



CPCA Comments to DDOT on Connecticut Avenue NW Reversible Lanes and Multimodal Safety Project, submitted to DDOT online porthole 7/30/22

I am writing on behalf of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association of residents of the Cleveland Park community, committed to protecting and promoting the diversity, vitality, tree-lined character, and overall well-being of the Cleveland Park neighborhood, and to advocating for issues important to its residents. We appreciate the efforts made to inform the community about the project and solicit comments. We understand at this time DDOT is considering input solely on refinements to Option C. So, we have focused our comments on that proposal. They are as follows:

Posting analyses

To enable the public to provide sufficiently informed input, we request that DDOT publish all analyses and data generated to date and going forward in regard to option selection and refinement. Currently little such information is posted.

Diversion studies and calming measures

We request that DDOT analyze diversion within Cleveland Park more thoroughly and ensure that appropriate calming measures are put into place prior to making any further changes to traffic patterns and introduction of bike lanes.

DDOT has stated that some such analyses have already been performed and suggest minimal diversion will occur from Connecticut Avenue within Cleveland Park. However, our experience has been that even limited traffic jams can result in high volumes of traffic through the neighborhood. Further, our experience has been that traffic volumes can increase dramatically along 34th St due to congestion on Connecticut Avenue. Accordingly, we urge further evaluation of the level of diversion that may occur both to Cleveland Park neighborhood streets (from Tilden to Macomb) and to 34th Street that may affect traffic volume through Cleveland Park.

Even if traffic diversion volumes may be limited, commuters and others can be expected to drive as quickly as permissible to find a new route. Accordingly, in addition to posting speed limits clearly along neighborhood streets connecting to Connecticut Avenue, additional, appropriate calming measures should be identified and implemented. On non-bus or emergency routes, these could include speed humps and cameras. On bus/emergency routes as well as along 34th Street, additional traffic lights as well as cameras could be installed.

Analyses of diversion and appropriate calming measures to introduce should be posted to enable further public engagement, and project planning should ensure such introduction of appropriate measures will occur prior to any additional traffic adjustments under the project (beyond the elimination of reversible lanes that has already been implemented).

We note that DDOT has indicated not all streets to which diversion may occur can be studied due to resource constraints. While it seems appropriate to ensure that diversion along the entire corridor is understood and appropriately addressed, it seems clear that diversion to 34th Street is significant to neighborhoods along its entire length, and that traffic volumes will be relatively high at Cleveland Park as a closer-in neighborhood and Connecticut Avenue must pass over Rock Creek by bridge to continue to the next neighborhood. Accordingly, these two areas of focus for further diversion analysis would be compelling.

Biker and pedestrian safety

With regard Connecticut Avenue itself, we request that DDOT ensure bike rider compliance with traffic laws is managed to prevent any injury to pedestrians and those traveling by bus. In this regard we appreciate and support DDOT's plans to analyze bus stops in collaboration with WMATA. Introduction of mechanisms to ensure bikers halt before stopped buses is needed, but additional measure are needed to protect pedestrians crossing the Avenue.

As DC seeks to promote greater biker ridership along the corridor, measure need to be put in place to ensure that bikers are aware of their duties to comply with traffic laws and ensure such compliance. We appreciate that these concerns are not exclusive to this project, but before introducing bike lanes to one of the primary DC corridors is clearly the right time to address these issues in an effective manner.

Loading and unloading

With respect to Cleveland Park in particular, we request that DDOT ensure flexibilities are built in to enable commercial and residential loading and unloading and sanitation pick-up on both sides of the Avenue. Reliance on the Avenue is needed in Cleveland Park because there are very limited off-Avenue options. In addition, demand can be expected to increase dramatically should development occur along this strip in keeping with DC government goals for promoting increased residential development near the Cleveland Park metro stop, as expressed in the 2021 amendments to the DC Comprehensive Plan.

We appreciate that DDOT will be engaging the community further on these issues including through task forces in which CPCA will participate. However, we are concerned that these efforts may focus only on how to balance needs rather than expanding options to allow for use of both sides of the Avenue. Simply put expecting commercial loading and unloading, residential moves in and out, or sanitation activities to be conducted on one side of the Avenue by crossing from the other side is neither feasible nor safe. Other options, for example at off-hours, will be needed.

Parking on residential segments of the Avenue

We request inclusion of parking along the residential blocks of Connecticut Avenue within Cleveland Park (from Tilden to Porter) in addition to within the commercial strip (from Porter to

Macomb). Parking near Connecticut Avenue is quite limited within Cleveland Park, and demand can be high not only from residents but visitors including families visiting the National Zoo. Further, DDOT has stated that parked cars can serve to slow traffic enhancing safety. Having more traffic lanes on the Avenue between commercial strips can be expected to encourage drivers to speed up; including parking can be expected to reduce this risk and associated risk of traffic accidents and to pedestrian safety.

Importance of public transportation

We note the importance of public transportation to sustainability and addressing climate change. It is also critical to residents and those working in our neighborhood who rely on public transportation. It is, therefore, critical that the project encourage rather than discourage ridership. A challenge has been how to strike a balance among multimodal needs and preferences. In addition to ensuring bus passenger safety entering and exiting buses as discussed above, we request that DDOT take whatever additional measures can be put in place to prioritize bus traffic and enable buses to travel efficiently along the corridor.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with DDOT to help ensure this project contributes to quality of life in our neighborhood, traffic safety, and sustainability.

John Barlow Weiner
President