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February 10, 2016

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VIA EMAIL: leif.dormsjo@dc.gov

RE: Comments on DDOT's Southeast Boulevard Feasibility Study

Dear Mr. Dormsjo,

At a properly noticed meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B on February 9, 2016, with a quorum present, ANC 6B voted 7-0-0 to send you comments on the draft results of the Southeast Boulevard Feasibility Study and our support for the resumption of the NEPA *Barney Circle & Southeast Boulevard Transportation Planning Study*.

COMMISSIONERS

SMD 1 Jennifer Samolyk
SMD 2 Diane Hoskins
SMD 3 James Loots
SMD 4 Kirsten Oldenburg
SMD 5 Steve Hagedorn
SMD 6 Nick Burger
SMD 7 Daniel Chao
SMD 8 Chander Jayaraman
SMD 9 vacant
SMD 10 Denise Krepp

ANC 6B appreciates the effort that DDOT undertook to conduct the feasibility study and thanks DDOT for seeking Commission and community input in the scoping of the study and providing a presentation on January 6, 2016, on the draft findings of the study. This study serves as an important "bridge" between the concepts developed by the Office of Planning (OP) in its Southeast Boulevard Planning Study and the resumption of the NEPA study. The Commission is pleased that the feasibility study did not find any fatal flaws in the OP concepts but recognizes that there are funding and other challenges ahead.

The study identified the estimated costs to the road portion of the project as substantial and a significant challenge to overcome. A cost comparison with one of the 2014 alternatives from the NEPA study, or possibly other studies, would have greatly assisted the Commission in understanding the impact of this finding, assuming such comparisons are possible.

Interpretation of the traffic analysis also proved difficult, but in retrospect the evaluation of the more rigorous traffic analysis provided with the 2014 NEPA study alternatives was also problematic. The Commission suggests that it would be helpful for both DDOT and the community if DDOT offers a tutorial on the production and analysis of traffic data. This would be even more beneficial if accomplished early on in the context of the resumed NEPA study.

Continued on Page Two

Notwithstanding the need for a better understanding of financial and traffic analyses, the Commission supports the resumption of the NEPA study, preferably as quickly as possible. Within this context we ask that DDOT follow our vision for this project, fully coordinated with OP, to include:

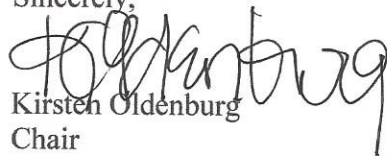
- connection(s) to the Anacostia River waterfront
- a new neighborhood linked to the existing street grid
- a boulevard that adequately moves people between 11th Street and Barney Circle

The feasibility study clearly indicates that the determination of excess land for uses such as housing or parks through a disposition process cannot be initiated until the road system has been designed, and possibly funded. Considering this, we ask that the alternatives that arise from the NEPA study be designed in such a way that supports our vision and sets aside as much contiguous land as possible. The Commission also believes that such alternatives should include one which would deck the site with an upper level at grade for the neighborhood street grid over a lower level 4-lane boulevard that would directly connect 11th Street and Barney Circle.

ANC 6B has repeatedly voiced concerns about the inclusion of a bus terminal within this project for a variety of reasons. This position has been reinforced by the feasibility study, which projects the additional cost of this component. Other concerns expressed by the community about the SE Boulevard have been a loss of their property values and increases in cut through vehicle traffic on residential streets.

In conclusion, the Commission is committed to working with DDOT and various stakeholders over the next years to realize this new, connected neighborhood and reiterates its thanks to DDOT for completing the feasibility study in a timely manner.

Sincerely,


Kirsten Oldenburg
Chair

cc:

The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Charles Allen, DC Councilmember for Ward 6
The Honorable Mary Cheh, Chair, DC Council Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Mr. Eric Shaw, Director, DC Office of Planning

APPENDIX A (To ANC 6B Letter to DDOT)

The following statements and questions were prepared by Commissioner Daniel Chao and Resident Member Kelly Waud and presented to the ANC 6B Transportation Committee at its meeting on February 3, 2016.

Purpose of DDOT SE Blvd Study

The goal of the DDOT Feasibility study stated in section 1-5: Complete an assessment to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the concepts, including constructability, project costs, and process requirements.

