

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Transportation



March 8, 2021

Dear Property Owner,

I am writing to you about the proposed installation of a new sidewalk on Western Avenue.

On August 17, 2017 the District Department of Transportation delivered a letter to your residence providing notice of our intent to install a sidewalk where none exists along the south side of Western Avenue, NW between Brandywine Street, NW and Davenport Street, NW. In accordance with the Priority Sidewalk Assurance Act of 2010, the Priority Sidewalk Assurance Amendment Act of 2013, and the Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Act of 2020, the next step in the process is to provide adjacent property owners the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed sidewalk design plans. The plans that accompany this letter are for your review.

DDOT will provide a 51-day period for comment before scheduling installation of the sidewalk construction. The deadline for submitting comments on the proposed design plans of the Western Avenue, NW sidewalk is May 17, 2021. ANC 3E will take up this subject at its meeting on April 8, 2021 and will take comments on the proposed sidewalk in preparation for an ANC Resolution. In addition, on March 16, 2021 at 6 pm there is a virtual meeting, sponsored by ANC 3E, where DDOT representatives will present and answer questions about the sidewalk design.

The Western Avenue sidewalk project is part a city-wide effort to fill gaps in the sidewalk network. Over 1500 blocks of missing sidewalk have been identified in the District. Filling these gaps will improve safety and access for children, adults, the elderly, and those with disabilities and generally make the city more walkable. As a minor arterial roadway, the missing sidewalk along the south side of Western Avenue presents a significant safety risk for pedestrians and is a high priority for DDOT.

All sidewalk installation work will be done within the public right of way and not on private property. All costs associated with sidewalk construction will be borne by the District and no cost will be assessed to adjacent property owners. With the passage of the Sidewalk and Curbing Assessment Amendment Act of 2002, the rules that applied to sidewalk construction changed. Previously, when the District installed a new sidewalk, half the cost was paid for by the District government and half the cost was assessed to adjacent property owners. Because the District was assessing adjacent property owners for an improvement, adjacent residents were entitled to a vote on the project, and a yes vote by a majority of the adjacent property owners was required for the work to be done.

After the passage of the 2002 law, this requirement was removed. Therefore, while DDOT is required to provide notice and to work with adjacent home-owners to address concerns about the impacts of sidewalk construction, a vote by adjacent property owners is no longer required for sidewalk construction. The final option for protesting the installation of a sidewalk is to submit a request for exemption to the DDOT Director. Information on this can be found in DDOT's Sidewalk Installation Policy ([https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2-6\\_DDOT-DDOT-Sidewalk-Installation-Guidelines-and-Policy\\_2015.pdf](https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2-6_DDOT-DDOT-Sidewalk-Installation-Guidelines-and-Policy_2015.pdf)).

In some cases, landscaping, ornamental trees, or other structures that have been placed in public space may need to be removed or modified for sidewalk construction.

Written comments from adjacent property owners and community members may be submitted by email to the DDOT project manager, George Branyan, at [george.branyan@dc.gov](mailto:george.branyan@dc.gov). These comments will be posted on the DDOT Notice of Intent webpage and available for public review. (<https://ddot.dc.gov/service/ddot-notice-intent>)

If you have any questions about this process, please contact George Branyan, at 202-671-2561 or [george.branyan@dc.gov](mailto:george.branyan@dc.gov).

Sincerely,

George Branyan  
Active Transportation Branch Manager  
Planning and Sustainability Division  
District Department of Transportation

cc by email:

Dee Smith, Ward 3 Councilmember Constituent Services  
Jon Bender, ANC 3E Chairperson  
Amy Hall, ANC 3E 02 SMD  
Tom Quinn, ANC 3E 04 SMD  
Emir Gur-Ravantab & Tony Donaldson Jr., Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services

Attachment: Design Plans for Western Avenue NW sidewalk.