



Testimony before the Hon. Mary M. Cheh,
Chair, Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Regarding MoveDC &
Confirmation of Matthew Brown, DDOT Director

by Cheryl Cort, Policy Director
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Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. The Coalition for Smarter Growth is the leading organization in the Washington, D.C. region dedicated to making the case for smart growth. Our mission is to promote walkable, inclusive, and transit-oriented communities, and the land use and transportation policies and investments needed to make those communities flourish.

We are pleased to contribute to the discussion about MoveDC. I have served as a member of the advisory group and participated in different public events related to the MoveDC's significant public outreach effort. MoveDC is a major milestone for the city. It is built on an extensive and innovative approach to public engagement, and sets a bold vision for our city's future. We commend DDOT for leading this deliberative process resulting in this far sighted plan. We urge the DC Council to embrace this plan for our future.

Move DC's vision, goals, analysis, and long term capital projects plan offer a transformative approach to planning our city's transportation future. Beginning with the cornerstone goal for Sustainability and Health: 75% of all commute trips in the District by non-auto modes, this vision and long term plan creates a lasting policy framework for the city. The goals seek to increase the person-carrying capacity of the transportation system, strengthen neighborhood connectivity with increased coverage of all modal networks, achieve zero fatalities and improve safety for all users of the network, protect and enhance public spaces, and preserve the system to maximize reliability. These goals are far more specific and meaningful than past generic statements about moving people and goods safely and reliably.

The results of the extensive public consultation, scenario testing, and refinement of goals, are a plan that enhances a truly multimodal system, prioritizes pedestrians and makes the most of bicycle and transit investments. This is a transformational vision, policy document and capital projects list to build the infrastructure for the transformation. MoveDC provides the overarching guidance for transportation decision-making that we have been seeking. It is not the view of a particular administration but an overarching future vision that plans our transportation networks to serve the broader goal of building sustainable communities. The plan provides a long needed decision-making framework for a multimodal infrastructure that puts pedestrian safety and access first, and integrates other modes and functions as priority needs require and right-of-way allows.

The plan gets specific with the key elements of the transportation network, by mode (transit, pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular), and by geographic area (downtown, eastern, northern, southern, western planning areas), regional connections and investments. It also provides supporting elements of Transportation Demand Management, Parking and Curbside Resources, and Sustainability and Livability – these are farsighted policy and programmatic recommendations befitting a 21st Century transportation strategy.

The scope of MoveDC, and framework for setting priorities through tiering modal priorities is an important step towards a more specific set of short term projects and programs. We are eager to take the next steps in this process, to finalize this document and move to implementation.

Speaking briefly to Matt Brown's confirmation as Director of DDOT, we wish to express our support for his nomination and appreciate some of the availability he has provided in his new role. We find that as bold as MoveDC is, DDOT in its daily practice seems to behave in the opposite – timid and tentative.

For example we understand that there's money in FY15 budget for the necessary Environmental Assessment of a 16th Street rush hour bus lane to be done. But no start date. We have requested a start date from Mr. Brown. It would be helpful if the Council could get a more specific commitment for when the study will begin.

We also want to express our concern that languishing Metrobus improvements are being passed over for less than optimal expenditures on the city's sometimes overlapping Circulator service. We need to establish a clearer understanding of what the mission of Circulator service is, and not waste resources duplicating some services, while neglecting other needed Metrobus priority corridor improvements.

Regarding residential permit parking and related visitor permit parking, we are concerned that DDOT doesn't have a cohesive approach – even if implementation of program changes needs to be incremental. We are concerned that DDOT will simply expand the current annual visitor parking pass program in similar form rather than examining alternatives that better meet the need to manage the RPP zoned curbside in high demand areas close to major job centers like Dupont, Georgetown, and Logan Circle. These areas are likely to experience a significant increase in use of VPP for commuting. Our suggestion is to pilot a "pay by phone if you don't have an RPP sticker" approach. This means eliminating the 2 hour free parking. It might also be possible to give residents a credit in a pay by phone account to give to visitors, thus extending a free visitor parking allocation without removing a market-based approach to managing the curbside.

Thank you for your consideration.