

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D

Government of the District of Columbia



September 4, 2024

Acting Director Sharon Kershbaum
District Department of Transportation
250 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Project Delivery Administration
District Department of Transportation
250 M Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Re: ANC3D Response to NOI #24-214-TESD: Safety Treatment on Foxhall Road

Dear Director Kershbaum:

As you are aware, on June 13, 2024 our neighbor, Patricia Bullinger, was crossing Foxhall Road at Q Street NW in accordance with the walk signal in the crosswalk and was killed by a driver who turned quickly out of Q Street onto northbound Foxhall Road. Our ANC and the residents of Foxhall Village quickly mobilized to examine pedestrian safety issues at this intersection and at neighboring intersections. At the same time, your Department, together with the Metropolitan Police Department and the Mayor's Office also examined this tragic collision to see what changes should be made.

The result of these efforts has been (1) a July 10th letter from this Commission laying out our recommendations for improvements in pedestrian safety and (2) a Notice of Intent from your Department for changes (NOI #24-214 TESD). We very much appreciate the rapid response of your Department to the need to make engineering changes at these intersections. Such changes will not completely prevent future tragedies, but can reduce the chances for a repeat situation. We all recognize that another very important factor in this recent pedestrian death and others is the irresponsible behavior of some drivers and their refusal even to pay the multiple tickets they accumulate by their bad behavior. This is an issue that this ANC, the Council, and your Department need to address aggressively. In addition, these particular intersections are not the only unsafe intersections within ANC3D's neighborhoods which need to be addressed, but both of these topics are outside the scope of the Department's NOI and our current response to that Notice.

CHANGES AT Q STREET

Your Department proposes to install flex-posts at key locations in this intersection to prevent parking and to narrow Foxhall Road clearly to one lane at this intersection. You also propose to extend the median in the east portion of Q Street which will discourage dangerous U-Turns at that intersection. We request that the Department put into its plans the conversion of these temporary changes to permanent concrete structures once the effectiveness and the specific placement of the obstruction have been established. Our analysis of the pedestrian safety issues at this intersection concluded that drivers exiting the west portion of Q Street and turning left onto northbound Foxhall road drive exceedingly quickly and thereby poses a disproportionate risk to pedestrians crossing where Ms. Bullinger was killed.

We believe there are two measures that can mitigate this risky situation. One is the step that your Department proposes to take—namely, to narrow Foxhall road visibly to only one lane, forcing the turning vehicles to slow down to make the turn. The other measure which is not included in your Department's NOI, but which we believe is necessary, is to lengthen the traffic signal green interval for Q Street so that vehicles will not feel forced to accelerate quickly in order to catch the traffic signal interval. We urge the Department to conduct an analysis of this traffic signal timing. Should there be some doubt that this change is necessary, we highly recommend that the Department's engineers observe this intersection during the morning rush hour starting around 8 AM in order to observe the behavior of these drivers, many of whom are commuters cutting through the neighborhood on Q Street from MacArthur Blvd.

CHANGES AT VOLTA PLACE

Your Department proposes to install a median pedestrian refuge island at this intersection together with restrictions on parking in order to make this crosswalk safer. We support this change and believe it will afford a significant enhancement to the pedestrian safety at this intersection. Because this intersection is used frequently by children who are accessing Hardy Park across Foxhall, we also are asking the Department to give serious consideration to installing a pedestrian-activated flashing light to give further protection to pedestrians at this intersection. Fifty-nine neighbors signed a petition specifically asking for this enhancement at this intersection. We have filed the appropriate Traffic Safety Input request in order to facilitate the Department's review of this request (#24-00488934).

CHANGES AT RESERVOIR ROAD

Your Department proposes to add a median extension using flex-posts to discourage drivers from cheating by using the left-hand turn lane and then continuing straight—a very common violation. We have also been assured that you will provide white lines across the intersection to help convey the message to drivers. We endorse these changes and believe they will provide safety enhancements for both pedestrians and drivers. We ask that DDOT plan now to convert the temporary flex-post installation to a permanent concrete installation once the effectiveness and the exact positioning of these traffic diverters are validated after they are installed. We also ask that the Department examine the length of time pedestrians are provided to cross Foxhall Road at this intersection. It appears very

short, given the width of the intersection and the many turning cars. In addition, the slip lanes there are very dangerous for pedestrians.

These changes would be made more effective if DDOT would add one other change that we have advocated in the past and in our July 10th letter. We strongly recommend that DDOT point left-hand turn arrows and the word "ONLY" in the left lane of Foxhall as it approaches Reservoir from the north, with these markings starting at the intersection of Hoban Road and Foxhall Road. When drivers appeal tickets that MPD gives them for cheating on the left hand turn lane, drivers claim that they did not know the limitation on the lane until too late. MPD has indicated that changing the markings on the road would help them win their cases and help bring about a major change in driver behavior that is jeopardizing both pedestrians and other drivers.

CHANGES AT GREENWICH PARKWAY

Your Department proposes to restrict parking to make exits from the nearby alley safer and to provide an adequate bus stop area. We have no objections to these changes if DDOT feels they will enhance the safety of that area. We are worried about taking away too much parking through all of the actions proposed in this NOI because short-term parking is important to both neighborhood residents and businesses in the area, so we ask that DDOT limit the removal of parking spaces to those clearly needed for safety.

REMAINING ISSUES

We realize that a NOI such as has been proposed cannot address all of the issues that we raised about making Foxhall Road safer for pedestrians in our July 10th letter (attached). However, we ask that the Department not consider this NOI "once and done" with regard to making Foxhall safer. In particular, we ask that the Department examine our recommendations which are based on our grass-roots interactions with neighbors who are most familiar with the pedestrian environment in the vicinity of Q Street. Where a Traffic Safety Input request is required by DDOT procedures, we have entered these recommendations into the system. These recommendations include:

- A speed Camera (#24-00483774)
- A Red light camera at Q street (#24-00483849)
- An assessment of the feasibility of a bike lane from Reservoir Road to MacArthur High School, potentially utilizing Q Street.

In addition, we recommend a comprehensive study of the intersection of Reservoir Road and Foxhall Road and the installation of the crosswalks identified many years ago in the Department's own Livability study further north on Foxhall.

Thank you again for the Department's quick response to this recent accident. We look forward to our continued cooperation with the Department regarding all transportation matters. In addition, we plan to continue to work with your Department and other agencies, including the Department of Public Works and the Metropolitan Police Department regarding the continuing challenge of changing the behavior of

drivers in the District who violate our traffic laws, and in many cases, avoid any consequences for doing so.

We ask that the Department give “great weight” to these recommendations of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D which were approved by our Commission at our duly-noticed monthly meeting on September 4th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tricia Duncan".

Tricia Duncan, Chair

cc: Councilmember Matt Frumin
Hope Cousin (MOCRS)
Christian Pineiro, DDOT