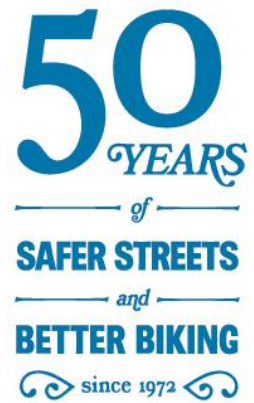




February 23, 2023

Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC, 20590



Re: 2023 Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant Program
Application for Wheeler Road, SE Safety Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I understand that the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has applied to the United States Department of Transportation for the 2023 Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant to advance the Wheeler Road, SE Safety Project in the District of Columbia. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association, on behalf of its 6,000 members in the Washington region, enthusiastically supports this project.

The Wheeler Road, SE Safety Project will reduce crashes, reduce speeding, and improve safety and access for all roadway users, in a community that experiences traffic violence at far greater rates than other neighborhoods. The project will improve upon DDOT's recent limited traffic calming efforts by extending a road diet, curb extensions, median refuge islands, and other traffic calming measures to the rest of the corridor. The project includes streetscape enhancements, sidewalk widening/shared use path, street lighting analysis including pedestrian level lighting, traffic signal upgrades, improving school pick-up and drop-off, bus priority evaluation, bus stop location and shelter evaluation, green infrastructure feasibility, drainage upgrades, and landscaping enhancements. This project aims to improve pedestrian, transit rider, and bicyclist safety along Wheeler Road, from Alabama Ave SE to Southern Ave SE.

Wheeler Road was identified as a Vision Zero High Injury Corridor based on the high rate of crashes resulting in death and serious injury. In recent years, it was the site of multiple severe and fatal crashes, including crashes that injured children walking to school. When DDOT launched its current

project on Wheeler Road, analysis confirmed speeding and aggressive driving concerns which community members have been raising for years. All speed survey locations along Wheeler Road found that nearly one-quarter (20-25%) of drivers exceeded the speed limit by at least 11 MPH. One speed survey location found almost one-half (47%) of drivers exceeded the speed limit by at least 11 MPH. We know that speeding is the most consistent predictor of severe crashes because it makes crashes harder to avoid and makes them more deadly when they occur.

DDOT has already installed some of the planned interventions along a small section of the corridor. At one-speed camera location, speeding citations dropped 50% in just a matter of months. These funds will allow DDOT to install similar traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements for the entire corridor, making it safer for the residents, including many children and seniors, who use it every day.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association empowers people to ride bikes, build connections, and transform places. With the support of more than 6,000 members in the Washington Region, we envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. We advocate for new and better bicycling infrastructure and policies, build community through events and outreach, and educate thousands of youth and adults to be more comfortable, confident bicyclists.

WABA believes that DDOT's application will help meet DC's Vision Zero goals while also bringing substantial benefits to a historically disadvantaged community. The project is in clear alignment with the Biden Administration's stated goals to improve the safety of our transportation networks.

WABA encourages the Department to approve DDOT's application for funding for the Wheeler Road, SE Safety Project.

Sincerely,

Garrett Hennigan
Organizing Manager
Washington Area Bicyclist Association