for the Trail to ensure safe crossing at those intersections in furtherance of the community’s traffic calming and safety goals”);
- [Resolution 4B-21-0504](#), Supporting the Piney Branch Road Traffic Calming Improvements Project, NOI 2021-04-12 (May 24, 2021) (supporting “comprehensive traffic calming” along Piney Branch Road, NW, proposed by the District Department of Transportation, including physically narrowed lanes and curb extensions; calling for improvements to the proposal, including “concrete parking barriers to physically protect the bike lane in front of Takoma Education Campus to provide additional space between children and traffic”; and requesting consideration of additional improvements, including “making lane widths along Piney Branch Road, NW a consistent ten feet in width [and] the use of community planters in the space created by curb extensions”);
- [Resolution 4B-21-0303](#), Supporting Proposed Improvements to Intersection of Piney Branch Road, Whittier Street, and 8th Street, NW (NOI #21-6-TOA) (Mar. 22, 2021) (“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).”);
- [Resolution 4B-20-1005](#), Requesting Installation of Speed Humps on Dahlia Street NW between Georgia Avenue NW and Piney Branch Road NW (Oct. 26, 2020) (“Current traffic control measures, including posted school zone and stop signs, have been insufficient to control speed through this [school zone] corridor.”);
- [Resolution 4B-20-0901](#), Requesting Installation of Speed Humps and Additional Traffic Calming on Whittier Street, NW, between Blair Road, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW (Sept. 28, 2020) (“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.”);
- [Resolution 4B-20-0601](#), Requesting Traffic Calming and Safety Measures on Piney Branch Road, NW, from Eastern Avenue, NW, to Georgia Avenue, NW (June 22, 2020) (urging the District Department of Transportation to act expeditiously to implement permanent traffic calming and safety measures along Piney Branch Road, NW, including recommendations from both the relevant Safe Routes to Schools

assessment and the Rock Creek East Livability Study, as well as consideration of all possible traffic calming along the road).

- Much of the Commission’s work contributed to and subsequently built upon the findings and recommendations included in the [Rock Creek East I Livability Study](#), issued in December 2020, which was the result of several public workshops in 2019 and significant data collection. That Study built upon past completed District Department of Transportation studies. As noted in the study, “some challenges in the area, which include crossing challenges for pedestrians due to wide crossing distances and drivers not yielding. Additionally, the bicycle network through this corridor is incomplete, despite its connection to the future Metropolitan Branch Trail.”
- Recently, residents have raised traffic safety concerns on the 800 Block of Underwood Street, NW, and at the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW. The 800 block of Underwood Street, NW, is one-way westbound, but is nonetheless a road wide enough to visually signal a two-way street and encourage wrong-way driving. Piney Branch Road, NW, has unprotected bike lanes and the east-west crossing has pedestrian pylons. The 6400 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, has two lanes of traffic that reduce to one lane on the 6500 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, and there is no bike lane on the 6400 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, all of which creates a dangerous choke point at this intersection. The intersection of Piney Branch Road, NW, and 9th Street, NW, presents a confusing and dangerous convergence of three roads, where drivers must enter the intersection before they can see all oncoming vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic. Drivers go the wrong way southbound on 9th Street, NW, as well. The area abuts a grocery store and a church, with regular travel by significant numbers of vulnerable road users including children and seniors.
- The Metropolitan Police Department’s 4th District and Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George held a walkthrough with neighbors of this area on June 20, 2024, in response, in part, to a recent [fatal shooting](#) on the 800 block of Underwood Street, NW. Residents noted traffic safety concerns and that traffic calming infrastructure could improve community safety more broadly.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests consideration of the following traffic calming and traffic safety measures on the 800 Block of Underwood Street, NW, and at the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, to prevent illegal cut-through and reckless driving and enhance pedestrian and other safety:
 - **Installation of daylighting – including gore striping and flex posts on the east side of the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, or other installations that would create a “pinch point” like chicanes.** This installation

would narrow the road to better signal the westbound one-way and prevent reckless driving. A similar installation exists at 4th Street, NW, and Sheridan Street, NW, by Whittier Elementary School.

