

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
**Department of Transportation**



**Fiscal Year 2017 Performance Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
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**Director**

Before the  
Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Mary M. Cheh, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building  
Room 500  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

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11:00 A.M.

Good morning Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment. My name is Leif Dormsjo, and I am the Director of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser in today's hearing to discuss the activities and accomplishments of the Department of Transportation in Fiscal Year 2016.

Mayor Bowser's administration remains committed to creating pathways to the middle class by investing in education, infrastructure, public safety, and people. The Fair Shot Budget for fiscal year 2017 (FY2017) was the first budget developed wholly under Budget Autonomy. For the first time since Home Rule was passed in 1973, the District was able to spend our local dollars without having to wait on Congress to pass the federal budget. This brings us one step closer to operating like the 51st state.

It has been two years since I assumed leadership at DDOT. Last year, I highlighted the advances that the agency made in safeguarding infrastructure, enhancing transparency, bolstering public engagement, and infusing strong management practices into the core of the agency. I committed to expand on this



progress in year two and I am proud to report that we have fulfilled this promise to deliver superior transportation projects and service for the residents and visitors of the District of Columbia.

### ***I) Education***

DDOT is committed to being a learning organization. DDOT's operations team recently completed a five-day training on Productivity, Accountability, Capability and Efficiency, or "PACE". This training was the first of its kind for DDOT. The curriculum consisted of more than 20 courses on a wide range of topics relating to daily operational work, and was focused on building practical skills and knowledge in order to continually advance our service delivery capabilities to the community. In addition to providing superior professional development and enhancing job safety acumen, this training also provided the opportunity to earn certifications and strengthen inter-disciplinary awareness. We were very excited to be able to offer this rich educational opportunity to DDOT staff, as part of our continuous efforts to retain an engaged and highly skilled workforce.

### ***II) Infrastructure***



**a. Roads, Alleys, Sidewalks**

In FY 2016, DDOT focused on improving infrastructure. Sidewalks, roads, alleys, bridges, and tunnels are the lifeblood of the District. Last year, DDOT completed repairs on 261 blocks of sidewalk, 50 percent more than in FY 2015. DDOT resurfaced 21 miles across local and federal roads, slightly fewer miles repaved than in FY15 (26 miles). This overall improvement is also highlighted by our significant increase in money spent maintaining our assets over the last two years. FY 2016 sidewalk expenditures were 10% higher than FY 2015 expenditures, and more than two times higher than the FY 2010-2014 five-year average. Similarly, FY 2016 local paving expenditures were 77% higher than FY 2015 expenditures, and more than three times higher than the FY 2010-2014 five-year average.

DDOT is nearing the conclusion of our fourth AlleyPalooza. Over the last two years, we have repaired or reconstructed more than 300 alleys. We have taken a “worst first” approach by inspecting and rating the alleys that have been submitted in the 311 service request system and going after those in the worst condition, ultimately increasing the numbers of our alleys in good and excellent condition. And we also should not forget to mention the 229 bridges and 15 tunnels DDOT is responsible for repairing and maintaining.



**b. Major Projects**

The South Capitol Street Corridor project is the largest construction project in the agency's history. Phase 1, which includes the replacement of the 67-year old Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge over the Anacostia River, will cost approximately \$500 million. The design-build project includes an innovative Project Labor Agreement and locally-based hiring preferences. Over the past year, DDOT reviewed technical and financial proposals from the three shortlisted design-build teams, and we look forward to awarding the contract this summer. Phase 1 construction is scheduled to begin in 2017 and be completed in late 2021. DDOT is working closely with DMPED, DGS, DOEE, and other partners to ensure that this multi-year construction project is coordinated with the construction of DC United's Audi Field and other development projects in and around Buzzard Point.

The Capitol Crossing project made significant headway in FY 2016 as well. After nearly two years of construction, the new Massachusetts Avenue on-ramp portal onto the I-395 southbound Third Street Tunnel will open this spring. The new portal will improve traffic flow as well as pedestrian and bike-lane safety. The existing 3rd Street Tunnel on-ramp will be closed immediately and will be removed. Surface street work will continue to restore roads, sidewalks, and public



space and is expected to last approximately six months. Furthermore, an additional travel lane will open on the new I-395 Third Street Tunnel 2nd Street off-ramp soon. The development team plans to deliver the first building in December 2018.

