

July 9, 2014

George S. Hawkins
General Manager
District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority
5000 Overlook Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20090

Dear Mr. Hawkins,

We write to express our frustration and disappointment at the lack of notice and coordination related to your agency's planned water main work on 17th Street SE, work that now threatens to further delay important pedestrian safety improvements to this heavily trafficked and dangerous corridor. At a properly noticed meeting with a quorum present on July 8, 2014, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B voted 9-0 to send this letter to your agency.

For the past decade, ANC 6B has been urging the District Department of Transportation to implement traffic calming measures along 17th and 19th Streets SE. Thousands of commuters use 17th and 19th Streets SE daily to travel from I-295 to I-695. Vehicles frequently speed on these two residential streets, creating an extremely dangerous situation for pedestrians crossing these streets to access St. Coletta's of Greater Washington, the Stadium Armory Metro plaza, Spielberg Park, Payne Elementary School and Historic Congressional Cemetery. Just this past May a pedestrian was struck and killed by a hit and run driver at the intersection of East Capitol and 17th Street SE.

In 2012, DDOT initiated the 17th & 19th Streets Safety Improvement Project, a project that involved our commission and Hill East residents in a discussion of how to improve pedestrian safety along these two corridors. ANC 6B unanimously supported the project's final recommendations for 17th Street SE, which include narrowing the street from two lanes to one lane, adding a dedicated bike lane, installing curb extensions on the west side of the street at each intersection, repaving the street and painting new crosswalks, and installing new permanent electronic speed display signs and new speed limit signs along the corridor. We feel that these improvements will help reduce traffic volume, slow vehicle speed and significantly increase pedestrian safety.

While the original timeline called for construction to begin in spring 2014, DDOT delayed implementation by 6 months to conduct an environmental assessment. In May 2014, we learned that the environmental work had been completed and that 17th Street SE construction was set to begin in Sept. 2014.

On June 16, our commission was notified by DDOT that the project was being delayed by an additional 18 months due to your agency's plan to replace aging water mains on 17th Street SE between C Street SE and Potomac Ave SE. While we certainly understand and appreciate your need to replace aging water infrastructure, we are frustrated by your agency's apparent lack of

communication and coordination. And an additional 18-month delay on critical pedestrian safety improvements is unacceptable.

We would appreciate an explanation as to why DDOT and ANC 6B were not notified of this planned work and its potential impact on the timeline on the implementation of the 17th Street SE improvements and whether you plan similar work on 19th Street SE. We would also request that you move your water main replacement timeline up so that the safety improvements to 17th Street SE can be implemented as scheduled. Reducing vehicle speed and increasing pedestrian safety should be the city's top priority along 17th Street SE.

Sincerely,

Brian Flahaven
Chair

Cc: The Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Mayor
The Honorable Tommy Wells, Councilmember
Matthew Brown, Interim Director, District Department of Transportation
Ali Shakeri, Program Manager, Wards 5 & 6, District Department of Transportation