



Kevin Harrison
Transit Delivery Division
District Department of Transportation
250 M Street, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

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Re: NOI# 22-08-TDD Minnesota Ave SE Bus Priority and Safety Improvements

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and our 6,500+ members in the Washington Region, I write with comments on the proposed Minnesota Ave SE Bus Priority and Safety Improvements Project. WABA envisions a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. This project is an opportunity to achieve that vision for a small piece of Minnesota Ave, and we thank you for the opportunity to weigh in.

WABA enthusiastically supports this project as it delivers many community-focussed multimodal access and safety in a single project. Improving bus speed and reliability on Minnesota Ave will allow the relatively high frequency bus service to shine, reducing trip times and establishing a more equitable transportation network east of the river, where transit trip times are significantly higher than trips by car. New bus bulb outs will allow bus drivers to easily align both doors with the platform, for easier, safer, and quicker boarding for passengers. Relocating some bus stops to the far side of intersections also helps reduce delays.

While many drivers may fixate on the changes to parking, the most significant change proposed for drivers will be a substantial reduction in crashes with other drivers thanks to all hours safety improvements. Since 2017, one driver and two pedestrians have died after traffic crashes in addition to hundreds of reported crashes that caused minor

and severe injuries to drivers. With high speeds, well-documented aggressive driving, and road geometry that permits it, drivers of this one mile stretch of road are at a significant risk of injury.

The proposed design will make this corridor far safer for everyone who uses it. As with dozens of similar corridor redesigns in DC, narrowing the road to a single lane in each direction will eliminate opportunities for speeding, dangerous lane changes, and “leap-frogging” in empty parking lanes. Curb bulb outs, new pedestrian refuge islands will shorten crossing distances, and further discourage speeding. And the changes at 34th and Ely Pl will take the first major steps to create a plaza here as proposed in the Far Southeast III Livability Study.

Protected bike lanes will create a safe, low-stress experience for people traveling by bike. They will link the Massachusetts Ave bike lane and proposed Branch Ave protected bike lanes to Ely Pl using the shortest and only continuous path between them giving Ward 7 neighbors south of Fort Dupont convenient biking connections to four schools, various recreation centers, and the future proposed connection to the Anacostia River Trail at E or D St. SE. With limited street space, extremely low utilization of on-street parking, and no other options for bicycle connectivity around major geographic boundaries like Fort Dupont, this is the best use of this public space.

As you complete the design, please address the following comments and concerns:

1. Realizing MoveDC’s bicycle priority network on Minnesota Ave - both the 2014 MoveDC Plan and the 2021 update designate Minnesota Ave as part of DC’s priority bicycle network and prescribe continuous protected bike lanes from Pennsylvania Ave to Ridge Road. While this goal may be outside the scope of this bus priority project, we are disappointed that DDOT has both the vision and opportunity for continuous protected bike lanes on Minnesota Ave, yet has decided to partially punt this opportunity into the future.

2. Add usable bike network connections to the north and south - only one existing bike lanes will connect to the Minnesota Ave lane, leaving a significant connectivity gap even when complete. If extensions will not be built in the near term, DDOT should implement high-quality, low-stress, and context-sensitive bike facilities at the north and south end to connect the new protected bike lanes to the places people want to go.
 - a. South to Pennsylvania Ave Bridge via Fairlawn Ave SE - contraflow lanes on M and bike lanes on Fairlawn Ave, combined with good wayfinding would help complete this connection over the river.
 - b. South to Pennsylvania Ave via 30th St.
 - c. Ely Pl SE bike improvements to schools and rec centers - the Far Southeast III Livability study recommended sharrow markings for Ely Place to form an east-west bike route from Ridge Rd to the future Anacostia River Trail connection. DDOT should prioritize creating this bicycle route soon, however lane markings are not sufficient to make Ely Pl a low-stress bicycle experience for the many families and children who would use it to bike to school, the park, or the ice rink.
 - d. Some neighborhood connections may provide an alternate bicycle route (eg. over to Fairlawn Ave SE), but these alternate routes are far less discoverable, leaving most people to simply continue on the main road.
3. Harden bike lane at Lyndale Pl SE - the horizontal lane shift around the pedestrian refuge island pushes drivers toward the unprotected bicycle lane, yet only careful drivers will check for people on bikes first or resist drifting into the bike lane as they maneuver around the island. A few low profile, mountable wedges placed in the buffer zone, parallel to the travel lane, just before the crosswalk could deter drifting into the bike lane without interfering with bus or bike movements.
4. Install Flex posts on top of or outside of the bike lane line - in similar narrow protected bike lane installations in DC, flex-posts were drawn on top of the bike lane line, but installed on the curb side of the line, which narrows the already narrow

bike lane, If a similar situation arises here, posts should be placed towards the street's centerline instead.

5. Add retro reflective strips to the outer edge of median islands - a common complaint about new pedestrian refuge islands is that they are not visible enough from a distance. In addition to the centerline flex-posts, consider using the retroreflective treatment used on the 4th St. NW and 15th St. NW protected bike lane precast curbs for the leading edge of the refuge islands.
6. Center the sharrow marking at mixing zones - plans show the shared lane markings placed against the curb, which invites drivers to safely pass bicyclists. Move the shared lane markings to the center of the lane.
7. Add centerline and left turn hardening to intersections without pedestrian refuges, especially at Randle Circle, Ely Pl to encourage slow turns and limit pedestrians exposure in crosswalks.
8. Curb extension at C St SE - plans show a bus bump out, but no matching curb extension for the crosswalk. Add a concrete curb extension here rather than paint and post.

For follow-up or questions, please contact me at garrett.hennigan@waba.org or 202-656-3078. Thank you for considering our comments.

Garrett Hennigan
Organizing Manager