



Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on Public Works and Operations

2025 Performance Oversight Hearing on the Department of Public Works

February 11, 2025

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), on behalf of its 5,000 members and nearly 25,000 regional advocacy supporters, appreciates the opportunity to testify on this occasion.

We will also presume to speak for the 18,000 DC residents who bike to work on a daily basis according to [goDCgo](#)¹, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT)'s sustainable transportation initiative – that figure represents 5% of commuters, according to goDCgo – and for the shared-mobility users who logged 6,114,324 Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) rides in 2024, a 36.9% increase from 2023. Plus, according to [Ride Report](#)², ridership of all permitted micromobility providers (excluding Capital Bikeshare) totaled 8,475,300 trips in 2024. Of course, the District is home to many, many thousands of other bicyclists.

The District's bicyclists and micromobility users rely on and value the city's bike-lane and trail network. We deserve safe, well maintained infrastructure, which – related to Department of Public Works responsibilities – means bike lanes clear of leaves, debris, illegally stopped or parked vehicles, and snow and ice. Bike-lane obstructions are hazardous and often dangerously force riders into motor-vehicle traffic lanes and onto the sidewalk.

Reliably Clearing Snow and Ice from Bike Lanes

Chair Nadeau and committee members, please pursue improved snow and ice clearing performance with the Department of Public Works in collaboration with the District Department of Transportation.

We quote a message sent by a member to WABA on January 18:

“DC and the [National Park Service] have made minimal effort to ensure that all the bike lanes are rideable after the recent snow storm. Today, the bike lanes on 11th Street have ice in them. The bike track on 15th Street has a 3ft tall mound of snow that was left by a snow plow. The bike track at Hains Point has ice and snow on the west-side. The bike lanes on Q, R, and T Street have ice patches. If we are going to have bike lanes and bike tracks then [the District] must purchase and deploy the necessary equipment to ensure that riders can use this infrastructure each and every day of the year.”

Another WABA member wrote us on January 30:

¹ <https://godcgo.com/bike/>

² <https://public.ridereport.com/dc?time=2024-Q1&x=-76.9985535&y=38.9404124&z=9.82>

“First, and top of mind at the moment, it has been approaching three full weeks since the primary snowfall of the winter and there are still bike lanes with ice built up in them. This snowfall has been a massive failure of the responsible agencies and really disheartening as both a pedestrian and a cyclist.”

During our recent, long-lasting wintry weather, DPW and DDOT failed to adequately ensure that relied-on networks for active transportation – especially bike lanes and intersection crossings – were safe enough for most users. For many community members, it wasn’t clear which agency was responsible and there weren’t direct ways to report maintenance needs in bike lanes. Even when DDOT or DPW had cleared part of a route, there was a lack of collaboration between snow-clearing teams which resulted in mounds of remaining snow and ice obstructing intersection crossings, making routes uncomfortable, or even unpassable.

Stepped up Seasonal Leaf Clearing from Bike Lanes

We know that DPW has stepped up bike-lane leaf and debris clearing. DPW’s responded to committee questions, stating that the department deploys eight bike lane sweepers and tackles a ward’s lanes each week in rotation and also responds to bike-lane cleaning requests. However there is a need for us to reiterate two requests WABA made at last year’s DPW performance-oversight hearing. Here’s what another, a third, WABA member wrote us on November 12:

“I rely on the New Mexico Ave NW cycle track to get to work. Right now it is hazardous. There are so many piles of leaves that it seems implausible that nearby homeowners are not dumping the leaves from their yards into it. What is the correct order of operations to get to the correct screen on 311 to report this issue, for this and other cycle tracks in the area? When I report bike lane [issues], the only options are for wheel stops, flex posts, and paint. This is none of those things.”

This year, we again ask that DPW:

1. Take a proactive approach during leaf season and winter weather and plan for multiple passes. Leaves can make bike lanes hazardous by hiding large debris and creating traction issues when wet. DPW leaf crews do a thorough job, but a more timely response is needed to clear bike lanes and avoid unsafe conditions.
2. Create a dedicated 311 service request for bike lane sweeping, snow and ice clearing, and for trail maintenance. If a resident does take the time to call 311 or go online to file a request, then that effort should be rewarded with action, not a closed ticket because they could not find an appropriate service category.

Enforcement Addressing Vehicles Stopped or Parked in Bike Lanes

The person who wrote WABA about uncleared snow three weeks after a snowfall also wrote,

“I live along the new Columbia Road lanes. There is a proliferation of mopeds/motorcycles/food delivery drives using the bike lanes as a means of dodging in and out of traffic. It’s only a matter

of time before one of these people kills a cyclist (if it hasn't happened already). Also regarding these lanes, it is a common occurrence to find a car that has somehow found its way into the bike lane. Greater enforcement I really think is the key."

We agree. However we note that the number of "STOP/STAND BIKE LANE" citations issued by DPW has diminished from 2,105 in FY2022 to 1,814 in FY2023 and 1,684 in FY2024, even while the number of bike-lanes miles has (thankfully!) increased. Please redouble enforcing the District's prohibition on stopping, standing, and parking in a bike lane.

DPW's hearing response notes that high-dollar scofflaws are highly correlated with risky driving and are aiming specific enforcement efforts towards them. We celebrate the pilot to target high-dollar scofflaws using data from license plate readers. From April to December 31, 2024, DPW reports that they impounded 424 high-dollar scofflaws and recouped \$588,983 from towed vehicles. We encourage DPW to continue focusing on the most dangerous drivers.

In Conclusion

We have identified issues clearing snow and ice from bike lanes, the need for stepped-up seasonal leaf clearing from bike lanes as well as service-request system improvement, and concerns about insufficient enforcement addressing vehicles stopped, standing, and parked in a bike lane. We ask the committee, the council, and the Department of Public Works, in cooperation with other city agencies, to energetically address these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

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