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April 11, 2025

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Ms. Sharon Kershbaum
Director Department of Transportation
250 M Street, SE Washington, DC 20003

VIA EMAIL: sharon.kershbaum@dc.gov

Re: Urgent prioritization of safety measures on the 500-800 blocks of 17th St SE

Dear Director Kershbaum:

At a properly noticed general meeting on April 8, 2025, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted X-X-X, based on the recommendation of its Transportation Committee, to submit the following request to the Department of Transportation (DDOT).

We request that DDOT urgently examine the safety situation on the section of 17th St. SE between Barney Circle and Potomac Ave. This stretch of road has been converted over the past several years into a two-lane section with parked cars on the west side and a two-way protected bike lane on the east, bordering Congressional Cemetery.

We appreciate the efforts by DDOT to enact a road diet, as this thoroughfare is frequently used and abused by commuters speeding through the neighborhood between highways. This letter is not meant to take away from that achievement. There are, however, a few urgent updates needed to abate some of the dangerous and unfortunate effects of the narrower roadway.

In short, drivers are continuously hitting the new traffic islands, which are very difficult to see during the day and are practically invisible at night. We urge DDOT to paint, illuminate, or otherwise improve the visibility of these islands.

Below are two photos from Friday, March 28, and January 31, 2025. They depict vehicles having struck the median and either getting stuck, resulting in an abandoned vehicle, or careening into the bike lane.



Notably, on the island where the green car is stuck, there used to be a sign installed by DDOT. Our neighbors report that in November 2024, they filed service request number 24-00700961 to repair the sign after a driver plowed into it. The ticket was reported closed, but the sign was not replaced.

These are not isolated incidents. One neighbor living on 17th St has reported seeing approximately one collision a week from her home, and has submitted extensive documentation to DDOT through a TSI.

Many/most of these incidents do not result in a police response, but they do contribute to significant feelings of danger for residents on this street. Families attempting to get their children into cars along 17th St have reported feeling like their lives were at risk just trying to get into and out of parked vehicles. Hit-and-run accidents where cars avoiding the islands make physical contact with parked cars are a regular occurrence.

We welcome dialogue with DDOT on this issue and hope that the seven open TSIs on this section of 17th St can be addressed as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Ryder'.

Edward Ryder, Chair of ANC 6B

CC: Abraham Diallo, DDOT - abraham.diallo@dc.gov