

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Transportation



Fiscal Year 2023 Budget 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

Monday, April 4, 2022

12 P.M.

Good afternoon, Chairperson Cheh and members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment. My name is Everett Lott and I am the Director of the District Department of Transportation, commonly referred to as DDOT. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser on DDOT's Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

Fiscal Year 2023 Overview

DDOT's FY 23 operating budget underscores our commitment to safety in the District's road network and especially for our most vulnerable users--children and pedestrians. Our budget invests in 92 new traffic safety personnel to make sure we have coverage at all school posts. It expands our signage and pavement markings and provides 3 new staff to perform safety analysis and increase our public communication. We are also expanding our Automated Traffic Enforcement program with a \$9.4 million dollar investment and 43 FTE. Finally, this budget continues our commitment to the safety of the District's public spaces with nearly \$1 million for additional inspectors and permit reviewers, to ensure the safety of the public Right of Way.

Our Capital Budget makes an historic investment of an additional \$143 million over the current 6-year plan. Funding will address all 15 high-crash corridors and all 15 of our most dangerous intersections and build out our mobility

network. The budget also includes full design and construction funds for high priority streetscape projects, such as Wheeler Road and Alabama Avenue, and allows us to complete the Benning Streetcar Extension and the K Street Transitway.

I want to start with our 25-year strategic plan, moveDC. This budget is built on the framework of our moveDC goals, which are: equity, safety, mobility, project delivery, management and operations, sustainability, and enjoyable spaces.

Equity

Equity is a consideration in every enhancement we have put forward today—only through a persistent focus on equity will we ensure our investments in transportation benefit all. In FY 2022, DDOT developed a framework to guide our investment choices. We created a transportation needs map to highlight the areas of greatest need and how the area overlaps with communities included in the transportation equity definition. And from this, we created a pilot equity assessment tool for use in budget formulation to ensure public investments in transportation justly benefit all residents.

Safety

The Mayor's budget continues to make historic investments allowing DDOT to take immediate action to address safety issues on our roadway. We are taking proactive steps to improve safety in our school zones, including:

- \$10.4M for the necessary expansion of our Traffic Operations to cover all our school posts.
- The enhancement will also increase dedicated Vision Zero staffing to perform data analysis and increase our public education.
- The budget will also provide \$0.5 million for a curbside management study that will be specifically focused on curb space in school zones.

As we know, speed is often the most significant factor in traffic deaths and serious injuries. This budget includes an investment of \$9.4 million to further expand our automated traffic enforcement cameras program. This funding allows us to add 170 speed cameras and 25 school bus stop cameras to the program and includes 43 FTE. This budget also supports the move of the traffic management center out of the Reeves Center on 14th Street NW. The DDOT Traffic Management Center is a 24/7 operational hub that supports all traffic management and signaling control throughout the District.

At DDOT, we are focused on infrastructure safety improvements, emphasizing low-cost, high-impact, and permanent, long-term safety improvements along our most dangerous intersections and corridors.

The budget proposes the following investments:

- \$10 million for Vision Zero quick build intersection safety improvements, asset hardening for curbs and medians, and asset preservation in FY 2023;
- \$5 million for the implementation of the livability study recommendations;
- \$36 million to expand the bike lane network by 10 miles a year for the next 6 years;
- And \$200 million for Streetscapes, which includes addressing our most dangerous intersections and corridors.

Since Mayor Bowser launched the Vision Zero Initiative, the District has publicly committed to addressing our most dangerous intersections and corridors. This work has already begun but Mayor Bowser's request would allow DDOT to install more permeant solutions in these areas. With a \$200 million investment in our Streetscapes program, we will design and construct new streetscapes for these corridors as well as to begin scoping on all the remaining projects in 2023.

Each of the 15 high-crash intersections identified in the Vision Zero Action Plan will be either planned, designed, or built with current and requested resources and we will be tracking and communicating our progress from study to design to completion. We also have full funding in our streetscapes portfolio to begin design and construction on the Wheeler Road Corridor, Alabama Avenue Phase II, Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue Intersection Phase III, and the Cleveland Park project.

We are proud of the progress made in our bicycle priority program. The investment of \$33 million over six years will allow DDOT to design and deliver 10 miles of bike lanes each year—exceeding the goal set forth in moveDC. This capital plan will complete the 9th Street NW downtown protected bike lane and continue the momentum achieved with our “20-by-22” initiative.

We are also investing in safe pedestrian and cyclist access between communities and transportation options with \$88.5 million to build new pedestrian bridges at the Anacostia Metro station, Kingman Island, and adjacent to the Long Bridge rail facility. These resources complement requested federal funds for replacing the Lane Place and Douglas Street bridges over DC 295, key lifelines for those communities.

