



Celebrating

10

**YEARS of
EXCELLENCE**

District Department of Transportation

“During the past 10 years, DDOT has made significant strides toward making the District the prosperous, equitable, sustainable city I know it can be.

From increasing transportation options and improving the safety of our neighborhoods to maintaining our flourishing tree canopy and implementing innovative stormwater management solutions, DDOT has helped the District become a model of cutting-edge policies and practices in government and sustainability.”

– Vincent C. Gray
Mayor, District of Columbia



December 2012

As we stop to commemorate 10 years of hard work, dedication and success for the District Department of Transportation, we must recognize the essential role the agency has played in the development of the District during the past decade. We have experienced our first solid decade of population growth since World War II, but, of course, our city isn't getting any bigger physically. Accommodating this growth means using the space we have more efficiently and effectively to continue to draw businesses, residents and visitors to the District. Two major drivers of this growth have been the variety of transportation options and the sustainable, mixed-use, transit-accessible communities that DDOT has helped to develop and serve.

DDOT's accomplishments reach beyond the District's roads, bridges, sidewalks and alleyways. In my Vision for a Sustainable DC, I set a target of a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the District by 2032, and an 80% reduction by 2050. I've also proposed a goal of enabling 70% of the District's landscape to filter or capture rainwater, improving the quality of our waterways and drinking water, and reducing the impact of development on the environment. DDOT has been, and will continue to be, integral in achieving these goals, as transportation is one of the main contributors to air and water pollution.

During the past 10 years, DDOT has made significant strides toward making the District the prosperous, equitable, sustainable city I know it can be. From increasing transportation options and improving the safety of our neighborhoods to maintaining our flourishing tree canopy and implementing innovative stormwater management solutions, DDOT has helped the District become a model of cutting-edge policies and practices in government and sustainability.

For DDOT's tireless contributions to making the District one of the best and most sustainable cities in the world, I say: congratulations on 10 years of exceptional service!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent C. Gray".

Vincent C. Gray
Mayor, District of Columbia

Foreword from the Director

“Get it done.” That’s something you’ll hear me say frequently, but it’s not just a catch phrase. It’s a mantra that drives all we do here at DDOT. It’s an expression of the hard work and can-do attitude of our employees, past and present, all of whom have helped shape the agency into what it is today. For the past 10 years, DDOT has provided its employees with a the proper tools and training, as well as a safe environment to “get it done.” This book highlights and commemorates their accomplishments in pushing this agency and the District forward.

In addition to overviews of DDOT’s achievements during the past 10 years, you’ll find historical perspective pieces outlining how we got here. DDOT’s success didn’t happen overnight: the “History and Origins” chapter traces the agency’s roots back to the 1820s. “Then and Now” segments provide a fascinating look into the past of the 11th Street Bridge, the DC Streetcar, and the revitalization of Columbia Heights.

You’ll read personal stories from both DDOT employees and members of the community we serve. In the “DDOT Perspective” pieces, our employees share their stories about how their work impacts the residents, visitors and workers of the District. These stories come from employees like Antonio Morrobel, a crossing guard who hasn’t missed a day of work in nearly 20 years of serving the students of Thompson Elementary, and Frank Seales, who twice served as interim Director and helped write DDOT’s charter. The “Local Perspective” sections reveal how DDOT’s work has shaped communities, from ensuring safe travel to school for our students to driving economic growth through transportation investments.

We’ve accomplished a lot in 10 years, but we’re not done yet. We must continue to provide first-rate customer service to the residents of the District, invest in our transportation system, develop sustainable communities and practices, and implement alternative transportation options in order to make DC a model transportation system for the world.

Let’s get it done.

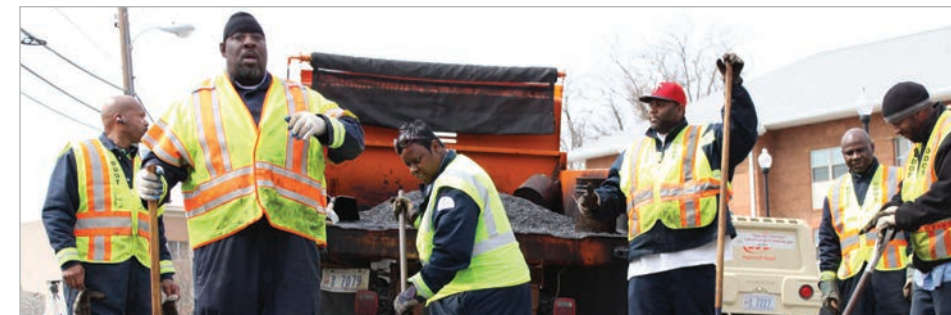


Terry Bellamy
Director, District Department of Transportation



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HISTORY & ORIGINS



Although the story of today's DDOT began in 2002, the agency's foundations were laid in the decades and centuries prior. The ever-changing environment of transportation and the District's governance have shaped the roles and responsibilities of the agency. Pierre L'Enfant's original vision for the city, the District's first council system, the Engineer Commissioners and the modern council-mayor system all played critical roles in the development of our transportation system.

