

D.C. Pedestrian Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
Remote Public Meeting

Attendees: J.I. Swiderski, Geoffrey Hatchard, Cheryle Adams, Dalton Howard, Ameen Beale, Paul Harrison, Joe Bishop-Henchman, Ameen Beale and Heather Foote. Agency reps: George Branyan (DDOT) and Rita Abou Samra (OP). Invited Guests: Charlie Willson (DMOI) and Emily Ruskin (Mayor's Office of Racial Equity). PAC staff: Uma Gupta. Member of the Public: Chris [no last name recorded].

Introductions: Gupta convened the remote meeting at 6:39 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

Mayor's Task Force on Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) Safety and Equity. Charlie Willson (Acting Director, Vision Zero, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure) and Emily Ruskin (Policy and Data Analyst, Office of Racial Equality, Office of the City Administrator) co-chair the Task Force, which was created by the Mayor in March 2023 and will sunset at the end of 2024. Willson described its charge is to research and make recommendations on ways the District could improve the use of ATE as a safety tool and minimize disparate impacts of financial penalties on drivers/vehicle owners. This includes researching ATE measures, moving violations, policies and procedures, including the fine and fee schedules and possible pilot programs, as well as driver education and behavior change. Recordings and slides of the five public meetings to date are posted at <https://dmoi.dc.gov/atetaskforce>.

An interim report was sent to the City Administrator on September 30th and is currently under review; a final report with findings from the pilot and recommendations is to be submitted on the same date in 2024. With the Task Force sunsetting 60 days after that. The ATE program includes cameras for speeding, red lights, stop signs and soon other traffic regulations. The last two fiscal years have seen landmark investments in capital projects along the high injury network. The bus priority project includes 51 corridors covering 81 miles. An example is the bus priority project along Minnesota Avenue where there was high-end speeding near an elementary school and the project resulted in traffic calming and almost eliminated the high-end speeding. The planned expansion in the number of cameras was one prompt for the creation of the Task Force; the District already has more camera coverage per mile than most North American cities. The most notable new type of camera will be enforcing the bus lanes. There are now 90-100 cameras and that number will be doubled or tripled in the next year or two. In DC, safety cameras really do work as a safety intervention. A 2021 study of 2019 data on 29 cameras showed that cameras reduced injury crashes by 30%, from the day the cameras were placed to a year later. Any enforcement regime is best measured by how many it deters from violating in the first place. Cameras cite less than 1% of passing drivers, and citations drop

by one-third in the first twelve months. Some 70% of vehicles that received citations received only one. ATE cameras are not equitable in the sense that fines affect you depending on your income. We recommended some pilots to try to get at that equity element. The research is being conducted through three subcommittees: pilot projects proposals; ticket enforcement and compliance; and driver education and behavior change

Ruskin, who has served as co-chair since the Task Force inception, reported on the Driver Education and Behavior Change Subcommittee. The Office of Racial Equity was called in as a technical advisor to ensure consideration of historical roots in what's being seen and to advise on complements to the ATE program, such as driver behavioral interventions such as the Lab@DC's on-going high risk driver pilot. The scaling up of the ATE program is an opportunity to think through the possible impacts of that expansion. The intent and goal is to change driver behavior but ensure there aren't other consequences. The Subcommittee reaffirms the effectiveness of ATE as a technology that improves roadway safety by modifying driver behavior. It is looking at the intersection of the technology and racial equity, and addressing successful driver messaging and education campaign strategy. Ruskin spoke to historical harm in roadway design in the District and underfunding of public works that led to roadway inequities. Some policies were by design and explicit, as in redlining and racial segregation. The disproportionate number of crashes happen in Ward 7 and 8, partially a result of inequitable roadway design.

With that foundation laid, the subcommittee found the ATE program to be unequivocally effective, even with these structural inequities. Ultimately, roadway investment is the goal. Capital projects take considerable time, money and public conversation. In the interim time needed to roll out these capital projects, ATE reduces speeding, reducing crashes and harm in the short and medium term.

The District already does many of the recommended complements to ATE: reduced speed limits, making yellow lights longer, road diets and bump-out curbs. The Subcommittee also looked at successful driver messaging and education campaigns, as well as approaches that could further modify driver behavior, one of the elements in a Safe System approach. Our research focused on drivers who continue to speed, are the hardest to reach, and findings were more limited there. DDOT took on a nudging study over the summer and hopes to have results at the end of 2023. This subcommittee had a longer, broader scope than the other two.

Willson recapped work of the other two subcommittees and took questions. Although precise numbers are not yet available, it appears that the majority of vehicles on DC streets are registered in other jurisdictions. The more tickets that people get, the less likely they are to pay them. A very small subset of vehicles get more than one ticket in a given year, so the issue is how to nudge that small subset, including through booting and towing. The current threshold

for booting and towing is based on the amount of money owed, but without a safety element included, so vehicles with speeding violations are not prioritized. The subcommittee discussed using that booting and towing towards a safety goal, such as those drivers going 20 mph over the limit or running red lights. The Lab overlaid citation and crash data and found that vehicles going 21 mph or more over the limit were 2-3 times more likely to be involved in a crash. The sheer number of tickets for moving violations may be useful. DPW has been going out at night to look at nightlife destinations, to try to identify vehicles that might otherwise evade ticketing, or put payment on an installment plan.