Purpose of ANC 6B –

ANC 6B should weigh in on whether the feasibility study achieved its stated goal and submit follow up questions to be answered by DDOT in writing prior to next steps to be taken by DDOT.

Questions

I. Traffic Assessment

1. What is the basis for the statement on page 1 that "The future Southeast Boulevard will serve less vehicle traffic as compared to the previous Southeast Freeway"? This appears to contradict the images shown at the January Transportation Committee meeting that indicated increased road traffic in figures 7 and 8.
2. How does DDOT define "previous Southeast Freeway"?
3. Can DDOT representatives meet with ANC 6B to discuss and answer specific questions regarding traffic patterns presented in figures 6, 7, and 8?

At the ANC Transportation Committee meeting on January 6, questions were raised regarding glaring discrepancies in traffic patterns shown in Figure 6 "no Build" compared to Figures 7 and 8 "4 lane build; 2 land build". Figure 6 shows a map of red lines on all streets throughout Downtown DC, Capitol Hill and SE DC and Figures 7 and 8 shows only red and green traffic patterns on small segment of map (only 695, 295, SE Blvd, E Capitol and few blocks adjacent to SE Blvd).

The presenter was unable to explain discrepancies between Figures 6, 7, and 8. Questions were posed such as: why would finishing the 4 block SE Blvd relieve traffic congestion for all of downtown DC and SE DC and Capitol Hill. Why are local blocks on Penn, K or L Streets going to face increased traffic of up to 500 cars per day. The presenter did not have answers however stated the figures are impacted by larger regional traffic pattern, a pattern that he could not speak to.

4. Why does DDOT "anticipate(s) that vehicle traffic volume in the project corridor will be reduced as compared to the previous condition" (section 2.2)? How is DDOT defining "previous condition" in this instance? What factors does DDOT presume is driving this decrease?
5. DDOT studied AM peak period traffic. Is PM peak period consistent with the changes anticipated from AM peak period? Did DDOT study PM peak period?
6. How is "best balance" determined in the following statement pulled from section 2.2 of the report?
"Based on the travel demand analysis, a neighborhood-sensitive four lane section offers the best balance

between accommodating anticipated travel demand, achieving increased multi-modal connection as envisioned in the area's strategic planning documents, and respecting the site's context within the Hill East neighborhood."

7. It appears the costs for proposed traffic calming measures anticipated for 13th, 14th and 15th streets have not been incorporated into the cost assessment. (Ref "Connections to 13th, 14th, and 15th Streets would result in increased volumes on those streets, which may require traffic calming measures to deter cut-through traffic. in section 2.2, and page 2-8 in Section 2-4).

Has cost for proposed traffic calming measures anticipated for 13th 14th and 15th been incorporated?

If not, what does DDOT anticipate those costs to be, and why were they not included in the overall project scope?

8. How will this project better connect the neighborhood to the Anacostia since residents currently have access from Barney Circle and 11th Street. How does DDOT define and quantify "better access"? (e.g., As reduction in walk time from the metro?)

9. How will the project's anticipated change in traffic pattern benefit commuters? Especially if the North-South numbered streets are connected to the SE-SW freeways as that will slow commuter traffic?

10. How exactly will this project overcome the barrier to the Anacostia that is the CSX railway?

II. Bus Storage Component

Report states: "A transit garage could be provided at Southeast Boulevard that takes advantage of the location and topography of the site to minimize visual impacts to surrounding neighborhoods and so that vehicles accessing the facility would not use residential neighborhood streets."

1. Will buses use new constructed ramp, road, entrance or which existing local streets?

2. Can DDOT provide exact route buses will travel to and from storage site that would not impact local traffic, noise and air congestion?

Figure 10 in report only show where buses would exit and enter via Barney Circle and Hopkins Children Playground adjacent. Based on figure 10, buses can cause traffic congestion on 11th Street SE, M Street SE, I Street SE or along 695 freeway adjacent to Marine Barracks as they enter and exit using existing road.

3. Does DDOT enforce no idling rule and if so, how would DDOT coordinate with city agencies to enforce it?

4. The cost project for bus storage is \$65-70 million at minimum and can increase each year beyond 2015. Has a cost benefit assessment been done or will it be done? For example, how much revenue will the bus storage generate for D.C. to justify the price tag?

