



The Washington, DC region is great >> and it can be greater.

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Greater Greater Washington

Oversight testimony on the District Department of Transportation

Dear Councilmember Cheh and members of the Committee on the Transportation and the Environment,

I welcome the opportunity to submit written testimony on the District Department of Transportation's performance over the past year.

Greater Greater Washington advocates for frequent, reliable transportation; more housing and more affordable housing; and the land-use policies needed to support them both. My colleagues Caitlin Rogger and Ron Thompson testified at the February 26 hearing on behalf of the coalitions they manage: the DC Sustainable Transportation Coalition and the Transportation Equity Network, respectively. Please accept my comments here, on behalf of Greater Greater Washington, where I serve as policy manager.

Generally, GGWash has been pleased with DDOT's performance under former director Jeff Marootian. I commend DDOT for pivoting quickly at the early onset of the Covid-19 pandemic to embrace public-space interventions, like streateries and slow streets, and for capably leading an accessible—and fun!—moveDC outreach process at a time when “normal” methods of outreach, such as public meetings, are not possible.

If, and when, we take issue with DDOT's performance, it's that, despite the agency's excellent features—dedicated staff among them, and vastly improved communication on projects compared to several years ago—it's that its work is not moving the District away from a dependency on single-occupancy vehicles fast enough. That's because achieving goals [as aggressive as those laid out in Sustainable DC 2.0](#), requires disincentivizing driving as much as it requires increasing access to transit, biking, and walking.

The Sustainable DC 2.0 goals are:

- By 2032, increase use of public transit to 50 percent of all commuter trips in all wards (currently 40.5 percent)

- By 2032, increase biking and walking to 25 percent of all commuter trips in all wards (currently 16.8 percent)
- By 2032, reduce commuter trips made by car to 25 percent (currently 42.7 percent)
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by 60 percent (currently 1.73 metric tons)

Over the next year, we hope to see DDOT take advantage of the resets and accelerations brought on by Covid-19 and do really, really big things to keep congestion down in the region's core, improve people's quality of life and the quality of their transit trips, and sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will require aggressive policies, such as further increasing the cost of Residential Parking Permits; eliminating parking and driving lanes (in line with some the excellent and under-used data in DDOT's [2014 curbside study](#)) to implement the planned Bus Priority Network; and automated traffic enforcement, which can change drivers' behavior without exposing them to law enforcement officers.

GGWash is particularly interested in seeing work from DDOT that acknowledges that the concept of peak trips has been functionally blown up by Covid-19. Of course, more people are working from home, but we shouldn't center white-collar workers with flexible accommodations when essential workers' trips actually increased Metrobus ridership. We should heed that, and clear the way for, especially, more and better bus service, to which dedicated bus lanes are critical.

We know that people are moving around the District on foot, by bike, and by bus, and that those residents and visitors are disproportionately less wealthy and less white than those who drive. We hope that Interim Director Lott, and, ultimately, DDOT's permanent leadership, prioritize non-single-occupancy-vehicle transportation, a stance that is inherently more racially and economically equitable than our status quo.

We've been pleased with DDOT's performance, generally; things really have improved since the Vision Zero roundtable in 2018, which felt like a low point for trust in the agency's ability to keep District residents, well, alive when moving around it. But if there's ever a time to make sweeping changes to our streets, it's now. So: more of everything, please, but single-occupancy vehicles, and faster!

Thank you,
Alex

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