



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS
WAKEFIELD CHEVY CHASE FORT GAINES
c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015
www.anc3e.org

Resolution Regarding DDOT Notice of Intent 17-02-TOA regarding safety assessment of the intersections of Reno Road and 39th Street NW, 39th and Ingomar Streets NW and Reno Road and Ingomar Street NW

Whereas, over the years there have been numerous crashes and near-crashes at the intersections of Reno Road and 39th Street NW; 39th Street and Ingomar Street NW; and Ingomar Street and Reno Road NW (the intersections). According to a 2½-year analysis of the intersection by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), all of the crashes were between cars traveling northbound or southbound on 39th Street and cars traveling on Reno Road, and

Whereas, the 16 side-impact crashes recorded by the study demonstrate the dangerous nature of this complicated intersection, and

Whereas, 8 of the crashes involved cars northbound on 39th Street, and 8 of the crashes involved cars southbound on 39th Street, and

Whereas, a hill on Reno Road between Huntington Street and Ingomar Street makes this intersection particularly difficult, and

Whereas, ANC 3E has been made aware of requests from numerous members of the community about safety at this intersection dating back many years, and

Whereas, on April 6, 2016, DDOT hosted a site visit at the intersections that was attended by Commissioners from both ANC 3E and ANC 3/4G as well as community members from both impacted ANCs, and during this meeting DDOT shared 4 options for improving the three intersections including erecting all-way stop signs at both intersections, adding a pair of traffic signals and two options for converting two-way streets to one-way streets, and

Whereas, on September 19, 2016, ANCs 3E and 3/4G jointly hosted a publicly noticed meeting about the above intersections that was attended by multiple DDOT staffers, ANC Commissioners from both ANCs and members of the community from both ANCs, and at this meeting DDOT officials presented a draft proposal for changes at all three intersections¹, and

Whereas, at both public meetings some members of the community suggested either all-way stop signs or a traffic signal to make the intersections safer, and

¹ <http://anc3e.org/reno-rd-safety-improvements-meeting-with-anc34g-and-ddot-sept-19-2016-notes/>

Whereas, DDOT's presentation at the September 19, 2016, meeting stated that "All-way stop control does not meet warrants and could result in low driver compliance," and

Whereas, it has been ANC 3E's observation that a stop sign for west- and eastbound traffic on Military Road at 43rd Street NW, which is a minor arterial and the only stop sign the entire length of Military Road, does not work well both because of disproportionate traffic volumes on the two streets and also because the stop sign does not resolve the sight line issues at the intersection but instead surprises drivers and gives pedestrians a false sense of safety, and

Whereas, according to the Federal Highway Administration, "the overuse of stop signs may cause drivers to carelessly stop at the stop signs that are installed. In stop sign observance studies approximately half of all motorists came to a rolling stop and 25 percent did not stop at all. Stop signs can give pedestrians a false sense of safety if it is assumed that all vehicles will come to a complete stop at the proper location. A study conducted by Beaubien also showed that placing stop signs along a street may actually increase the peak speed of vehicles, because motorists tend to increase their speed between stop signs to regain the time spent at the stop signs,"² and

Whereas, DDOT traffic engineers report that motorists are particularly liable to carelessly roll through stop signs when traffic on the opposing streets is greatly disproportionate, as it is at this intersection, and

Whereas, traffic signals in the District of Columbia cost a minimum of \$250,000 each and these intersections would likely require 2 traffic signals, and ANC 3E believes intersections without signals on major arterials like Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues, which also have much higher traffic and pedestrian volumes, would be more appropriate and urgent locations for such an infrastructure investment, and

Whereas, ANC 3E believes Reno Road maybe the only arterial or minor arterial road in Upper NW DC that generally has smoothly flowing traffic today, but this ANC also believes that adding a 3-cycle light or a pair of all-way stop signs close together will without a doubt create a traffic chokepoint that does not currently exist and that would be to the detriment of residents who live adjacent to the intersections as well as residents who live on parallel north-south streets that would be likely to get more traffic, and

