

By Electronic Mail

May 3, 2021

Everett Lott, Interim Director
District Department of Transportation

RE: Prioritizing Traffic Safety in Responding to Service Requests

Dear Interim Director Lott:

Over the past weeks, several [traffic fatalities in our neighborhoods](#) have devastated our communities. These fatalities, as well as numerous other crashes, are the direct result of poor road design and government inaction to make our streets safer. As Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, we routinely hear from residents regarding their traffic safety concerns and report problem areas and request necessary fixes. Many of these requests relate to basic government services, like missing or damaged street signs, missing crosswalks, and damaged sidewalks, yet we see little to no action. We are tired of waiting for the next crash, and we demand systemic, preventive improvements.

Specifically, we are calling for changes to and a re-prioritization of the District Department of Transportation's service level agreement timelines, including responses to Traffic Safety Assessments. As you are aware, the Department's scheduled response times are swift for certain roadway services — 3 business days to address a pothole — but provide an extended timeline for other essential traffic safety measures — 130 business days for roadway signs, 270 business days for roadway striping/markings, 270 business days for sidewalk repair, and 130 business days for traffic safety investigations (plus an undetermined amount of time for potential implementation). The Department's service level agreement timelines clearly prioritize fast car travel over safety for all road users, particularly vulnerable users.

To improve public information and transparency, more quickly address traffic safety issues, and ensure accountability, we request the following:

- The Department has provided the service level agreement timelines noted above via a table presented to several Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. This table of timelines is not available on the Department's public website, and the timelines in this table differ from information on the Department's public website, some of which are presented as a range (e.g., 4-6 months). The Department should publish a table of service level agreement timelines on its public website and include information that is consistent across the Department's webpages.
- Damage to existing signage should be addressed swiftly; there is no excuse for delay. The Department should ensure adherence to the [24-hour timeline to replace existing stop signs](#) and reduce the timeline for [traffic control sign replacement](#), particularly for

pedestrian crossing signs. Commissioners have reported damaged signs, including stop signs, that have gone without replacement for weeks, and replacement of pedestrian crossing signs and other traffic control signs suffer extended delays (some years long) or are closed without action. If the Department is facing delays producing signs, it should have a backup supply, and temporary, emergency signs should be available immediately as necessary.

- Damage to existing traffic safety infrastructure, including pylons and plastic or rubber curbs, also should be addressed swiftly. The service level timeline for these types of requests is unclear, and should be provided publicly. Commissioners have reported damaged pylons and curbs that have suffered extended delays (some years long) or are closed without action.
- There is no reason to delay crosswalk striping for existing crosswalks. The Department has already indicated that it will [install high-visibility crosswalk lines on all intersections as a part of its repaving process](#), indicating that all existing crosswalks are eligible for striping. No investigation is necessary. The Department should prioritize timely crosswalk striping at all existing crosswalks.
- Sidewalks are a crucial piece of infrastructure that often seems to be ignored. The Department should ensure adherence to [resolving sidewalk repair requests within 25 business days of the time they are reported](#) or sooner. Commissioners have reported sidewalk repairs with extended delays (some years long) and areas with missing sidewalks with no action.
- The Department appears to rely on a months' long timeline for investigation for new traffic control signs, new pavement markings, and Traffic Safety Assessments, yet many requests are closed with a one-sentence response that the matter is an "enforcement issue" or that no changes are possible. The instructions for completing the Traffic Safety Assessment form are unclear and do not include any limitations on the scope of the investigation, yet one Commissioner was informed that a Traffic Safety Assessment could address no more than three blocks. As a regular matter, neither residents nor Commissioners receive any underlying data or reports from these Assessments. The Department should expedite these investigations, share underlying data with the individual making the request and the relevant Commissioner, and clearly indicate in its response what solutions were considered, how they were assessed, and the reason the solution was adopted or rejected.
- Residents and Commissioners provide detailed information to the Department when completing a Traffic Safety Assessment form and providing a Commissioner endorsement. The Department should provide a public facing, location-based database for all Traffic Safety Assessments, and not just those submitted in the last 30 days, including links to the submitted forms (with redacted contact information for

non-Commissioners). Transparency would help assure equitable consideration of traffic calming mechanisms and consistency across neighborhoods and Commissions.

