

Testimony of Ward 3 Vision to the  
DC Council Committee on Transportation & Environment,  
Public Oversight Roundtable,  
Mary M. Cheh, Chairperson  
Regarding the  
Wisconsin Avenue Upgrade / Streetscape Project

1 May 2013

My name is Thomas Hier, and I am the Chair of the Steering Committee of Ward 3 Vision, which is a group of Ward 3 residents who can imagine our neighborhoods as even better urban places – more walkable, sustainable, and vibrant – and we are working to achieve that.

Ward 3 Vision is pleased to testify in support of the recent changes to the Wisconsin Avenue corridor in Glover Park and would like to encourage similar studies and implementations along other parts of Wisconsin Avenue and other arterial streets that share vital commercial resources within residential neighborhoods. The District enjoys scores of unique commercial areas. Each deserves to best serve its residential constituency. The Wisconsin Avenue Streetscape project attempts to strike this balance.

Recent census data indicate that our society and city are evolving. It is clear that the 70 year experiment in auto-centric planning is coming to an end. We praise the Office of Planning and the DC Department of Transportation for understanding these trends and taking steps to rethink our public spaces to better accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit and automobiles.

Wisconsin Avenue has suffered two fatalities and countless injuries in recent years. However while making these changes, we need to ensure that there aren't negative impacts on the nearby residential neighborhoods and encourage DDOT and the community to work together to solutions that mitigate such impacts.

Rather than abandoning the entire project, specific changes should be considered (*e.g.*, re-evaluating dedicated left-turn lanes, re-timing lights). This is especially true with the 85 condos and retail planned for the site at Glover Park Hardware / Washington Sports Club, as the new vehicle trips will likely change traffic assumptions.

Additionally, north of Calvert St., residents have observed increased speeding and rush hour cut-through traffic. Further, the latest change, eliminating morning rush parking on the northbound side in has simply pushed apartment house parking into the residential areas, and extending “no parking” restrictions to 7:30 PM has further exacerbated those same parking problems. DDOT ought to reconsider changes made on Wisconsin Avenue north of Calvert Street.

The District of Columbia needs to continue to address pedestrian and cyclist safety, and projects like this are vital to the evolution of our city. As DDOT makes these changes, it needs to be sensitive to the impacts on abutting neighborhoods and continue to study and tweak the configurations to optimize safety in the context of a “complete streets” solution.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas C. Hier,  
Chair, Ward 3 Vision Steering Committee  
On behalf of Ward 3 Vision