



# Discussion on the Issues Related to the Proposed Dalecarlia Bike and Pedestrian Lanes

Presented by the Coalition of Concerned Citizens of  
Spring Valley, Palisades, Wesley Heights and Kent  
Neighborhoods of Washington

Presentation to Ward 3 Councilmember  
Mary M. Cheh



November 13, 2019

# Agenda-Process, Safety and Practicality

1. Who We Are and Why Are We Here?
2. The DDOT and ANC3D Process-How Did We Get Here?
3. Safety of Dalecarlia Parkway and Access to the Sibley Hospital Campus
4. Traffic and Environmental Concerns
5. Practicality-Who does this benefit and who does it impact?
6. Viable Alternatives
7. Q&A

# Purpose of the Meeting

- Who We Are

- Over 600 residents and counting that live in Spring Valley, Palisades, Wesley Heights and Kent
- Residents that have signed a petition against the conversion of two lanes of Dalecarlia Parkway into bike lanes
- People who will be impacted by DDOT's proposal
- We are avid bicycle enthusiasts
  - ✓ *We don't have issues with bikers*
  - ✓ *We don't have issues with well thought-out bike lanes that connect residential areas to other neighborhoods and commercial areas in the city*
- Residents who rely on clear access to Sibley Hospital
- First Responders who require direct and unobstructed access to Sibley Hospital

- Why are we here?

- To Raise Awareness of the issues with the elimination of traffic lanes on Dalecarlia Parkway
- Because we have no faith in the process

# The DDOT and ANC 3D Process-How Did We Get Here?

- Before engaging with the public, DDOT convened a select group to provide input that included pro bike lane ANC Commissioners and bicycle advocates, **but not any individual community stakeholders**
- Residents who came out to the Livability Study meetings emphasized strong, overwhelming opposition against this
- Residents were continually promised no final decisions had been made, yet the recommendation never changed and DDOT indicated no openness to change their plans throughout their process
- Two ANC Commissioners in particular, without obtaining any input from residents at a public meeting, advocated for this change with DDOT privately and then decided to support this even before taking a public vote or seeking public input
- DDOT and the ANC Commissioners who participated in the private meetings cited recommendations from a 2005 study to justify the closure of two lanes
- Following the DDOT Livability Study presentation in August, a ANC3D meeting was quickly scheduled for the following week and a detailed 13 page letter of recommendation was posted on the ANC3D site a mere 36 hours prior to the meeting
- At the meeting, the public comment session was short circuited by the ANC commissioners by imposing unreasonable time limits on the ability of residents to present their views while providing no ability for public input into the letter
- The ANC established a special committee whose members were selected behind closed doors and reflects a biased view of the neighbors
- While DDOT has expressed a willingness to engage with the community through the ANC process, the ANC process is not representative of the neighborhood that is most directly affected by DDOT's action

# The DDOT and ANC 3D Process-Our Views

- DDOT's Livability Study and ANC 3D engaged in a deeply flawed processes
- The "ANC 3D Special Committee" is a creation of the ANC; created to give DDOT (and individual ANC Commissioners) cover by giving the appearance of community engagement on repurposing Dalecarlia; **yet the ANC committee does not have large scale buy-in from the community**
- An ANC recommendation should not be given great weight when it is the outcome of a procedure that is not transparent and does not allow for meaningful public engagement
- The ANC record in this case demonstrates that it cannot be trusted to be an honest broker
- **DDOT will not entertain Alternatives!**
  - Other Options take too long or will cost more money

# Safety of Dalecarlia Parkway and Access to the Sibley Hospital Campus

- Safety-The conversion of these lanes presents significant safety issues
  - There is just no way that this won't impact ambulance traffic into the hospital.
  - This will block ambulance and other emergency access by backups with no place for vehicles to pull over and get out of the way-**This is a real life-safety issue.**
  - It is simply not safe to have cars driving in two opposing lanes traveling close together given the topography and overall design of the roadway
- First Responder Concerns
  - Local First Responders do not like this idea
    - ✓ First Responders at Fires Station #20 had no idea of this proposed change
    - ✓ When presented with the proposal, they were 100% in agreement that this is not safe and not practical
    - ✓ They are very concerned with having only one lane of access to Sibley Hospital
    - ✓ DDOT claimed that the ambulances could "jump" the wide landscaped median in the event of a traffic backup and drive on the bike lanes
      - First Responders said that this was not only impractical but impossible, given vehicle clearances, the width of the median and speed that emergency vehicles travel