Whereas, in September of 2013 a DDOT-initiated traffic study of the 5300 block of Reno Road (between Jocelyn Street and 39th Street NW) commissioned for the purpose of determining the suitability of this block for locating a traffic enforcement camera found the mean speed of traffic traveling southeasterly to be 25 miles per hour (MPH) and traffic traveling northwesterly to be 25 MPH, and the same study also found that 85% of cars traveling southeasterly were traveling at 28 MPH or less and 85% of cars traveling northwesterly were traveling at 30 MPH or less,³ and

Whereas, at both public meetings where DDOT officials were present as well as in email correspondence numerous members of the community asked about removing and pruning both vegetation and trees on

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https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/other_topics/fhwasa09027/resources/lowa%20Traffic%20and%20Safety%20FS-%20Unsignalized%20Intersections.pdf

³ http://ddotfiles.com/SpeedCameras/Ward3_Proposed/5300_RenoRd_NW.pdf

both the northeast side of Reno Road and 39th Street and the northwest side of Ingomar Street and 39th Street and Reno Road, and

Whereas, according to DDOT's Public Realm Design Manual in section 4.1:

Sight Distance Requirements

Landscaping or other enhancement located in the lawn area near an intersection must maintain minimum sight distances between streets to ensure public safety of motorists and pedestrians. Site distances vary depending on speed limits and site conditions and will be determined by DDOT. The DDOT Design and Engineering Manual provides minimum sight distances to use as a basic guide:

1. Street Intersections: A 30-foot by 30-foot sight triangle is required at every intersection corner. No landscaping or hardscaping shall be permitted that will block the line of sight, generally higher than 24 inches. Major roads may be required to include a 50-foot by 50-foot sight triangle (DEM-35.2.12). Additional sight distances may be required to comply with clearances. The Design and Engineering Manual, Chapter 30: Roadway, also gives stopping sight distances based on speed limit. Applications for fences at intersections must include sight-distance triangles on a street plan. All sight distances must be within the public right-of-way, behind a building restriction line, or a sight distance easement. If the line of sight crosses onto private property, a "Sight Distance Easement" shall be indicated on the plat to meet the required sight distance. The District shall obtain from the property owner the required easement or right-of-way to be dedicated to the District. In any event, the District shall work with the property owner to establish an unobstructed sight distance triangle (DEM-30.6.2).⁴

Whereas, ANC 3E has never received a satisfactory answer from DDOT about why the agency will not exercise its right to utilize the public space right of way to improve sight lines at this intersection, but

Whereas, only 5 of the 16 crashes noted above involved cars traveling south on 39th Street and colliding with cars traveling north on Reno Road, so removing a clearly obstructing tree and bushes on the northeast corner of the intersection would not go far enough to resolve the problems at this complicated intersection, and

Whereas, only 3 of the northbound 39th Street crashes involved cars traveling north on Reno Road, and

Whereas, on January 9, 2017, DDOT gave notice to ANC 3E that it intends to make the following modifications at the intersections:

- **Convert 39th Street NW between Reno Road and Jenifer Street NW to one-way northbound**
- **Remove on-street parking on the west side of 39th Street NW between Reno Road and Jenifer Street NW to allow for the installation of contra-flow bike lane**
- **Convert Ingomar Street NW between 39th Street and Reno Road NW to one-way eastbound**
- **Convert the intersection of 39th Street and Jenifer Street NW from two-way to all-way stop control**
- **Remove on-street parking on north side of Jenifer Street NW between 39th Street and Reno Road NW to accommodate an increase in vehicle trips on this segment**
- **Install additional signing and marking improvements, including high-visibility crosswalks**

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Whereas, DDOT has in part utilized the same solution on the 4300 block of 36th Street NW between Reno Road and Warren Street NW where a short one-way block keeps cars from having to try to make a similarly difficult angled turn at a location with poor visibility, and