**c. Intelligent Transportation Systems**

DDOT is improving infrastructure through the use of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) solutions to improve efficiency on bus routes, address parking and congestion, and analyze deployment of District fleet vehicles. In 2016, DDOT and WMATA operationalized transit signal prioritization or “TSP” for WMATA buses. This multi-year project covers several major corridors, including 16th Street, Wisconsin Avenue, and Georgia Avenue. One hundred and ninety-five signalized intersections will now intelligently prioritize the busiest buses by holding green signals as buses approach. As the District’s population grows and development projects expand, intelligent transportation systems like TSP will play a crucial role in getting people where they need to go.

We are also using ITS for parking. DDOT selected the Chinatown/Penn Quarter Area to test various technologies to make parking easier and reduce congestion by increasing parking availability and providing drivers with tools to find available parking spaces. The congestion pricing model used for this pilot project charges higher prices on higher-demand blocks, while keeping prices static



or lowering them on blocks with lower parking demands. The pricing also adjusts during the day, recognizing that parking has peak and non-peak hours, as well. In October 2016, DDOT instituted the first of four planned price adjustments, and our data shows that the pilot area has seen occupancy generally increase, with marginal increases in length of parking stay. A second price change was implemented in February 2017, expanding the range of prices. Current and future rate changes will be communicated to the customers using: decals on parking meters; real-time parking availability apps (ParkDC and VoicePark); and the [www.parkdc.com](http://www.parkdc.com) website.

The Penn Quarter/Chinatown pilot project is slated for completion at the end of calendar year 2017. Between now and then, DDOT will continue to review on a quarterly basis, and has planned two additional price changes and an evaluation of pricing for special events and freight loading. After the project concludes, DDOT intends to evaluate lessons learned, determine how to maintain dynamic pricing operations in Penn Quarter/Chinatown going forward, and apply some solutions that were deemed viable and easy to maintain to the other performance pricing zones. We will also evaluate the potential to expand the program to other areas of the District.



DDOT is partnering with the Department of Public Works (DPW) to enhance our existing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system for snow. For snow removal, our AVL data now includes enhanced reporting systems, resource allocation, and prioritized route identification (such as streets that have not been sufficiently plowed). DDOT will be working with DPW to pilot the AVL system for construction activities throughout the summertime.

**d. Transit**

The District's transit system greatly expanded in 2016. On February 27, 2017, DDOT celebrated the one-year anniversary of the successful launch of the DC Streetcar on H Street/Benning Road. Out of the seven months streetcar ran in FY 2016, six of those saw increasing ridership. In total, DDOT carried 487,000 passengers in FY 2016, and we continue to see strong sustained ridership. The DC Streetcar had its busiest month in January 2017 with almost 93,000 passengers. On average, ridership increased by 37 % since the launch of the system in 2016. This is primarily associated with opening of Sunday service in September 2017 and the public events in January 2017.

To continue that momentum, we put the sixth vehicle into service to provide greater flexibility and resiliency, improved the frequency of vehicle arrivals from



every 15 minutes to every 12 minutes, and expanded the service to all seven days of the week.

As a result of these efforts, we have maintained our headways. Our on-time performance is 93%. The few service breaks that did occur were related to illegally parked vehicles or emergency activity for non-streetcar related issues. Now we are looking to expand the system east and west, with our first stop the Benning Road Metro station to complete the connection to the WMATA system.

The DC Circulator program improved several key indicators in FY 2016, with an increase in ridership and decreases in cost per revenue hour and subsidy per rider. While DDOT is grateful for the strong support of our riders, we want to ensure that the Circulator has the resources it needs to continue to provide safe and reliable service in the years ahead. Accordingly, DDOT has undertaken two projects that are critical to the long-term success of the DC Circulator program.

