



Eckington
Civic Association

Everett Lott
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District Department of Transportation

Anna Chamberlin
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Vision Zero Director
District Department of Transportation

George Branyan
Active Transportation Branch Manager
District Department of Transportation

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Director Lott, Ms. Chamberlain, Ms. Bailey, and Mr. Branyan,

On behalf of the Eckington Civic Association, we are writing to request that DDOT improve east-west bike facilities between the Metropolitan Branch Trail in Eckington and points to our neighborhood's west.

Eckingtonians are grateful for the recent progress that has been made in building protected bike lanes (PBL) on north-south routes across the city. We are excited that the Metropolitan Branch Trail is fully funded and will be completed over the next few years. We are also excited that DDOT has committed to installing protected bike lanes on New Jersey Avenue NW and 9th Street NW.

Unfortunately, the essential east-west links intended to join these facilities in the Mid City — narrow, painted lanes on Q and R streets — present serious danger to hundreds of bicycle and scooter riders each day. Those who use these lanes must navigate stopped vehicles, drivers veering into the bike lane, inch-close dangerous passing, and the constant threat of being

“doored.” It is our understanding that these lanes are not compatible with DDOT’s current safety standards and would not be built this way today.

Crash statistics back up our lived experiences: First responders report an average of 1 crash every week on Q and R Streets over the past 5 years – resulting in injuries to 53 bicyclists, 31 pedestrians and 171 vehicle drivers and passengers. There is no accounting of the unreported crashes and near misses that users experience every day.

The dangers to cyclists are apparent in Eckington. 9 cyclists have been injured on R street in the last five years. Just last week, a cyclist suffered major injuries after being struck by a vehicle at R street and Harry Thomas Way NE.¹ A further 6 cyclists have been struck on the unit block of Florida Avenue. According to DDOT’s North Capitol Street project team, the intersection of R street and North Capitol Street is among the most dangerous intersections in the city—not just the North Capitol Street corridor.

We urge DDOT to fix these dangerous routes by building PBLs on Q and R streets from Connecticut Avenue NW to the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) trail so people of all ages and abilities can be safe when they bike or scoot to work, to school, to go shopping, or for recreation.

A protected east-west route will benefit communities across a wide swath of our city – stretching from the MBT in Eckington to Bloomingdale, Truxton Circle, Shaw, Logan Circle and Dupont Circle. Pedestrians will benefit from the traffic calming effects of the PBLs, which also will safely separate bicyclists from the main roadway.

People choose to bike when it is safe, convenient, and low-stress. Even if parts of a route meet these criteria, even a few blocks of high stress, unsafe conditions can turn a potential cyclist away, limiting their mobility and options for recreation.

Even when most of the route is blissful, it is the most stressful blocks that turn someone away. These narrow painted bike lanes squeezed next to high-volume driving lanes are no substitute for a truly low-stress and safe bikeway.

Thanks,

Conor Shaw
President, Eckington Civic Association

Brandt Witt
Vice President, Eckington Civic Association

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<https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/crashes-in-dc/explore?filters=eyJDUKINRUIEIjpbIjMzMjQ4NTQzODU4Ii19&location=38.910517%2C-77.018339%2C16.00&showTable=true>