

Joint Statement of Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Multimodal Accessibility Advisory Councils

The first step in achieving DC's Vision Zero traffic safety goals is to identify the most dangerous drivers operating vehicles in DC, whether they are from DC, MD or VA. The second step is to show that such reckless behavior is unacceptable by taking rapid, effective enforcement actions. We propose a specific and ambitious target that will signal to reckless drivers that DC is serious about reducing reckless driving: by September 30, 2024, 20% of all vehicles with over \$1,000 in fines from moving violations are booted and/or towed. We further propose that this goal increases by an incremental 10 percentage points every year until 80% of eligible vehicles are booted or towed.

This is physically and technologically possible. Why it has not taken place is a failure of government will. This failure is in fact an equity issue, given that the disproportionate burden of traffic violence is suffered by people of color, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. Additionally, this is a commonsense justice issue as there must be penalties for behavior that endangers pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities, as well as law abiding vehicle operators.

According to DC DPW and press accounts, there are some 780,000 boot eligible vehicles on DC streets, owned by drivers in DC, MD, VA. There are also some \$889 million in unpaid fines, according to DC DPW. This is particularly vexing as the mayor, DDOT, and MPD continuously complain of a lack of financial resources for traffic related improvements; consequently, while we applaud the Council's past actions to increase the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) cameras, we believe a substantial portion of the revenue should support Vision Zero's goals, rather than be allocated to the General Fund.

To find and penalize traffic law breakers, many approaches are available. An approach we recommend would call for DPW, DDOT, and DMV to analyze its moving citation data and generate a prioritized list of vehicles and their corresponding license plates. DPW should then take this list of license plates and immediately scale up its use of readily available mobile license readers to then prioritize and implement active booting and towing of vehicles with large numbers of severe moving citations. To ensure such a government program is implemented, transparent metrics must be created to measure success or failure.

The citations should be addressed to the vehicle's registered owner, who is assumed to be the party responsible for the vehicle's use. Our government must develop a system that prioritizes fines, considers their number and the dangerous conduct that led to the fine, as well as ability to pay. But there must be recognition of the occurrence and a penalty. This could include a fine ranking system based on the number of citations and the degree to which victims are endangered by dangerous behavior. Substitution of driving classes could be considered in lieu of high fines.

Overall and most importantly, the District must show it cares about traffic deaths and injuries and is willing to create a climate of traffic safety. Systematic and aggressive collection of unpaid fines would signal to motorists that disobeying DC traffic laws has real consequences.

