



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
on the Confirmation of Everett Lott as
Director of the Department of Transportation (PR24-0326)
October 26, 2021**

Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, I am Lisa R. Gore, Vice-Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase). Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the Committee's hearing on the confirmation of Everett Lott to be Director of the Department of Transportation (DDOT). I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its October 25, 2021 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

The Commission does not oppose Mr. Lott's confirmation but seeks assurance from him prior to his confirmation that he understands that he will be assuming , responsibility for an agency with chronic management issues and that he has specific

plans that he can articulate on how he intends to make DDOT more responsive to the needs of the City. Our Commission's testimony over several years has described DDOT's inadequate performance and the need for significant improvements.¹ While some issues have been addressed, and DDOT has made progress in some areas, Mr. Lott faces major challenges. We urge the Council to insist that the Mayor, the Director, and DDOT staff improve the Department's performance, community engagement, and transparency.

Several examples illustrate our Commission's and our constituents' frustration. First, DDOT failed to implement incremental traffic safety controls at the hazardous intersection of Military Road, NW and Chevy Chase Parkway, NW. Over many years, our Commission has repeatedly requested specific steps that could alert drivers to the hazards at this intersection, and we had even agreed with DDOT's engineers last July on several modest improvements to signage and roadway markings that should reduce accidents. We also agreed that these initial enhancements would be evaluated to determine whether they have been effective, and more extensive changes — including making one block of Chevy Chase Parkway one way — would be implemented, if necessary. Unfortunately, DDOT has not yet made the agreed upon changes and accidents continue to occur.

This is indicative of a larger concern with DDOT's responsiveness to requests for traffic safety enhancements. Mr. Lott recently announced a “new administrative processes to fast-track Vision Zero safety improvements to District roadways and sidewalks.” He

¹ See ANC 3/4G's Testimony at the Oversight Hearings on [February 26, 2021](#), [January 27, 2020](#), [February 10, 2020](#), and [February 25, 2019](#) and the Budget Hearing on [April 11, 2019](#), and at a Vision Zero Roundtable Hearing on [May 13, 2021](#).

said that “by eliminating and streamlining bureaucratic processes, DDOT will be able to move faster to improve the safety of our roadways.” The Mayor said that these new procedures should “accelerate roadway safety improvement projects.” She said that “To expedite some of these processes, the community engagement process will be truncated. I don’t do that lightly. But we have professional traffic engineers to make recommendations and take implementation steps that will make our community safer.” Changes obviously are necessary if DDOT expect to implement the types of meaningful, improvements the community has long supported. We oppose, however, efforts to “streamline” and “truncate” community engagement processes that reduce legitimate and necessary input from those community members and their ANC representatives who are most familiar with the conditions in the neighborhood.

Second, DDOT has a long history of inadequate community engagement, best illustrated by its continuing failure to meet and communicate with the residents on Chestnut Street about installation of sidewalks. For almost a decade, DDOT kept the community in the dark about plans for much-needed sidewalks. Even as the actual work began, DDOT did not keep residents abreast of its plans and provide information about traffic calming measures that were being installed simultaneously with the sidewalks. DDOT needs to do a better job communicating with its customers — the affected residents — so that they know what to expect and have an opportunity to be heard.

Third, DDOT’s response to 311 requests is completely broken. 311 request are often categorized as “completed” when no work has been undertaken. (Note: in many

such cases, 311 generates an email asking, “how did we do” when the answer is “you did nothing.” Further, DDOT’s response appears to be completely haphazard. Some requests are addressed quickly while allowing other safety hazards to persist for years. There is no discernable explanation for this.

Our Commission, like several others, recently identified a large number of urgent sidewalk repairs, many of which if not addressed were likely to — and did, in fact — cause serious accidents from falls. Some of those requests were addressed within weeks, but others that had been the subject of repeated requests were not addressed at all. In other instances, DDOT closed the 311 request even though the sidewalk was not repaired. We saw no evidence of a systematic, organized plan to fix all of our sidewalks, particularly those that posed the greatest danger to pedestrians. DDOT needs a rational, comprehensive way to identify and address the most urgent 311 requests and to provide feedback to commissioners and residents.

The Commission recommends the following suggestions as a way for DDOT to involve the community in the formulation of its new community engagement policy prior to implementation:

1. Forming an ad-hoc advisory committee consisting of diverse community members to work with DDOT on developing the new community engagement policy recommendations. This effort would complement DDOT’s recent agreement to partner with the ANC Vision Zero Caucus to identify opportunities to improve data sharing

related to Traffic Safety Investigations, including getting input on their recently designed Traffic Safety Investigation Dashboard.

2. Providing the general public with a 60-day comment period on the final community engagement policy. In essence, DDOT is undergoing a rule making process in that the agency is substantially changing internal procedures in the way it assesses traffic safety improvements and infrastructure. It is not uncommon for agencies to allow a public comment period as it affords residents with an opportunity to shape agency rules, identify potential policy gaps, and provide alternative recommendations that agencies may not have considered.

Commissioners and residents have more interactions with DDOT than any other District agency. We all depend on our roads, sidewalks, and alleys to get around. We expect our roadways and sidewalks to be safe and that traffic will be controlled to prevent accidents. We rely on DDOT to inform us when it plans changes to our transportation infrastructure, and we need to know that DDOT will listen to our concerns. DDOT has not met those basic requirements in the past, and we recognize that the Director cannot reform this large bureaucracy overnight. We do expect, however, that Director Lott, if confirmed, will make the changes necessary to improve DDOT's performance, responsiveness, and transparency.

Thank you.