- Maintenance and Storage Space: In September 2016, DDOT worked with the Department of General Services (DGS) to release a solicitation to enable DDOT to competitively select a site for this facility. Under the current contractual agreement, the maintenance facility is provided by the contractor, currently First Transit. If the District were to own or control a



long term lease on a facility, the DC Circulator program would have access to a larger pool of vendors. To address this need, DDOT is working with DGS to identify an appropriately-sized maintenance space(s) controlled by DDOT. This maintenance space would enable DDOT to maintain assets properly and to hold contractors to high performance standards. DDOT and DGS are actively engaged in the solicitation process.

- Fleet Replacement: DDOT is preparing to replace more than half of the current fleet of vehicles for the DC Circulator. DDOT is developing a procurement package for this purchase and will share details of the purchase once the procurement package is finalized. This initiative to modernize the fleet is critical for the long-term health of the system, as nearly half of the fleet will reach the end of its useful life next year. The funds required for this purchase are contained in the FY 2017-2022 Capital Improvements Plan.

As part of the 2017 Transit Development Plan update, DDOT will propose alternatives designed to improve the efficiency and performance of individual routes and the network as a whole. DDOT is currently identifying areas of overlap



with the Metrobus network and will propose alternatives so that DC Circulator serves to complement Metrobus.

FY 2016 was another successful year for Capital Bikeshare. We installed 31 new Bikeshare stations in the District and introduced a \$2.00 single-trip fare in June 2016 as part of our SafeTrack mitigation strategy. Trip purchases saw dramatic growth in 2016 and we surpassed 15 million trips taken since our launch in 2010. DDOT continues in our commitment to expand accessibility and grow city-wide bike ridership through a robust expansion plan for 99 new stations by FY 2018 in minority and low-income neighborhoods, tourist destinations, and other high-demand areas. Last year, we reported that we were looking forward to the launch of our Community Partners program in FY 2016 to improve access to Capital Bikeshare at an affordable price for low-income residents in the DC region. I am proud to report that this effort has been a great success; since its launch we have enrolled eight partners, including Whitman-Walker Health, Unity Health DC, and Community of Hope, and sponsored more than 180,000 annual memberships. Since the summer of 2016, Capital Bikeshare members have enjoyed more than 7,500 two-wheeled trips through the Community Partners program.



***e. Green Infrastructure***

DDOT's work also supports the environment and sustainability. In FY 2016, DDOT planted 6,400 trees, increasing the total trees to 145,000 and increased the canopy cover by 627 acres between 2011 and 2015. The FY 2017 planting season began in October 2016 and is coming to a close at the end of March 2017. In FY 2017 we will have planted an additional 8,000 trees. In addition to expanding our tree canopy, DDOT is integrating green elements into our streetscapes. In 2016, we began design for nine green alleys and completed the design of three alleys. Those three alleys will be constructed this spring, and an additional two green alleys will be constructed later in FY 2017. We hope to accelerate green alley design and construction work into FY 2018 and beyond.

***f. Improved Management Tools***

One of the first management improvements I initiated is called "TranStat." This bi-weekly program focuses on performance reporting and process improvements using a data-driven approach. At TranStat, a diverse group of managers and program experts convene to review data analysis, troubleshoot issues, and plan for new or restructured programs in a roundtable format. TranStat has raised internal awareness of the importance of tracking performance, accurately reporting data,



and using this information to identify and request necessary assistance and resources. For example:

- The TranStat setting allowed for immediate assignment of responsibilities and feedback on safety upgrades and improvements proposed for high-hazard intersections identified over a series of District-wide site visits.
- Over a series of TranStat meetings, performance and safety stakeholders surfaced a number of challenges and opportunities around the School Crossing Guard program, including staffing issues, deployment location improvements, Safe Routes to School best practices, new management tools, and possible funding enhancements.

In FY 2016 DDOT launched ***ProTrack Plus***, a comprehensive project management application that enables staff to manage projects through their entire life cycles (“cradle to grave”). DDOT is building additional functionality into ProTrack Plus to link service requests and work orders to capital projects. In the past, DDOT projects and maintenance activities would not necessarily inform the other. However, DDOT is now integrating overlapping maintenance issues with proposed capital projects to achieve “economies of scope.” This system allows DDOT to integrate capital needs alongside maintenance needs and more efficiently close out maintenance once completed.



