



**WABA**  
WASHINGTON AREA  
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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Major Projects Planning  
Planning and Sustainability Division  
District Department of Transportation  
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**Comments on bikeway design in the K Street NW Transitway and Protected Bike Lane Project**

Ms. Packett,

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, I am pleased to offer comments on the K Street NW Transitway project. We appreciate the invitation to participate in the design charrette and the opportunity to comment. Most importantly, we commend DDOT leadership and Mayor Bowser for recognizing the importance of integrating a high-quality, low-stress bicycle facility into this important downtown transit improvement project.

Having stated that appreciation, we do regret that the compressed design schedule is forcing such a substantive decision on the bikeway design without enough information to assess the consequences of that design. Without more detailed alternatives to compare, we are left to make assumptions about potential conflicts, about the effectiveness of mitigations, and about which mitigations are technically possible. Despite these concerns about the process, we still earnestly support the inclusion of the protected bike lane in the project.

Based on the information available, WABA supports the center-running protected bike lane alignment. This design offers a continuous, low-stress, protected bicycle route through one-mile of the most stressful bicycling conditions in downtown DC. The center-running option leaves 9 feet in each direction on most blocks to design a spacious bike lane and curbed area to protect and buffer users from traffic. At most intersections, this design leaves ample space to design intuitive queuing areas for turns that minimize pedestrian conflicts. And it eliminates right turn conflicts at intersections, driveway conflicts at more than 13 garages and alleys, and conflicts with deliveries and passenger pick-up/drop-off — all of which are present in the curbside design.

Both alignments have strengths and pressing concerns. In principle, we prefer the traditional curbside protected bike lanes design because the intersections are more intuitive, turns less confusing, and bike lane easily accessible. However, the right turn, driveway, and loading conflicts will be severe in this corridor. And while those conflicts may be mitigated with

protected intersections, raised crosswalks, dedicated bicycle, and right turn signaling, and careful design, those mitigations will require significant additional space and complex design alterations at every block to produce a safe result. With so many competing needs for road space including pedestrian access, stormwater management, traffic flow, transit, signals, utilities, landscaping and cost, DDOT planners will face significant pressure to compromise or eliminate needed bikeway safety mitigations at many blocks. At this point, we have no assurances that mitigations like protected intersections are even possible within the aggressive timeline and scope of this project. Therefore, we must support the center-running alignment.

Since the center-running alignment is not without issue, we urge DDOT to address the following concerns as the design progresses;

- Substantial bike lane barriers needed at the park squares - where K Street narrows at park squares, people in the bike lane will be uncomfortably and dangerously close to traffic without an option for a less stressful route. It is imperative that the design safely separate bike lane users from both buses and automobile traffic with a permanent, raised, and formidable barrier fixed into the roadway such as jersey barriers or anchored metal bollards. Every effort should be taken to maintain a wide bike lane and wide buffer area in these narrow blocks.
- Transitions to intersecting bikeways - protected bike lanes are planned or already in place at 20th, 17th, 15th and both 12th and 11th have conventional bike lanes. DDOT should design these to be intuitive and possible for a high volume of bicyclists, ideally in a single traffic signal phase. Instructing bicyclists to simply use the crosswalk and ped signal is not sufficient.
- Transition at east and west end - a seamless transition should be designed in and out of the center protected bike lane at each end of the facility.
- Lane maintenance - clearing snow, debris, and leaves may be more challenging with this center-running design. DDOT should ensure that the Downtown BID or Department of Public Works has sufficient equipment and a plan to clear the lane of snow, leaves, and debris by the time construction finishes.

If after considering all of the public input, the curb-running design is chosen, WABA has additional feedback and comments on intersection design and how to integrate protected intersection guidance and best practices from NACTO, Montgomery County, and Massachusetts.

Thank you for considering our comments. Please reach out to me at [garrett.hennigan@waba.org](mailto:garrett.hennigan@waba.org) or 202-51-0524 x210 with any questions.

Best regards,

Garrett Hennigan  
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