Project Delivery

As a part of our Project Delivery goal, DDOT is committed to completing projects on-time and on-budget while engaging and communicating with the community. Mayor Bowser's budget supports the estimated \$259 million to rebuild and replace the H Street Bridge in order better serve the transportation needs of the community as well as the region. DDOT and the District's Office of Contracting and Procurement are working closely to prepare the design-build solicitation and we are currently short-listing qualified teams to deliver this project. This project is the foundation of our modernization and redevelopment of the area around Union Station.

This budget also provides the second tranche of funding needed to take the K Street Transitway project from design to construction. The \$57 million proposed will fully fund construction. The project is a bold and progressive reimagining of the K Street corridor to better serve the 20,000 daily transit users as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

The Benning Road Streetcar project reflects all of DDOT's moveDC goals, including equity and safety. The new streetcar line expands transit service in Ward 7 and addresses safety and maintenance needs of the corridor. Final design for this

project will be complete in a few months and it is fully funded in the Mayor's budget.

Mobility

DDOT is proud of our mobility goal to increase system reliability, improve accessibility, while providing safe and affordable travel choices for all users and trips.

Mayor Bowser's budget sustains the District's investments in improving bus service by investing \$101M over six years to deliver 51 bus priority projects across all 8 Wards. These projects will improve average speeds for 122 Metrobus and 5 Circulator routes serving approximately 60% of bus riders and 79% of job locations in the District.

Equitable access to transportation requires investments in adaptive resources. To that purpose, we have invested \$250K in FY 2022 for a new Adaptive Bikeshare program pilot and this budget allows that program to continue in Fiscal Year 2023. Our planned investment in the Capital Bikeshare network will allow for the expansion of 80 new docking stations across all 8 wards and add 2,500 new e-bikes to our fleet. These new stations will increase transit options by ensuring that every District resident has access to a Capital Bikeshare station.

Management and Operations

Through our management and operations goal, DDOT will ensure the state of good repair for our existing assets. Essential to meeting this goal is improving our frontline services to the community, including a \$13 million investment to replace our Transportation Online Permitting System, also known as TOPS. TOPS is at the core of all Public Space regulation in the District. The system currently collects roughly \$22 million per year in revenue, has over 140,000 registered users, and issues about 80,000 public space permits each year. This replacement will ensure that the critical permitting functions are timely and accurate and that inspections can be performed and tracked most effectively. This modernization will correct significant issues with the current end-of-life system, including improving the system interface, reflecting underground utility information, creating logical workflows to expedite permit reviews and compatibility with mobile devices. This investment compliments the \$948 thousand and 7 FTE to support permit and inspections capacity for DDOT to ensure that safety is maintained in our right of way.

The FY23 budget continues the sustained investment in our core assets: streets, alleys, and sidewalks. This budget allocates over \$400 million to eliminate:

- streets in poor condition by 2025
- alleys in poor condition by 2023; and
- ensure that the District’s sidewalks are in a state of good repair.

Last year, Mayor Bowser doubled resources for new sidewalks, and this year continues that \$4 million investment. DDOT is focused on faster delivery. The Mayor’s budget also includes a BSA proposal to remove the requirement to receive Council approval for contract option years and this will help us focus our team on getting shovels in the ground with these funds.

Sustainability

DDOT’s sustainability goal includes funding to reduce emissions and strengthen resilience in the face of climate change, especially in historically under-resourced communities.

Mayor Bowser is ensuring the growth and maintenance of the District’s tree canopy—now at over 175,000 street trees—with an investment of \$50.8 million over 6 years. With added funding from the Tree Fund and local sources, DDOT has been able to plant more than 8,400 street trees per year. Further, DDOT has been able to expand the planting program to parks and schools in a partnership with the Department of Energy and Environment.

Mayor Bowser's budget doubles-down on sustainable modes of transportation by making sure that a growing share of the Circulator fleet is electric. Specifically, the budget supports the purchase of 17 new electric buses in addition to the 14 we are currently procuring. These new 17 will replace 14 diesel vehicles and add 3 new buses to the fleet. Additionally, with this budget, DDOT will be able to complete Phase 2 of the electric bus garage located at South Capitol Street. This will house the all-electric fleet for the new Ward 7 Circulator Route. Necessary for our electric conversion, the Mayor provided funds within the DGS budget to make the much-needed down-payment on the new Circulator facility at Claybrick Road.

Enjoyable Spaces

Our moveDC goal for enjoyable spaces requires that DDOT managed public spaces must be accessible, safe, and welcoming to residents, visitors, and communities. Through this budget, we continue our community investments in safe and enjoyable spaces with a \$1.5 million investment for a signature Open Streets event, similar in size and scope to our upcoming Open Streets event this year on the 7th Street corridor. The budget also includes \$100 thousand dollars to continue support for our Arts-in-Right of Way grant program. This program draws attention to safety in our roadways and involves local artists and the community by placing art installations in the right of way throughout the District.

Conclusion

I want to thank Mayor Bowser, the members of the Council and this committee for all the support you have provided DDOT. This budget proposal represents a significant and necessary investment in District safety and a state of good repair. I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.