The use of ***ProTrack Plus*** allows DDOT's project stakeholders to work in a more collaborative manner while benefiting from the leveraged data to improve decision making. The platform provides comprehensive information regarding the project funding and obligation, project phases, and project location(s) as they relate to other project locations, examining any conflicts and potential cost sharing opportunities. By utilizing ***ProTrack Plus***, along with refined processes, we are breaking down the silos that inhibit collaboration and efficiency.

As part of an effort to clearly communicate how the District's transportation system is performing, DDOT announced the release of the District Mobility website on February 13, 2017. The website is part of the larger ongoing District Mobility Project, which was established to increase understanding of mobility issues in the District and define a program of improvements to address them. The interactive, data-rich website design provides an innovative platform for sharing the state of mobility and DDOT's progress towards reducing congestion on our roads. Interactive maps allow website users to see how transportation demand in the District changes over the course of a day and how those changes impact all modes.



The District Mobility Project leverages transportation data for multiple modes (walking, bicycling, transit, and driving) to inform DDOT's short- and long-term investment strategies by highlighting areas with high congestion, low reliability, and poor accessibility across all modes of transportation. The selected performance measures provide a framework for ongoing system monitoring. It can be used to identify system gaps, and at the start of projects to reduce the need for initial data collection by providing the "before" data for before and after studies of congestion-related projects.

### **III) TRAFFIC CONTROL MANAGEMENT**

#### **a. Staff Training**

DDOT's recent PACE Conference demonstrates the agency's commitment to education in a variety of subjects, including CPR, Safe Work Zones, materials testing and quality assurance and quality control, and performance management. The PACE Conference provided this training to over 300 DDOT Operations staff. The training ultimately improves skills and reinforces a safety culture to improve our overall service delivery and commitment to customer service.

#### **b. Vision Zero**



In February 2015, Mayor Bowser committed to Vision Zero. Since that time, it has been DDOT's top priority to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2024. By December 2015, our action plan was complete and 30 District Government agencies began implementing the plan. Now in 2017, we can look back at one year of implementation. At the highest level we are not satisfied. In line with the national trend, total annual fatalities increased by from 2015 to 2016, from 26 to 28 (7%). Crash related fatality rate in the District increased by 7% from 2014 to 2016, while the national rate rose by 14% during the same time frame.

However, our most vulnerable users had a safer year. Pedestrian fatalities decreased 40 percent, from 15 to 9. Bicycle fatalities remained constant, with one fatality in each year.

With respect to the Mayor's action plan, we are making real progress. When you are biking, you'll notice 6.26 miles of new bike lanes, 1.6 of which are buffered or protected, and a four-mile extension of the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. This completes a nearly 70-mile network of bicycle and pedestrian trails between the District and Maryland. When you are walking, you will find 22 blocks (6,600 feet) of gaps in the sidewalk network that no longer exist. When you cross the street, you can rely on five new rectangular rapid flashing beacons



and seven new HAWK signals. We also used new technology to remotely assess the accessibility of 724 curb ramps, 92,276 linear feet of sidewalk, and 83 bus stops. When you are walking, bicycling, or driving, you will see 88 new or upgraded traffic signals.

Vision Zero relies upon city-wide partnerships, and our sister agencies are doing their part. The Vision Zero two-year action plan has 67 strategies, of which 39 strategies (58%) are complete. Our partners have fully embraced Vision Zero. The Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) is publishing open data that has never been available to the public before. DC Public Schools (DCPS) is educating second graders on bicycle safety. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is creating a safety culture by rewarding its safest bus drivers. The Department of For-Hire Vehicles (DFHV) is doing more driver training to prevent dangerous driving and also alerting passengers to watch for bicyclists as they open taxi doors. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is educating residents on vulnerable travelers by, for example, providing safety videos in their waiting rooms. And the DC Fire and EMS Department (FEMS) is arriving at crashes and getting patients to hospitals faster. These are just a few examples. Under Vision Zero, we have more urgency, we have better



information, and we are laying the foundation for drastic improvements in safety in the near future.

