

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



**Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
**Sharon Kershbaum**  
**Acting Director**

Before the  
Committee on Transportation and the Environment  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Charles Allen, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building  
Room 120  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Thursday, April 11, 2024  
9:30 A.M.

### **Slide 1**

Good morning, Committee Chair Allen, Councilmembers and District residents. I am Sharon Kershbaum, the Acting Director of the District Department of Transportation, commonly referred to as DDOT. I am joined today by Paul Revesz from our Resource Allocation Division. I am pleased to testify at today's hearing on Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget for our agency.<sup>34</sup>

I would like to begin by putting this budget in context. As this Committee is fully aware, the District is facing significant budgetary pressures due, in part, to the significantly growing costs to fund WMATA—our regional transit provider. The increase – over \$200 million – is more than DDOT's total operating budget for fiscal year 2025. Mayor Bowser recognizes the significant role that WMATA plays in our network and in our economy and has committed to fully funding the agency in FY 2025. This is a big win for the District and will complement all the other transportation investments her budget is making at DDOT.

### **Slide 2**

The FY 2025 budget makes key investments in the District's transportation network and helps DDOT achieve the goals outlined in our strategic plan, *moveDC*. *moveDC* guides how the District invests scarce resources in programs and projects related to Safety, Mobility, Sustainability, Project Delivery, Enjoyable Spaces, Management and Operations, and Equity. Today's presentation will follow this framework and showcase how the Mayor's budget helps make continual improvements to the transportation network in the District.

### **Slide 3**

Mayor Bowser's FY 2025 budget invests \$184.6 million in DDOT's operating budget along with 797.7 full-time equivalent staff. As discussed earlier, with the pressures being put on the District's budget we had to make some compromises and are focusing on those programs that we believe add the most value to our transportation network.

Perhaps the biggest change will be to the Circulator program: We are proposing to operate the network through March 2025, at which point we plan to work with WMATA to implement augmented Metrobus service to replace Circulator service. Additionally, we are proposing small reductions to our FTE count, parking program, Streetcar program, and overall supplies budget –

reductions that we feel will realize efficiencies and have very little impact on the public's experience.

Finally, we are proposing increases to:

- our popular Capital Bikeshare program to fund growth in the network and ridership;
- a Streatery beautification program; and,
- a micro-transit grant program, among others.

I will discuss these enhancements in greater detail throughout my testimony today.

#### **Slide 4**

Mayor Bowser's FY 2025 budget continues significant investments in DDOT's capital program with a \$2.0 billion investment over the CIP. The capital budget funds all of DDOT's long-term investments in the District's transportation assets, from Safety projects, to major Corridor improvements and state of good repair investments.

Of note, the proposed budget also shifts \$158.5 million in current project balances to the CIP – mainly in FY 2025 – in an effort to align project budgets with project delivery schedules.

#### **Slide 5**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is making a once-in-a-generation investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure. DDOT already takes advantage of the growing formula funds available from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), but we are also aggressively applying for the various new discretionary grants authorized under the legislation.

As noted on this slide, we are winning these grants, too. To-date we have won \$170 million in federal grants. I am most excited about RAISE grants supporting Wheeler Road and South Capitol Street Trail as well as the INFRA grant for East Capitol Street. These grants will make key safety and mobility investments along important corridors.

Additionally, we recently made significant headway with USDOT in becoming eligible to apply for their Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program. We will keep this Committee informed about our progress, and we are very encouraged about this development.

### **Slide 6**

The recent Capitol One Arena modernization and expansion agreement highlights one of the District's greatest strengths: Our world-class transportation network that can move people to and from large events as well as smaller gatherings in our Downtown core.

Mayor Bowser recognizes that no one will come Downtown if they cannot get there quickly, safely, and reliably so her budget makes the key investments in WMATA and DDOT to keep Downtown thriving.

The FY 2025 budget supports continued investments in transportation projects that will improve downtown, such as Bus Priority, Capital Bikeshare, and Streetscape projects like Penn West. Additionally, the budget includes funding for a Downtown Transportation study so DDOT can work with stakeholders to find the best projects that fit the needs of businesses and residents alike.

### **Slide 7**

DDOT's infrastructure projects, big and small, are designed to support a transportation network that offers safe and secure travel choices for all users. The Mayor's budget continues to support our agency's proactive work to improve safety where it is needed the most.

### **Slide 8**

Safety is, of course, one of the most important goals in moveDC and the FY 2025 budget provides significant investments in helping us re-design our roadways to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the District. The High-Injury Network (HIN) identifies the corridors and intersections where a disproportionate number of crashes occur – it helps us target both our quick-build/tactical investments as well as major corridor projects for longer term impact. The FY 2025 budget includes \$82 million in our Safety & Mobility capital project to fund quicker-build projects and \$248 million in our Streetscape capital project to fund major corridor investments.