From the dirt roads and canals of the 1820s to the development of the streetcar system in the 1870s, the rise of the automobile in the 1920s, and the inauguration of Metro service in the 1970s, transportation choices and policies have influenced the residential and commercial development of the District for two centuries.

In the early 19th century, roads in the District were largely unpaved and difficult to traverse. People moved along dirt roads by horse-drawn carriages or on foot. In 1830, nearly 90% of the District's 23,000 residents lived in the "Old City" south of Boundary St. (now Florida Ave.) or in Georgetown. The remainder of what is now Washington, DC was then Washington County, DC, a rural area dotted with estates and farmland. Goods and heavy loads were transported by canals, including the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal and the Washington City Canal, which ran along the Mall and connected to the Potomac near the White House, and to the Anacostia at the Navy Yard.

When the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened in 1835, the canals had outlived their effectiveness: rail had proven to be a viable transportation alternative. Public transportation at the time consisted of horse-drawn omnibuses, first on dirt roads, then later on rails. Given the unevenness of the city's roads and the elevation of outlying parts of the District, this early transit system was limited in its usefulness.

The first major development in transportation in the District came in 1888 with the introduction of the electric streetcar. Streetcars running on underground electrical conduits allowed the city to expand beyond its traditional boundary at Florida Ave. into "streetcar suburbs" like Columbia Heights, Cleveland Park, Brookland and Anacostia.

Left: Parking lot outside Wilson Building, ca. 1970

Engineer Commissioners. Transportation issues have been a major focus in District government for more than a century. In 1878, responsibility for the daily affairs of the District was given to a three-member Board of Commissioners. The board consisted of two commissioners appointed by the President and one commissioner from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The "Engineer Commissioner" was charged with the maintenance and oversight of all of the District's infrastructure projects, including street cleaning, snow removal and maintenance and paving of roads. The Engineer Commissioner remained in charge of infrastructure projects in the District until the passage of the Home Rule Act in 1973, when the Board of Commissioners was abolished and replaced with an elected mayor and city council.

"When I came, the Director was a retired general from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who ran the place like a military organization," recalls William McGuirk, who started with the agency just before the Engineer Commissioner system was eliminated. "It wasn't half bad because there was discipline and people were held accountable." Perhaps as a result of this discipline and accountability, the Engineer Commissioners helped advance a number of issues that would guide the development of the District for decades to come. Under the Engineer Commissioners, the District saw its first street master plan (1893), comprehensive zoning plan (1920) and comprehensive street lighting plan (1923). These plans are largely credited with preserving the Baroque aesthetic character of the city.



Southwest Washington, DC with Washington City Canal visible, ca. 1863 (photo from Library of Congress)

Developing the System. Streetcars enjoyed more than six decades as the primary form of transportation in Washington until the automobile revolution of the 1920s. During its prime, DC's streetcar system boasted more than 100 miles of track within the District and connections to the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. As the internal combustion engine was developed, buses began to replace streetcars, which required regular track maintenance and electrical work (at the streetcar companies' expense). The increasing affordability of cars allowed more people to live further from the urban core and decreased the use and effectiveness of streetcar lines.

Despite marking the beginning of the end of the streetcar era, the 1920s and 1930s were very important to transportation in the District. The District's roads struggled to handle the increased traffic caused by the city's exploding population, which had more than doubled over 30 years, growing to 450,000. As the federal city, Washington was not eligible for the Federal-Aid Highway Program as states were. The city had insufficient money in its General Fund to finance the road improvements necessary to accommodate the population increase. In 1924, the Board of Commissioners successfully lobbied Congress to allow the District to institute a two-cent per gallon gasoline tax that would be used exclusively for road maintenance. In 1938, the Federal-Aid Highway Act was amended, allowing the District access to the same pool of highway funds available to other states. As a result, the District's transportation system saw dramatic improvement in a short period of time.



15th St. at G St., ca. 1915

Rapid Progress. Funding from the gas tax and Federal-Aid Highway Program allowed both the agency and the system to achieve rapid progress. In 1932, the 19 divisions within the city's "Engineer Department" were reorganized, with DDOT's predecessor, the newly formed Department of Highways, assuming the transportation functions formerly split among eight divisions. Fewer than half of the District's 544 miles of road were paved with asphalt in 1924: by 1948, the Department had paved 980 miles of roads in Washington. In 1944, the Department introduced a cost-analysis system to all of its maintenance and construction projects.

Although auto use was increasing dramatically, alternate modes of transportation were immensely popular in the District in the 1940s. In 1940, one out of every seven District residents commuted to work on foot. In 1948, 38% of commute trips were taken by bus. An underground rail transit system was considered in 1942 but not recommended.

Perhaps prophetically, a publication much like this one from the Department of Highways in 1948 stressed the importance of continued investment in transit. "A vigorous program of improvement in addition to that heretofore undertaken in transit facilities and service must be made if the transit riding habit is to be encouraged and stimulated," the report cautioned. "If this is not achieved, then it is inevitable that Washingtonians will turn to private passenger cars in numbers and, thereby, produce traffic loads far in excess of existing street capacities."