# Traffic and Environmental Concernes

- Traffic on Dalecarlia Parkway
  - Increased traffic per lane as a result of going from four lanes to two;
    - ✓ This will create bottlenecks getting into Westmoreland Circle, which is already bad as is during morning and evening rush hours
    - ✓ This will create bottlenecks getting onto Dalecarlia from Loughboro Road
    - ✓ This will create bottlenecks getting into Sibley at shift change hour (5:00 and 7:00 AM and 5:00 and 7:00 PM)
- Impact to residents that use other Sibley resources such as Grand Oaks
  - There is a very high number of residents who have their own home health care aides at Grand Oaks.
  - The shift changes will not only affect hospital workers, but also workers at Grand Oaks and private duty home health care aides.
  - It will also impact the expanding range of services at Sibley resulting from a new hospital, the Medical Office Building, the National Proton Center, and the addition of specialty health care services at Sibley
  - ***This is a hospital that is expanding and serving residents from across the metro area and will continue to grow as the population ages***
- Neighborhood Traffic
  - Drivers will simply cut through Spring Valley and Kent Corner seeking less congested alternative routes, creating more traffic and safety concerns for our neighborhood – a main reason for Dalecarlia Parkway's placement.
- Environmental Concerns
  - Idling cars in traffic creates pollution

# Practicality-Who does this benefit and who does this impact?

- This is not a practical or logical solution to getting cars off the road
  - Dalecarlia Parkway is a north/south limited access divided loop road designed to provide unfettered access to Sibley Hospital and MacArthur Boulevard to the south and Massachusetts Avenue to the north
  - It takes commuter traffic out of our neighborhoods
- Who will actually use these walking and bike paths?
  - Not bike commuters.
    - ✓ The road doesn't provide better or more direct access than other routes to the employment centers of Downtown or Bethesda
    - ✓ Bikers can easily use 49th Street
  - Not walkers
    - ✓ People will not walk to Sibley Hospital. There is bus service from the Metro to the hospital, so why have a walking path?
    - ✓ It does not make our neighborhood more walkable as it does not provide a direct connection for residents to walk from their homes to the commercial corridor or even other residences."
- Who does this impact?
  - Virtually the entire community and commuters

**An ill-conceived idea that benefits few and impacts many!**



# Viable Alternatives

## Alternative #1

- Do nothing-A majority of residents like Dalecarlia Parkway the way it is
  - It serves the community's needs well and we don't want to lose what we consider an aspect of "livability" in the community
  - Where does this bicycle "path" lead?
    - ✓ Few bicyclists and virtually no pedestrians use the Parkway now
  - Who would use it if we built it?
    - ✓ What is the expected bicycle use? Pedestrian use?
    - ✓ When would people use the bike lanes?
  - Dalecarlia Parkway is too steep in places to be attractive to bikers and pedestrians
  - While many are in favor of bike lanes in the city, why do it here?

