



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

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Public Hearing on
B24-565 Safe Routes to School Expansion
Regulation Amendment Act of 2021 and
B24-566 Walk Without Worry Amendment Act of 2021
March 14, 2022**

Chairwoman Cheh and members of the Committee and staff, I am Connie K. N. Chang, ANC 3/4G Commissioner for Chevy Chase, DC. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding two important bills related to student and pedestrian traffic safety. I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its properly noticed March 14, 2022 public meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

In 2015, Mayor Bowser committed the District to achieving a Vision Zero Pledge to eliminate transportation fatalities and serious injuries by 2024 through the implementation of strategies related to data, education, engineering, and enforcement.¹

¹ See: <https://ddot.dc.gov/page/vision-zero-initiative>, accessed on March 14, 2022.

It is a great disappointment that the Mayor’s Vision Zero goal of zero traffic fatalities by 2024 has a vanishingly small chance of success as road deaths continue to pile up, including several instances where drivers hit and killed children in crosswalks and injured young students on their way to and from school.² Too often, efforts to slow traffic are met with community resistance to traffic calming on their particular blocks. It is our view that the safety of our community must take precedence over the desires of any individual block whenever DDOT determines that traffic calming measures are necessary in the best interests of community.

Traffic violence hit closer to home—a few streets from where I live—when an elderly driver tragically lost control of his vehicle on upper Connecticut Avenue Northwest and barreled into diners enjoying lunch on the patio of a beloved restaurant on a beautiful sunny day last Friday. This incident in my ANC and the dozens of lives lost over the past year across the District add urgency to the call for traffic safety and the end to traffic violence. As we testified last year³, “we need to make our streets safe for the most vulnerable — e.g., children traveling to and from school, seniors and those with disabilities who may move more slowly and are less able to avoid a collision, and bicyclists and pedestrians who too often must share roadways with cars and trucks without adequate protection for safe travel.”

Traffic engineering and enforcement measures can help reduce vehicular speed, alter driver behavior, and design roads and sidewalks to protect pedestrians and cyclists from distracted and reckless drivers who appear to have grown in numbers since the pandemic began. In response to the trend of increasing traffic-related deaths and serious injuries, Councilmember Lewis-George and Councilmember Nadeau have each introduced legislation that will significantly improve traffic safety across the District, especially for students and pedestrians.

² See: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/allison-hart-bicycle-road-safety/2021/09/18/2253d8a4-1820-11ec-a5e5-ceedb895922f_story.html and <https://dcist.com/story/21/10/06/dc-driver-car-strikes-two-children-vision-zero-walk-to-school/>, both accessed on March 14, 2022.

³ ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the Committee on Transportation and the Environment Roundtable on The Surge in Traffic Crashes, Fatalities, and Injuries in the District and the Urgent Need to Fully Fund the Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Amendment Act May 13, 2021 found here: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Testimony-re-Vison-Zero-5-13-21-approved-5-10-21.pdf>.

The Safe Routes to School Expansion Regulation Act ([Bill 24-0565](#)) (“Safe Routes to School Act”), introduced by Councilmember Janeese Lewis George with twelve co-sponsors, would enhance traffic safety around public schools. The Act would require a traffic signal or all-way stop at every local intersection within a quarter mile of a school. It also mandates the installation of raised crosswalks, curb extensions, crosswalks with pylons, flashing pedestrian signals, and speed humps in the vicinity of schools. Among other things, the Act would expand school zones, reduce the speed limit in school zones to seven days per week, and require automated traffic enforcement within each school zone.

The Walk Without Worry Act Amendment Act of 2021 ([Bill 24-0566](#)) (“Walk Without Worry Act”), introduced by Councilmember Brianne Nadeau and twelve co-sponsors, would develop design and engineering standards for continuous sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and raised intersections, specify circumstances requiring the installation of traffic calming measures, and require DDOT to incorporate each proposed change in all new paving or roadway resurfacing projects, as part of DDOT’s annual paving plan. The Walk Without Worry Act would target intersections with substantial pedestrian activity, as well as intersections adjacent to school facilities, Metrorail station entrances, key civic locations, midblock crosswalks, and crosswalks not controlled by a traffic signal, stop sign, or pedestrian beacon.

