

**ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1C  
ADAMS MORGAN**

**Minutes of the July 19, 2004 Public Forum**

The forum was called to order at 7:04PM. Commissioners Broaddus, Gibson, Miscuk, and Roth were present; Commissioners Apostilides, Moretti, and Weaver were absent. Approximately fifty members of the public were in attendance.

Commissioner Roth called the meeting to order, invited his fellow commissioners to introduce themselves, and explained why certain commissioners were absent for the meeting. He then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Broaddus, the organizer of the event.

Commissioner Broaddus reminded the audience of ANC 1C's resolution passed earlier in the year outlining its three transportation priorities: pedestrian safety, parking access, and transit improvements.

She then introduced the evening's speakers:

- Bob Irwin, DC Department of Transportation, Ward One and Two Program Manager
- Bill Schultheiss, Toole Design Group (unable to attend at last moment, replaced by Commissioner Broaddus)
- Greg Walter and Steve DelGuidice, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- Commissioner Broaddus (presenting the findings of the neighborhood visit by Walkable Communities' Dan Burden)

***Bob Irwin, DDOT***

Bob Irwin apologized that he had hoped to have more updated information to present at the forum, but that meetings that had been scheduled with WASA and Eastern Federal Lands had been moved from before to after the forum date.

In regards to street resurfacing, Irwin stated that Lanier Place, Adams Mill Road, Calvert Street, and Ontario Place were all slated to be milled and repaved in 2004. However, he stated that delays in WASA's lead service line replacement schedule would likely push the Adams Mill Road and Ontario Place repavings into next year. Adams Mill Road and Calvert Street could be repaved by this fall pending the results of a final coordination meeting with WASA.

Eastern Federal Lands' reconstruction of the 18<sup>th</sup> Street/Columbia Road/Adams Mill Road intersection, and the Lanier Place/Adams Mill Road/Calvert Street intersection will begin in late 2004 at the earliest.

In regards to the concept of angle parking on Adams Mill Road and/or Calvert Street, Irwin indicated that both were only in the study stage. Angle parking on Adams Mill

Road would require a narrowing of the current center island, while angle parking on Calvert could be undertaken at any time without major structural changes to the roadway.

Irwin provided a brief update on the Kalorama Road reconstruction project, explaining that despite earlier assurances that their work was done, WASA recently told DDOT that one newly-installed sidewalk would have to be torn up so that more water lines could be installed. The re-replacement of this sidewalk will be at WASA's expense, but this and other coordination issues have further slowed progress on this project.

Irwin indicated that as a pilot project, the block of Columbia Road between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Street would soon be striped with bike lanes in both directions. Usage of, and problems with, the bike lanes will be carefully monitored.

Finally, Irwin stated that beginning in September or October, Ward One Transportation Planner Callistus Nwadike would be undertaking a six-month planning study of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and the surrounding area. The study will cover many issues, including parking, sidewalks, and taxis.

***Commissioner Broaddus (for Bill Schultheiss)***

Commissioner Broaddus began her presentation by discussing the history of ANC 1C's hiring of Bill Schultheiss in the first place. DDOT had money budgeted to rework the 18<sup>th</sup> Street/Columbia Road/Adams Mill Road and Adams Mill Road/Lanier Place/Calvert Street intersections (the thirteenth most dangerous intersections in the District), and came to the ANC with a set of plans by contractor Eastern Federal Lands that were said to be 95 percent complete. While the ANC appreciated certain elements of the design (sidewalk "bulbouts" at intersections, reconfiguring the functionality of Adams Mill Road at the intersections, improving pavement markings, etc.), major questions remained, and Mr. Schultheiss was hired to provide expert input into possible improvements to the DDOT/EFL plan.

Schultheiss developed two alternative designs for the two intersections, and Commissioner Broaddus displayed both of them. In [Option A](#), the turn slip from westbound Columbia Road to northbound Adams Mill road was narrowed, and the angle of the turn slip was made more severe, so that drivers would be forced to slow down. Related to this change, the traffic island at this intersection would be significantly expanded, so as to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. This change would not only shorten the crossing distance from 80 to 50 feet, but it would allow for shorter signal times at the automobile intersection.

Option A also envisioned moving the failing bus stop at the McDonalds to a point north of the intersection on Adams Mill Road, where it would be consolidated with the more residential bus stop further up the street. Traffic flow through the Exxon gas station would also be modified, with the entrances on Adams Mill Road being closed, entrance now being off of the adjacent alley, and exits being to Lanier Place only. This would eliminate or reduce the current circumstance of drivers turning across oncoming Adams Mill Road traffic.