- **Consideration of a contraflow bike lane on Underwood Street, NW.** This installation would reinforce the westbound one-way on Underwood and narrow the road. A similar installation exists on 8th Street, NW, and has successfully calmed traffic on that road.
- **Consideration of installation of a raised crosswalk on the east side of the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, or speed humps along the 800 block of Underwood Street, NW.** This installation could better signal the westbound one-way on Underwood and prevent wrong-way driving, as well as prevent reckless, cut-through driving. Please note, this installation does not have consensus support among neighbors on the 800 block of Underwood Street, NW.
- **Installation of flex posts in the gore striping on the northeast side of the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW.** This installation would visually narrow the road to slow cars going northbound along Piney Branch Road, NW, as the road narrows on the 6500 block, as well as somewhat limit using the bike lane and parking lane as illegal pass lanes.
- **Consideration of a HAWK signal or flashing pedestrian beacon at the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW.** This installation would provide much-needed safety for pedestrians crossing Piney Branch Road, NW, to go to the grocery store, church, local schools, and more.
- **Fixing the flashing speed limit sign on the 6400 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, which has been broken for an extended period of time.** This installation is non-functional and needs to be repaired.
- **Consideration of protected bike lanes along this portion of Piney Branch Road, NW, to connect the protected bike lanes beginning at Butternut Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, with the area farther south.** This installation would prevent driver use of the unprotected bike lane as an illegal pass lane – a common occurrence. This installation on the west side of the road also would assist with the continued challenges presented by illegal commercial vehicle parking on the 6500 block of Piney Branch Road, NW. See [Letter](#) Noting Lengthy History of Requests & Calling for Action to Address Illegal Commercial Vehicles (May 22, 2023). And this installation would safely connect the Rock Creek East I Livability Study focus areas of C5 (Piney Branch Road, NW)

and C3 (Georgia Avenue, NW (South)) that raise the largest number of safety and livability concerns.

- **Consideration of the challenges created by the choke point at the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW.** As the Commission has previously noted, the change in lanes from two to one and addition of the unprotected bike lane creates a dangerous choke point. [Resolution 4B-20-0601](#), Requesting Traffic Calming and Safety Measures on Piney Branch Road, NW, from Eastern Avenue, NW, to Georgia Avenue, NW (June 22, 2020). A former Commissioner has noted that the additional travel lanes on the 6400 block of Piney Branch Road, NW, were supposed to be removed at one point, leaving only one lane in each direction north of the Georgia Avenue, NW, intersection, and no explanation was given why this did not move forward.
- **Assessment of the northbound approach on 9th Street, NW, which requires dangerous maneuvers onto Piney Branch Road, NW, and to turn left on Underwood Street, NW, as well as wrong-way traffic southbound on 9th Street, NW.** Drivers going northbound on 9th Street, NW, and turning left on Underwood Street, NW, must be in the intersection to see oncoming traffic and then must dangerously maneuver around the median to make this turn. Sight lines are dangerous. In addition, drivers go the wrong way southbound on 9th Street, NW (a road that is one way northbound from Tuckerman Street, NW, through Piney Branch Road, NW). It is unclear what installations would work best to address this safety issue, and the Commission requests further engagement on this issue.
- These requested installations are based on the attached Traffic Safety Assessments from 2019 and 2020 and the following 311 Service Request Numbers for Traffic Safety Inputs: 24-00352040 (June 21, 2024); 24-00185133 (Apr. 6, 2024); 24-00185126 (Apr. 6, 2024); 24-00005647 (Jan. 3, 2024) (see attachments).
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has worked extensively over years on traffic calming and traffic safety infrastructure along Piney Branch Road, NW. While the Commission is proud of our successes and thankful for the District Department of Transportation's installations thus far, the Commission reiterates the importance of traffic calming and traffic safety infrastructure for the larger stretch of road. The Commission believes we should build for the neighborhoods we want through robust traffic safety infrastructure and universal design principles. Traffic safety infrastructure should be routine installations and not require significant community advocacy and one-off DC Council action.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Transportation to consider the aforementioned traffic calming and safety measures on the 800 Block of Underwood Street, NW, and at the intersection of Underwood Street, NW, and Piney Branch Road, NW, and present an installation that will best prevent illegal cut-through and reckless driving and enhance pedestrian and other safety.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Transportation to engage in regular and open communications with the Commission regarding the status of its assessment and any proposed installations to allow fulsome engagement with the community.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B notes that older requests for traffic calming, including under the Traffic Safety Assessment process, are not reflected in the Traffic Safety Input dashboard and requests the District Department of Transportation consider a mechanism to reflect or somehow account for requests under previous recent systems. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B also notes that 311 requests for Traffic Safety Inputs have not made their way to the Traffic Safety Input dashboard and would like to understand why this might be the case and ensure all relevant requests are included.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B appreciates modifications to the District Department of Transportation's traffic safety installation processes to more easily allow residents to submit requests and to not require Commission "endorsement" or resolution for traffic calming requests and urges DC Councilmembers to better inform residents of this process and further push for standardization of procedures and installations – and not rely on Commission advocacy to move one-off projects forward.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, to 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 _ members was present) on June 24, 2024, by a vote of _ yes, _ no, _ abstentions.