

April 8, 2004

Committee of 100 on the Federal City  
Testimony before the DC Council Committee on Public Works and the Environment  
Budget Hearing, DC Department of Transportation

Chairperson Schwartz and members of the Council, on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City (C100), I want to thank you for this opportunity to address the Council about the 2005 budget of the District Department of Transportation. We first want to thank the Council and DDOT for the sustained effort and accomplishment in improving the District's infrastructure over the last several years, actions that are continued in the 2005 budget. Most of the budget documents before you address this "hard" side of this equation.

Not surprisingly, the C100 would like to make several comments about programs not readily found in the budget documents but are of equal importance.

1. Transportation Planning. DDOT is now engaged in updating its Strategic Transportation Plan. At least in part from C100 urging, the agency has included an analysis of current conditions as a foundation for that plan and is currently engaged in a multi-modal analysis of several strategic corridors. It's an important foundation. Because so many projects spring up without benefit of this kind of analysis, we would ask that sufficient (additional) time and dollars be directed to this effort. Moreover, we would ask that data about transportation to and from schools be added to this analysis. In general, we support an increased staff and budget for improved data analysis and data collection—but especially related to transportation planning. Transportation enhancement funds are an untapped source for this work. And last, we would ask that transportation planning be carried out within the context of the comprehensive plan, including crafting the strategic transportation plan so that it becomes the transportation element of the comprehensive plan.
2. Zoning Cases. The C100 seeks budget approval for at least two additional DDOT positions to be dedicated to addressing the transportation aspects of zoning cases and to track the "transportation" decisions that the Zoning Commission makes that forever alter transportation plans and decisions made elsewhere. Far too often, good transportation decisions made at the front end are completely undone by Zoning

Commission decisions. It's too often true that DDOT performs no real analysis to provide cogent or informed recommendations in zoning cases. A running joke is someone at DDOT has a macro on his or her machine to provide "evidence" in its transmittal letter to the Zoning Commission that the project under consideration has "no adverse traffic effects." I can think of think of two recent Zoning Commission decisions affecting places near my own home that will completely destroy all other possibilities for "providing reliable transportation services . . .so [we] can move safely and efficiently, while enhancing [our] quality of life and the District's economic competitiveness," DDOT's mission.

3. Enforcement Authority. The C00 recommends DDOT being granted [traffic] enforcement authority, with a possible redirect from the Department of Public Works, and supports requiring that enforcement be used as a remedy before launching major design and construction projects. Traffic congestion on K Street and the remedies being proposed to address this congestion is a perfect test for this authority.
4. Construction Management Plans. We support DDOT establishing and publishing the details of construction management plans, especially for large scale projects such as Columbia Heights.
5. Public Space and the Public. By extension, we recommend that DDOT more creatively and consistently engage the public when making decisions about public space, perhaps by establishing a Public Space Committee with a broad mix of civic, geographic, and professional representatives.
6. Design Review and Standards. The C100 recommends the DDOT establish citywide Design Review and Standards, especially in Historic Districts.
7. Metrocheck. The District is justly proud of its investment in transit and, at the Transportation Planning Board, supports the Metrocheck program in the policy sense. Recognizing that this recommendation goes beyond the parameters of the DDOT budget, the C100 supports the District government providing Metrocheck, at a beginning stipend of \$30/month, for its own employees.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane A. Pecor, Transportation Subcommittee Chair