## Residents are adamant that they simply do not want this

*It does not make our neighborhood more walkable*

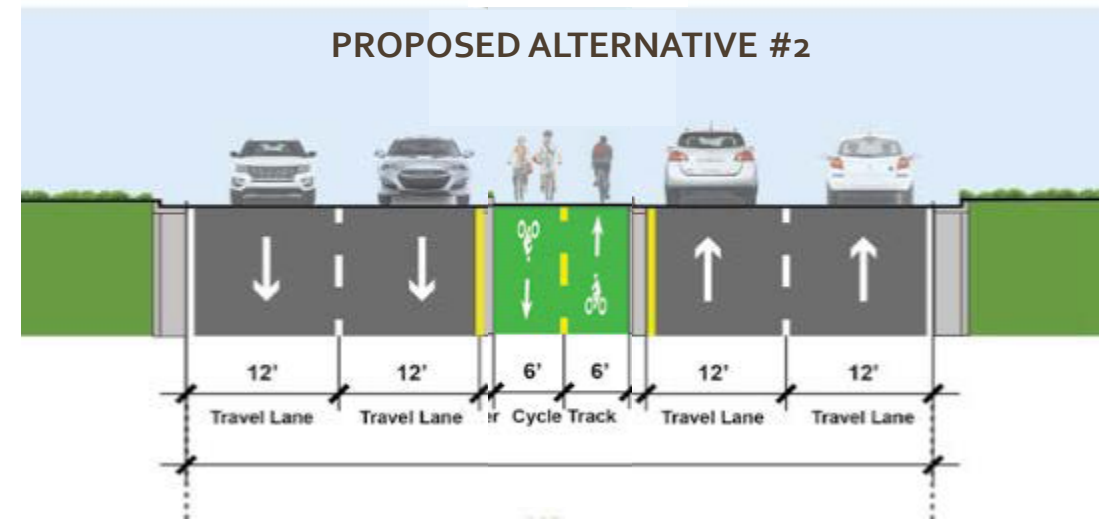
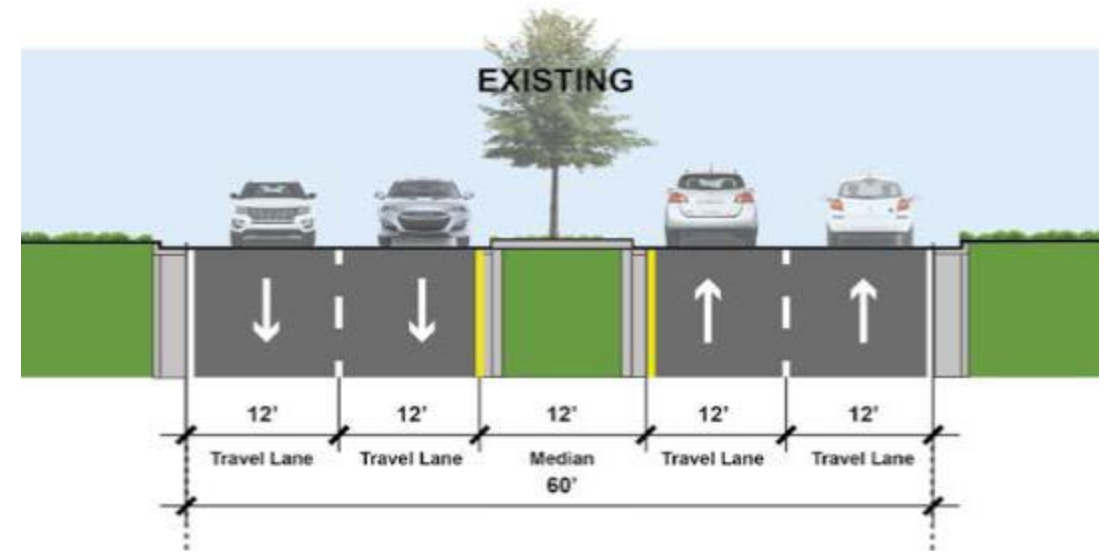
*It does not make our neighborhood more bikeable*

*It does not provide a direct connection for residents to walk or ride from their homes to the commercial corridors or even other residences*

