

## **Draft ANC Letter for Traffic Calming on Reno/34th St NW within ANC3C Boundaries**

Ms. Sharon Kershbaum, Interim Director  
District of Columbia Department of Transportation  
250 M Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Re: ANC 3C Request for Traffic Calming on Reno Road/34<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

Dear Interim Director Kershbaum:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C (Cleveland Park, Massachusetts Avenue Heights, and Woodley Park) respectfully requests that DDOT address pedestrian and vehicle safety problems on Reno Road and 34<sup>th</sup> Street NW within the ANC 3C area and undertake traffic calming and other measures to address our concerns. The community fears that the current configuration of the road and continuing increase in traffic and reckless driving makes this stretch the site of a tragedy waiting to happen.

As you know, Reno Road and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets, NW are classified as a minor arterial road under DDOT's functional classification system. Reno Rd, which becomes 34<sup>th</sup> Street at Rodman Street, NW (together "Reno/34<sup>th</sup>") bisects ANC 3C from Rodman Street in the north to Massachusetts Avenue, NW in the south, and runs through the Cleveland Park, Massachusetts Avenue Heights, and Woodley Park neighborhoods. Within ANC 3C Reno/34 abuts one preschool (Cleveland Park Congregational) and five primary and secondary schools (John Eaton Elementary School, Beauvoir School, Cathedral School for Girls, NCRC, and St. Albans School). Students and other pedestrians walk along or cross Reno/34<sup>th</sup> Street to reach these primary and secondary schools or to attend others within three blocks of Reno/34<sup>th</sup> (including Maret, Sidwell Friends, and Washington International School), as well as to visit the Macomb Playground, Rosedale and Tregaron conservancy parks, and Hearst Recreation Center. From Rodman south to Woodley Road, there are no or minimal tree box buffers between often narrow sidewalks and moving traffic in the travel lanes. There are crosswalks without any other traffic calming such as traffic lights, stop signs or raised/narrowed crosswalks, resulting in drivers not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks and giving pedestrians a false sense of security.

There are other safety problems on Reno/34<sup>th</sup>. Traffic is observed to exceed the posted speed during non-rush hours. During rush hours when traffic is heavy, some drivers behave aggressively (using an extended center turn lane to bypass slow or stopped traffic, for example) or seek alternative routes on intersecting local streets. In addition to commuter traffic on Reno/34<sup>th</sup>, the above-named schools and other institutions together generate considerable traffic, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times.

DDOT last considered safety and structural issues almost 25 years ago, when it eliminated a reversible center lane on portions of Reno/34<sup>th</sup>. As the area population has grown in these years, traffic and safety challenges have increased also. The ANC believes that it is time for DDOT to focus again on Reno/34<sup>th</sup> issues holistically, but also to undertake traffic calming and other measures to address urgent safety issues in the short term. The ANC has already urged that DDOT undertake some of them, particularly in the vicinity of John Eaton School.

### Pending ANC traffic calming/safety enhancement request - John Eaton Elementary School

By resolution on July 17, 2023, ANC requested DDOT to install speed humps on 33rd Pl NW between Lowell St. NW and Woodley Rd. NW, and speed tables/raised crosswalks, curb bump outs at intersections around Eaton Elementary School, among other immediate traffic calming measures. [ANC Resolution](#). We reiterate our request that that DDOT focus on John Eaton School safety issues as a priority.

### Other immediate measures to improve pedestrian and traffic safety

Lower speed limit signs on Reno/34<sup>th</sup>. Traffic speed limit signs are inconsistent and not logical. Although DDOT has posted 20 mph speed limit signs on portions of Reno/34<sup>th</sup>, It recently posted new, higher 25 mph between Woodley Road and Garfield Street, adjacent to several schools and school crossings. DDOT should replace them with consistent 20 mph signage.

Increase traffic enforcement along the corridor. DDOT has a speed camera installed at the intersection of Rodman St. NW, we urge DDOT to add further speed cameras and other traffic enforcement mechanisms to this corridor.

