



July 31, 2019

Director Jeffrey Marootian
DC Department of Transportation
55 M Street SE, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20003

Re: Franklin Street Bike Lane from 7th – 12th Streets NE NOI (Notice# 19-179-PSD)

Dear Dir. Marootian,

I write on behalf of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) to express our strong support for the bike lane proposed by DDOT to be installed on Franklin Street NE between Seventh Street and Twelfth Street NE, reflecting a vote of our membership at our July 16, 2019 meeting. The BNCA is an all-volunteer, non-profit association that exists to advocate for and improve the quality of life of the Brookland neighborhood. With roughly 200 members, most of whom are residents of Brookland, as well as many local businesses and property owners, we strive, in coordination with our local ANCs, to represent the views of the entire community on issues of common concern.

As you are aware, issues of traffic safety, speeding, and excessive over-sized vehicles have been a predominant concern of many in Brookland in recent years. We have had numerous meetings with DDOT to advocate for solutions. We have often been disappointed by the pace of progress. Issues of speeding and truck traffic on Franklin Street have been among our top priorities. We continue to press DDOT to develop and implement comprehensive solutions so that neighborhood streets like Franklin are used appropriately. We note that Franklin Street runs past many schools, including Noyes Elementary School between 10th and 12th Streets. We continue to believe signage must be improved along this stretch to make clear that this is a school zone where the speed limit is 15 mph, and drivers who speed are subject to rigorous enforcement. In short, while we support the bike lane for reasons stated below, we want to be clear that this project is but one step toward achieving “Vision Zero” and other transportation and transit goals for Brookland.

At our July 16, 2019 general meeting, Mike Goodno, Bicycle Program Specialist with DDOT, gave a presentation on placing bike lanes in both directions on Franklin Street between 12th and 7th Streets NE, as well as reducing Franklin Street to one lane in either direction (consistent with the design of Franklin Street outside of this segment), and installing a new left-turn lane at 7th Street westbound and at 10th Street eastbound. Mr. Goodno explained that the 85th percentile speed in this stretch of Franklin has been documented as 33 mph. That means 85% of the cars are traveling at least 8 mph over the 25 mph speed limit, which in fact, as a school zone, should be 15 mph during school hours. Further, we know that many vehicles travel much faster than that.

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Mr. Goodno explained that in addition to improving bikability and connectivity of Brookland to the Metro Branch Trail, installing bike lanes and shrinking the width of vehicular lanes on Franklin is consistent with traffic calming practices (sometimes called a “road diet”) that have been documented to successfully improve traffic safety and flow for multi-modal transit. In addition, there is anticipation that by aligning the width of this stretch of Franklin with the rest of Franklin Street, the inducement to drivers to speed up to pass as the road widens in this stretch will be removed, thus further improving safety for all forms of transit (cars, bikes, pedestrians, etc.). Finally, the addition of dedicated turn lanes at 7th and 10th may even improve the flow of vehicular traffic.

After Mr. Goodno’s presentation, and with a quorum of voting members and officers in attendance, BNCA voted a resolution in support of the Franklin bike lane proposal as set forth in Notice of Intent # 19-179-PSD, by a vote of 11 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.¹ Members expressed support for the project both as a means of improving cycling connectivity and for its traffic calming value. Members also expressed a desire to see DDOT continue to evaluate the effect of the project on a continuing basis to ensure there are no unintended consequences, and to consider further traffic calming measures as may be warranted. Mr. Goodno committed that DDOT will do this and will work to address problems that might arise.

There is no existing street parking on this stretch of Franklin and so members did not express this as a concern for the current proposal. We understand that DDOT would like to further extend bike lanes to connect from 7th Street to 4th Street on Franklin. This would require the elimination of some rush-hour restricted parking in that stretch. BNCA is not expressing a view on that issue at this time. We note that there is some conflicting factual information as to whether residences along that stretch all have adequate access to off-street parking. Several of our members have noted that they would like to see the bike lanes extended and connected to the broader bike lane network; others have expressed sympathy for residents in that stretch to the extent they rely on that street parking. We consider this issue severable from the installation of bike lanes on Franklin between 12th and 7th. The need for traffic calming and improved connectivity for non-vehicular transit in that stretch is paramount for BNCA.

Thus, BNCA supports the proposal and seeks expeditious implementation of the project.

Sincerely,



Daniel Schramm
President, BNCA

¹ A copy of the July 16 meeting minutes is available at <http://brooklandcivic.org/july-2019-minutes/>.