



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS
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www.anc3e.org

RESOLUTION REGARDING DDOT NOI 13-62-TOA AND DDOT PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT IT

WHEREAS:

Background

1. DDOT began the Rock Creek West II Livability Study (“Livability Study”) in 2010 and completed it in early 2011.
2. The Livability Study, conducted by DDOT policy and engineering staff, along with private consultants, included several open houses and other opportunities for public engagement.
3. ANC 3E issued a resolution in April 2011 applauding DDOT for conducting the Livability Study.
4. We said then that Livability Study represented a valuable first step toward a systematic approach to decisionmaking about traffic calming, and each of its recommendations, if implemented, likely would improve neighborhood livability.
5. We noted, however, that funding constraints necessitated prioritization of Livability Study recommendations, and that DDOT had invited ANCs and others to help it set these priorities.
6. One of the Livability Study’s recommendations was installation of roundabouts on 42nd Street NW near Warren Street, NW (“Roundabouts”).
7. In our April 2011 resolution, we stated the following:
8. “The 42nd Street corridor abuts or is near Janney Elementary School, IONA Senior Services, Friendship Terrace Retirement Community, and St. Ann’s Academy, among other institutions, each of which is associated with considerable pedestrian activity by members of potentially-vulnerable populations.”
9. “The 42nd Street corridor has generated numerous complaints about speeding, traffic volume, and motorist disregard for pedestrians.”
10. “American University intends to move its law school near the 42nd Street corridor, which likely will generate additional traffic there.”
11. We therefore called upon DDOT to make installation of the Roundabouts one of its highest priorities in implementing recommendations of the Livability Study, to help slow traffic on this important street and, perhaps, deter some through traffic that belongs on adjacent arterial routes.
12. Subsequently, in negotiations with the ANC, the Tenleytown Campus Neighbors Association (TCNA), and AU, the University agreed to fund, *inter alia*, construction of the Roundabouts.
13. The Zoning Commission incorporated AU’s promise to fund the Roundabouts as a condition in its order permitting AU to move its law school near the 42nd Street corridor. The process leading up to that order included numerous public hearings.

14. On August 27, 2013, DDOT issued the above-referenced Notice of Intent (NOI) to install the Roundabouts on 42nd Street, NW at the north and south approach at Warren Street, NW.

15. DDOT informally advised the ANC that it intended initially to install roundabouts constructed of temporary material, and to adjust parameters of the roundabouts in light of experience with them before constructing permanent roundabouts.

16. On September 19, 2013, we formally supported the above-referenced Notice of Intent, and asked DDOT to report on its recommendations for construction of the permanent Roundabouts.

Temporary Roundabouts and Proposed Permanent Roundabouts

17. DDOT subsequently installed temporary roundabouts and appurtenant structures composed a multitude of thin metal pylons and plastic attachments.

18. ANC and TCNA members observed several problems associated with the placement and construction of the roundabouts, and reported these to DDOT.

19. First, the only crosswalk in the immediate vicinity of the temporary roundabouts abutted the southernmost roundabout. This created a hazard for pedestrians.

20. Second, the temporary roundabouts were placed close to the west side of the intersections. This led southbound traffic to need to slow down more than northbound traffic.

21. Finally, the temporary roundabouts as constructed – though they were useful to illustrate the two foregoing problems -- were not only unattractive but visually distracting to drivers. Moreover, pieces of the temporary roundabouts not infrequently became detached and, because ongoing maintenance was not performed, sometimes led to a debris field that created an independent hazard.

22. On May 23, 2014, DDOT submitted drawings depicting proposed permanent roundabouts (“Proposed Roundabouts”), along with a brief accompanying narrative.

23. The Proposed Roundabouts respond to the problems enumerated above.

24. First, DDOT proposes to install two new crosswalks. In particular, DDOT will remove the crosswalk that currently abuts the southernmost temporary roundabout and replace it with a crosswalk considerably closer to Van Ness Street, NW, extending the sidewalk on the east side of the street to meet the new crosswalk. This configuration will create a safer environment for pedestrians than existed before the temporary roundabouts were installed.

25. Second, the Proposed Roundabouts are closer to the east side of 42nd Street than the temporary roundabouts. This should reduce the disparity between directions in traffic-slowing.

26. Finally, the Proposed Roundabouts should be durable, simple for drivers to understand, and attractive. The Proposed Roundabouts and appurtenant structures would be made of concrete. The roundabouts themselves could feature plantings in the middle that would help beautify the streetscape. DDOT has confirmed that the artist’s rendering attached hereto as Exhibit 1 could be closely realized.

27. The Proposed Roundabouts also feature a “lip” that would make it easy for emergency vehicles to traverse.

28. DDOT predicts loss of only approximately three parking spaces in connection with roundabout installation, and street parking is plentiful near the roundabouts in any event.