Post no right turn on red at 34<sup>th</sup> and Porter Streets. Many children cross at this busy intersection to get to their respective schools. The intersection's topography (steep hills to the east and west on Porter Street and to the south on 34<sup>th</sup> Street and a curved approach from the north on 34<sup>th</sup> Street) make this intersection particularly dangerous for pedestrians. Posting signs to warn drivers to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks would be helpful as well.

Raised crosswalks and grooved pavement rumble strips at Porter and at other Reno/34<sup>th</sup> Street intersections, on both Reno/34<sup>th</sup> and at cross streets. We are encouraged that DDOT has expanded its tool kit to install traffic calming measures on streets other than local streets, such as raised crosswalks. These devices would slow, but not impede traffic and increase the visibility of school children and other pedestrians at these intersections. DDOT should pay particular attention to intersections without signalized crossings.

Remove double and surplus utility poles that obstruct driver sight lines. Although new utility poles have been installed, older poles still remain at 34<sup>th</sup> and Newark Streets,

which obstruct driver sight lines. DDOT should instruct utility companies to remove the additional pole as soon as possible at this and other intersections.

Increase enforcement of existing thru-truck restrictions. Reno/34<sup>th</sup> and a number of interesting streets have existing restrictions on thru-trucks larger than box trucks, yet there is no apparent enforcement of such restrictions. Large trucks take longer to come to a stop and pose other safety challenges for pedestrians. We urge that DDOT ensure that truck restriction signs are clear and that MPD step up enforcement of existing restrictions.

### Medium-term holistic traffic calming

Beyond these existing requests for traffic calming and other measures that can be implemented in the short-term, we request that DDOT focus holistically on structural and other traffic calming along 34<sup>th</sup>/Reno.

--Evaluate unsignalized intersections for four-way stop signs or signals where warrant requirements met. We urge DDOT to consider previous safety resolutions passed for [Newark St. NW](#) and [Rodman St. NW](#) intersections.

--Consider traffic lane changes to enhance safety with robust community engagement. For example, the long center turn lane that extends from north of Nebraska south to Cleveland Avenue seems unnecessary except at the major (collector) cross streets where there is a significant amount of turning traffic.

1. The long center turn lane may even encourage higher vehicle speeds by creating a long visual median or buffer for drivers. For example, north of Nebraska and south of Cleveland Avenue where there is no center turn lane but one lane of street parking, traffic appears to be more “calmed.”
2. When traffic is slowed or stopped at rush hour, some drivers use the center lane as a passing lane to travel one block or more to bypass congested traffic.
3. In some blocks the space recaptured from the center turn lane could be repurposed into creating wider buffers between narrow sidewalks and the north and south travel lanes. Other possible uses depending on community input include one lane of parking, which itself can serve as a buffer; protected bike lane or landscaped median (like on Cleveland Avenue).
4. Eliminating the center turn lane at most streets would allow DDOT to install bulb-outs or narrowed crosswalks to make crossing safer for children and other pedestrians within the Study Area.

--Consider ways to reduce level of thru-traffic/commuter traffic on Reno/34<sup>th</sup>, such as eliminating the slip lane between Tilden and Springland Lane and reconfiguring intersection to require a right-angle turn (as NPS has done at Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, south of Kennedy Center at turnoff to Memorial Bridge).

--Consider ways to calm and reduce level of thru-traffic/commuter traffic, including trucks, that use local streets to reach Reno/34<sup>th</sup> Street.

--Encourage area schools (independent, public charter, and DCPS) to promote the use of more school buses and public transportation, to provide alternatives to private vehicle transportation.

The ANC also requests that DDOT conduct an updated traffic count at various times during the school year on Reno/34th from Van Ness Street south to Massachusetts Avenue (“Study Area”), including turning data to/from cross streets, including at Cleveland Avenue and Garfield Street, NW. Update traffic count data on at least 80 percent of cross streets within the Study Area.

ANC 3C hereby authorizes the ANC chair and the Commissioners for SMDs \_\_\_\_\_ to represent the Commission with respect to this letter.

Thank you for your attention to these important safety requests. The ANC looks forward to partnering with DDOT to calm traffic and enhance safety along Reno Road and 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed public meeting on October 23, 2023 with a quorum present, a quorum being five commissioners, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 3C approved these written comments by voice vote.