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Destination DC ★ Downtown DC BID ★ Dupont Circle BID ★ Events DC ★ Federal City Council ★ Georgetown BID
Golden Triangle BID ★ Greater Greater Washington ★ Greater Washington Partnership ★ Mt. Vernon Triangle CID
NoMa BID ★ Rosslyn BID ★ Sierra Club DC Chapter ★ Southwest BID ★ Washington Area Bicyclist Association
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**Testimony by Caitlin Rogger, Executive Director
Department of Public Works
Agency Oversight Hearing
February 8, 2022**

Dear Chairperson Cheh and Members of the Committee,

DC Sustainable Transportation (DCST) is a nonprofit organization that brings together business, advocacy, and government entities to make DC a global leader with frequent, rapid, safe, affordable, and reliable transportation to, from, and around DC job centers.

Our members include ten of DC's Business Improvement Districts, the Federal City Council, Events DC, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the Sierra Club DC chapter, the Greater Washington Partnership, Greater Greater Washington, the Transportation Equity Network, and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

The Department of Public Works plays an essential role in enforcing the District's parking and other vehicular laws, with important implications for safety, mobility, and sustainability. Even as the District makes laudable investments in bus priority, pickup-dropoff zones, and bike lanes, their usefulness is immediately compromised when they are not enforced effectively, bringing us back to square one.

Ample evidence from the past two years has established that DPW's current capabilities don't position it to meet or approach the District's enforcement needs, with nearly as many vehicles eligible for booting (633K) as there are District residents, and the booting team reduced - in a time of increased parking violations - from a meager 10 to just 4 people. Labor shortages, coupled with limited towing and storage facilities for vehicles that must be towed, are a few of the challenges that will hamper efforts to get more serious about this growing problem.

Under new leadership and with, as Chairperson Cheh noted, a compelling vision, it is DCST's hope that DPW will be able to address these limitations. That's only going to be realistic if they are able to get in place the personnel - priority 1 - and facilities - priority 1a - to perform the work. The

process for hiring personnel must be made more efficient and given higher priority so that the department has the skilled people on board to do the work they're funded to do.

Once new ticketing, booting and towing officers are wearing DPW badges, where and when they're distributed throughout the city needs to adjust to changed traffic and parking patterns, for example with much greater attention to pickup-dropoff zones that the District has invested in to ensure traffic flow and efficiency of freight. Furthermore, it's clear that DPW needs several acres to store towed vehicles rather than topping out at 750 cars each day. DCST is also keen to understand DPW's plans for integrating new technology to improve the efficiency of enforcing violations.

DCST is excited about the District's investment in traffic cameras, but cameras are only one layer of the wider picture, and they need to be coupled with more flexible, robust and proactive approaches. Historically DPW's modality around enforcing bus and bike lanes, as well as pickup-dropoff zones, has tended too far toward reactive and spot-fix approaches, which are triggered when a violation is reported - too often the vehicle is gone by the time a team is realistically able to appear or act. A more systematic, schedule-based approach, is one thing we are very hopeful to see under the leadership of the new Interim Director and ultimately the permanent Director. This will only become more important as the miles of bus and bike lanes increase. We have to get good at doing this now if we're going to support a truly multi-modal future for the District.

We are encouraged by DPW's recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with DDOT to dedicate towing resources for DDOT's use. It's significant, and it should be done more often, for agencies with shared objectives to share resources, whether that's facilities, staff, or technology. In other words, this is a good start and we hope to see much greater collaboration between DPW and DDOT in future.

Another needed change is ticket reciprocity with jurisdictions across the region. With nearly 90% of the violations occurring on District streets being committed by non-DC residents, there is a ceiling on how effective enforcement can be without addressing this inconvenient but urgent issue.

As a department with a broad remit around matters with direct and immediate impacts on residents' lives, it's apparent that DPW gets pulled in many directions. DCST hopes that with some lessons learned, DPW will be in a position to build on its enforcement capabilities and that we'll see much stronger performance in FY2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caitlin Rogger". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Caitlin Rogger
Executive Director
DC Sustainable Transportation