29. DDOT has informed the ANC that 42nd Street is not suitable for a dedicated bike lane even absent roundabout installation given the current parking configuration.

30. The leader of TCNA, an organization which represents many if not most residents in the area adjacent to the Proposed Roundabouts, has stated that residents strongly want DDOT to move forward with the Proposed Roundabouts.

Conclusion

31. Members of ANC 3E have heard complaints for many years about threats to safety from traffic on 42nd Street, including frequent motorists' failures to obey stop signs, speeding, and disregard for crosswalks.

32. The Livability Study began in 2010. Today, four years later, many of its recommendations still have not been implemented, largely because of lack of funding.

33. We reiterate our belief that the Livability Study recommendations for 42nd Street, including the Proposed Roundabouts, will significantly contribute to safety in the neighborhood. Given the amount of time that has passed, and American University's obligation to will fund construction of these improvements, we believe DDOT should move quickly to implement them.

34. We recognize that DC has had little experience with roundabouts (as opposed to full-fledged multi-lane traffic circles, *eg*, Chevy Chase Circle).

35. In this regard, DC has fallen behind best practices in traffic calming, however.

36. Many jurisdictions, including both Maryland and Virginia, have made roundabouts key elements of their traffic safety endeavors. Representatives from these jurisdictions agree that although there is a learning curve associated with roundabouts, in the long run they tend to be safer than sign or signal-controlled intersections.¹

37. Virginia's Department of Transportation (VDOT), for instance, states that "[r]oundabouts are one of the safest types of intersection designs."² VDOT notes that roundabouts help reduce crashes, fuel consumption, and air pollution, as well as often enhancing the beauty of intersections.

38. Maryland's transportation department echoes many of VDOT's statements, and notes that "[i]n particular, single-lane roundabouts have been found to perform better than two-way stop-controlled intersections in the U.S."³

39. The public health literature also echoes these conclusions.⁴

¹ See generally "States embrace roundabouts for intersections," http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-06-23-roundabouts_N.htm?csp=34 (last viewed on June 10, 2014). See also *Cities Going Green: A Handbook of Best Practices*, Kemp *et al* ed., at 33-34 (reporting, among other things, on studies in which drivers surveyed before installation of single-lane roundabouts tended to oppose them, but when resurveyed one year after installation, strongly supported them).

² "Roundabouts in Virginia," <http://www.virginiadot.org/info/faq-roundabouts.asp> (last viewed on June 10, 2014).

³ "Traveling Maryland's Roundabouts – Safety," <http://www.sha.maryland.gov/Index.aspx?PageId=288> (last viewed on June 10, 2014).

⁴ See, *eg*, Retting, *et al*, "Crash and injury reduction following installation of roundabouts in the United States," *Am J Public Health* 20001 April; 91(4): 628-631 ("Results are consistent with numerous

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. ANC 3E would like to thank DDOT for acting on this matter and working in such a collaborative fashion with the community.
2. ANC 3E reiterates its support for DDOT Notice Of Intent 13-62-TOA.
3. We likewise support the Proposed Roundabouts, and respectfully urge DDOT, in conjunction with American University, to proceed as quickly as possible to replace the temporary roundabouts with the Proposed Roundabouts.
4. We reiterate our request that DDOT ensure that provisions are made to protect bicyclists, such as “Yield to Bicyclists In The Circle” signage and also urge DDOT to repaint and maintain the sharrows currently on 42nd Street..
5. We respectfully urge DDOT to work with TCNA to negotiate a memorandum of agreement that will allow TCNA members to beautify the Proposed Roundabouts with appropriate plantings and to maintain the plantings.
6. Neighbors at and around 4205 Warren Street believe that it may be safest to remove the single parking space in front of 4205 Warren, and we ask DDOT to investigate this possibility. A depiction of the single space in question is attached as Exhibit 2.
7. We understand that a resident whose house abuts one of the Proposed Roundabouts has applied for handicapped status. We urge DDOT to work with this resident and the ANC to provide reasonable accommodation for the resident.
8. Finally, we ask DDOT to report back to the ANC in a year with any suggestions for changes in signage or otherwise to improve the functioning of the Proposed Roundabouts.

The resolution passed by a vote of 4-0-0 at a properly noticed meeting held on June 12, 2014, at which a quorum was present, with Commissioners Bender, Frumin, Quinn, and Serebin in attendance.

ANC 3E

by Jonathan Bender
Vice-Chair

international studies and suggest that roundabout installation should be strongly promoted as an effective safety treatment.”) [abstract at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446639/> (last viewed on June 10, 2014)]

EXHIBIT 1