### **Slide 9**

Major corridor improvement projects on the HIN are the best way to make long-term safety design changes. The six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) makes critical investments in 10

corridors on the HIN as described on this slide. Highlights include continued work on some of our most dangerous corridors such as Southern Avenue, Alabama Avenue and East Capitol Street which is the recipient of the federal INFRA grant.

Some of those that are still in the planning phase, such as New York Avenue and North Capitol Street, will not see additional design and construction funding in the CIP because we do not have a preferred alternative selected yet and cannot reliably budget for the final project.

### **Slide 10**

Tactical interventions allow DDOT to proactively *and* reactively address safety issues with quick and medium-sized projects such as bulb-outs, pedestrian refuges, and traffic signal modification. The FY 2025 budget supports our primary proactive program – the Annual Safety Program, or ASAP, which delivers about 100 projects across the District annually.

In addition to the proactive work, the FY 2025 budget also fully funds DDOT’s responsive work – both the Traffic Safety Input program and post-fatal interventions. Under the TSI program DDOT is reviewing and addressing nearly 1,000 locations annually.

### **Slide 11**

Another key safety initiative at DDOT is our Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program which has grown, with the support of this Committee, to encompass a number of funding streams. These investments have allowed the agency to stand-up a robust program that works with schools and parents alike to make walking and cycling to school safer.

Starting in FY 2024, DDOT is delivering at least 25 Action Plans per year and will meet this goal annually going forward. In addition, we are happy to announce that the agency has recently awarded a standalone contract to build all the approved interventions that are being managed by SRTS, including new sidewalk construction, crosswalk installation, and traffic calming measures among others.

### **Slide 12**

The FY 2025 budget continues to support operating the District’s ATE camera network – a key enforcement tool to help ensure drivers operate their vehicles safely. To-date, DDOT has installed 461 cameras, including 296 cameras on our roadways and intersections plus 25 School

Bus Stop-Arm and 140 on Metrobuses to enforce bus lanes and bus stops. And we are on track to install all 477 cameras by the end of this month.

These cameras are having a positive impact: A peer-reviewed study found that ATE cameras in the District can reduce injury crashes by 30% within a year of installation and that 70% of first-time offenders do not get a second ticket. Our goal is to change behavior through engineering and enforcement interventions.

### **Slide 13**

Mobility is a strategic goal because this is the heart of operating a DOT in an urban environment: offering multimodal options so all residents and visitors can easily and safely travel on foot, by transit, or by bike.

### **Slide 14**

As discussed earlier, the District has made significant commitments to funding WMATA in FY 2025 but difficult decisions had to be made elsewhere in the budget. Since its launch two decades ago, Circulator has provided reliable, customer-forward service throughout the District. While this service has done so much to get District residents and visitors around our city, ridership on Circulator has not been able to rebound as much as other modes since the pandemic and the cost to operate the network is unsustainable.

As a result, the FY 2025 budget will fund the system through about March 2025. DDOT is currently working with WMATA on various scenarios to maintain service on key corridors and we are also requesting \$620,000 to help Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) establish their own fixed-route micro-transit offerings.

### **Slide 15**

The District's Bus Priority program is one of the best ways that DDOT can complement the increased investment to operate Metrobus in FY 2025. The FY 2025 budget continues to support DDOT's plan to design and build 51 Bus Priority projects in the District and, consistent with moveDC, to have 25 bus lane-miles built or under construction by the end of FY 2025. Recent highlights include M Street SE, 8th Street NE and Minnesota Avenue SE. The budget will fund new locations on U Street NW, Georgia Avenue NW, 11th Street SE, and 8th SE among others.

### **Slide 16**

The FY 2025 budget supports DDOT's goal of building a network of bike lanes and bikeways to keep bicyclists safe and help the District meet its sustainability goals by reducing single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel. These projects not only improve safety for cyclists but also, where possible, redesign the roadway to improve safety and visibility for pedestrians and drivers as well. One facility that is getting a lot of use at this time of year is 15th Street NW. With our partners in the National Park Service, DDOT was able to extend the bike lane south to the Tidal Basin vastly improving access and reducing stress for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

### **Slide 17**

Trails provide residents and visitors low stress transportation options that, in many cases, allow us to take advantage of the natural beauty that the District has to offer. The FY 2025 budget supports seven trail projects across the District and moves the needle on completing the regional network. Many of these projects represent incremental, but significant, improvement on existing assets. For example, the planned improvements to the trail along Suitland Parkway will take it from a high-stress experience to one that is much safer and accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists and others of all abilities.

