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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Budget Hearing on the
Department of Energy and Environment
April 11, 2019**

Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase), and I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its April 8, 2019 meeting by a vote of 7 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

The Mayor's proposed FY 2020 capital budget for the Department of Transportation (DDOT) (<http://bit.ly/2Jzpwfq>) includes increased funding for important improvements to the District's transportation system — Capital Bikeshare expansion (\$7.4 million more than FY 2019), local streets in Ward 3 (\$6.6 million more) and Ward 4 (\$6.6 million more), safety projects related to Vision Zero (\$31.0 million more), sidewalks (\$15.0 million more), stormwater and flood mitigation (\$17.0 million more), streetlight management (12.7 million more), and Urban Forestry (\$11.9 million more). As we testified at DDOT's performance oversight hearing (<http://bit.ly/2GnJp6V>),

our transportation infrastructure is badly deteriorated across the District. Streets, sidewalks, and alleys all need urgent repairs, but DDOT does not have the resources to fix everything as quickly as we — or other ANCs — would like. DDOT necessarily has to prioritize where it will spend scarce repair dollars.

We appreciate the Mayor’s commitment to long-overdue investments in crucial safety and quality-of-life measures that can enhance our neighborhoods.

We noted in our performance oversight testimony, however, that ANCs and the community need “better communications about the criteria for those decisions and where and when particular projects are in DDOT’s queue.” It is difficult to know whether the budgeted funds will be even marginally sufficient without greater specificity about how and when DDOT will spend the appropriated money. The Council should require DDOT to specify its detailed plans in each budget category to ensure that these resources will address the most urgent concerns.

For instance, we applaud the substantial increase in funds to make Vision Zero a reality. Instead of making progress toward eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries, the District has slipped backwards. Additional focused funding can help reverse this trend. It has been disheartening, however, that DDOT has for years done nothing to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety around Chevy Chase Circle, a key gateway to the District. DDOT assured our Commission in June 2018, that it had developed a comprehensive safety plan with adjacent jurisdictions and would conduct a pilot study in the Fall of 2018. Nothing further has happened, and the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic in and

around Chevy Chase Circle continues to be a major concern. It should be designated as a priority going forward.

Similarly, although the proposed budget includes increased funding for sidewalks, we are still awaiting action on the promised sidewalks for Chestnut Street. We were told in February 2018, that money had been earmarked for this project, that the design would be completed in a year, and that construction would begin in the Spring of 2019. Still no work has been contracted and DDOT can provide no schedule for when this important safety feature will be built. Appropriating funds for sidewalks will be pointless if there is no commitment to get essential, high-priority work done.

Additional proposed funding for streets in Wards 3 and 4 is certainly welcome because dozens of streets in our ANC need urgent resurfacing or substantial repairs. “Potholepalozza” is purely a stopgap measure to address the most egregious problems, but it cannot fill the critical need for major rehabilitation of many roads. DDOT should provide transparent criteria for deciding which streets will be repaired and a schedule for when work will be done in each ANC. Even with the proposed increases, there are not enough funds to address the widespread need, so the Council should insist that DDOT performs reasonable triage to address the worst problems first.

Additional funds allocated for street light management and for stormwater and flood mitigation need to be spent on projects that have been thoroughly vetted with the affected communities. The Mayor’s Streetlight Advisory Panel was

convened to provide neighborhood and community input for DDOT's conversion of streetlights to LEDs, and rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, DDOT should tailor new streetlights to residents' needs and to reduce light pollution. Similarly, stormwater and flood mitigation projects should be based on science, engineering, and — importantly — consultation with residents who will be affected by those projects.

ANC 3/4G supports the proposed increases in DDOT capital funding. We urge the Council, however, to insist that DDOT provide transparent, timely plans for how the money will be spent to ensure that DDOT is addressing high-priority concerns in our community.