**c. Inauguration and Women's March**

DDOT's performance was exemplary during two monumental events in January. On Inauguration Day, DDOT's Traffic Control Officers, Safety Technicians, and Ambassadors blanketed the city. This was a DDOT all hands-on-deck operation. No matter where visitors were, they were likely to spot our signature gray fleece hats and vests. The following day, we helped guide the hundreds of thousands of people making their way to and from the Women's March on Washington. These 48 hours were just the tip of the iceberg. Prior to these events we spent weeks filling potholes, resurfacing roads, posting emergency parking and wayfinding signage, and getting the message out about traffic and the roadway incident management system; 155 staff completed Improvised Explosive Device training; and many others attended evacuation walkout planning and radio communications sessions. In addition, this was the first time DDOT co-located in Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) in support of MPD to improve communication and deployment of staff.

**IV) People**



**a. Transparency**

DDOT is committed to transparency and public engagement. The DDOT Compendium is accessible from our homepage and continues to be a very useful tool, in an online searchable format that provides comprehensive information about DDOT policies, procedures and services. The DDOT Compendium complements the innovative online resources already provided by DDOT and the District government, and is a one-stop reference tool for a wide range of information about the agency.

In addition, in an effort to improve government data transparency and easy access, we continue to upload District wide crash locations, moving and non-moving violations and construction permits issued in the District into OCTO's open data platform. In FY 2016, we added Capital Bikeshare locations and Slug Lines to the Open Data website.

DDOT's robust public engagement strategy provides residents with access to DDOT's activities and upcoming events. As part of our data-driven approach towards operations and customer service, DDOT partnered with OCTO in 2016 to convert our website to a mobile-responsive format. This is because most visitors to DDOT's website are using a mobile device. Additionally, we have optimized our online calendar functionalities to better serve users. For starters, DDOT is now



using online calendar management for upcoming community presentations, and will soon roll out a new tool allowing residents to request DDOT speakers at community events.

**b. Equity and Inclusion**

DDOT hired a dedicated Transportation Equity and Inclusion Officer in FY 2016. The Transportation Equity and Inclusion Officer reviews and expands opportunities across the agency to promote policies, education programs, and performance measures to track the agency's progress at advancing disability and civil rights. In FY 2016, the Equity and Inclusion Division submitted the ADA Transition Plan for the Public Right of Way to FHWA. This is a living document that is updated annually and includes the accomplishments and future schedule to overcome physical barriers. In addition, DDOT and the Office of Disability Rights worked together to develop the ADA Preliminary assessment tool. This tool allows our engineers to identify physical public space barriers using satellite and street-level photography rather than requiring in-person inspections at all locations. In FY 2017, DDOT will continue to expand equity and inclusion efforts throughout the agency.



Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and Certified Business Enterprises (CBE) are critical to DDOT's work. In FY 2016, DDOT awarded \$11 million in prime contracts to DBEs, more than triple the amount in FY 2015. For CBEs, DDOT awarded \$28.5 million in FY 2016, more than two-and-half times the amount awarded in FY 2015. DDOT continues to grow these figures through outreach, training, and education. For instance, in the fall 2016, DDOT partnered with the Federal Highway Administration to host the Sixth Annual Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Summit and Networking Symposium. This event was attended by more than 300 people, and DDOT used this opportunity to launch its new Small Business Enterprise (SBE) certification program. DDOT continues to work with DBEs, CBEs, and SBEs and looks forward to increasing projects and opportunities for these enterprises in the future.

## **Conclusion**

Chairperson Cheh, as we look to our third year under the direction of Mayor Bowser, you have my pledge that we will continue to improve all of DDOT's services. In the next year, we will continue to improve the agency's planning, operations, and project delivery.



In closing, I'd like to thank you for your leadership and support. As always, we operate with complete transparency and I will ensure that the communication channels with your staff remain open and productive. This concludes my presentation and my staff and I are happy to address your questions as well as those of other Committee members.

