

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Transportation



Fiscal Year 2027 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 Charles Allen, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 120
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12:30 P.M.

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Good afternoon, Committee Chair Allen, Councilmembers and District residents. I'm Sharon Kershbaum, Director of the District Department of Transportation and am pleased to testify at today's hearing on Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2027 budget for our agency. The FY 2027 budget helps DDOT focus on its core mission and deliver on its strategic plan, moveDC. It ensures a state of good repair for key assets, such as roads and bridges, and invests in new projects to make sure we can provide a safe and multi-modal transportation network. As with all budgets—especially in recent years--some difficult trade-offs had to be made to account for major cost pressures. Despite this, I feel that the FY27 budget helps GROW DC by ensuring that DDOT's projects and programs are funded to retain and attract new residents, support economic development, and keep the District moving.

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The FY27 budget appears to make major cuts to DDOT, but in fact the changes are right-sizing our operations and will not impact public facing services. First, we are properly funding both overtime and streetlight energy payments. Next, the budget eliminates contract funding and vacant staff positions for the Streetcar program, which has now ended. We are also moving more costs out of our overhead/indirect budget and de-funding non-critical vacant positions. Finally, the estimate for CaBi revenues was reduced to reflect the eliminated one-time rollover from FY25 to FY26.

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The FY27 budget continues to make significant investments in DDOT's capital program—first, the local match requirement to our federal formula grants is fully funded. It ensures that all of our state of good repair work on federal roads, bridges, and tunnels is supported. Next, the local budget adds to that by fully funding investments on local streets, alleys, and sidewalks; funding safety investments as well as improving mobility options like multi-use trails. Overall, the budget represents \$4.1 billion over the six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to reflect both federal and local investments, which is a \$500 million increase over our current CIP.

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One of the pillars of the Mayor's growth agenda is growing our economy, including supporting sports and entertainment venues, as well as revitalizing our Downtown spaces. The budget includes investments in roadways, bridges, and transit to build out the infrastructure on the RFK site and improve connections to the stadium campus for all users. In Downtown, investments near the Capital One arena, including a transformative plaza adjacent to the Portrait Gallery, support a vibrant and dynamic public realm. These investments appear in the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) budget, but DDOT will be closely involved in these efforts.

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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.

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Safety is, of course, DDOT's north star and the FY27 budget provides significant investments in helping us redesign our roadways to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the District. The High-Injury Network 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 FY27 budget includes \$48.7 million in our Safety and Mobility capital project to fund quicker-build projects and \$135.3 million in our Streetscape capital project to fund major corridor investments.

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Spot Safety interventions allow DDOT to proactively and responsively address safety issues with quick and medium-sized projects such as bulb-outs, pedestrian refuges, and traffic signal modification. The FY 2027 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 2027 budget also fully funds DDOT's responsive work, including both the Traffic Safety Input program and post-fatal interventions.

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Major corridor improvement projects on the High Injury Network (HIN) are the best way to make long-term safety design changes. The six-year CIP makes critical investments in eight corridors on the HIN as described on this slide. Highlights include continued work on our most dangerous corridors such as Bladensburg Road, Rhode Island Avenue, and North Capitol Street.

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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. DDOT is continuing to deliver at least 25 action plans per year and will meet this goal annually going forward.

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The FY27 budget continues to support operating the District's Automated Safety Camera (ASC) network, which is a key enforcement tool to help ensure drivers operate their vehicles safely. To-date, DDOT has installed 547 cameras, including 312 cameras on our roadways and intersections, 25 School Bus Stop-Arm cameras and 210 cameras on Metrobuses to enforce bus lanes and bus stops. The program continues to advance safety goals by encouraging safer driving, reducing severe crashes, and protecting pedestrians and cyclists in the District. FY27 funding includes a \$310,000 enhancement to introduce an additional 70 Clear Lanes cameras to improve bus efficiency and safety.