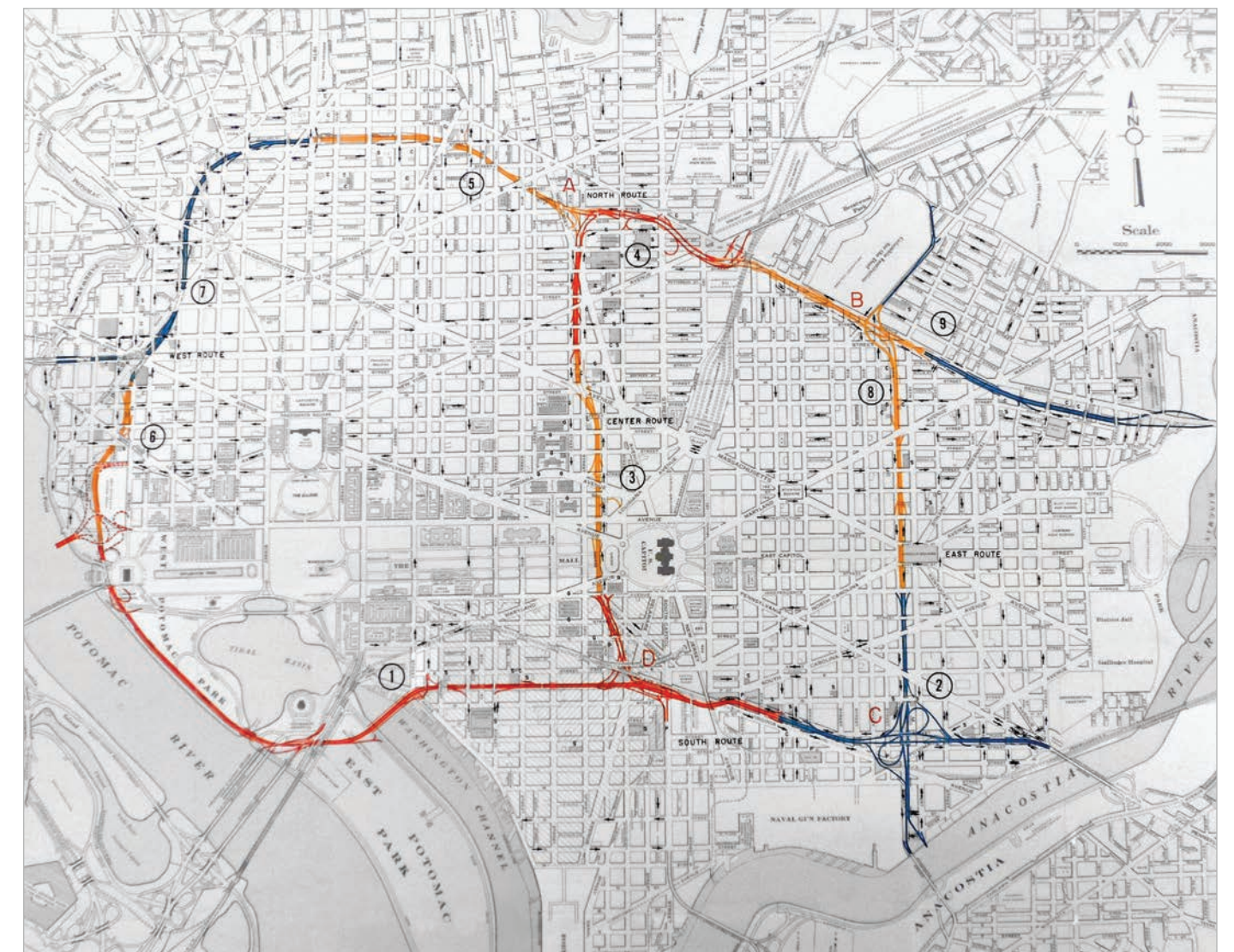


Traffic at 14th St. and Pennsylvania Ave., 1945

Population Decline and Metro. As World War II wound down and employment and residential centers developed in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs, residents started to move out of the city. The 1950s marked the first of five consecutive decades of population decline in the District. Workers living in the suburbs still needed ways to commute to the city, increasing the number of cars and buses on the District's roads. By the 1960s, it became obvious that the city's street grid could not support the increasing volume of commuter traffic.

At the time, two competing visions for increasing the capacity of the transportation system developed. One camp favored the development of numerous limited access expressways to channel traffic around the city's most congested areas. Planners developed a network of freeways through established neighborhoods across the District, including two additional beltways. Groups opposed to the freeway system advocated a subway transit system to alleviate congestion and preserve community links.

Although construction had already begun on segments of the freeway network, transit advocates were successful in blocking most of the expressway plans, and in 1965, Congress authorized \$431 million for development of an expandable 25-mile subway network. Ground was broken for the system in 1969 and Metrorail service began in 1976, offering a sustainable alternative to single-occupant vehicles and a complement to commuter buses in the District.



