



**Testimony by Jeremiah Lowery, Advocacy Director, Washington Area  
Bicyclist Association  
PR24-0326, the Director of the District Department of Transportation  
Everett Lott Confirmation Resolution of 2021**

October 26th, 2021

Good afternoon, Chairperson Cheh and members and staff of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, I am Jeremiah Lowery, the Advocacy Director at the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and our membership in DC and throughout the region. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Acting Director Everett Lott has attended WABA's ANC Vision Zero Caucus meeting, has met with our Executive Director, and overall has been forthcoming and responsive to community demands for safer transportation infrastructure in Washington, DC.

While we appreciate the Director's leadership on projects such as retooling traffic safety investigations and the eastern downtown protected bike lane, we should like to highlight some areas where we encourage the Director to step up and exhibit stronger leadership going forward if he is confirmed by the DC Council.

**Transportation Equity**

So far this year, ward 7 and 8 have more traffic fatalities than almost the rest of the wards combined.

That is completely unacceptable.

We are asking Director Lott to not only be a leader that pushes for equitable investments in safe infrastructure across DC but also leads DDOT to seek out new and innovative ways to engage, respond, and follow up with community requests for safe streets projects in all parts of DC, with an emphasis on communities that have consistently had the highest rates of traffic crashes and fatalities over the last few years, while historically receiving being the most underinvested.

While we must ensure there are funds to create safe infrastructure projects in underinvested communities, it must be done simultaneously alongside community leaders to ensure buy-in for projects.

## **DDOT Staffing**

Moving forward, the DDOT Director should work to ensure not having the appropriate staffing level is no longer a reason why safe streets projects cannot move forward.

While we understand that with every bold vision there requires enough staff to carry out that vision, the DDOT Director must work with the DC Council on a yearly basis to ensure the department has the staffing in place to help the District's vision zero causes while ensuring we are moving forward with the implementation of our bike and trail network.

Without exception, all divisions within DDOT must be aligned behind the District's vision zero and modeshare goals. Frustratingly, this is often not the case with DDOT's Infrastructure Project Management Division, which manages a massive budget and most of the long-term capital projects.

This division continually delivers projects that work against DC's Vision Zero Goals, by prioritizing moving cars quickly above pedestrian and bicycle safety. Brand new capital projects should not require immediate, substantial design changes to retrofit traffic calming, safe pedestrian crossings, and long-planned protected bicycle lanes. Yet this year, DDOT staff from other teams are planning last-minute safety fixes to the now-under construction Florida & 9th NW streetscape, the brand new 17th St. NE streetscape and the East Capitol St. Bridge. On Southern Ave at Wheeler Road, where speeding and injury crashes are constant, IPMD just broke ground on a project to widen the intersection to speed more cars through the area at the expense of pedestrian safety.

IPMD relies on engineering habits that too often put vulnerable road users at risk. The division's continually fail to offer meaningful opportunities for community members to understand projects, give feedback or receive useful and timely follow-up. Going forward, the Director must reform DDOT's IPMD division to embed Vision Zero, the safe systems approach, and safety for vulnerable road users front and center.

## **Vision Zero Bill Implementation**

Thanks to the leadership of Council member Cheh and members of this committee, the Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020 (Vision Zero Bill) will potentially have a dedicated funding source.

Therefore, when funds are in place, we will be looking forward to the Director owning the implementation of this act and leading the department on fully implementing vision zero in the near future.

Also, WABA pledges to assist and support the Director on a publicly transparent process to fully implement an act that will potentially save lives and make our transportation safer for all users.

### **Protected Bike Lane Network**

We applaud the Mayor and the Director for making a commitment to invest in 30 miles of protected bike lanes over the next 3 years. But we must make stronger investments to complete our bike network at a faster pace, because the current pace to which we are moving does not reflect the rise in need and popularity among residents for a safe, comfortable, connected and protected bike lane network to commute.

If DC is to complete its planned protected bike lane network, it is going to take vision, leadership, and commitment from the Director. An example of where leadership is currently needed is the implementation of Connecticut Avenue protected bike lane in Ward 3, also known as Concept C on DDOT's project page.

After four Ward 3 ANCs, dozens of community organizations, and businesses supported Concept C, they have let to hear that the Director has their back on the project. We strongly urge the Director to stand by the community on this project and lead the way on implementing this project, as well as all projects that will fully complete a connected and protected bike network in the District.

### **MoveDC**

Lastly, we look forward to the Director revealing a bold and visionary moveDC draft plan. A plan that specifically names (including timeline) the bike and trail projects needed to complete our bike and trail network in DC.

Develop a moveDC plan that specifically names (including timeline) the bike and trail projects needed to complete our bike and trail network in DC. At this moment, we are in desperate need of leadership that is serious about improving mobility in DC, improving it through the development of a moveDC plan that accounts for the rapid increase in the number of residents biking and using our trails.

In conclusion, if the Director leads the District towards a transformative vision that develops an equitable and safe multimodal transportation system for all users, WABA and a growing number of advocates and community residents will be there right alongside him to support his efforts for the District.

Thank you and we look forward to the work ahead to achieve our collective goals

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