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At the heart of operating a transportation department in an urban environment is mobility: offering multimodal options so all residents and visitors can easily and safely travel on foot, by transit, or by bike.

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The District's Bus Priority program is one of the best ways that DDOT can support WMATA's Metrobus operations. The FY27 budget includes \$92M over the CIP to continue delivering

projects to improve bus speeds and efficiency across all eight Wards. Completed bus priority projects have boosted bus speeds by as much as 40%.

DDOT will focus our efforts on the highest bus frequency corridors, based on the new Metrobus network, and we'll be updating our Bus Priority network and plan accordingly in FY27.

Bus priority projects also allow DDOT to deliver safety improvements on our HIN. The initial 2027 Bus Priority construction schedule includes projects on multiple Tier 1 HIN corridors, including U St NW, Georgia Ave NW, and Minnesota Ave NE.

Meanwhile, initial planning is already underway for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on H St-Benning Rd NE. This project will dramatically improve the transit experience on the corridor, shortening travel times and improving reliability for everyone who depends on the D20, D2X, and C57. This investment in speed and reliability will also establish a convenient link between Union Station and RFK, giving fans an exciting new option for reaching the new stadium without sending more traffic through the neighborhood. It will also help local businesses tap into the thousands of people attending events. Unlike an underground Metro tunnel, the BRT allows riders to see the many shops and restaurants along the line. And unlike driving and circling for parking, it's easy to hop off and on. This project is also envisioned as the first step towards a Crosstown BRT (also known as the Gold Line) connecting Ward 7 to Georgetown and beyond.

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Capital Bikeshare had a third consecutive record-breaking year in 2025— a sign of the program's success. Residents and visitors are using CaBi to make those last mile connections or, with the advent of e-bikes, taking longer journeys solely with CaBi. The Mayor's FY27 budget supports the continued operations for the system through its special purpose revenue fund and provides the needed capital funds to keep the growing system to a state of good repair.

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The FY27 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 travel. The budget will support our existing slate of projects as well as new

projects identified through our strategic bikeways plan. 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.

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Trails provide residents and visitors low-stress transportation options that, in many cases, also showcase the natural beauty the District has to offer. The FY27 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, improvements on existing assets.

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

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The FY 2027 budget will continue to make needed investments in our bridges. These are long-term projects that will provide much needed improvements and update the use of the roadway to accommodate multi-modal investments to the extent possible. Highlights include Theodore Roosevelt, H Street, and Benning Road. In addition to the Benning Bridge and interchange project, we also have funding to include a Benning Road corridor project to improve multimodal access to the RFK campus.

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

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The FY27 budget continues to make the historic investment to maintain our assets in a state of good repair. Alleys are continuing to be rehabilitated with a plan to restore 215 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. 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, we are adding \$400,000 annually in our Strategic Asset Management budget to expand a program for camera-based asset condition assessments within the right-of-way. This technology will allow us to use our existing fleet to capture the condition of our roadways, signs, pavement markings, and flexposts, reducing our dependency on 311 notifications and inspections. We hope to add and maintain between 100-200 cameras to our vehicles with this budget.

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

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DDOT maintains many stormwater and flood mitigation assets and the FY27 budget helps ensure that they are kept to a state of good repair. Additionally, the budget includes funds that are needed in order to respond to emergencies created by more frequently occurring severe storms. This budget makes the contractual capacity to respond to these emergencies possible, and the related capital projects need to remain fully funded to ensure that sufficient funds are kept in reserve to address them as they arise.

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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, and growing. Among many other benefits, our trees improve our air and water quality, provide critical habitat for birds and bees, and cool our neighborhoods.

The FY27 budget supports the planting and maintenance of street trees as well as 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. Of note, the outyears

have been reduced for balancing purposes but we will revisit those in future budgets to ensure consistent investments.

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

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The 11th Street Bridge Park has completed final design, and we are working with Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR) 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.

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Together, these investments and program priorities shape DDOT's plans to GROW the District. This concludes my presentation. I look forward to addressing any questions that you may have.