



WABA
WASHINGTON AREA
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

March 31, 2021

Hailey Peckett
MoveDC Project Manager
District Department of Transportation
250 M St. SE
Washington, DC 20003

Re: Comments on MoveDC Draft Strategies

Hailey Peckett,

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and its 5,000+ members in the Washington region, I write with comments on DDOT's draft strategies presented as part of the MoveDC update. WABA envisions a just and sustainable transportation system for the Washington Region where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. We enthusiastically support the direction and intentions of the MoveDC plan and its goals for creating an equitable transportation system in the District that safely, conveniently, and efficiently get people where they need to go while aggressively pursuing climate, traffic safety, and equity goals.

While we support many of the goals and strategies in principle, we have deep lingering concerns with some strategies and especially the underlying DDOT priorities and resource allocation they suggest.

1. Miles Per Year is the wrong approach for measuring Protected Bike Lanes

Though we agree thoroughly that DDOT needs a strategy to build more protected bike lanes each year, we urge DDOT to use the MoveDC plan to approach the question more holistically and ambitiously. What is the end result and when should it be complete? To achieve the broad goals of this plan, as well as DC's sustainability, traffic safety and modeshare shift goals, we believe that DC's low-stress bicycle network must be fully complete by 2030 at the latest. Yet, the network must substantively serve a majority of DC neighborhoods, transit hubs and destinations long before then.

The MoveDC plan should define the full low-stress bicycle network and deadlines for completion (e.g. 80% of residences within 1/8th mile access to the low stress bicycle network by 2025). It should set yearly project completion or access increase goals to meet the deadline, instead of an arbitrary mileage count. We agree that "build more" is part of the strategy, but projects must be built in the right places and at the right pace. Five miles per year does not guarantee equitable investment or an appropriately resourced rollout.

2. The Bicycle Priority Map must be specific about facility type

It is imperative that the MoveDC plan lay out a complete vision for a low-stress, all ages and abilities bicycle network. On most of DC's busier streets, creating a low-stress bicycling experience requires creating protected and dedicated space for people on bikes. Without a continuous and appropriate treatment, the majority of interested, but concerned bicyclists will not consider riding on the road. Daily practical experience and guidelines from Federal Highway Administration, National Association of City Transportation Officials, and Montgomery County make it clear that a "low-stress" bicycling intervention necessarily looks different on a 4 lane artery versus a neighborhood street.

The MoveDC Bicycle Priority Map must be updated to reflect the appropriate infrastructure intervention for each road segment as a starting point for any future road project. There is always room in the block-by-block design process for flexibility to account for details that were simply too small for a citywide plan to consider. To comply with the intent of the Vision Zero Omnibus Enhancement Act's mandatory protected bike lanes provisions the MoveDC plan must commit to specific bicycle facility types that result in a low-stress bicycle network.

3. Equitable Multi-Use Trail Development must be an explicit part of the plan and be treated separately from on-street bicycle facilities

Through correspondence with Director Lott, we understand that multi-use trails were included under the "install more protected bike lanes and paths" strategy. Off-street trails and on-street bicycle facilities should have their own separate strategies and goals. Multi-use trails follow different paths for planning, funding, and staffing at DDOT and face entirely distinct challenges compared to on-street bicycle facilities. Multi-use trails serve a wide variety of user groups in addition to bicyclists and also have the potential to expand fully accessible, enjoyable public spaces.

Similar to our above comments on the low-stress bicycle network, we ask that the MoveDC plan define a completion goal and a timeline for completion. As a member of the Capital Trails Coalition, DDOT should be willing to endorse the DC portions of the regional Capital Trails Network (roughly ~40 miles of new trail in DC), prioritize projects for delivery through the STIP, and increase staffing and planning resources to deliver on time.

Additionally, we support these strategies with the following comments:

- Implement MoveDC through the STIP process - The current STIP devotes an inordinate amount of funding to highway and car capacity projects while transit, and bike / walk MoveDC "priorities" are stretched out for decades. Both the STIP and DDOT's yearly staffing resources need to be redistributed to fund and implement the stated priorities of the MoveDC plan. Staffing levels in a particular department should not dictate what gets funding priority. If staffing for transit and active transportation are inadequate to achieve immediate and long-term transportation priorities, then the yearly budgets and capital budget need to change to reflect these priorities.
- Consider lifecycle costs and benefits in project discussions - Trails and Protected Bike Lanes especially need defined maintenance plans and dedicated funding in operating budgets for snow clearance, debris removal (in bike lanes) and barrier maintenance and lifecycle repaving

- Track the effects of DDOT projects - Successful DDOT projects, especially those that repurpose road spaces to walking, biking or transit, should help demonstrate the need and benefits for future projects. Folly NYC's lead to include economic measures, safety measures, and modeshare change.
- Update condition assessments to improve asset conditions - the current systematic or proactive conditions assessment is biased towards driving conditions, but pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure relies on resident 311 reports & complaints. Staff and resources should be rebalanced to proactively assess ped/bike/transit infrastructure conditions where reports are less common or where crashes are highest
- Incorporate Complete Streets principles - we encourage DDOT to officially update its Complete Streets Policy to comply with the requirements of multiple acts of the DC Council
- Update design and engineering guidelines - DDOT is trending towards effective standard designs for quick-build or interim protected bike lanes. However, DDOT should develop standard engineering drawings for high quality concrete curb and landscaping protected bike lanes so that developers may deliver improvements to the protected bike lane network by default. DDOT must also adopt standard drawings for protected intersections (e.g. MassDOT and Montgomery County)
- Modernize signals and technology to reduce congestion - As written, this strategy shows a clear bias for moving cars as quickly as possible. DDOT's signals should be upgraded, but in service of alternate safety and sustainability goals such as traffic calming, reinforcing safe speeds with "green waves" matched to the speed limit, "green waves for bicycles" to prioritize moving people on bikes in priority bicycling corridors, speeding up bus movement, and reinforcing pedestrian priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the plan. We look forward to reviewing the draft plan. Please contact Garrett Hennigan at 202-656-3078 or garrett.hennigan@waba.org with any questions.

Garrett Hennigan
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