



## Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

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November 19, 2010

Gabe Klein  
Director  
District Department of Transportation  
2000 14<sup>th</sup> St NW, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington DC 20009

### **RE: Comments on DDOT's Proposed Circulator Routes**

Dear Mr. Klein:

The Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Brookland and to working with neighboring communities and the city as a whole when there is an issue of shared concern.

On Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup>, BNCA members attending the monthly meeting were concerned to learn that no one from Ward 5 was part of the Community Advisory Panel for the development of new Circulator routes being proposed by DDOT. DDOT has a responsibility to ensure that the Advisory Panel represents the District. Instead, the Advisory Panel overrepresented downtown interests, which are already well-served by mass transit.

We were further concerned to learn of DDOT's unwillingness to publicize the recommended Circulator routes for public inspection and comment. DDOT did not make the recommended routes available online until just a few days before the comment deadline of November 19, 2010. The recommendations were available only upon special request to DDOT after November 8<sup>th</sup>, or by attending one of two public meetings, both of which were held right before the comment deadline.

Having been excluded from the development of the proposed Circulator routes, Ward 5 residents should not be required to review the results and submit a detailed response in a matter of days. We certainly expect to be included in the revision of the recommended routes and in future deliberations on this important aspect of providing urgently needed services to the citizens of our community.

The comments below regarding the proposed Circulator routes developed by DDOT, are submitted on behalf of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association.

## **I. ANALYSIS OF METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used by DDOT to develop the recommended Circulator routes is opaque and ended up rewarding areas already well-served by mass transit.

The methodology for developing new Circulator routes should:

1. Identify gaps in coverage in order to serve those areas better.
2. Identify areas already well-served by mass transit in order to avoid duplication.
3. Identify routes that will connect District residents with jobs and employment centers.

Instead, DDOT evaluated proposed Circulator routes against eleven “objectives” and “measures,” such as whether the route would traverse the National Mall, serve tourist needs, and connect to existing metrorail and metrobus services. The objectives were apparently all given the same weight. No objective or measure captured the routes’ ability to connect District residents to jobs. The eleven objectives and measures were as follows:

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>
1. Mobility to Existing and Developing Activity Centers	➔ Number of Activity Centers Served
2. Mobility to Existing and Developing Activity Centers	➔ Size of Activity Centers
3. Quick Transit Connections between Activity Centers	➔ Existing One-Seat Ride End to End
4. Complements Existing Transit Options	➔ Existing Transit Connections between Activity Centers
5. Provides Maximum Convenient Connectivity to Non-Auto Modes	➔ Number of Metrorail Stations Served and Connections to Hi-Freq Metrobus Lines
6. Eases Metrorail Core Capacity Constraints	➔ Connects Two or More Metrorail Lines
7. Addresses Multiple Trip Purposes	➔ Traverses the Mall
8. Provides Transit Service to/from Monumental Core	➔ Variety of Land Uses at Activity Centers Served
9. Provides Transit Service between Visitor Destinations	➔ Number of Visitor Destinations Served
10. Enable Tourist Market to Access Key Activity Centers	➔ Number of Direct Connections from the National Mall to Activity Centers
11. Serve and Connect Key Activity Centers	➔ Timing of Development in Activity Centers Served



Many of the objectives and measures were duplicative, such as “Number of Metrorail Stations Served” and “Connects Two or More Metrorail Lines.”

DDOT used a scoring system to select the final routes. However, the scoring system appears to have been abandoned when it came to selecting the final routes: there is no connection between the route scores and whether they were selected or not (refer to DDOT’s scoring spreadsheet in which the “selected corridors” had scores between 9 and 19 and the rejected corridors had scores between 1 and 18).

The methodology used by DDOT to develop the recommended Circulator routes was flawed and produced skewed results.

## **II. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

DDOT’s opaque and flawed approach yielded “recommended corridors” that duplicate existing routes, fail to address gaps in service, and fail to connect District residents with centers of employment.

### **1. The Recommended Corridors Duplicate Existing Routes**

A quick look at the recommended corridors reveals that at least three of the routes are duplicative of existing transit services.

- The recommended Adams Morgan to H Street NE route duplicates the existing U Street-Garfield Metrobus Line. Bus lines #90, 92, and 93 already go directly from Adams Morgan to H Street NE. From there, users can hop on the new streetcar if they want to go to Benning Road. Buses run approximately every 10 minutes, with service until 3:30am on weekends. Inexplicably, the recommended Adams Morgan to H Street NE route will add Circulator service on top of the H Street streetcar route, which will debut in March 2012. This is redundant and contrary to the District’s goal of building streetcar ridership.
- The recommended North Mall to Georgetown route duplicates existing services. The destinations on this proposed route are already served by the Circulator line from Union Station to Georgetown. Bus lines #D1, D6, 32, and 36 also already serve the same needs.
- The recommended Tenleytown to Brookland route duplicates bus lines #H2 and H4.

