

## Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Eastern Washington



*Did you know ~*

- *There are at least 23 road and bridge improvement projects in planning that impact our Anacostia Riverfront neighborhoods*
- *Major pieces of current development along the Anacostia (e.g.: stadium) are missing from the transportation planning documents*
- *DC DOT responses to community inquiries about specific elements of the various projects are often different and conflicting*
- *There is no comprehensive assessment of how all these projects interact with each other and on our riverfront neighborhoods*

*~ Our neighborhoods deserve a comprehensive transportation plan*

Dear Anacostia Waterfront Neighbors,

For over two years Anacostia Riverfront citizens concerned about the traffic congestion and parking on DC's commercial and neighborhood streets have been trying to determine just what is being planned and what impacts we should expect to have as a result of the projects we know about. While everyone is in favor of fixing our DC traffic problems, poor planning forebodes a poor future. Traffic is like water - when it hits an obstacle, it flows around to the path of least resistance. We don't want our local streets to become that pathway for commuter traffic. Current highway improvement planning does not appear to take a comprehensive look at what is planned and what impacts the whole series of projects may have on local streets.

For example: When the 11<sup>TH</sup> Street Bridge expands to 12 lanes, how many cars will dump out onto local residential streets? When the four Kenilworth Avenue interchange upgrades are complete, will the local roads be able to handle increase in commuter traffic through the neighborhoods? When the "park access" road along the River's edge is complete, how soon will it be before it becomes a suburbanite's highway? How can Navy Yard traffic get to/from commuter arteries without interminable congestion back-ups? If no one supports a Mass Ave bridge, why does it remain on the drawing board?

The Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Eastern Washington has had members from both sides of the River tracking the town meetings and studying the various disjointed proposals. At every turn, at every meeting, new pieces of the puzzle emerge, new questions arise, and new doubts grow. The time for clearer answers is before construction begins. A comprehensive assessment by an independent transportation planning organization would go a long way toward assuring that 1) we know what's really happening, 2) we know what impact the series of projects will have on local streets, and 3) we know that the end result will be in the best interests of the city and its neighborhoods.

The Coalition has sent the attached letter to the Mayor and each City Councilmember. We urge the ANC to send a letter to DDOT Director Menome and the City Council endorsing our request for a new, comprehensive, mobility study for the neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River.

Respectfully Yours,  
~ Concerned Citizens

## *Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Eastern Washington*

The Honorable Adrian Fenty  
Mayor, The District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20004  
August 1, 2007

Re: *Request for a New Traffic Mobility Study for Eastern Washington, DC*

Dear Mayor Fenty:

Communities on both sides of the Anacostia River face major impacts from large-scale transportation proposals. The transportation proposals alone involve reconfiguration of three major bridges and the addition of multiple new linkages that will hugely affect neighborhood and commuter traffic flows. The development proposals will greatly intensify land use bringing many additional people through and into the Anacostia River communities for work and recreation. Their addition will have large impacts on existing traffic corridors and open space.

All our affected communities have significant questions and uncertainties about (1) what exactly is planned, (2) how all the plans in combination will affect our communities and (3) what the cost to local taxpayers of the transportation infrastructure will be. In the past, a number of our organizations have supported one or more of these projects but failure to get responses to questions over the last year, has caused increasing concern for projects with such large potential results.

Acknowledging only the second of these three concerns, the District of Columbia government undertook a study of "future land use and transportation demand in the Anacostia corridor". This was issued in March/April of 2006 and was entitled "The Anacostia Waterfront Transportation Mobility Study". The other two concerns, i.e. the totality of what is planned and the cost of the transportation "package," have gone largely unaddressed.

We seek the following actions:

- Preparation of a new Mobility study in light of the fundamental deficiencies (summarized below) of the first mobility study. This new study should be prepared by consultants who *are* expert in the integration of urban land use and multi-modal transportation system planning and who are *not* involved with particular AWI or other initiatives in the affected communities.
- Preparation of a single document that accurately describes *all* AWI, Great Streets and other significant development projects planned for implementation in the Anacostia River communities.
- Full disclosure of how much parkland is proposed to be taken for development purposes and how much private property is proposed to be taken by eminent domain.
- Realistic estimates of the total cost of these transportation infrastructure projects including a breakdown of how much will be paid by the federal government, how much by District taxpayers and how much by other jurisdictions.

