

Testimony before the Council of the District of Columbia
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
FY 2022 Budget Hearing, Department of Public Works
June 4, 2021

Good afternoon Councilmember Cheh and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about the Department of Public Works, the Parking Enforcement Management Administration, and priorities.

Many people have said that DPW needs to increase parking enforcement; District and Federal agencies write over a hundred thousand parking tickets each month, or did before the pandemic. I believe the problem is one of priorities—not only are we only issuing an average 3,600 tickets a day, we aren't actually enforcing the things that make our streets dangerous.

First I would like to say enforcement is a *last* resort. We cannot simply enforce our way to safe streets. But bike lane parking kills. To take just two examples that made national news a couple years ago: in September 2018, in Concord, NH, Corrections officer Patrick Bettens was killed when he was forced out of a bike lane by a delivery truck and was hit from behind by another vehicle. In August, 2018, in New York City, a driver pulled into the bike lane in front of Australian tourist Madison Jane Lyden, forcing her to swerve into traffic; she, too, was hit from behind and killed.

DDOT, of course, bears the primary responsibility to create protected bike lanes and other infrastructure that doesn't just prohibit but *prevents* dangerous driver behavior. DMV, too, must step up educating drivers of their responsibilities and others' rights on the road. Again, we cannot simply enforce our way to safe streets.

However, especially in the short term, DPW Parking Enforcement can and must dramatically step up enforcement of vehicles parked in bike lanes. Others have noted that the majority of the Parking Enforcement team's time seems to be spent on neighborhood parking-permit checks, and a review of the citation numbers on DC Open Data shows that, next to over-stayed or unpaid meters, parking too long in an RPP area without a permit is the third-largest category of parking tickets, typically 8–10% of all tickets issued by DPW. Citations for parking in a bike lane, by contrast, typically comprise a third to a half a percent of tickets issued, somewhere between one thirtieth and one sixtieth of the number of residential parking citations.

If a person parks inappropriately in a neighborhood-permit zone, someone else may have a hard time parking their own vehicle when they get home—if a person has parked inappropriately in a bike lane, **someone else may not get home at all**. Bike lane parking is not a mere matter of convenience, an annoying issue to be dodged and avoided like a pothole—this is a life safety issue, and it is time DPW and other agencies start treating it like one. Take some of the resources dedicated to policing parking in front of people's residences, and cite instead the drivers who make our roads actively unsafe.

Thank you for your time.