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**ANC 3/4G Supplemental Testimony Before the  
Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Performance Oversight Hearing on the  
Department of Transportation  
February 10, 2020**

Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase). This testimony supplements the testimony submitted to the Committee on January 27, 2020 (available at <http://bit.ly/2SsBWH8>) and was made necessary by a presentation by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) at the Commission's January 27, 2020 meeting on the long-delayed plans for installation of sidewalks on Chestnut Street, NW from Oregon Avenue, NW to Western Avenue, NW.

DDOT should install a sidewalk on the north side of Chestnut Street, NW as quickly as possible for three reasons: (1) Chestnut Street, NW is on the E6 bus route;<sup>1</sup> (2)

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<sup>1</sup> The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has proposed to eliminate the E6 bus route and to extend the M4 route to cover Chestnut Street, NW. Thus, even if WMATA implements this plan, there will continue to be a bus route on Chestnut Street, NW.

Chestnut Street, NW connects Oregon Avenue, NW to Western Avenue, NW and is a common shortcut; (3) Chestnut Street, NW is also a frequently used detour during construction projects on Oregon Avenue, NW, exacerbating traffic and speeding through the end of 2021.

Residents' and the ANC's efforts to get sidewalks on Chestnut Street go back to at least 2009. On several occasions, DDOT assured residents that sidewalk installation was imminent, only to disappoint them again and again. The most recent occasion began with a May 2017 public meeting when DDOT presented four design alternatives, including one that was to install no sidewalk. After resident feedback, on August 21, 2017, Wayne Wilson, a civil engineer at DDOT, advised residents that

DDOT has selected to construct Alternative 1 based on public comments and our own internal review process. A sidewalk will be constructed on the north side of the street using part of the existing roadway. DDOT is currently configuring its new contracting procedures and once that is complete, the consultant selection process for the design of the project will begin. A projected schedule will be sent out once the new contracting system is implemented for hiring consultants. The design and implementation will be closely coordinated with the DC Water Oregon Avenue Sewer project as well as DDOT's Oregon Avenue project because both projects use Chestnut Street as a detour until mid-2020.

At the October 23, 2017 ANC meeting, DDOT's program manager, Paul Hoffman, stated that he expected to begin selecting a contractor for the project by the end of 2017, and design work for the project would be completed by the end of 2018. In November 2017, the Commission unanimously passed a resolution supporting the prompt installation of sidewalks on the north side of Chestnut Street because (1) it would improve

pedestrian safety; (2) it would comply with District law requiring expansion of sidewalks; and (3) it was the alternative most broadly favored by residents and seemed like a fair compromise.

On April 30, 2018, Director Jeff Marootian spoke with residents on Chestnut Street about sidewalks but did not publicly commit to a timetable for installation. On June 28, 2018, he advised that DDOT was in the process of selecting a design contractor, and at the March 26, 2019 ANC meeting, Zahra Dorriz from DDOT stated that the sidewalks for Chestnut Street were being designed.

In June 2019, Director Marootian wrote in an email to residents that DDOT would construct sidewalks on Chestnut Street in 2020, after the completion of Phase 1 of the Oregon Avenue Reconstruction Project, and on September 16, 2019, he reaffirmed that DDOT would begin construction of the project once Phase 1 of the Oregon Avenue Reconstruction Project was complete. On December 11, 2019, DDOT representatives stated at a public meeting that Phase 1 of the Oregon Avenue Reconstruction Project would be complete in July 2020.

At the ANC's January 27, 2020, Samer Alhawamdeh, project manager at DDOT, and Ellen Jones, Chief Project Delivery Officer at DDOT, provided the most recent update on the status of the sidewalk project. Mr. Alhawamdeh stated that surveying for the project was expected to finish by early February. He explained that the project would then go through three design phases ending in late August 2020. Once the project is designed, bidding process would begin, which would typically take between two and three

months. After that, the sidewalks would be constructed over six to nine months. After factoring in time for potential delays, Mr. Alhawamdeh predicted that sidewalks would not be installed until the spring of 2022.

This latest briefing is not consistent with representations DDOT has made over the past few years. In August 2017, DDOT selected a design concept alternative that called for sidewalks on the north side of Chestnut Street NW. DDOT represented that design work had begun, but since that time, DDOT has yet to complete even a 30% design for the project. Over the past three years, residents and the ANC have been repeatedly told that the design would be complete in 2018 and that the project would be constructed in 2020. Now, DDOT representatives estimate that the project will not be completed until the spring of 2022.

Residents are understandably frustrated by what appear to be never-ending delays and postponements. This is an urgent safety issue, made more acute by the increased traffic on Chestnut Street as a detour from Oregon Avenue construction closures. We urge the Committee to hold DDOT to its overdue promises and to insist that DDOT install the Chestnut Street sidewalks on a high priority schedule.