Engineering drawing for proposed DC Inner Loop freeway system, 1955

DDOT and the Superagency. By the time Metro service began, the Department of Highways had become the District Department of Transportation. In addition to its original responsibilities for planning, developing and maintaining the District's roadway network, the new Department of Transportation assumed responsibility for coordinating transportation activities with Metro, inspecting and registering vehicles, licensing motorists, enforcing parking regulations, and planning and implementing a bicycle network.

The first District Department of Transportation operated for only 10 years before being merged into the Department of Public Works (DPW), a new "superagency" formed in 1984 to assume the responsibilities of the Departments of Transportation, General Services and Environmental Services. Unfortunately, the responsibility for providing so many services, coupled with dwindling resources, forced DPW to prioritize its efforts, leaving parts of the District's infrastructure underdeveloped and largely forgotten.

"As the city spiraled into tougher and tougher financial times, the organization became increasingly focused on delivering on the responsibilities it had on a day-to-day basis, and that was picking up the trash," recalls Dan Tangherlini, first Director of the modern DDOT, and later DC City Administrator. "You had lost a focused, accountable attention to the transportation asset" when the superagency was formed. "We didn't have a meaningful continuing capital budget to make the kinds of replacements we needed to make." And it showed.

Potholes and Utility Cuts. By the late 1990s, the system had deteriorated to the brink of crisis. Although transportation functions had been consolidated into the Division of Transportation under DPW, the agency struggled to maintain the system. Potholes were rampant to the point of being sadly comical. "It was almost part of the fabric of the expectations of the city that if it weren't for the potholes, we weren't sure what was going to hold the streets together," half-jokes Tangherlini. Though problematic, potholes weren't the biggest nuisance on District roads.

As the digital age reached full swing, telecommunications companies began to cut trenches in streets to run data cable. Unfortunately, these street cuts were performed with little or no oversight or coordination. One company would cut the road to run cable, disrupting traffic along some of the District's busiest thoroughfares. "Two weeks later, another company would come and cut the same route," Tangherlini recalls. The seemingly endless road cuts demonstrated the need for a coordinated, accountable method for managing the public right-of-way.

In 2002, DDOT was remade into a cabinet-level agency with independent funding authority and accountability to the DC Council. "We were driven by this crisis to organize ourselves and then create some meaningful structures and policies around regulating the public right of way, recognizing it's the largest, most valuable asset the city owns, then treating it as an asset that needed to be maintained and invested in," says Tangherlini, who was instrumental in the formation of the new DDOT along with then Mayor Anthony Williams and Councilwoman Carol Schwartz.

DDOT established **d.**

May – DC Council passes the District Department of Transportation Establishment Act of 2002, creating a cabinet-level agency responsible for the management of transportation infrastructure and operations. Prior to the Act, transportation was managed under the Department of Public Works.

First director



November – Dan Tangherlini is confirmed by DC Council as DDOT's first director.

DDOT funds the addition of bike racks to all Metrobuses

New York Ave. Bridge widened and resurfaced



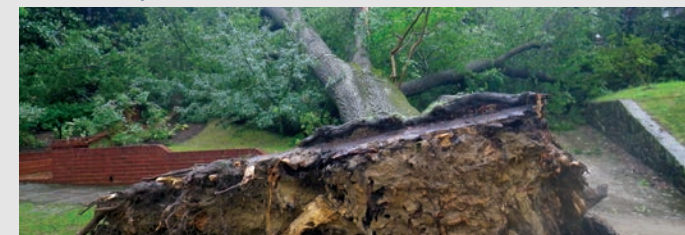
South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study

September – Study lays the foundation for transportation projects along the Anacostia.

Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 passed

DDOT assumes lead in DC snow and ice removal program

DDOT responds to first major natural disaster



September – Hurricane Isabel downs thousands of trees and interrupts power service for days.

8th St./Barracks Row Streetscape



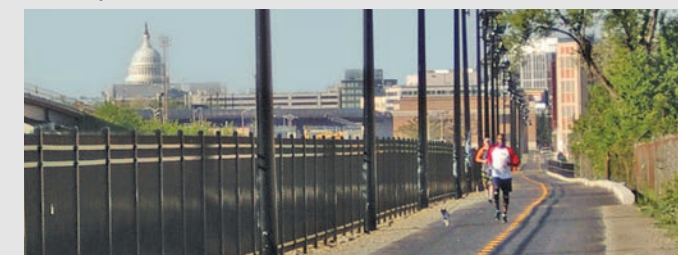
December – Streetscape and built environment improvements transform the corridor into a destination. The project is the seed for the Great Streets Initiative that revitalizes neighborhoods through transportation investment.

Streetcar Program begins



November – Plans to restore streetcar service to the District for the first time in 50 years are introduced along with a new streetcar order.

Metropolitan Branch Trail



November – Section of Metropolitan Branch Trail opens in conjunction with New York Ave. Metro station. The 8.25 mile trail stretches from Union Station to Silver Spring and, when completed, will include connections to the National Mall and the Northwest Branch and Capital Crescent trails, as well as various Metro stations and communities.

DC's Safe Routes to School program launched

Georgetown Project completed



July – The new agency completes the massive overhaul of road and utility infrastructure along M St. working closely with local electric, gas and telecom companies.