# Viable Alternatives

## Alternative #2

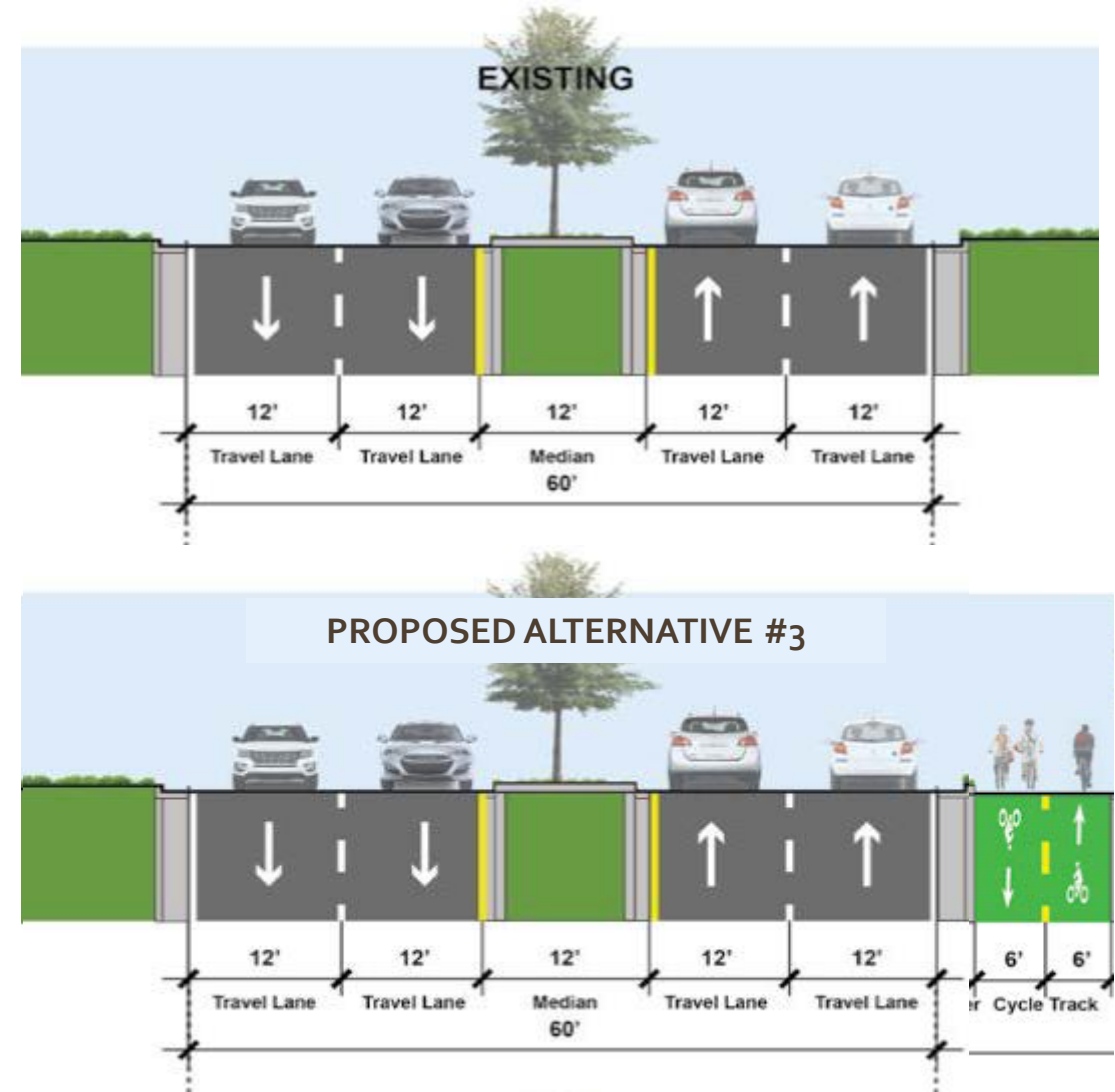
- Utilize the median on Dalecarlia for Bike Lanes
  - This will serve Bicyclists and Pedestrians without sacrificing automobile lanes
  - The Median is 12' wide, providing bicycles and pedestrians a path wider than the Capitol Crescent Trail
  - Keeps vehicles traveling in opposite directions safely away from one another
  - Provides bicycle amenities at a lower cost than other alternatives
  - Avoids engineering issues related to building a bicycle path on the right-of-way
  - This alternative has been used elsewhere in DC (Pennsylvania Avenue)
  - This is an easy and non-confrontational option that doesn't remove lanes of traffic used by thousands of drivers.