Whereas, in 2012 in response to a DDOT-proposed change to the intersection of 42nd Street and Military Road NW ANC 3E passed two resolutions urging DDOT to study the impacts of the now-installed traffic diverters at that intersection on 41st Street NW between Western and Wisconsin Avenues, and if implemented this proposal would inhibit the direct flow of traffic on yet another adjacent north-south route through the neighborhood, and despite several pledges from DDOT to look at 41st Street NW no such effort ever took place, and

Whereas, the approximately 200 feet of additional driving that the conversion of 39th Street to a one-way street northbound between Reno Road and Jenifer Street will require of southbound 39th Street drivers to reach Reno Road is a detour that drivers wishing to get from northbound Reno Road to westbound Jenifer Street have been utilizing for years (because left turns directly from northbound Reno Road onto Jenifer Street are prohibited), and the ANC is not aware of any complaints about or issues with this minor detour, and

Whereas, the removal of on-street parking on the west side of 39th Street NW between Reno Road and Jenifer Street NW and the removal of parking on one side of Jenifer Street NW between 39th Street NW and Reno Road will have a minimal impact on parking supply in the neighborhood because these blocks are bounded by a small triangular park that generates no parking demand and the current on-street parking utilization on these two blocks is typically very low, and

Whereas, the DDOT modifications to traffic patterns will simplify the dangerous 39th Street-Reno Road-Ingomar Street intersection for all drivers approaching it.

Therefore, be it resolved that ANC 3E supports DDOT's proposal to alter the traffic pattern at these intersections, remove parking, add a contraflow bike lane to 39th Street NW and add all-way stop signs at the intersection of 39th and Jenifer Streets NW and believes these changes should resolve many of the safety issues at the intersections without negatively impacting the carrying capacity of Reno Road or cause traffic spillover onto adjacent north-south streets.

Be it further resolved that ANC 3E respectfully urges DDOT to address the following questions and consider these suggestions before implementing the changes:

- Consider also adding a short bike lane to Jenifer Street between Reno Road and 39th Street, consistent with that street's already being an official bike boulevard
- Remove tall and illegal shrubs in the front yards of all three of the residences at the intersection of 39th and Jenifer Street NW, as allowed in DEM-35.2.12, to improve the sightlines at this intersection which will see more turn movements under this proposal
- Remove a tree or trees on the southwest side of Reno Road northwest of 39th Street, as necessary, to allow for a clear sight line for cars traveling northbound on 39th Street of cars traveling southbound on Reno Road
- Remove a small tree in the triangular park just to the south of the intersection of Reno Road and Jenifer Street, which partially blocks the view toward cars traveling northbound on Reno Road
- Install high visibility crosswalks at all three intersections as well as pedestrian warning signs for cars approaching both of the Reno Road intersections

- Consider adding additional pedestrian safety features to both the intersection of Reno Road and 39th Street NW and Reno Road and Jenifer Street NW, specifically bulb outs at both intersections to narrow the pedestrian crossing and the roadway to slow traffic
- Initiate a traffic calming study of 41st Street as was promised in 2012 to minimize any possible impacts from increased traffic there

Be it further resolved ANC 3E requests that DDOT return one year after the changes in the NOI have been implemented and measure the volume of cars and the number of crashes at the following intersections and report those findings to ANC 3E:

- Jenifer Street NW and Reno Road NW
- Jenifer Street NW and 39th Street NW
- 39th Street NW and Reno Road NW

Be it further resolved ANC 3E's support for the NOI is contingent upon DDOT's agreement to comply with the recommendations in the foregoing paragraph regarding volume and accident measurements and a report one year after implementation, and DDOT being open to making such further changes as are appropriate.

ANC 3E approved this resolution at its meeting on February 9, 2017, which was properly noticed and at which a quorum was present. The resolution was approved by a vote of 4-0-0. Commissioners Jonathan Bender, Amy Hall, Jonathan McHugh and Tom Quinn were present.

ANC 3E

By Jonathan Bender, Chairperson