DC becomes largest U.S. city to convert all traffic signals to LED

DC Circulator launched

July – DC Circulator begins service, offering routes linking Georgetown to Union Station and the Convention Center to the Southwest Waterfront. The Circulator has since expanded to five routes and now serves stops east of the Anacostia and west of the Potomac.

Tree planting program doubles to 8,000/year



2002

2003

2004

2005

Exceeding Expectations. “Expectations were incredibly low for the new agency,” says Emeka Moneme, DDOT’s third Director, who also was involved in drafting the agency’s charter. Due to the poor condition of the transportation system prior to 2002, Congress had debated transferring control of the District’s roads to the federal government, questioning whether or not the District government could effectively manage such an important asset. “The importance of the provision of the transportation system got lost over time,” according to Michelle Pourciau, DDOT’s second Director. Given these common sentiments, it was clear that the new agency had its work cut out for it.

DDOT responded with excellence. “We wanted to make sure we were thinking beyond what people saw the agency doing traditionally,” Moneme says. Addressing the challenges of the District’s transportation system would take more than filling potholes and coordinating utility cuts. It would require a flexible, adaptable agency with the ability not only to react to changes in the environment of transportation, but also to anticipate changes. “We saw a lot of creativity and public sector entrepreneurship,” added Moneme. “It was in the DNA of the agency from the beginning.”

From its formation, DDOT was progressive and creative. “We took new and innovative funding to a whole new level,” recalls Pourciau. Within six years, the new agency had repaved more than half of the District’s roads, thanks in large part to the financial and organizational structures in place and the agency’s unique position as a city and state DOT.

A 21st Century Agency for a 21st Century City. The agency’s formation coincided with the beginning of the District’s first sustained population increase since the 1940s. Although the region had been growing consistently, most of the area’s new residents were settling in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. “Before the formation of DDOT, we were really struggling with how to address the projected population growth in the region and how to compete for that growth,” Pourciau says. “If we couldn’t get more people to live in DC, our transportation system just couldn’t handle all of the long commutes. DC is pretty built-out. There’s just no room for new highways.”

As a result, DDOT had to find ways for the transportation system to accommodate current users, as well as attract new residents and businesses to the District. “We really tried to tie economic development to everything we did,” says Gabe Klein, the agency’s fourth Director. Through programs like Capital Bikeshare, DC Circulator, Great Streets and the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, “DDOT was able to really show how infrastructure could shape communities,” according to Moneme.

During its brief history, the agency has made progress that 10 years ago would have seemed impossible. “We were able to elevate transportation as an issue,” states Klein. “We showed that DDOT is a world-class transportation agency that can handle mega projects. Few District agencies have done as much for the District as DDOT.”

Marvin Gaye Trail



April – Improvements on Watts Branch Trail, including trail reconstruction and widening, construction of a new bridge and lighting and landscaping are finalized. The trail is rededicated as Marvin Gaye Trail.

Taylor St. Bridge replacement completed
Southern Ave. Bridge replacement completed

goDCgo.com launched

July – goDCgo.com, DC’s transportation demand management website, is launched. The site currently features an interactive map of all modes, special event information, and resources for DC employers.



Frederick Douglass Bridge improvements



January – Construction begins on Frederick Douglass Bridge lowering. The project demolishes the raised viaduct along South Capitol St., providing better and safer bicycle and pedestrian access to new development in the Southeast Waterfront area and clearing the way for a bridge replacement within the decade.

First Pedestrian Master Plan published
South Dakota Ave. Bridge replacement begins

Benning Rd. Great Streets project begins



Nationals Park opens



March – Infrastructure improvements, traffic management and parking plan are completed to support the new Nationals ballpark opening.

Bikesharing



August – DDOT opens Smartbike DC, the first bikesharing program of its kind in the nation and the predecessor to Capital Bikeshare.

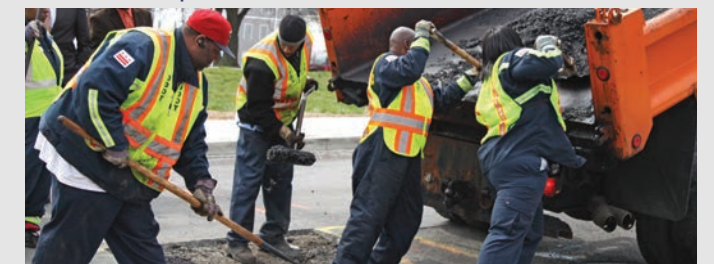
H St. Great Streets project breaks ground
Anacostia Riverwalk Trail construction begins

Traffic control officer and school crossing guard programs transfer to DDOT

President Obama Inauguration

January – DDOT leads transportation planning, traffic operations and parade route preparation for largest event ever hosted in the District’s history.

First Potholepalooza



May – Since the month-long annual campaign to repair damaged roadways was launched, crews have filled more than 19,000 potholes across DC.

DC Circulator adds two new routes
DDOT broadens public outreach through Facebook and Twitter

Bikestation DC opens at Union Station



October – Bikestation offers protected parking for more than 100 bikes, a private changing room and day-use locker rentals next to the District’s busiest transit hub. The project receives the international Brunel Award for freight and rail support buildings.

