November 4, 2019

Dear Chairperson Fast,

DDOT has reviewed the ANC resolution on the P Street project, along with other public comments, and given it great weight in our decision making process.

The following concerns were raised with regard to this project:

1. The overall routing and connection to the Anacostia River Trail (ART)
2. The removal of 26 on-street RPP parking spaces on the south curb
3. The tree canopy on P Street SW
4. The safety of people on bikes and and scooters
5. The public process for developing this project and reaching a decision

Below are our responses to these concerns, and justification for advancing the project at this time:

1. **Routing.** The routing on P Street SW is necessary due to the presence of Fort McNair, and because the next connecting street in the grid between 2nd and 4th is M Street, a quarter mile north and a principal arterial. This routing was part of the original Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan in 2003\(^1\), and has been affirmed as part of every planning effort to consider this area since that time.\(^2\) In DDOT’s annual workplan for 2019, we acknowledged again the importance of the trail, in particular to meet the multi-modal goals for stadium trips and for area residents, and reaffirm the prior planning work’s

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\(^1\) [https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/The%20Anacostia%20Waterfront%20Framework%20Plan%202003.pdf](https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/The%20Anacostia%20Waterfront%20Framework%20Plan%202003.pdf)

\(^2\) [https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/publication/attachments/bicycle_master_plan_2005_proposed_bicycle_facilities_map_0.pdf](https://ddot.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddot/publication/attachments/bicycle_master_plan_2005_proposed_bicycle_facilities_map_0.pdf)

\(^3\) [http://www.wemovedc.org/resources/Final/Part%202_Plan%20Elements/Bicycle.pdf](http://www.wemovedc.org/resources/Final/Part%202_Plan%20Elements/Bicycle.pdf)


\(^5\) [https://gis.railtotrails.org/ctc/](https://gis.railtotrails.org/ctc/)
conclusions, that P Street is the most viable corridor for closing this gap in the ART in Southwest.

Following that conclusion, DDOT did investigate using the area of public space between the sidewalk and the base wall. Early in our planning work we walked away from this option due to the poor sightlines at the base exit, and the agency’s approach of minimizing new paving over pervious surface wherever possible. Commissioner Litsky asked DDOT to consider this option following our first meeting on the topic. DDOT revisited the option with our subject matter experts in urban forestry, engineering, and stormwater management, and described to the commissioner the various complications related to those topics in a letter dated October 9th, 2019. To summarize, a trail in this location would mean the pin oaks along the corridor might die, the paving of that area would require stormwater facilities within the roadway and tree strip, and the engineering would not meet our minimum width standards, and the location would present a persistent sightline problem and related collision risk at the base entrances.

DDOT also investigated the following options in the winter/spring of 2019: bike lanes on both sides of the street, protected bike lanes on both sides of the street, a protected 2-way cycletrack with a conversion of P St to 1-way vehicular travel. Of these options, both bike lanes, and protected bike lanes would require the removal of parking from one or both sides, respectively. The 1-way vehicular travel option could retain parking on both sides, but significantly complicates vehicular circulation for the neighborhood. Exploring these options reaffirmed our judgement that a 2-way, protected cycletrack was the best way to connect the ART through the area.

2. **Parking.** Most of the opposing comments related principally to the removal of parking spaces, and related issues of equity. Residents of Canal Square noted that the price was nearly $200/month for a space in the complex, while the on-street parking amounts to around $3.10/month. DDOT acknowledges this difference, however the agency’s role in managing and regulating public space is to ensure safety and access for all travelers, not simply to provide private vehicle storage for nearby residents. Finally, the current configuration actually violates DDOT’s policy of providing residential parking only on the side of the street with residents.

3. **Trees.** P Street has a tree canopy of mature pin oaks. In considering possible routes through the corridor, DDOT staff noted the root system of the oaks within the space between the sidewalk and base wall. Urban foresters confirmed that disruption or paving of this area would almost certainly deprive the trees of water and oxygen, and would likely lead to their demise over a short amount of time – an unacceptable outcome for DDOT and the public. The cycletrack connection DDOT developed will be built within the existing curb-to-curb street width, and work in this space will not affect the trees.

4. **Safety.** DDOT’s is committed to a safe transportation network. Where we fall short in this corridor and others is related to the absence of safe bike/scooter infrastructure, especially when our transportation plans for this area, and the entire city, encourage more people to walk, bike, scoot, and take transit, rather than drive. We have evaluated all
possible scenarios for completing this project in the near term, and our conclusion is that the two way cycletrack on the south side of the roadway is the best means of delivering on the promise of a safe, multi-modal future.

5. **Process.** DDOT has conducted extensive outreach as part of the planning process for the P Street Protected Bikeway. Manager Will Handsfield first mentioned DDOT’s intentions to complete the project to then Commissioner Anthony Dale and Chair Gail Fast at a joint Capitol Riverfront/Southwest BID Mobility Now working lunch event on February 7th, 2019. Efforts to have a meeting with Commissioner Dale were unsuccessful, and he resigned his seat in the summer. Will sent a letter to the ANC in June of 2019 indicating that the agency was interested in pursuing the project. The letter included description of the project and a cross section of the proposed facility. Efforts to schedule a meeting on the subject were unsuccessful throughout the summer, and in September, DDOT completed the plans and issued a Notice of Intent for the project. DDOT staff attended ANC 6D’s September organizational planning meeting, the September ANC meeting, the October organizational planning meeting, and the October ANC meeting to discuss P Street, 4th St, and 1st St projects.

The commission’s resolution on the P Street project was 6-0 against, while public comments on the project were 47% for, 53% against, with the primary opposition coming from the Canal Square tenants association (the complex located on P St.). Some of the supportive comments came from ANC commissioners representing areas connected to the ART in other parts of the city.

A final note on a topic brought up by commissioners: Should Fort McNair open up the possibility of a waterfront trail around their property, this would be a good reason to revisit the trail plan and subsequent routing decisions, but at this time, DDOT has no expectation of that occurring in the immediate future.

DDOT hopes to install the bike lane by the end of November, depending on the weather. For any questions related to this decision, you can contact me at 202-671-2331 or Mr. Handsfield at 671-3378

Sincerely,

James R. Sebastian
Associate Director

Cc: Hon. Charles Allen, DC Councilmember, Ward 6
    Gail Fast, Chair, ANC 6D
    Andy Litisky, ANC Commissioner, 6D-04
    Leon Anderson, Safety Branch Manager, DDOT
    Naomi Klein, Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff, DDOT