



Re: Intersection of 14th St, D St, and Kentucky Ave SE

Dear Interim Director Kershbaum:

At a properly noticed general meeting on November 14, 2023, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted 9-0-0, based on the unanimous recommendation of its Transportation Committee, to submit the following request to the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT).

Thank you for sending a DDOT engineer, Rahul Jain, to our ANC 6B Transportation Committee meeting on November 8 to discuss the intersection of 14th St, D St, and Kentucky Ave SE (14/D/KY). Like the many other “number-letter-state” intersections in DC, this is a challenging intersection to manage. However, ANC 6B believes that the current configuration excessively favors vehicle flow over pedestrian flow and safety. The streets that form 14/D/KY are rather wide considering that none are arterials: the crosswalks are 40 ft long at D St, 45 ft long at KY, and a whopping 55 ft long at 14th St. Rahul Jain tells us that DDOT considered a full “Barnes Dance” for this intersection, but could not implement it, because the road was too wide for ADA-speed pedestrians to navigate the diagonal crossings (which, by our measurements, range from 52 ft at the narrowest diagonal to a stunning 160 ft at the longest diagonal).

The northeast corner of this intersection contains Payne Elementary, and DDOT considers 14/D/KY to be dangerous enough to warrant a daily school crossing guard (who is great at his job, by the way). The southwest corner of 14/D/KY contains Safeway. While there are other grocery stores to the north and west, there are almost none to the south and east of this Safeway for several miles, so it is an unusually popular store for automobile drivers. Because of how dense and walkable this neighborhood is, however, people walking/biking/scooting still outnumber drivers at all hours.

Last year, DDOT converted the 400 block of 14th St SE to one-way southbound. As a result, the only lawful way for a vehicle to reach the Safeway parking garage is via the 14/D/KY intersection. This had two effects: one, it moved some Safeway traffic from 14/E to 14/D/KY; but two, it induced far more drivers to ignore the garage altogether and park on local streets. The hunt for street parking leads to lots of wasted driving. Once parked, these drivers turn into pedestrians who need to find safe passage across 14/D/KY and into the grocery store. As a result, the number of near-collisions has skyrocketed, and this intersection has become one of the most complained-of in our ANC.

DDOT's engineer Rahul Jain reported that DDOT is already planning to add additional crosswalks. We endorse this measure. Rahul Jain also reported that DDOT will consider adjusting the walk cycle. Currently, traffic lights are on a 100-second cycle, in which the intersection is vehicle-only for 70 seconds and pedestrian-only for 30 seconds, which seems out of balance with the large proportion of pedestrians at 14/D/KY. Indeed, this is one of the neighborhood's most jaywalked intersections because of that imbalance. We endorse DDOT considering adjustments to increase the walk cycle.

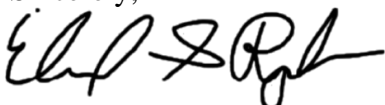
However, ANC 6B and our residents believe that the true cause of the problem is that 14/D/KY is too wide. Unlike most "number-letter-state" intersections, there is no pedestrian island in the middle. By our calculations, this intersection could fit an island up to 30 ft by 138 ft and still maintain a roundabout vehicle lane 11 ft wide. Furthermore, there is no daylighting at this intersection, so drivers can (and do) illegally park in the crosswalks, illegally cut off bikes/scooters, and illegally turn right on red. Given how wide D, 14th, and KY each are, it seems that all six corners could easily support bulbouts, initially in the form of flexiposts but eventually in the form of sidewalk extensions.

As DDOT's engineer Rahul Jain noted, this intersection is currently experiencing utility repairs, which is delaying the introduction of the new crosswalks that DDOT has planned. Those utility repairs have inadvertently shown how useful a road diet would be. Throughout the monthlong process, Exelon and Washington Gas have only occasionally needed to employ a flagger. Instead, because 14/D/KY is so wide, usually they are able to cordon off the section they are working on, and traffic continues to flow around them. This natural experiment suggests that 14/D/KY could be permanently narrowed with little harm to vehicular flow.

In light of the above reasons, ANC 6B formally requests that DDOT investigate 14/D/KY to determine whether further improvements to this school, residential, and commercial intersection are warranted in keeping with DDOT's Vision Zero obligations. We ask that DDOT update ANC 6B as this investigation proceeds, via your community engagement specialist Abraham Diallo. Thank you again for the work DDOT has already done at this intersection, and we look forward to your review and response.

Thank you for giving great weight to this Commission's recommendations. Should you wish to discuss this letter with the Commission, please contact ANC Commissioner Matt LaFortune, Chair of the ANC 6B Transportation Committee, at 6B09@anc.dc.gov.

Sincerely,



Edward Ryder, Chair of ANC 6B