### **Slide 18**

For the past 12 months, Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) has consistently broken ridership records – a condition that is a sign of success of the program. Ridership has grown 72% since FY 2020 and FY 2023 saw CaBi's highest-ever ridership, with the addition of 2,000 ebikes and 115 stations since the system opened. Residents and visitors are using CaBi to make those last mile connections or, with the advent of ebikes, taking longer journeys solely with CaBi. The Mayor's FY 2025 budget supports the continued operations for the system and the needed capital funds to keep the growing system to a state of good repair.

### **Slide 19**

DDOT delivers, and we strive to complete projects on-time and on-budget while engaging and communicating with the community.

**Slide 20**

The FY25 budget will continue to make needed investments in our bridges – these are long-term projects that will provide much needed improvements to the condition of the bridges and update the use of the roadway to accommodate multi-modal investments to the extent possible.

**Slide 21**

In addition to the major rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, DDOT will also embark on a new bridge to provide much-needed access to the Anacostia Metrorail station from across Suitland Parkway and we will install improved safety barriers on the William Howard Taft Bridge before starting a rehabilitation project.

**Slide 22**

Through our management and operations goal, DDOT will continue to ensure a state of good repair for our existing assets.

**Slide 23**

The FY 2025 budget continues to make the historic investment to ensure our assets are maintained and in a state of good repair. Alleys are continuing to be rebuilt and rehabilitated with a plan toward restoring 241 more locations by 2027. In addition, while utilities are doing a lot of work in the District – especially for much needed lead line replacement – we are continuing to make progress toward eliminating poor condition roads. And, of course, sidewalks. Currently, about 90% of sidewalks are in the excellent to fair condition and we are shifting to a more proactive and performance-based approach to get a better sense of their condition. Finally, I want to highlight a new capital project called BLM Plaza Asset Management – with \$2.7M over the CIP, this project will allow us to maintain one of our signature projects to a state of good repair for years to come.

**Slide 24**

The DC Smart Street Lighting Project will modernize streetlights in the District of Columbia by converting them to LED technology with remote monitoring and control capabilities. LEDs better direct light onto the road, sidewalks, and trails, all helping to improve safety and advance



the District's Vision Zero goals. The project increases the city's sustainability efforts by reducing streetlight energy consumption by more than 50 percent, eliminating 38,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

**Slide 25**

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

**Slide 26**

DDOT maintains scores of stormwater and flood mitigation assets and the FY 2025 helps ensure that they are kept to a state of good repair. Additionally, the funding is needed to respond to emergencies such as those that occurred in the summer of CY 2023. DDOT has the contractual capacity to respond to these emergencies, and the related capital projects need to be fully funded to ensure that sufficient funds are kept in reserve to address them as they arise.

And, on April 8th, the USDOT announced that DDOT won a \$1 million PROTECT grant for flood mitigation on Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue.

**Slide 27**

DDOT's Urban Forestry Division is the primary steward of Washington DC's approximately 200,000 public trees and has a mission of keeping this resource healthy, safe, & growing. Among many other benefits, these trees improve our air and water quality, and provide critical habitat for birds and bees, and cool our neighborhoods.

The FY 2025 budget supports the planting and maintenance of street trees as well trees in other public areas, such as schools and parks. The Tree Fund is a critical tool, as is the capital program, to ensure that we plant 8,000 trees per year to grow the District's canopy.

**Slide 28**

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), intends to establish a nationwide network of electric vehicle (EV) chargers that support access and reliability for all users. DDOT will use the funding to make

grants to vendors that will install for Direct Current (DC) Fast chargers along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors.

DDOT is estimating installation of 5 charging stations in FY 2025. The Request for Applications (RFA) for FY24 was released on March 29, 2024.

**Slide 29**

Enjoyable spaces are accessible, safe, and welcoming to residents, visitors and commuters, and we continue to invest in these kinds of place-making projects.

**Slide 30**

The 11th Street Bridge Park has completed final design and we are working with the private sponsor to move the construction phase to procurement. The Park will be built on the old piers from the original 11th Street Bridge and will provide a park connecting the two sides of the Anacostia River.

The project is funded with local and private sources and we are working closely with BBAR to help make this project a reality.

**Slide 31**

The District embraced Streateries during the COVID-19 pandemic and we are making them a permanent option for restaurants with a new rulemaking, permit process, and guidelines for safety and aesthetics. As part of this program, the FY 2025 budget includes \$750K in one-time operating funds to help streateries establish compliant plans and, ultimately, construct a streatery. Streateries – especially safe ones that are aesthetically pleasing – will make the District, including the Downtown core, even more attractive.

**Slide 32**

This concludes my presentation. I look forward to addressing any questions that you may have.