



Council of the District of Columbia, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

2025 Performance Oversight Hearing, Metropolitan Police Department

March 11, 2025

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) envisions a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. WABA has 5,000 members and nearly 25,000 regional advocacy supporters, and we appreciate the opportunity to testify on their behalf.

Traffic violence – deaths, serious and minor injuries, and perceived lack of safety that diminishes our mobility, whether walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, or traveling by private vehicle – is a major public safety concern. Washington, DC experienced 52 traffic deaths in 2024, the same number as in 2023, itself 16-year high. Mayor Bowser pledged in 2015, “We will do everything in our power to eliminate transportation fatalities and serious injuries, because no loss of life is acceptable.” We have not succeeded.

The District’s efforts to end traffic violence are coordinated under the Vision Zero DC multi-departmental program. Management resides in the Office of the City Administrator, and the Metropolitan Police Department is part of this effort, of course responsible for enforcement of the traffic laws and associated data reporting.

We note the work of the MPD’s Traffic Safety and Specialized Enforcement Section (TSSES) and the addition of four new staff in 2024. We also note the District’s extensive use of speed, red-light, and stop-sign enforcement cameras and the attorney general’s recent suits against egregious reckless driving offenders. We especially appreciate the creation and improvement of protected bike lanes and intersection safety and similar measures although we are disappointed in politically charged decisions that have sacrificed safety measures due to political pressure. Finally, we recognize additional steps such as the recently announced safety-corridor enforcement effort, targeting stretches of New York Avenue NE and South Capitol Street.

Yet past steps have not brought us to zero traffic deaths, and it is unlikely that recently implemented steps will bring us to zero.

We need continued focus, investment, and innovation to end traffic violence in the District. MPD plays a critical role, every day and as part of Vision Zero DC. DC Vision Zero Office Director Charles Willson has indicated that the office will publish a new strategic plan later this year. We specifically ask that MPD solicit public input and comment on their part of this effort. We suggest that additional resources be allocated to the MPD crash-investigation team and that crash-data analyses incorporate EMS and trauma-center injury data to complement MPD collected data.

We urge that the Council and the MPD redouble Vision Zero DC efforts. They are literally a matter of life and death.

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

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