



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B

July 3, 2018

Mr. Sam Zimbabwe
Chief Project Delivery Officer
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003
sam.zimbabwe@dc.gov

RE: DDOT's Connecticut Avenue Streetscape and Deck-Over Project

Dear Mr. Zimbabwe:

At its regular meeting on June 13, 2018, the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission ("ANC 2B" or "Commission") considered the above-referenced matter. With 9 of 9 Commissioners in attendance, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission approved the following resolution by a vote of (9-0-0):

WHEREAS, Connecticut Avenue NW is an arterial road of vital importance to the District, and to Dupont Circle and ANC 2B,

WHEREAS, in 1949 the District created the Dupont Circle underpass and underground to improve safety and service of the streetcars running on Connecticut Avenue, and to alleviate chronic congestion of motor vehicle traffic on the circle's surface streets,

WHEREAS, when streetcar service ceased in 1962 the Dupont Circle underpass was converted to a motor vehicle bypass of the circle, while the curbside lanes continued to serve the businesses on the block and funnel local vehicles into and out of the circle,

WHEREAS, the aesthetics and potential neighborhood use of the at-grade area were not considerations until after Metrorail's Dupont Circle station was constructed and Dupont Circle's "renaissance" as a significant destination and thriving community came to fruition during the 1980s,

WHEREAS, the blank space above the underpass in the 1500 block of Connecticut Avenue between Dupont Circle and Q Street NW is an unsightly, wasteful barrier confronting pedestrians and businesses,

WHEREAS, Dupont Circle residents, civic groups, and ANC 2B have called upon the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for many years to address the empty

space and to provide accommodation and safety features that specifically include pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-vehicle uses,

WHEREAS, DDOT is now preparing to remedy the 70-year old mistake by transforming the void above the underpass into a useful public resource as part of a focused project to significantly improve access, safety, and aesthetic along Connecticut Avenue from Dupont Circle to California Street NW,

WHEREAS, DDOT held a public meeting on April 26, 2018 to present its findings and preliminary design options for review and comment from residents,

WHEREAS, DDOTs design options for the deck-over park are an “oasis” in the existing footprint of the space that preserves the existing traffic lane configuration; a “promenade” that provides a connection to Dupont Circle at the expense of parking and the turnaround lane; and a “piazza” that transforms the traffic lanes to commingled traffic and pedestrian use,

WHEREAS, Greater Greater Washington (GGWash) conducted a survey to determine popularity of the designs which yielded a fourth option: the “piazza” option plus elimination of vehicular access, making the space pedestrian-only,

WHEREAS, the GGWash survey indicated DDOT’s first option (“plaza”) to be the least desirable, with DDOT’s “piazza” (third) option and the write-in fourth option (“piazza” closed to vehicles) to be the most favored,

WHEREAS, there is exceptionally strong and united support across constituencies for the Connecticut Avenue Streetscape and Deck-Over Project, and

WHEREAS, the community stakeholders and ANC 2B recognize that Connecticut Avenue is an official evacuation route; and from K Street to Nebraska Avenue NW it is designated as an arterial road in the National Highway System, which overlays a variety of administrative, inter-agency, and Federal Government dynamics which can limit options for transformation and create delays or other unforeseeable obstacles.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2B generally supports the Connecticut Avenue Streetscape and Deck-Over Project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B supports option 3, the “piazza” design with shared street option, for the deck-over park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B supports use of additional landscaping and softscaping elements on the deck-over/“piazza” to make the space as welcoming as possible as a gathering place for the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests that DDOT consider alternate designs for the underpass ventilation strategy so that it is both visually appealing and disperses unhealthy air and noise as far away from people in the area as possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests that DDOT prioritize the deck-over park for the fastest possible delivery substantially in advance of the current timetable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B supports a design of the deck-over which will accommodate closures of the service lanes/shared street to traffic on a frequent/as needed basis for events, such as the Dupont Circle Farmers Market, regardless of the design that is selected.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests that DDOT make necessary improvements to 19th Street between Dupont Circle and R Street NW to accommodate increased volume during closures of Connecticut Avenue; and to consider traffic calming measures to keep traffic flow and speed compatible with a residential street in advance of the construction of the deck-over park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B recommends that DDOT evaluate making the portion of Q Street between 19th Street and Connecticut Avenue NW into a two-way roadway to permit bypass of the 1500 block of Connecticut Avenue during closures by using 19th Street from Dupont Circle to Q Street to return to Connecticut Avenue when Q Street itself is not closed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests that DDOT study the potential resulting traffic patterns on 19th Street northbound from Dupont Circle NW due to the construction of the deck-over park and institute appropriate measures to mitigate traffic and speed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B generally supports the design of the broader streetscape components of the project and is eager to see improvements to the pedestrian and biking environment along Connecticut Avenue NW.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B believes that it is essential that the streetscape project includes provisions for bike lanes connecting to the existing bike lanes on Columbia Road or to potential future bike lanes north on Connecticut Avenue NW.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests and expects to be included and engaged regarding the continuing design and execution processes for the project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ANC 2B requests and expects that DDOT will be timely, transparent, and accountable to the community concerning issues that could cause delay or alteration of the project.

Commissioners Amy Johnson (2B01@anc.dc.gov) and Daniel Warwick (2B02@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission's representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Warwick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Daniel Warwick
Chair