2006

2007

2008

2009

Into the Future. As we progress through the 21st century, DDOT will continue to be a world-class transportation department and a model agency within the District government. Our workforce is highly skilled and adept at managing the challenges facing the transportation system and the agency. "We've come a long way in the last 10 years," says Terry Bellamy, DDOT's current Director. "Just in the two years that I've been Director, we've seen significant progress in landmark programs like pay-by-phone parking, Capital Bikeshare and the 11th Street Bridge project. But we're not done yet. In order to meet the needs of the District into the future, we need to keep working."

Mayor Gray's Vision for a Sustainable DC sets aggressive targets for greenhouse gas reductions and alternative transportation, and DDOT will play a leading role in helping the District achieve these ambitious goals. DDOT has made transportation improvements in underperforming neighborhoods across the District, but parts of the city still need infrastructure investments to thrive as sustainable, livable, connected communities. Traffic-related fatalities are down more than 50% since the agency's formation, but DDOT will continue to enhance the safety of our roads, sidewalks and crosswalks until they have reached zero.

DDOT has become known as a go-to agency within the District government and a national leader in innovative transportation programs, and will continue to lead the industry and the District for years to come.

DDOT Directors



Dan Tangherlini
2000-2006



Michelle Pourciau
2006-2007



Emeka Moneme
2007-2008



Gabe Klein
2008-2010



Terry Bellamy
2011-Present

Pennsylvania Ave. bike lanes open

Transportation Online Permitting system launched

Solar-powered parking meters introduced

Nannie Helen Burroughs Great Streets project begins

DC reaches 3% bike to work rate, the highest among East Coast cities

Columbia Heights Streetscape completed



July – DDOT provided traffic and sidewalk improvements and constructed a fountain and plaza as part of the continued redevelopment of this historic neighborhood.

Countdown signals installed



December – Pedestrian countdown signals are fitted citywide, marking the largest U.S. deployment of such signals.

DDOT Headquarters moves



May – DDOT streamlines operations by co-locating headquarters at Navy Yard.

11th St. inbound replacement

December – The inbound freeway portion of the 11th St. Bridge opens to traffic. The first river bridge replacement in 40 years is the largest project ever constructed by DDOT and improves an important link between communities on both sides of the Anacostia.

Revitalization begins for O & P Streets, Adams Morgan Streetscape and Columbus Plaza

H St. NE Great Streets project and Old Market House Square renovation completed

New York Ave. NE Bridge reconstruction begins

LED alley lights pilot launched

Pay-by-phone parking introduced

Capital Bikeshare ridership reaches 2 million

May – With more than 1,200 bikes and expansion plans to other jurisdictions, the program has quickly become the largest bikesharing program in the U.S. since its launch in 2010.



Alliance for Biking and Walking rates DC No. 2 in U.S. cities

11th St. Bridge Opens



December – 11th St. Bridge replacement opens all new spans and ramps to traffic ahead of schedule

Pennsylvania Ave. Great Streets completed

March – Improvements make the corridor more visually appealing and safer for vehicular traffic and pedestrians.

Howard Theatre Streetscape completed



2010

2011

2012

SAFE PASSAGES



Safety is DDOT's top priority. Our commitment to ensuring the safety of all users across every mode of transportation drives everything we do. Engineering a safe transportation system, educating users on safe transportation practices, and enforcing traffic laws are three central tenets of DDOT's safety program.

One of DDOT's primary concerns is ensuring that the built environment of our transportation system is safe for all users. DDOT has installed bike lanes and easily visible crosswalks to make roads safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. We have invested more than \$350 million in bridge replacements and improvements during the past decade to ensure safe river crossing and enhance emergency evacuation routes. We use cutting-edge signal technology to calm traffic and reduce congestion for motorists. Our planners and engineers pay special attention to areas around schools and senior centers to ensure that sidewalks and crosswalks are visible, well-lit and maintained.

DDOT also works to ensure all users, especially the most vulnerable users, have the knowledge and skills needed to safely navigate our transportation system. We have been funding safety education in District schools since 2003. As part of their physical education curriculum, students in grades K-2 learn pedestrian safety skills and students in grades 3-8 learn bicycle safety. Teaching children to walk and bike safely not only allows them to be safer now, but also to build on these skills as they grow.

Schools are only one focus of our safety education program. DDOT partners with local jurisdictions, law enforcement agencies and national groups to promote roadway safety to the general public. We have implemented public education and enforcement campaigns aimed at reducing aggressive driving, increasing pedestrian awareness and safety, combating drunk driving, and ensuring motorists use seatbelts.

From project planning and design to operations and maintenance, safety is the overarching concern of all of DDOT's daily activities. As a result of our tireless efforts to improve the safety of the District's transportation system, we have seen a decline in traffic fatalities from 68 in 2001 to 32 in 2011, with a goal of reaching zero as soon as possible.

