



## TESTIMONY

### **Performance Oversight Hearing: Committee on Transportation & the Environment**

**From:** Susan Volman, Chair DCCA Transportation Committee  
1516 Corcoran St. NW, Washington DC 20009  
**To:** Chair Mary Cheh and Committee members  
**Re:** Parking restrictions, 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW Bus Lanes Project

I was unable to attend the hearing on January 27<sup>th</sup>, although I know that several of my neighbors addressed this issue, including Barry Karas, who quoted me in his testimony. Thus, I know you are aware that local residents are seeking reconsideration of the AM parking restriction in the non-peak, northbound direction of 16<sup>th</sup> Street between O and U Streets. I am submitting this additional testimony to shed more light on the issue, provide some history, and ask you to revisit it with Director Marootian in your DDOT oversight role.

I live on the 1500 block of Corcoran Street, just off 16<sup>th</sup> Street, I am a member of the Board of the Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA), and I also served on the Transportation and Public Infrastructure (TPI) Committee of ANC2B. Wearing these various hats, I was involved in almost all the public engagement events around the 16<sup>th</sup> Street bus planning, beginning with the kickoff meeting in March 2015 and including smaller meetings with the TPI Committee and a DCCA membership meeting. These all took place long before Mr. Marootian was Director of DDOT.

#### **Some History:**

At the first meeting in 2015, I expressed my concern with a potential plan to create 5 lanes from the existing 4 lanes on 16<sup>th</sup> Street between U and O Streets to accommodate a reversible lane and peak hour bus lanes. **My concerns were that DDOT was largely thinking of the residential blocks of 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the Dupont Circle area as an obstacle to get through, rather than as a neighborhood with many residents. This is still a concern.** DDOT and other advocacy groups focused on the conflict of car commuters vs. prioritizing bus travel for 20,000 daily users, with little thought to local residents beyond the fact that many of us also use the S buses and did want improvements in bus travel. However, there are 5 ANC 2B Single Member Districts that cross, touch, or are within 1 block of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, representing approximately 10,000 people. Yes, we are bus riders, but we are also pedestrians and use 16<sup>th</sup> Street for parking. For example, our early concerns with the introduction of a 5<sup>th</sup>, reversible lane in the Dupont Circle area included the unsafe conditions it would create at the 3 unsignalized cross walks in this stretch of 16<sup>th</sup> Street. As the plans and engagement meetings continued, although DDOT acknowledged our safety and other concerns, but in 2016 the preferred option still included the reversible lane, although this idea was eventually abandoned due to space considerations. **I provide this history to inform you that I and others, including Mr. Karas who testified, were following the planning closely and provided lots of feedback about the project as it evolved. We are not coming late to the party to ask for a full review of the project.**

In 2017, in my roles as the chair of DCCA’s Transportation Committee and serving on ANC 2B’s TPI Committee, I wrote DCCA’s response and the first draft of the ANC’s resolution, both in favor of Option 4, which included the parking restrictions on both sides of 16<sup>th</sup> Street during both AM and PM peak hours. This option, with minor modifications, was adopted in the 2018 Design Phase report <https://www.16thstreetnbus.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/16th-St-Online-Public-Meeting-072718.pdf>.

Subsequently several of my neighbors who live on or near 16<sup>th</sup> Street raised objection to the northbound non-peak direction AM parking restriction, because they would need to move their cars at 7 AM if they parked overnight. You have heard details of their concerns at the hearing and in their written testimony. Traffic in the northbound direction in the morning is very light, so I agreed to help advocate to revisit this decision. My efforts, and those of others to accomplish this are detailed below.

**The Data**

In the January 2016 Final Report (<https://sixteenthstbus.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/16th-Street-Final-Meeting-Presentation.pdf>), when the full length reversible lane was the preferred option, it included parking restrictions in both directions at both AM and PM peak times. This table entitled “Recommended Alternative: Bus Travel Time Savings” was in the report:

	<b>AM Peak Estimated Travel Time Savings</b>	<b>PM Peak Estimated Travel Time Savings</b>
S1/S2/S4 Southbound	<b>5.9 minutes</b>	2.0 minutes
S9 Southbound	<b>3.7 minutes</b>	0.8 minutes
S1/S2/S4 Northbound	2.4 minutes	<b>5.9 minutes</b>
S9 Northbound	1.1 minutes	<b>4.6 minutes</b>

The table, **which is for the full length of the project area** (i.e., not just for the O to U street section under discussion) presents data on transit time savings in both the peak directions and non-peak directions for both AM and PM. I call your attention to the two bottom left cells, which **show the transit-time savings for the non-peak AM direction of 1.1-2.4 minutes**.

In 2018, the Design Layout Option included a table showing the transit time savings **in the peak directions only**, which were reduced with the deletion of a full-length reversible lane.

	<b>AM Peak Southbound (min)</b>	<b>PM Peak Northbound (min)</b>
Preferred Alternative (from Planning Study 2016)	3.7 - 5.7	4.6 - 5.8
Proposed Design Layout Option (from Design Phase 2018)	1.9 - 2.6	1.8 - 3.2

It’s possible that the savings in the non-peak direction remain the same between 2016 and 2018. However, a number of other changes were made in these 2 years, before the design was finalized, so **it’s not clear that the 2018 plans still encompass transit time savings of 1.1-2.4 minutes in the AM for the full route in the non-peak northbound direction**.

### **Efforts to Revisit the AM Non-Peak Parking Restriction with DDOT.**

In the summer of 2019, ANC Commissioner Ed Hanlon, after receiving complaints from constituents, asked Director Marootian for a traffic study to determine whether the non-peak AM parking restriction was warranted. Separately, I pursued this issue with DDOT after discussing it with the DCCA Board and the ANC's TPI Committee. The responses we received can be boiled down to three points: 1) the public engagement period has ended; 2) the ANC concurred with all the parking changes; and 3) these restrictions are necessary. Commissioner Hanlon and I both were referred to Spring Worth, the transportation planner for the final stages of this project. I contacted Ms. Worth to ask if there were any updated data on the transit time savings in the final plans for the AM non-peak direction. Ms. Worth referred me to the engineers who were working on the project, who then referred me back to Ms. Worth.

### **My Request**

I urge you to ask Director Marootian to provide us any available data on the transit time savings, and effects on general vehicle travel times, **under the current design plans, specifically for the northbound lanes of 16<sup>th</sup> Street during the AM peak hours between O and U Streets NW.** If these data are not available, I request that DDOT be required to obtain these numbers. If the effect of this parking restriction on bus travel and/or general vehicle travel proves to be negligible, then we request that DDOT reconsider this parking restriction.