

To: ANC 3D Commissioners, DDOT
From: Ward 3 Bicycle Advocates
Subject: Arizona Avenue bike lane
Date: July 12, 2022



We are writing today to voice our disappointment at ANC 3D's action to table its consideration of a much-needed bike lane on Arizona Avenue NW due solely to a last-minute delay tactic employed by its opponents. Any delay in DDOT's issuance of a Notice of Intent is unacceptable to the safety of every cyclist.

As you will see from our response, Donald L. Crowell III's submission may be long but lacks substance. It is rife with false claims, red herring arguments, and the relitigation of issues DDOT has already addressed.

We urge ANC 3D not to be distracted by these last-ditch tactics to forestall your duty to the community and to support this protected bike lane as quickly as possible. As a matter of process, we also advocate that the ANC vote when removing items from a previously-published agenda.

The following is W3BA's response to Mr. Crowell's assertions:

- 1. The proposed cycletrack design makes no alterations to the sidewalk; therefore ADA requirements are not violated, despite Mr. Crowell's claims.**

W3BA fully supports the widening of sidewalks where width is below current design standards and ADA requirements. With that said: nothing about the proposed cycletrack makes any alterations to the sidewalks; therefore there is no ADA issue with this design.

- 2. Nothing in FHWA guidance suggests that the cycletrack design is inappropriate for Arizona Ave, despite Mr. Crowell's claims.**

DDOT's May 16 response addresses this particular argument, stating that this claim is incorrect. While FHWA guidance does not suggest that such a facility is inappropriate for Arizona Avenue, FHWA's outdated, suburban-oriented guidance of functional classification is generally problematic. Arizona Ave NW has the adjacent land use and design characteristics of a minor collector road. While DDOT will likely continue to use AADT as a proxy and include this neighborhood

street in the NHS network to increase federal funding flexibility, context very much matters here.

3. We don't decide where to put bridges based on how many people are swimming.

While Mr. Crowell contends high vehicular traffic and low bike volumes, bike lanes and complete street design are matters of policy, not capacity. The proposed design provides a two-way protected connection across neighborhoods - to schools, businesses, and ultimately to a premier off-road trail - without reducing vehicular lane capacity. The Arizona Ave NW bike lane will improve access and safety for cyclists in one of Ward 3's highest "Areas of Transportation Need," according to Move DC's Transportation Needs Index. Mr. Crowell also misstates the bicyclist counts. The measurements were taken only during morning and evening rush hours, so they do not represent "all day" totals. Indeed, the counts focused on vehicular traffic, so it is reasonable to question whether they were accurately counting cyclists while focused on vehicles.

4. This improvement has been subject to significant community input.

While Mr. Crowell complains about insufficient planning/community engagement, Arizona Avenue was designated a 'future planned improvement' of the Bicycle Priority Network in the 2021 update of DC's Multimodal Long-Range Transportation Plan. MoveDC's public engagement efforts for this update began in 2020 and continue today. DDOT's numerous outreach efforts include presentations to the community and to ANC meetings, public comment periods, and communication during ANC meetings. It's regrettable Mr. Crowell was not aware of the plans, but that does not detract from DDOT's extensive investment in sharing information and solicit feedback nor should it slow down the decision-making process. Safer biking infrastructure on Arizona was also discussed as part of the ROck Creek Far West Livability Study, which was conducted in 2019.

5. Protected bike lanes enhance safety; proper design can improve safety even more.

While Mr. Crowell suggests that the downhill portion and numerous driveway conflict points make the design unsafe, he seems to misunderstand the study he cites to make this assertion. The research confirmed that bike lanes provide significant protection to cyclists. Mr. Crowell cherry-picked data from the 15th St NW cycletrack - the single stretch in DC with multiple crashes - and extrapolated a conclusion from the outlier, not the overall data and quotes from the study synopsis, which omits critical context and nuance. Specifically:

- 15th St is a heavily-used bike facility, but the study neglects to calculate exposure rates.
- The synopsis does not adjust for the severity of injuries. Crashes in a bike lane typically involve pedestrians and other cyclists at low speeds rather than drivers and result in lesser injuries.
- Crash data also includes ‘falls,’ which can be attributed to poor facility maintenance, such as failure to remove leaf accumulation in fall and winter, which creates slippery conditions for cyclists.

Mr. Crowell neglected to mention the study’s most evident conclusion: that bike lanes need careful design. It does not recommend forgoing bike lanes altogether. In this sense, DDOT’s months-long effort to carefully design this facility reflects the study’s recommendations.

To suggest the proposed bike lane is less safe than sharing the roadway with commuters defies common sense. The greatest cause of cyclist injuries is drivers colliding with them.

That said: W3BA recognizes that the downhill speed of experienced, confident cyclists may surpass the design speed for the cycletrack. To minimize the risk of conflict and falls, W3BA encourages DDOT to include large and frequently marked sharrows in the center of the downhill general travel lane so drivers know that faster-moving cyclists may also use the travel lane, as allowed by DC law.

6. Protected bike lanes will improve, not detract from driveway visibility

Mr. Crowell’s assertion that the design does not ensure adequate visibility does not account for how the current parking configuration along Arizona Avenue already significantly limits visibility for drivers exiting driveways. By removing parked cars, the cycletrack will in fact improve visibility. To the extent inadequate turning radii are provided on the current 65% plans, DDOT can easily correct that in the final designs.

7. W3BA fully endorses Mr. Crowell’s suggestion for bicycle lanes on Macomb and Loughboro.

Additional bicycle lanes on Macomb St and especially Loughboro are laudable ideas. But we assure Mr. Crowell that the residents on these roads will also have concerns about the removal of parking, safety, and a lack of ADA-compliant sidewalks.

W3BA concurs with DDOT’s assessment that Arizona Avenue provides the best connection to Capital Crescent Trail, Key Elementary, and businesses along MacArthur Blvd. While Mr. Crowell claims that only a small portion of Key

students would ride to school, using his proposed bike lane on Loughboro will still require children to riding on Arizona Ave, and with his suggestion they would do so on a busy road where drivers tend to exceed the speed limit, which endangers them.

8. While W3BA recognizes that removing parking is a contentious proposition for Arizona Ave NW residents, it is not the safety risk that Mr. Crowell claims.

We disagree with Mr. Crowell's unsubstantiated claims that removing spaces will increase street crossings. First, parking north of Garfield St. is rarely used on either side of the street. Only parking spaces immediately north of MacArthur see moderate use because this section is close to local businesses. Patrons and employees using these spaces will be able to cross at the controlled intersection. For those few visitors who need to cross Arizona, there is a crosswalk at MacArthur and Garfield that protects pedestrians. Mr. Crowell should be reassured that this project will improve signage for existing crosswalks at all intersections along Arizona Ave.

While W3BA is empathetic to those who must change their parking behavior, the convenience of parking cars on the street (essentially free storage of personal property on a public right of way) must not trump the accessibility and safety of other street users. Most Arizona Ave residents have driveways on their property, so the parking spaces retained on one side of the street should meet residents' infrequent need for street parking.

In conclusion, W3BA asks that both ANC3D and DDOT see this letter for what it is: a last-ditch delaying tactic that prioritizes parking over road safety and, furthermore, promotes status quo over urgently-needed change. Arizona Avenue is a street that has historically been ceded to commuting traffic. Let us now reclaim it for District residents. The time for discussion is over. **W3BA urges ANC3D to approve this action immediately and urges DDOT to build the Arizona Ave bike lane as quickly as possible.**