Left: photo by Christopher Quay



Traffic Calming and Signal Improvements. DDOT knows that alleviating congestion and improving the flow of vehicular and non-vehicular traffic are essential to maintain the safety and efficiency of our transportation system. We use cutting-edge technology to time our signals first for pedestrian traffic, then for vehicular movement. 56 miles of bike lanes, 12 miles of new and improved trails and more than 2,000 bicycle parking racks have been installed across the District during the past 10 years, increasing the safety and appeal of cycling around town. Raised crosswalks and intersections, pedestrian flashing beacons and leading pedestrian intervals improve the safety and visibility of pedestrians and slow vehicular traffic in heavy pedestrian areas. Because of DDOT's continued efforts, DC has one of the lowest traffic-related fatality rates in the country each year.

Livability Studies. In an effort to provide lasting and holistic solutions to transportation issues, DDOT has undertaken livability studies across the District. Livability studies take a big picture look at the street network in a study area and identify concrete actions to improve transportation safety and options. DDOT collects information on study areas from public meetings, field visits and data research to assess the interplay between transportation, public health, housing, cultural resources and the natural environment. A major component of the livability studies is to make specific recommendations to improve quality of life in the study area. These recommendations seek to expand neighborhood access to commercial areas, strengthen connections to the regional transportation network, and calm traffic in residential areas.

*Top: Pedestrian rapid flash beacon;
Bottom: DDOT worker installing bicycle pylon;
Right: Pedestrians using raised crosswalk on
E. Capitol St. NE (photo by Brandon Soublet)*





Public Education and Outreach.

A major component of ensuring the safety of our transportation system is the education of all users. In addition to its safety education programs in District schools, DDOT also partners with local, regional and national agencies on traffic safety programs. DDOT has participated in Click It or Ticket, Smooth Operator, Distracted Driving, Street Smart, Work Zone Awareness, and Motorcycle Safety programs, and run numerous public service announcements promoting transportation best practices. In 2011, as part of Project Safe Child, DDOT provided more than 1,000 child safety seats to low-income families in the District.

When it comes to maintaining the safe and efficient operation of the District's thoroughfares, communication is a two-way street. Like most agencies, DDOT uses community meetings and traditional media outlets to communicate with the public. However, DDOT has been a leader in social media interaction since 2009. Twitter and Facebook not only allow DDOT to reach more users, but also allow us to receive and address concerns as they arise.

Crossing Guards and Traffic Control Officers. Timed signals, raised crosswalks and bike lanes can only go so far in ensuring that our roadways operate smoothly and safely. DDOT's crossing guards and traffic control officers are our boots on the ground ensuring that traffic flows smoothly, intersections and bus stops are clear, and children and adults can cross busy corridors safely. Enforcement is essential to ensuring that all users follow traffic rules, and our traffic control officers have the power to issue tickets for parking and minor moving violations. In 2008, DDOT assumed control of the school crossing guard program, enhancing the linkages between traffic enforcement and safety education in our schools. School crossing guards offer not only safety enforcement, but also serve as positive role models for the District's students.



DDOT Perspective: Keeping Kids Safe

At the corner of 11th Street and Massachusetts Ave. in Northwest DC, one crossing guard has become an institution. Antonio Morrobel, a native of the Dominican Republic and long-time DC resident, has provided safe crossing for more than a generation of students at Thompson Elementary School.

"I love my job," said Morrobel. "I am able to be a daily part of some of these kids' lives, and hopefully a positive influence on them. After 20 years, some of the early children I knew have grown and now have kids of their own attending Thompson."

Antonio was one of 130 school crossing guards who transferred into DDOT from the Metropolitan Police Department in 2008 when responsibility for traffic control and safety at school crossings shifted to the young agency. Since that transition, DDOT has hired more than 70 new crossing guards to ensure that these important posts are manned every school day.

"Crossing guards are some of our most popular employees," said DDOT Director Terry Bellamy. "They represent a clear safety element for kids who are on their way to and from school, and in instances like Antonio's, some of our crossing guards have become ingrained members of their school's community. We're constantly hiring new crossing guards to keep up with the demand."



Safe Routes to School. DDOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program works to make it safer, more convenient, and more fun for students to get to school on foot or by bicycle. Through Safe Routes to School, DDOT works with each participating school to develop a SRTS Action Plan that identifies barriers to safe biking and walking and develops specific recommendations for improving safety around the school. Although each school develops its own unique Action Plan, SRTS is often able to recommend common best practices. Schools without the broad-based community support required for an Action Plan can still reach out to DDOT's SRTS Coordinator for advice and recommendations regarding specific student transportation safety issues.

Many recommendations have no cost to implement: some participating schools have simply moved pick-up and drop-off areas to mitigate hazards around the school. For more complex recommendations, DDOT looks for ways to integrate the improvements into its routine operations and maintenance, or into existing or upcoming projects. Engineering recommendations from the E.L. Haynes Public Charter School Action Plan were incorporated into the Georgia Ave. Great Streets Project. Nearly 30 schools in the District have participated in the program to date. Although the program is focused on traditional public schools, DDOT has begun to work with private and charter schools to increase student safety.