5. What is the comprehensive plan for this bus storage component to relieve parking at RFK stadium?

6. As all 3 options propose require grade separation (bus storage is below grade and roads, parks, development above grade), will the bus storage component be required to be built before extension of the grid?
7. How can the grid be extended with parks and development built without first constructing the underground bus storage?
8. Structurally can an underground bus storage support development of residential and business buildings 50 feet tall above grade?
7. Since current ground surface is below grade south of L Street, can SE Blvd traffic lanes be constructed to travel below grade in lieu of the bus storage component similar to the planned Capital Crossings project? Can DDOT conduct a cost assessment of SE Blvd tunnel in lieu of bus storage component?
8. The report indicates that "detailed programming of (transit vehicle) storage needs" has not happened. When does DDOT anticipate this detailed review? Will DDOT limit its consideration of locations to the proposed SE Boulevard project? What other site is DDOT considering within DC for transit vehicle storage? Region wise, what sites are being offered or considered in Virginia and Maryland?
9. Can DDOT pursue federal and regional (DC/MD/VA) partnerships for a comprehensive bus storage assessment to identify several storage areas throughout our capital region?
10. \$65 to \$70 million is a significant amount of public funds. Why is a \$65-\$70 million project attached to a local road/grid extension study? Can DDOT conduct a separate project study for the \$70m bus storage project with capital region impact?
11. Can DDOT incorporate ongoing discussion of development of the RFK site and Reservation 13 to this project? Can DDOT or local agencies consider the bus storage component cohesively tied to RFK and Reservation 13 development plans?
12. Should the bus storage component move forward, does Office of Planning have a role to play by conducting a comprehensive plan to incorporate RFK and Reservation 13?

II. Involvement with Stakeholders and the Community

1. DDOT's feasibility study states: "Given the cost and duration associated with Southeast Boulevard, it will be important to continue discussions with a broad spectrum of stakeholders during the EA to confirm community support for the project, engage with AWI Signatories, and evaluate project costs and funding options."
2. How will consensus be determined? Whose voice has the most weight?
3. Can DDOT provide a written work plan of steps of study and public input prior to final sign off for construction, if one assumes the project will be constructed?
4. Section 2.1.1 indicates that private development is not consistent with Title 23 – How was this determined? process? cost? value?
 - What happens should DDOT be unable to surplus the excess land not needed for transportation purposes?
 - How and when would DDOT know whether FHWA would allow for the disposition of the "excess"?

5. Study states: "the next step would be to engage the Southeast Boulevard Partners to initiate the process to plan, design, and build the Southeast Boulevard Project." Who are the Southeast Boulevard Partners?

6. On July 27, 2015, per DDOT's request and solicitation for public comment for the feasibility study, Commissioner Chao, ANC 6b07 submitted the following comment to DDOT:

Good morning!

Per DDOT's public comment period, please see below comments from Brian and Kelly Waud, residents of 1300 block of L Street SE.

As SMD 6b07 Commissioner, I agree with Ms. Waud's comments regarding L Street not becoming a commuter road and that the project must not create additional challenges/dangerous scenario for pedestrians and cyclists. We have already witnessed earlier the issue with taking out cross walks on 11st at K and L Streets SE and DDOT has recognized that a crossing must be reinstated and will work on it. Please keep in mind public safety as you proceed with designs, etc.

We know from observation that the current SE blvd experiences high volume traffic during rush hours, about 5 hours per day and I am concerned that as you extend the grid, you are forcing that kind of traffic pattern onto L Street and low income residents at Hopkins. I don't feel that DDOT wishes to subject low income residents to additional air pollution.

And you also recall that several ANC commissioners raised concerns regarding the issue of title check not haven been conducted. To that issue, can you let me know what kind of partnership DDOT will have with federal agencies? I'm a little confused as to whether the project will receive matching funds from FHWA, whether funds have already been provided and set aside. I thought this project was shovel ready but apparently it isn't.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

best,

Daniel

How did DDOT aim to address or consider Commissioner Chao's public comments on high traffic volume impact to K and L Streets.

How does planning for daily entrance/exit of hundreds of tour and passenger buses adjacent to children's playground at public housing complex comply with Executive Order 12898?

How did DDOT consider Commissioner Chao's submitted public comment on pollution impact to low income residents?