- There are notable inconsistencies and a lack of transparency in traffic safety measures implemented, which leads to inequitable application of solutions. Certain areas and streets are deemed not eligible for specific solutions, yet those solutions are implemented in similar areas and streets elsewhere, even when the street classification is the same. Speed humps and raised crosswalks exemplify this inconsistency: some blocks have multi-year outstanding requests while others are implemented within months of submission. Clarity on when a Commission letter/resolution is required is also needed. While there may be exceptions to limitations on traffic safety mechanisms available, residents and Commissioners have no way to discern what exceptions might exist. The full suite of traffic safety mechanisms available and where they are eligible to be implemented should be public information.
- Implementation is crucial. Service level agreement timelines can seem like mere suggestions. A mechanism to track scheduled response times versus the actual timeline for completion for specific requests would help assure accountability as to implementation.
- Some of the aforementioned challenges are addressed, at least partially, via the [Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020](#), including requiring installation of sidewalks on both sides of the street, connecting new sidewalks to existing sidewalks, and making crosswalks high-visibility crosswalks, as well as requiring publication of requests for all-way or signalized stops at intersections and requiring the Department to explain its reasoning when a request is denied. Notably, the Act requires third-party restoration of crosswalks and bike lanes for specific projects — and penalties for failure to comply — within timelines that are stricter than the Department applies to itself. We call on the Mayor and DC Council to fully fund the Act in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

Thank you for your consideration and implementation of our requests.

Sincerely,

Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner
Alison Horn, ANC 6B09 Commissioner
Amber Gove, Chair, ANC 6A04 Commissioner
Monique Diop, Chair, ANC 8D04 Commissioner
Lisa R. Gore, ANC 3/4G-01 Commissioner
Tiffani Nichole Johnson, ANC 4B06 Commissioner
Alison Brooks, Chair, ANC 4B08 Commissioner
Brenda Parks, ANC 4B04 Commissioner
Robin Nunn, ANC 2B03 Commissioner
Colleen Costello, ANC 5B05 Commissioner
Sabel Harris, ANC 1B12 Commissioner

Trupti J. Patel, ANC 2A03 Commissioner
Elizabeth Miske, ANC 2C02 Commissioner
Layla Bonnot, ANC 1A01 Commissioner
Amanda Farnan, candidate for ANC 1B11 Commissioner
Celeste Carano, ANC 1C02 Commissioner
Meghan Faulkner, ANC 1C04 Commissioner
Fiona Clem, ANC 1C08 Commissioner
Kimberly Martin, ANC 7E07 Commissioner
Connie KN Chang, ANC 3G05 Commissioner
Meg Roggensack, ANC 2B01 Commissioner
Keya Chatterjee, ANC 6A01 Commissioner
Aryan Rodriguez Bocquet, ANC 4D03 Commissioner
Michelle Yan, ANC 2F03 Commissioner
Ellen Armstead, ANC 8D05 Commissioner
Rachel Maisler, Chair/Ward 4 Representative, DC Bicycle Advisory Council
Evan Yeats, ANC 4B01 Commissioner
Alan Wehler, ANC 4C09 Commissioner
Japer Bowles, ANC 1C07 Commissioner
Moshe Pasternak, ANC 2B04 Commissioner
Jonah Goodman, ANC 4C10 Commissioner
Anthony Lorenzo Green, ANC 7C04 Commissioner
Edward Ryder, ANC 6B07 Commissioner
Kelvin Brown, ANC 7B06 Commissioner
William Zeh Herbig, ANC 2B05 Commissioner
Corey Holman, ANC 6B06 Commissioner
Zack Gold, ANC 1C05 Commissioner
Mark Eckenwiler, ANC 6C04 Commissioner
Christian Damiana, ANC 3D07 Commissioner
Sauleh Siddiqui, ANC 3C05 Commissioner
Jared Weiss, ANC 6D02 Commissioner
Robb Dooling, ANC 6A06 Commissioner
Erik Lindsjö, ANC 4D01 Commissioner
Stephen Cobb, ANC 5D07 Commissioner
Yannik Omictin, ANC 2A01 Commissioner
Matthew Holden, ANC 2B08 Commissioner
Mike Silverstein, ANC 2B06 Commissioner
Zachary Israel, ANC 4D04 Commissioner
Alex Lopez, ANC 6E02 Commissioner
Ben Bergmann, ANC 3D08 Commissioner
Zach Rybarczyk, ANC 1A03 Commissioner
Michael Scott McKernan, ANC 2B07 Commissioner

cc: Councilmember Mary M. Cheh, Chair, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

Michael Porcello, Legislative & Committee Director, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

Councilmember Phil Mendelson, Chair
Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large
Councilmember Christina Henderson, At-Large
Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At-Large
Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr. At-Large
Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau, Ward 1
Councilmember Brooke Pinto, Ward 2
Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4
Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie, Ward 5
Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Councilmember Vincent C. Gray, Ward 7
Councilmember Trayon White, Sr., Ward 8

David C. Jones, ANC Liaison, DC Department of Transportation