Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-25-0202

Calling for Installation of Meaningful Traffic Safety Infrastructure Around LaSalle-Backus Elementary School
Adopted February 24, 2025

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

- In 2014 the District of Columbia set a goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on its roadways by 2024;
- The District fell short of its goal over the last 10 years, and during that time the Commission has seen 10 traffic fatalities and 81 major injuries, according to District Department of Transportation (DDOT) crash data;
- Rising traffic fatalities in D.C. is consistent with national trends;
- LaSalle-Backus Elementary School at 501 Riggs Road, NE has educated generations of Washingtonians in Wards 4 and 5, and the boundary includes Lamond, Manor Park, and Riggs Park neighborhoods in Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 4B and 5A north of the Fort Totten metro station;
- LaSalle's student entrance is on the corner of Riggs Road, NE and Madison Street, NE, and families report it is dangerous for pedestrians or drivers to travel to and from the school in any direction;
- Riggs Road, NE between Eastern Ave and South Dakota Ave, NE is an arterial roadway with westbound traffic from Maryland, and the multitude of speed limit signs on Riggs Road, NE by the school are both confusing and ineffective;
- While Riggs Road, NE between Madison Street, NE and Nicholson Street, NE is marked a 25mph zone, Riggs Road, NE between Nicholson Street, NE and 6th Street, NE is marked a 15mph school zone;
- LaSalle families and neighbors report motorists consistently disregard intersection stop signs and travel at much higher speeds than posted

speed limits on Riggs Road, NE; in 15mph school zones on the 400 block of Madison Street NE and the 5800 block of 6th Street, NE; and on surrounding streets marked 20mph including the 400-500 blocks of Kennedy Street, NE and the 5500 block of 4th Street, NE;

- There is poor visibility for drivers and pedestrians by the student entrance at Riggs Road, NE and Madison Street, NE, for several reasons;
- LaSalle lacks a family parking lot or pickup/drop-off loading zone, unlike other schools in Wards 4 and 5, so there is no safe place for LaSalle families to park;
- Consequently, the student entrance bottlenecks with four (4) Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) school buses and families who double park during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up;
- Additionally, there is insufficient street lighting and numerous WMATA busses that make frequent stops on Riggs Road, NE;
- There is no significant tree box buffer or green space between Riggs Road, NE and the campus, so numerous high-speed traffic accidents have come into direct contact with the school yard and the adjacent Riggs LaSalle Recreation Center;
- For many years, Commissioners, residents, and LaSalle administrators have communicated with DDOT through petitions and Traffic Safety Input (TSI) requests to express concerns and request traffic safety improvements around the school;
- DDOT's TSI Dashboard shows several traffic safety input requests for these intersections marked for "future consideration;"
- The previous LaSalle principal requested two crossing guards stationed on Riggs Road, NE at Madison Street, NE and Nicholson Street, NE nine years ago, but the school only has one, which was finally approved after a motorist/pedestrian collision where a LaSalle parent sustained major injuries (CCN 17035905 March 3, 2017);
- DDOT ignored LaSalle's current principal when she requested a traffic safety review five years ago;
- Furthermore, DDOT uses TSI data to create Safe Routes to School (SRTS) action plans, but the TSI prioritization model is weighted against arterial roads like Riggs Road, NE which places the LaSalle community at an unfair disadvantage for DDOT safety improvements;
- DDOT's stated justification for weighting local road enhancements over arterials is there is a separate Annual Safety Improvement Program (ASIP) to support arterial roadways, yet ASIP has no planned work on Riggs Road, NE;
- DDOT's longstanding pattern of neglect in this neighborhood has predictable and preventable consequences: Most recently, a LaSalle caregiver was hit by a motorist during morning drop-off near Riggs Rd. NE and Madison St. NE on February 11, 2025; and

- The Commission has repeatedly supported making more permanent and hardening traffic safety infrastructure, and encourages such longer-term considerations and investments at this location where feasible. *See* 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); Resolution 4B-24-0501, Noting History of Requests and Calling for Installation of Meaningful Traffic Safety Infrastructure at the Intersection of South Dakota Avenue, NE, and Riggs Road, NE, and the Intersection of Missouri Avenue, NW, and New Hampshire Ave NW (May 28, 2024); Resolution 4B-23-0602, Supporting Safety Improvements on 3rd Street, NE Between Riggs Road and 2nd Street, NE (NOI #23-110-TESD) (June 26, 2023); and Resolution 4B-21-1101, Requesting installation of 4-way stop signs at the intersections of Kansas Ave NW and Madison St NW, Kansas Avenue and Longfellow St NW, and along the 3rd Street Corridor from Missouri Avenue NW to Sheridan Street NW as well as installation of speed humps (November 22, 2021); therefore

RESOLVED:

The Commission requests DDOT consider the following mechanisms to address traffic safety concerns at these intersections, as well as any other appropriate traffic calming and traffic safety infrastructure:

– Conduct a SRTS action plan at LaSalle soonest, and prioritize Title I public elementary schools for SRTS action plans;

– Reweight the TSI prioritization model to balance local roads and arterials equitably;

– Prioritize Riggs Road, NE for ASIP projects, particularly between South Dakota Avenue, NE and Eastern Avenue;

– Close sidewalk gaps in the school's walkshed, particularly the 5500 block of 4th Street, NE, 5500 block of 5th Street, NE, 300-800 blocks of Kennedy Street, NE, 700-800 blocks of Nicholson Street, NE, and the 1200 block of Jamaica Street, NE in accordance with D.C. Code § 9–425.01;

– Clarify and streamline speed limit signage on Riggs Road, NE, and conduct a traffic study to investigate the timing of the lights to decrease bottlenecks in front of the school;

– Daylight the north side of Madison Street NE outside the entrance of LaSalle to improve visibility of crosswalks and intersections (e.g., install

signs and markings to prevent parking too close to intersections), and add Pick-up/Drop-off zone signage;

– Deploy two traffic control officers or crossing guards at the intersections of Riggs Road, NE at both Madison Street, NE and Nicholson Street, NE;

– Install speed tables, rectangular rapid flashing beacons and real-time speed monitoring signage, including visual imagery, to reduce speeds at the intersections of Riggs Road, NE at Madison Street, NE and Nicholson Street, NE;

– Install speed humps, raised crossings, and crosswalk visibility enhancements like markings, lighting and signage on the 500 block of Nicholson Street, NE, the 5500 block of 4th Street, NE, and the intersection of 6th and Oglethorpe Streets, NE;

– Add new high-visibility, raised crosswalk ladder markings to the intersections of Kennedy Street, NE at 4th Street, NE and 5th Street, NE where no crosswalks currently exist;

– Daylight the intersection of 4th Street, NE at Kennedy Street, NE;

– Upgrade high-visibility crosswalk markings within a half-mile of the school to high-visibility ladder markings (e.g., crosswalk at intersection of Kensington Place at Madison Street, NE needs upgrade);

2. That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on DDOT to assess all available mechanisms to address the traffic safety concerns around LaSalle and surrounding streets, and promptly install such measures as will most effectively address these safety concerns;

3. That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on DDOT to engage in open communications with Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B and the LaSalle community about efforts to address the traffic safety concerns at and around LaSalle;

4. That the Commission designates Commissioner Sophia Tekola, ANC 4B05, Commissioner Tiffani Nichole Johnson, ANC 4B06, Commissioner Michael Cohen, ANC 4B07, and Commissioner Keenan Courtland, ANC 4B03 to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution;

5. 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;

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6. 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; and

7. That 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 nine members was present) on February 24, 2025, by a vote of _ yes, _ no, _ abstentions.

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