Above: U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood walks with students on International Walk to School Day;
Right: Murch Elementary School receives the 2009 Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award from Del. Eleanor Holmes-Norton and former Rep. James Oberstar

Local Perspective: Safe Routes to School

Jennifer Hefferan joined DDOT as its new Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Coordinator in 2009, following Congress' inclusion of the program in the 2008 SAFETEA-LU legislation. She works with SRTS teams comprised of parents, teachers/administrators, ANC Commissioners and other interested community members to help assess and address the barriers to safe biking and walking for each participating school.

"I help synthesize the team's assessment into a customized action plan built around 5 Es – Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Engineering and Evaluation," said Hefferan. "But SRTS is truly a community-based initiative. The plans are only as good as the information that SRTS teams compile and are able to implement."

District schools participating in the program have seen visible success. Murch Elementary, one of the first schools to enter the program, was recognized with the 2009 James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award based on its efforts to reverse a school policy that prohibited students from bicycling to school without special permission. The school also built community support for walking and bicycling to school.

"We realized that if we wanted to have our kids walk and bike more, we had to be more vocal," said Robin Schepper, the SRTS team lead at Murch in 2009. "In addition to overturning a long standing bike policy, we added two bike racks and, with DDOT's support, were able to get 1.5 miles of sidewalks installed. With SRTS, kids and families have a voice."

In 2011, SRTS supported the District's involvement in the first National Bike to School Day. More than 20 District schools participated, with many reporting more than 20% of students biking to school that day. Key Elementary reported the highest participation rate—22%—and received the Golden Bicycle Award.

"Participation has been amazing, especially when you consider DC has one of the highest bike-to-work rates at just 3%," commented Hefferan. "I hope we can continue to make progress," said Karen Kelliher, former SRTS team leader at Key. "Our school, our environment is not going to change. We have to change."



SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Sustainability in transportation reaches further than hybrid cars and LED traffic lights. Truly sustainable living involves reshaping our city and multi-modal transportation network to give residents and visitors choices outside of depending on cars. DDOT's commitment to sustainability goes beyond planning, development, implementation and maintenance of a multi-modal transportation system. We also work with community stakeholders, developers, transit providers and other city agencies to create complete, walkable communities that are transit-accessible and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

Transit is one of the best alternatives to single-occupant vehicles: bus and rail can significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled, improving local air quality and conserving natural resources. In order for transit to be a viable alternative, it must be convenient, reliable and affordable. DDOT is at the forefront of encouraging mass transit. We have implemented bus service along underserved corridors and laid the tracks for returning streetcar service to the District for the first time in 50 years.

Sustainable communities allow District residents to work and play where they live, reducing the reliance on cars and improving local air quality. DDOT works with community groups, private interests, the DC Office of Planning and the Deputy Mayor's Office of Planning and Economic Development to support economic development while maintaining quality of life. By leveraging the resources of this diverse set of stakeholders, DDOT has been able to ensure the transportation network functions for all users.

DDOT has promoted environmental stewardship and reduced its own impact on the environment by implementing all-electronic permitting and ticketing systems, converting all traffic signals to energy-efficient LEDs, and installing solar-powered parking meters. In order to offset the impact of our transportation system on the environment, DDOT plants thousands of trees annually and implements innovative stormwater management solutions.

Mayor Gray's Vision for a Sustainable DC sets a target of at least 75% of trips in the District be made without a car by 2032, meaning DDOT must continue to improve. Continued residential and job growth creates new challenges and opportunities, and DDOT will continue to lead the way in promoting sustainable living.

Left: photo by Kevin Kovaleski, Flickr

Evolution of Transit. Since DDOT's establishment in 2002, the District has seen a shift in travel patterns. Reinvestment in walkable, complete communities and the expanded reach of transit have decreased reliance on vehicle ownership. DDOT has led this shift in personal transportation preferences by offering an expanding array of options, including such advances as crosstown bus service, citywide bike-sharing and on-street parking for car-sharing vehicles. We are in the process of restoring streetcar service to the District for the first time in half a century. As a result of these efforts, nearly 60% of commute trips and approximately 50% of all trips by District residents do not involve a car. DDOT works with users and operators of our transit system to identify needs and implement solutions that help us all move freely, efficiently and sustainably through our city.

Circulator. In July 2005, DDOT launched the DC Circulator, crosstown buses offering service every 10 minutes. The initial two routes linked Union Station to Georgetown and the Southwest Waterfront to the Convention Center. Since its inception, the Circulator has expanded to five routes, reaching east of the Anacostia and west of the Potomac, while maintaining the same \$1 fare. In 2011, more than 5.7 million rides were taken on the Circulator. With more service expansions planned and numerous new routes under development, the Circulator will continue to complement Metrobus, Metrorail and future DC Streetcar service. DDOT remains committed to expanding multi-modal transit offerings in the District, and the Circulator is a key part of our strategy.



Above (left to right): DDOT's first Director Dan Tangherlini, former Councilmembers Carol Schwartz and Linda Cropp, former Mayor Anthony Williams, Del. Eleanor Holmes-Norton, former National Capital Planning Commission Executive Director Patricia Gallagher and Ginger Laytham of Clyde's Restaurant Group mark the inauguration of Circulator service, July 2005