The Pilots Subcommittee is looking at various possibilities: the ability to pay; low-income; and the fine amount. The subcommittee is considering a 50% fine reduction for those receiving SNAP benefits. Other approaches being considered are to make a driver safety class an option or to make the first fine lower and subsequent ones higher.

In response to PAC member questions and comments, Willson said since the goal is to target those driving at high speeds, there was not consideration of a pilot below the 11-mph threshold for ticketing. Swiderski noted that the PAC in the past recommended letters be sent to those driving above the limit but not at a speed to qualify for the fine. Vision.zero@dc.gov.
ate.taskforce@dc.gov.

DDOT agency report. Branyan reported that Sharon Kirshbaum was named Interim Director; her confirmation hearing date with the Council has not yet been determined. He also reported on the fall Street Smart Campaign which kicks off in Vienna. Rick Birt, head of the Highway Safety Office (HSO) is one of the speakers. George expressed appreciation for the PAC participating in the HSO safety event on Howard University Campus timed to Pedestrian Safety Month. The Howard Police Department is a new grantee of the HSO. That office is focusing on bike users aged 18 to 25 who represent 9% of the District population but account for 25% of roadway injuries. The campus is part of one of DDOT's high-injury corridors; there will be education, outreach and enforcement in the area. The Highway Safety Office has launched a pedestrian bike safety assessment with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). A team of seven international experts will evaluate DC's approach to ped/bike safety and make a series of recommendations to our leadership. This is on the PAC agenda for tonight. Branyan and Karyn McAlister are taking a look at the NHTSA questions to determine who in the executive should answer them. Branyan also noted nine planning studies that are underway or going into design, including bus priority projects on Georgia Ave. and U St. PAC has or has had representation on two of the studies. Branyan's report will be shared with PAC members. Adams asked the time duration for turn-around of a Traffic Safety Investigation (TSI), such as a U-turn. Branyan questioned whether this issue raises to the TSI level; it might be handled as a traffic safety input since a U-turn sign is not changing traffic patterns. He offered to look into the case number provided by Adams.

OP: Abou Samra said there is now a draft framework plan with five recommendations for the Downton DC Public Realm Plan. Its aims to bring people to the area post Covid. The project started in early May, and she works with project co-lead, Tim Maher.

PAC officer roles. Foote opened discussion on officer roles. Harrison said he believed the roles are fairly normal for a group of this sort and asked if that were Foote's impression. She noted earlier correspondence on these issues and also recalled that the PAC is not a ceremonial role and member input and participation is needed beyond the monthly two-hour meetings. She said it will be important to address attendance and related issues.

Self-introduction of PAC members. For the benefit of new/newer members, there was a round robin of self-introductions. Hatchard said he lives in the Trinidad neighborhood. This is his second tour on the PAC, having been appointed by McDuffie in 2013 and then attended one meeting prior to a move to California.

PAC officer election. Swiderski nominated Adams to continue in the role of treasurer, a motion seconded by Harrison. Adams was appointed by a 6-0 vote. There were no nominations for secretary. Harrison said he would be delighted to nominate Beale when he is re-appointed. There were no nominations for chair or co-chair. Foote expressed the view that the PAC cannot be absent a chair or co-chair and so self-nominated herself for the role of co-chair through November or December. Harrison seconded, and the motion passed with seven votes in favor.

National Highway Transportation Safety (NHTSA). There are six categories of questions, including Program Management, Education, Enforcement, Engineering, EMS and Equity & Accessibility. HSO Director Rick Birt has invited PAC members to participate, individually, by providing answers that will assist NHTSA in its assessment of the District's pedestrian and bicycle program. Participating PAC members will need to select which questions they choose to answer, but the responses or answers will not be due until later in the fall.

Approval of agenda: Swiderski moved to amend the agenda to consider PAC testimony at the October 26th hearing of the DC Transportation Committee. The motion was seconded by Harrison, and that agenda item was added.

Treasurer's Report: The starting balance on Oct. 1, 2023 was \$6,625. There were no debits from September 1st to 30th. There are two outstanding payments that have yet to be processed by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Once those payments have cleared, the account will have an end balance of \$6,625.

Proposed PAC Testimony. Swiderski reviewed his draft testimony that covers two bills, the "Trick or Streets Amendment Act of 2023" (B25-0283) and the "Prioritizing People in Planning Amendment" (B25-0296). Discussion ensued in support of the concepts in the bills, the

standards and processes adopted from engineering manuals that drive decision-making, and various options for presenting the testimony in oral and/or written testimony. Foote expressed her intent to vote present in vote on the testimony, given the short time-frame prior to the announcement of the hearing and insufficient time to assess the complex issues covered in a two-page bill. There was a motion by Swiderski, seconded by Harrison, to support the “Trick or Streets” portion of the testimony; it passed by a majority vote of five, with one voting present. Swiderski then moved to support the “Prioritizing People in Planning Amendment Act” which was seconded by Harrison. It passed with the same numbers as in the first vote.

Next meetings: The next meetings will be on Nov. 13th and Dec. 11th.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm.