



BEEKMAN PLACE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, INC.
1600 BELMONT ST, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20009

Dear Ms. Kanagy (megan.kanagy@dc.gov)

We are writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of Beekman Place Condominium Association and its residents. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 16th Street NW Transit Priority Planning Study (“Study”). It is clear that your team’s review and analysis was thorough and comprehensive. We would like to share our owners’ and residents’ thoughts on the Study with you and your team.

Beekman Place is located at the intersection of 16th St., NW and Belmont St., NW. The over 400 residents of Beekman Place are active users of numerous transportation methods. They travel by bus, rail, car, and foot to get to work, school, entertainment and recreation. It is very important to us that the Study respect and harmonize the competing demands of the users of 16th St. to ensure 16th St. remains a user-friendly transportation corridor for all modes of transportation.

Though we are eager to see improvements, we also have concerns with certain aspects of the three alternatives. To assist your review of our comments, we have divided them by subject area based on your “Draft Alternatives Comparison” chart. We have only commented on the most important issues for our residents and owners. We look forward to working with you as this process moves forward.

Physical Improvements

Base Improvements:

- **Support Bus Stop Upgrade:** We support upgrading bus stops to WMATA zone lengths. This will allow buses to ingress and egress easily and not block traffic while loading and unloading passengers.
- **Oppose Removing V St. Bus Stops:** We strongly oppose removal of the V St. bus stops both northbound and southbound. The V St. bus stops are heavily used by Beekman Place residents and provide important convenience and access to bus service. For those with limited mobility, walking up Meridian Hill to Crescent Street or down to U St. is a significant burden. We understand that removing stops provides incremental improvements to bus times. However, we urge you to not burden DC residents who live closer to downtown with less service in order to expedite travel times for those who live in Maryland or near the DC-MD border. Access to convenient and accessible bus stops is a key factor in people choosing public transportation over using a car.

Additional Improvement:

- Oppose Bus Lanes: We oppose the use of bus lanes on 16th St. This area has limited travel lanes and street parking available. We must account for the numerous cars that will be displaced by removing travel lanes. This becomes particularly worrisome when traveling between Florida Ave. and the downtown core because this stretch of 16th St. has less travel lanes. Having only 1 lane northbound during the morning peak hours and only 1 lane southbound during the evening peak hours will make travel extremely difficult for cars.

We are concerned that there may be a false impression that most of the residents who drive to work do so because they are opposed to public transportation. However, in speaking to Beekman Place residents, as well as residents of neighboring associations, this simply isn't the case. The majority of these residents drive to work out of necessity. In other words, they have chosen to live in the District but often have long commutes to jobs where public transportation is simply not an option. Though some may argue that installing dedicated bus lanes would bring about a change in behavior and result in more residents using public transportation, this simply isn't the case as these commuters have no choice but to drive to work based on the location of their jobs.

Installing dedicated bus lanes will remove travel lanes for cars which will result in significant hardships for commuters who rely on using 16th street as part of their daily commute. This will bring about a combination of adverse impacts such as: pushing vehicles into our neighborhood streets as alternate routes; making it difficult, if not impossible, to turn onto 16th St. from side streets, especially those intersections that do not have traffic lights; creating major back-ups and delays for the thousands of cars that use 16th St. as their primary commuting route.

- Support Intersection reconfiguration at Harvard/Columbia/Mount Pleasant: We support optimizing these intersections to ensure a better flow of traffic, buses, and pedestrians.

Transit Service Improvements

Base Improvements:

- Support Headway improvement and Running/Recovery time addition: We believe efforts to avoid bus bunching and adding recovery time to schedules are proactive measures that will improve bus service.
- Oppose S2 pattern reduction: The S2 route is a popular route among our residents. We oppose reducing S2 route patterns to 2 in each direction. We want more service, not less.

Additional Improvement:

- Support Off-Board Payment and All-Door Boarding: We strongly support off-board payment and all-door boarding. These are smart improvements which will expedite boarding and allow buses to move more rapidly.

- Oppose S1 Limited Stop Service: We strongly oppose limiting the S1 stops to mirror the S9 route. The S1 is a crucial route to our residents because it is the only route that heads westward on K St. If you eliminate stops, it will be significantly harder for residents to access this important bus. For those with limited mobility, walking up Meridian Hill to Euclid St. or down to U St. is a significant burden. This will impair many people's only effective route westbound. As your study notes, some incremental changes can have large impacts on travel time. Forcing riders to transfer buses, if the S1 has reduced stops, would lengthen the travel times for riders who are traveling westward.
- Oppose Truncated Service Pattern: We oppose truncating service patterns for S1, S2, and S4. Truncating these bus routes as proposed will force riders to transfer buses and so would lengthen the travel times of numerous riders. The minor time savings from truncating routes is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the current route plan.

Transit Operations Improvements

Base Improvements:

- Support Signal Priority and Peak Hour Signal Timing: We strongly support using technological improvements to optimize traffic signals and allowing buses transit signal priority. This will keep buses and traffic flowing expeditiously. This is a crucial improvement that DDOT should undertake promptly. We also support Peak Hour Signal Timing to ensure the expedited flow of traffic on 16th St.
- Support Peak Parking Restrictions: We support expanding parking restrictions on 16th to ease traffic congestion. Currently there is a pressing issue of cars illegally queuing up in the morning at parking spaces on 16th St. before the 9:30 am parking restriction ends. This results in the loss of a travel lane at 9:20 am, not 9:30 am. In the morning peak hours, expanding parking restrictions until 10 am is a great idea. Most commuters need to arrive to work by 10 am and so this will expedite travel. We also support evening peak hour expanded parking restrictions, but recommend that they terminate at 7 pm rather than 7:30 pm. Adding an extra 30 minutes to the parking restrictions is excellent proposal during peak hours.
- Support W St. Turn lane: This location is where 16th St. goes from 3 southbound lanes to 2 southbound lanes. A common complaint is that cars are unaware of the left-turn-only lane at 16th St. and W St. This causes traffic to back up as cars attempt to cut into the main travel lanes, especially during the morning peak hours. Improving signage and installing a turn lane separator will greatly improve traffic flow at this bottleneck. We strongly support this proposal.

We note that the bus lane proposals will further exacerbate the bottleneck at 16th St. and W St. as 16th St. narrows here.

- Support improving bus stop amenities and access improvements: We support improving amenities to encourage people to use public transportation. Access to public transportation is an important right and disabled travelers should be accommodated whenever possible with accessibility enhancements.

Additional Improvement:

- Support Automated Parking Enforcement on Buses: We strongly support deploying automated parking enforcement on buses. Illegally parked cars block roadways and cause bottlenecks and accidents as vehicles attempt navigate around them. This substantially delays bus and vehicle travel. Aggressive parking enforcement is crucial in changing behavior.
- Support Dedicated Towing: We strongly support dedicated towing to ensure illegally parked vehicles are removed promptly from 16th St. Unless illegally parked cars are removed, the benefits of automated parking enforcement on buses will not markedly improve travel conditions.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments. While we applaud some of the proposed changes, we remain deeply concerned about other proposals such as the dedicated bus lanes. The proposed changes contain in the Study will have significant impacts for a large number of residents who live both in and outside the District. We encourage DDOT to proceed in a cautious and inclusive manner.

We look forward to working with you as this process moves forward and encourage DDOT to continue to hold open forums allow neighborhood groups to provide public comments.

Sincerely,

Peter Quinnan

Vice President, Beekman Place Condominium Association