The recommended corridors should be modified so they do not waste resources by duplicating existing routes.

### **2. The Selected Corridors Fail to Address Gaps in Coverage**

DDOT’s recommended routes fail to adequately take into consideration gaps in existing mass transit coverage. The map of current and recommended Circulator routes emphasizes the District’s downtown core and East-West routes, instead of bringing connectivity to more parts of the District. The District’s downtown core and East-West routes are already well served by metro rail, metro bus, Circulator and Express.

In developing an intra-city bus service that meets the needs of District residents and employers, Circulator planners should break out of the commuter-style service model, where the objective is

to bring people from outlying areas into the city center. Instead, the Circulator planners should be increasing connectivity between all parts of the District in order to stimulate economic activity and growth within the District.

For example, the Circulator planners should consider more North-South routes that would connect District residents to jobs at the Washington Hospital Center (and other nearby hospitals) and the Convention Center.

### **3. The Selected Corridors Fail to Address the District's Number One Priority: Connecting Residents who Need Jobs with Major Employment Centers**

Instead of proposing routes that duplicate existing services, DDOT should consider Circulator routes that connect residents with jobs and fill gaps in existing mass transit services.

For example, the Washington Hospital Center—the largest private employer in the District of Columbia—is served by only three bus lines and no metro stations. Two of the bus lines follow the exact same East-West path (#H2, H4 buses). The third bus line travels North-South between the Hospitals and Union Station, but takes 50 minutes for a ten minute journey as it winds its way through various neighborhoods instead of traveling straight up North Capitol Street (#D8 bus).

The Hospitals complex has thousands of employees and almost two million outpatient visits per year:

- The Washington Hospital Center has 6,000 employees, 926 beds and 412,000 outpatient visits per year.
- Children's National Medical Center has 5,400 employees, 283 beds and 355,000 outpatient visits per year.
- The National Rehabilitation Hospital has 128 beds and more than 300,000 outpatient visits per year.
- The Veterans Affairs Medical Center has more than 500,000 outpatient visits per year.
- Providence Hospital has 408 beds and hundreds of thousands of outpatient visits per year.

In contrast, George Washington University Hospital has only 1,500 employees, 71 beds and 116,000 outpatient visits per year, but is served by a metro station, Circulator, Express, and half a dozen bus lines.

The Hospitals complex dwarfs all other employers in the District. It is located just two and half miles north of Union Station. Yet, the Circulator offers no routes to bring District residents to these jobs and patients/visitors to these essential services.

Likewise, there are no Circulator routes that connect Wards 5, 7 and 8 to jobs and opportunities at the Washington Convention Center. Construction of the new hotel will create approximately 1,600 construction jobs and when the hotel is complete it will provide more than 1,000 jobs to District residents.

The Circulator planners need to answer these questions:

- Why are there no Circulator routes from Wards 7 & 8 to the Hospitals?
- Why is there no Circulator route between Union Station, the Hospitals and Brookland Metro station?



- Why are there no Circulator routes from Wards 5, 7 & 8 to the Convention Center?
- Why are the areas West of the downtown core well-served by the Circulator, but not the areas to the East?
- Why are the thousands of students and employees at Ward 5's universities (Catholic University, Trinity University, Gallaudet University) not served by the Circulator?
- Why did the Circulator planners not incorporate the MWCOG's June 2010 study recommendations to reduce the 22 shuttle trips per hour at the Brookland Metro Station with a coordinated service, such as the Circulator?
- Why does DDOT's estimate of the size of the Brookland/Hospitals/AFRH "activity center" not appear to reflect the millions of annual outpatient visits to the Hospitals and the hundreds of thousands of annual visitors to the National Shrine and the Franciscan Monastery?

These questions should be answered before more Circulator routes get layered onto the already well-served downtown core.


### III. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

DDOT should ensure that all parts of the District are represented in major planning exercises such as this one and should meet its stated plan goal of "transparent decision-making and planning." In this instance, the lack of adequate representation has led to flawed recommendations for future Circulator routes.

DDOT should revise the recommended routes in order to (1) serve areas with mass transit gaps better, (2) avoid duplication of services, and (3) connect District residents with jobs and employment centers.

I look forward to hearing from DDOT regarding how the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association can participate in revising the recommended routes so the needs of Ward 5 residents and employers are more fully reflected in the results.

Sincerely,



Caroline Petti, President

cc:

Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas Jr.

Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham

Scott Kubly, DDOT Director of Progressive Transportation Services Administration

Marti Reinfeld, Senior Policy Advisor for Transit Operations, DDOT Progressive Transportation Services Administration