- Estimated costs of alternatives to particular plans which were identified by our communities in District-sponsored, planning meetings.

**Deficiencies of the first Mobility Study:**

The existing mobility study falls far short of providing the comprehensive look that is needed, given the potential for the AWI and other projects to affect the integrity and viability of our District neighborhoods and the flow of commuter and other regional travel. While the study disclaims any goal of simply “moving cars,” regional drivers and commuters appear to be the major beneficiaries of the “rationalized” (but uncosted) system it evaluates. It does not show how AWI and other transportation projects and related economic development will affect our communities.

Major shortcomings of the mobility study include:

- Failure to examine how freeway and arterial conditions will affect neighborhood traffic conditions
- Failure to examine conditions on the freeways and arterials including the SE/SW freeway and Pennsylvania Avenue. This issue is key to understanding commuter movement across and through our neighborhoods.
- Failure to integrate redevelopment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge into transportation planning for the Anacostia River communities. This issue is important in the understanding of how the proposed system will affect the use of the freeway by regional and interstate car and truck drivers as a beltway alternative.
- No assessment of conditions on the expanded 12 lane, 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge comprised of freeway and non-freeway lanes. For example: this expansion is proposed, in part, in order to shift a large amount of commuter and other regional traffic from the South Capitol Street Bridge. This shift would increase 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge traffic by 64% to 209,000 vehicles daily. A significant portion of this traffic would be carried by the four non-freeway lanes of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and the community streets on both sides of the river. Yet this major impact on the communities is not even mentioned in the mobility study.
- Failure, conceded in the mobility study (p.A3-21), to examine the impact on the transportation network of the intensified land uses resulting from AWI projects and other development initiatives on the east side of the river. For example: the Office of Planning’s Great Streets proposal for Pennsylvania Avenue SE calls for unbroken, high-rise, mixed-use development from the Sousa Bridge to Southern Avenue and the re-location of multiple police facilities that will bring 1100 cars into the Virginia Avenue SE neighborhood.
- Failure to address conditions resulting from Stadium events.
- Failure to describe or assess the benefits of comprehensive community traffic mitigation

**In Sum:**

- 1) We believe it is important to do this new mobility study as quickly as reasonably possible. It is important for the future of these communities that this information be provided in time to inform discussion of and decisions about AWI, Great Streets, and other major development initiatives. We have heard that some contracts may already have been signed, or signing is imminent, for the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges Project despite the fact that the final Environmental Impact Statement has not yet been released. We fear that any such contracts might “lock in” particular designs before residents, the Mayor and the Council have had an opportunity to fully digest costs and neighborhood impacts.
- 2) The same information must be provided to all residents and affected communities. To date, information from District government employees and government consultants varies from meeting

to meeting. Citizens who attend a meeting in one neighborhood receive different and conflicting information from that received by citizens in another neighborhood. Information given to the same residents changes from meeting to meeting without explanation. For instance, residents have been told affirmatively that an east of the river trolley will/will not be built; the contracts have/have not been let and that the trolley will run on Martin Luther King Avenue/Good Hope Road. It is apparent that planners and their advisers are talking past each other and that no one is speaking candidly to the communities. We request an open process with full disclosure for all neighborhoods and wards bordering the Anacostia.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these concerns. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Lisa Alfred, President  
Barney Circle Association

Patricia Makin  
Frederic Douglas Civic/Community Association  
Anacostia Garden Club

Patrick Crowley, Vice Chair  
Association for the Preservation of  
Historic Congressional Cemetery

William Phillips, President  
Friends of Garfield Park

Dianne Dale, President  
Anacostia Historical Society

Laura Richards  
Penn-Branch Community/Civic Association

Barbara Eck  
Capitol Hill

Vanessa Ruffin-Colbert  
District 4 Representative  
Southwest Neighborhood Assembly

Gladys Dorn Hall  
Hillcrest

Patricia Taylor  
Hill East

Thomas Grahame  
Capitol Hill

Frazer Walton Jr, President  
Kingman Park Civic Association

Stella Hall  
Du Pont Park

Richard Wolf, President  
Capitol Hill Restoration Society

Christopher Herman  
Capitol Hill

Yavocka Young  
Mainstreet Anacostia Organization

Joseph Glover, Chair  
Pope Branch Park Restoration Alliance (endorsed the letter subsequent to its mailing)