
September 7, 2017

Spring Worth
Project Manager, 16th Street NW Bus Lanes Project
Policy, Planning, and Sustainability Administration
District Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003
via spring.worth@dc.gov

RE: Support for 16th Street NW bus lanes, reversible lanes, and bus stop consolidation for 16th Street Bus Lanes Project - Design Phase

Dear Ms. Worth:

Thank you and DDOT staff for conducting the 16th Street Bus Lanes study. We are excited to have arrived at this important juncture after many years of advocating for bus lanes and other improvements for 16th Street bus service, which is one of the largest bus ridership routes in the region. We appreciate that DDOT is responding to the needs of the troubled but in-demand bus service for a corridor where buses carry half of the travelers during peak period, even though buses make up only a small fraction of the vehicles on 16th Street. The 16th Street bus corridor is plagued by chronic delays, bus bunching, and overall unreliable and overcrowded service. While DDOT and WMATA have made several improvements including adding S9 skip stop service and signal priority, much more needs to be done to offer high quality service for this high ridership corridor.

We enthusiastically support the proposed peak period bus lanes, in conjunction with other improvements to make bus service more reliable, efficient, and faster. These improvements will make the most of this limited right of way to provide better transportation services to corridor travelers.

Our position - Support for Option 2.5

- Our position is a modification of DDOT's Option 2, by adding a bus only lane in the northbound direction between U Street and P Street.
- Support full length, peak period, peak direction bus lanes on 16th Street NW from Arkansas Avenue downtown to H Street NW.
- Deploy reversible lanes for the full length of this corridor to provide more vehicular capacity during peak period in the peak direction. To meet safety standards for reversible lanes, we support the installation of overhead lane control signage.

- Support bus stop consolidation overall, while refining the list of bus stops based on further consultation and analysis.
- Implement other measures to reduce delay and improve transit service and overall travel capacity. Measures include: all-doors boarding, App-based fare payment option, automated photo enforcement on buses for the bus lane, extended hours for parking restrictions, dedicated towing, management of left turns.
- Implement all-doors boarding: We specifically ask DDOT to pursue a work plan for all-doors boarding with WMATA, given the time savings potential of this source of delay. We ask that DDOT provide an update to us on the status of all-doors boarding over the next two months.

Explanation

Option 2.5: When we started this effort, we hoped to convert 4 travel lanes into 5 lanes through the lower 16th Street travel corridor, since 5 travel lanes exist north of U Street. However, precise measurement determined that the right of way south of U Street is a few feet shy of making that possible. Between U Street and P Street, the right of way is approximately 48 feet rather than the minimum 50 feet needed for a 5-lane configuration.

Given this result, we still support using a reversible lane to ease the morning rush period in a 4-lane configuration south of U Street (rather than the hoped-for 5 lanes), even if it is not possible to use a reversible lane in the northbound direction during the PM peak period.

We also propose to implement bus lanes for each peak direction during the peak period since buses are usually carrying the most travelers, most efficiently, in the corridor during peak period. This is a challenge for the segment of 16th Street south of U Street to P Street since it is not possible to provide more than two northbound lanes – one as a dedicated bus lane, and one as a general travel lane. Our view is that with stepped up enforcement through automated enforcement on buses of the dedicated transit lane, dedicated towing, clearer signage, and extended hours for parking restrictions, it could be possible to manage traffic flow at a similar level to today's which is usually disrupted by illegally parked cars in the curb lane. Illegally parked cars constrict the PM peak capacity to often one lane. More effective enforcement could allow for freer flow of one lane for general use, and one lane for transit only. This would be an improvement from existing conditions.

Reversible lanes: While reversible lanes are not ideal, the current reversible lane between Arkansas Avenue and Irving Street seems to be working adequately to provide additional traffic capacity and not create hazardous conditions. With new overhead signage for reversible lanes, this will increase the safety of their use.

Bus stop consolidation: While we overall support DDOT's proposal to consolidate some bus stops, we recommend that individual stops be evaluated through consultation with users and revisions to the proposal made based on these findings. Once the bus stop consolidation plan is complete, we expect to see improvements to adjacent stops as recommended by DDOT's study.

The 16th Street bus corridor currently has a bus stop every 1/6th of a mile. If stops are consolidated to every 1/5th of a mile, riders could experience a 15-25 percent travel time savings on the S1, S2, and S4 routes. DDOT proposes to consolidate 3 of 16 southbound stops and 5 of 18 northbound stops. The stops were selected based on location within one block of an adjacent stop. The consolidated stops are also not S9 MetroExtra service stops. (We note this author supports consolidation even though she will personally lose her V Street bus stop, but can, and often does, walk to U Street.)

Thank you for your efforts to move commuters in this major corridor more efficiently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Cort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Cort