Our Commission offers our strong support for both the Safe Routes to School (Bill 24-565) and Walk Without Worry (Bill 24-566) Amendment Acts. We do wish to acknowledge that standardizing traffic safety measures is important as long as it allows for sufficient flexibility for exceptions to be considered. As one example, traveling by car may offer the safest mode of transportation (i.e., personal safety in high crime areas) in some school zones in the District, as Shannon T. Hodge, Founding Executive Director, DC Charter School Alliance, testified at the hearing on March 14, 2022. Banning parking within a school’s designated pick-up or drop-off zone, as Safe Routes to School Act currently requires, may negatively impact families in certain school zones and for others it may create undue hardship for working families.

We join with ANC 3E⁴ in recommending that both Acts consider adding leading pedestrian intervals (“LPIs”),⁵ which are a traffic calming measure that give pedestrians a 3 to 7 second head start when entering an intersection with a corresponding green signal in the same direction of travel, to all signalized crosswalks within one quarter mile of a public school or public charter school. LPIs enhance the visibility of pedestrians in the intersection and reinforce their right-of-way over vehicles that are turning into that intersection. LPIs have been shown to reduce pedestrian-vehicle collisions by 60% at treated intersections,⁶ and are therefore a desirable traffic calming measure in school zones and other intersections like Legation Street and Connecticut Avenue, NW, where conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles are high.

We join with ANC 4B in recommending that school zone safety and signage audits be carried out on an annual basis, and not only once to enable implementation of new safety features. Annual school zone safety and signage audits should take place “prior to the start of the school year with publication of the results [made publicly available] prior to the start of school, including certification by the District Department of Transportation that the required traffic calming mechanisms are in a state of good repair.”⁷ This Commission would add that annual audits should include a recommendation by Commissioner Jamila White (ANC 8A-05) provided in her public testimony at the hearing on March 14, 2022 for DDOT to examine, document, and make publicly available the routes that students take to get to and from school whether walking, biking, or driving (or being driven). The bottom line is that too many of our students in the District face unnecessary dangers that should be recognized and mitigated.

⁴ See ANC 3E’s resolution here: <http://anc6e.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ANC-6E-Resolution-2022-02-Item-12-Support-for-WWW-and-SRSE.pdf>, accessed on March 14, 2022.

⁵ For information on leading pedestrian intervals, see: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/lead_ped_int.cfm, accessed on March 14, 2022.

⁶ National Association of Transportation City Engineers (NACTO), “Leading Pedestrian Intervals”. Available: <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersection-design-elements/trafficsignals/leading-pedestrian-interval/>, accessed on March 14, 2022.

⁷ See page 3 of ANC 4B’s resolution, RESOLUTION #4B-22-0101 Supporting and Providing Feedback on the Walk Without Worry Amendment Act of 2021 and the Safe Routes to School Expansion Regulation Amendment Act of 2021 Adopted January 24, 2022, here: <https://anc4b.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/safe-streets-legislation-resolution-for-website.pdf>, accessed March 14, 2022.

The Commission would like to conclude our testimony by urging the Council to apply greater pressure on the Mayor to negotiate ticket reciprocity with Virginia and Maryland in order to hold their drivers, who make up a large portion of camera tickets, accountable for tickets received for speeding and running through red lights in the District.⁸ Until these penalties have teeth, redesigning our streets and roadways alone will not provide an adequate solution for reaching the Mayor's Vision Zero goal.

Thank you.

⁸ See <https://dcist.com/story/22/01/07/2021-deadliest-year-dc-roads/>, accessed March 14, 2022.