



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING  
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

**MATTHEW FRUMIN**  
Councilmember, Ward 3

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
Executive Administration and Labor  
Facilities and Family Services  
Hospital and Health Equity  
Housing  
Transportation and the Environment

February 22, 2024

Mayor Muriel Bowser  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Plans to Improve Safety on Connecticut Avenue

*Via e-mail*

Dear Mayor Bowser:

Under your leadership, the city has initiated substantial work to develop plans for improving safety on Connecticut Avenue. I appreciate the initial steps your administration has taken to implement elements of the plan, commonly referred to as Concept C, which you embraced two years ago. But as I noted in my letter to you on December 15, 2023, forward movement has stalled even as we have witnessed more than 300 crashes since you committed to Concept C.

I understand there is some degree of complexity in moving from a concept to specific plans, and there has been a laudable effort to address issues raised during the public comment period. At this point, however, it is critical that the administration put forward the refined plan and that we advance the Connecticut Avenue Multimodal Safety Improvement project, including its call for protected bike lanes.

Critics of including protected bike lanes in the mix of safety improvements rely on two primary arguments: (1) that doing so will slow traffic on Connecticut Avenue making it harder to travel at a time that we want to attract people downtown, and (2) protected bike lanes will have an adverse impact on businesses, seniors, and persons with disabilities. There are straightforward responses to both arguments, and neither should deter your administration from pursuing increased safety and advancing multimodal transportation that meets the needs of all users.

Impact on Downtown

No one should forget that the **primary goal** of all your administration's planning for Connecticut Avenue has been to reduce vehicular speeds to protect the safety of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. In pursuing that goal, in Concept C your administration wisely proposed changes that,

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in concert with adding bike lanes, would improve traffic flow by incorporating left turn lanes that should minimize back-ups. The net result should both reduce speeds and improve traffic flow, ultimately minimizing impacts on travel times.

Wherever the administration lands, it will move to reduce vehicular speeds on Connecticut Avenue. I know your administration is committed to that goal and I fully support you in it. The question is not whether you will move to slowdown cars. The question is whether protected bike lanes will be among your safety improvements. The plan must include such lanes as they are an important element in achieving safety for *all* users. Meanwhile, other changes in Concept C, such as curb extensions, intersection realignments, and pedestrian islands, which will improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow should be included. And, as we pursue these improvements, we should continue to work to strengthen our public transit systems. We can slow speeds, improve flow, add new transit modes, and strengthen existing public transit means to get downtown. There can be lots of winners, and I will stand with you to achieve that vision.

Impact on Businesses, Seniors, and Persons with Disabilities

Some have argued that protected bike lanes will result in too large a loss of parking and loading to the detriment of businesses, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Such concerns should not be taken lightly, and I share your commitment to address them. As you and I have discussed, if we are strategic, we can make this work for all users. DDOT has been working on plans to do so.

Often lost in these discussions is the fact that far from hurting businesses, evidence shows that adding protected bike lanes helps businesses. Many people are moving to rely on bicycles as a mode of transportation, which will only grow with the proliferation of e-bikes. So, while we need to work to ensure adequate parking and loading for our businesses, seniors, and persons with disabilities, we should not forget that protected bike lanes bring a whole new category of customers to our businesses who will not compete for car parking spaces. This is a category of customers we are letting down, and we should address their needs, too.

As we mitigate the concerns of those who rely on cars, we should not forsake the needs of those who choose not to. Our city hosts a large and growing population determined not to contribute to climate change or a dangerous driving environment. There is a reason the Biden administration places such a heavy emphasis on expanding modes of transportation, including bike infrastructure. The future is multimodal, and my children and yours expect us to get it.





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We are not in an on/off switch moment, but rather a transition period. Over time, we *must* move away from reliance on single occupancy cars. You rightfully pride yourself on leading a city in the vanguard on climate and safety initiatives, as well as a commitment to Vision Zero. To be true to our goals, we must move down the path to a less car-dependent, multimodal future. That requires us to include protected bike lanes in the Connecticut Avenue Multimodal Safety Improvement project.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since the spring of 2022, not a day has gone by without someone passionately making the pro or con case to me about protected bike lanes on Connecticut Avenue. This is one of the many difficult concerns that you and I have the privilege to face every day. Feelings run strong. Our job, though, is to move the city forward with a long-term vision while incorporating pragmatism and sensitivity in the moment. We can and must do that here by moving forward with a safety plan for Connecticut Avenue that includes protected bike lanes in a strategic manner that can meet the needs of all users of the avenue.

I look forward to working with you to finalize and implement such a plan and hope to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you as we move forward to a safer, multimodal future.

Sincerely,

Matt Frumin  
 DC Councilmember for Ward 3

cc: Interim Director Sharon Kershbaum, District Department of Transportation  
 Kevin Donahue, City Administrator  
 Councilmember Charles Allen, Chair, Committee on Transportation and Environment

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