

ANC6C03 notes from July 20 meeting in the NE Library about Maryland Avenue Reconfiguration

Mayor Bowser: this is an important project to protect pedestrians and drivers alike.

DDOT Director Dormsjo: We are on the cusp of having the 30% design completed. On August 10, there will be a block by block review of the design.

Designer James Smith:

- DDOT selected JMT [<http://www.jmt.com/>] to develop the design and we conducted a lot of local investigation (e.g., location of utilities). The 65% design will include utilities, and the appropriate vendors will be given the 30% design and will include input from the DC Historic Preservation Office.

- The plans will be made available on July 29, with a public meeting on August 10. [Later, upon questioning by Mark Eckenwiler and others, Dormsjo said DDOT would work with the ANCs to determine when community comments would be due, and when and how DDOT would respond.]

- The plan includes 10' wide travel lanes, a 10' median or left turn lane, a 6 foot wide bike lane, and on-street parking.

- The original concept included a thin median along the left turn lane. There is insufficient room for such a median. The curb bump-outs at each intersection will reduce the distance pedestrians need to travel to reach the other side of the road if there is not a median to provide a refuge.

- Sidewalks will be brick unless the surrounding sidewalks are already concrete. The design recommends enlarging the tree pits (boxes) in some areas. And there will be new traffic signals and the historic dome street lights will be installed.

- At the request of the DC Historic Preservation Office, the street scape will remain aligned with the original Le Infant design. [Later, this was clarified to not include plantings in the median, although there will be plantings along the sidewalks and appropriate landscaping within the small park areas that will be created by closure of some streets, which some designers are calling carriage ways.]

- [Presentation lasted 10 minutes with one slide of the street scape.]

ANC6A Chair Phil Toomajian: Thanks to the Mayor, DDOT Director Dormsjo and Councilmember Allen for pursuing this matter. The MD Ave corridor is dangerous, as evidenced by the librarian being struck by a car and many near misses. Past studies identified cars traveling at 20 MPH above the speed limit, with personal injury more likely than in other DC traffic corridors. Fewer lanes will put would-be speeders in queue, and the traffic lights can be better aligned to promote a steady flow. Both ANC6A and 6C endorsed the "road diet" and with the Council Member and DDOT we have been pursuing this plan for five years. We appreciate DDOT's short-term adjustments to the 7th and 10th Street intersections and need to pursue this project to completion.

Citizens Living on MD Ave at 12th and 13th:

1. The traffic studies that were mentioned were completed in 2011. Is there anything more recent?
2. Currently with 2 lanes in both directions, traffic is bumper-to-bumper at 13th and MD Ave during rush hour.
3. None of the ANC Commissioners live on MD Ave. They won't have to live with this design.
4. EMS uses MD Ave 30-40 times each day. If an emergency vehicle has pulled to the right (including the bike lane), can other vehicles pass safely? This problem includes delivery trucks, trash trucks and double parked vehicles.
5. I was not here in 2011, and feel bullied that the important decisions have already been made and I have no opportunity to affect the outcome.
6. There are churches on MD Ave with a significant number of disabled parishioners who currently can legally double-park during services since there is a second lane for through traffic. Once there is only one through-traffic lane, how will these people have reasonable access?

Director Dormsjo responded as follows:

- RE item 2: Traffic volumes don't support 2 lanes. MD Ave is over-built. The second lane in each direction encourages speeding. DC hasn't adjusted its traffic signal timing in a decade, and the new design for MD Ave will promote smooth flow.
- RE item 4: There are many roads in DC that are narrower than MD Ave will be, and emergency vehicles usually don't encounter problems.
- 80% of the funding for this project is from the federal government.
- April/May 2017 is the target for 100% design completion with construction bids and work to follow but they expect completion of construction prior to the Spring of 2019. (Help here. Are these the dates he spoke of? This seems like a key point to include in the notes)

Mayor: prior to the August 10 meeting, we will provide the earlier traffic analysis.

Citizen: what other options to tame traffic have been considered, like speed bumps and traffic signals at intersections that aren't currently controlled?

Mayor: the discussion on Aug 10 will not debate again the road diet: the ANCs, council members, entire council have committed to this approach.

Several citizens provided comments on specific areas like around Stanton Park at near the Library and many expressed themselves in general support of the road diet to improve pedestrian safety.