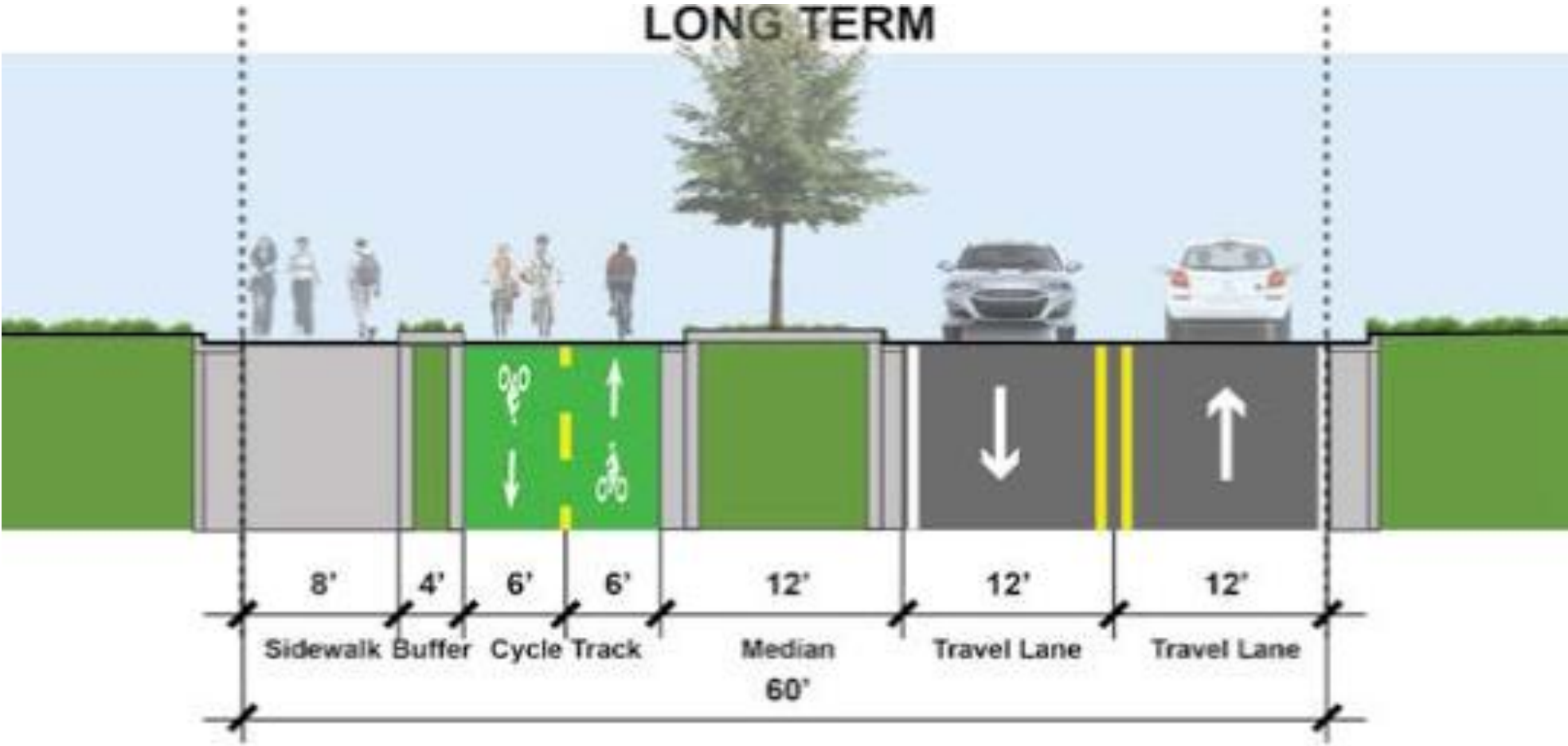
# Viable Alternatives

## Alternative #3

- Utilize the Eastern Right-of-Way on Dalecarlia to construct bike lanes
  - Serves Bicyclists and Pedestrians without sacrificing automobile lanes
  - Can be constructed on the DDOT Right-of-Way
  - Would be a more expensive option to Alternative #2



# Informal Straw Poll



# Q & A