In his Option A, Schultheiss also suggested a narrowing of Columbia Road to two lanes between Ontario Road and Biltmore Street, the only stretch where it is currently more than two lanes wide. He also suggested eliminating the second northbound lane of 18<sup>th</sup> Street, replacing it with one of three things: five feet of sidewalk on either side of the street, bike lanes, or a formal center-lane delivery zone.

From a parking perspective, Option A allows for angle parking on Adams Mill Road (with the elimination of the center island) and on Calvert Street (with the elimination of the painted center turn lane). It also provides for a short-term parking zone, or taxi lane, in front of the Blockbuster video store.

[Option B](#) also includes many of these features, but provides for two different changes. This option envisions the elimination of the turn slip from westbound Columbia Road to northbound Adams Mill Road. This would slow traffic at this turn, and it would also create a publicly-owned pedestrian plaza to parallel the privately owned SunTrust plaza across the street. Unfortunately, it would not allow for the crossing distances to be narrowed as significantly as they were in Option A. Option B also foresees maintaining the bus stop at the McDonalds location, but bulbing the sidewalk out to the bus, instead of having the bus try to turn in to take on passengers.

### ***Greg Walker, WMATA***

Walker indicated that ongoing surveys of area residents indicate that there are current transportation needs the transit system is not fully meeting. Since we cannot expand our city roads, transit is a logical candidate for expansion. District residents use Metrobus more heavily than Metrorail, so expansion will take into account ridership, survey results, and gaps in the current Metrorail system. A wider streetcar system, like Baltimore's was ruled out, but a narrow streetcar like Portland's was determined to be a feasible alternative. This system is being used for the new Anacostia line, which is being built on an abandoned CSX right of way. Ground will be broken for this line in September and will last roughly two years. When complete, the line will be 2.6 miles long and will include six stops (Pennsylvania Avenue, Fairlawn, Old Anacostia, Anacostia Metro, Barry Farms, and Bolling Air Force Base).

Through what is called an "alternatives analysis," other future new transit lines are being considered. The "alternatives analysis" examines new transit options, and how to turn these individual lines into a coordinated transit service. One such line connects Woodley Park, Adams Morgan, and U Street, following the route of the current U Street Link. Commissioner Broaddus had suggested trying to link this line to either the planned Wisconsin Avenue or Massachusetts Avenue lines, and WMATA is now building this suggestion into their analysis. The draft "alternatives analysis" will be available in September or October, with the routes that are selected to begin construction within five years. No decisions have been made yet as to these potential routes will involve light rail, dedicated bus lanes, or some combination.

At this point, the presence of Councilmember Jim Graham was acknowledged. Councilmember Graham recognized Commissioner Broaddus' work on transportation issues in general, and in organizing the forum in particular. He suggested that two issues meriting further study were taking any future Adams Morgan transit service underground, and bringing particular attention to the issue of late-night congestion.

***Commissioner Broaddus (for Dan Burden)***

Commissioner Broaddus began by explaining how Adams Morgan Main Street brought Dan Burden of Walkable Communities to Adams Morgan for a two-day session that included a business focus group, workshops, and a walking audit that included representatives from DDOT and WMATA. The first day's workshop focused on identifying issues and alternatives, while the second focused on recommendations.

Due to the partnership of Walkable Communities and Bill Schultheiss on this project, Adams Morgan received expert advice from three expert engineers for a fraction of the cost. Their primary recommendations included the creation of a roundabout at the 18<sup>th</sup> Street/Columbia Road/Adams Mill Road intersection that would include a "terminating vista," such as a landmark, artwork, or clock tower. Increased angle parking, to create new parking, narrow traffic lanes, and reduce traffic speeds, was also a key recommendation.

At this point, Lisa Duperier of Adams Morgan Main Street was introduced, and commended Commissioner Broaddus for organizing the forum. She stated that Dan Burden had suggested that neighbors think of the community as a totality, rather than isolating particular elements. She cited the elimination of bus slips and the narrowing of traffic lanes (such as with the addition of angle parking) as recommendations along these lines.

***Forum***

Commissioner Roth reminded the audience of the ANC's web address ([www.anc1c.org](http://www.anc1c.org)) and upcoming meeting schedule. The ANC's next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 8.

Resident Costello asked about the status of the cab stand at the SunTrust drivethrough lane. Commissioner Broaddus replied that since the drivethrough is privately owned, any use of that space must be approved by SunTrust, and negotiations continue. She also indicated that the drivethrough would be somewhat problematic, since it would involve cabs crossing two busy sidewalks.

Resident Andrade indicated that she opposed the installation of angle parking on Adams Mill Road, particularly if it involved eliminating the center median. She said that decisions should not always be based on the needs of the nightclub crowd. Bob Irwin responded that the installation of angle parking would require either the removal of the median or the narrowing of the adjacent sidewalks, but that the concept of angle parking at this location was still just an idea.

Resident Lawless asked if the bus stop at McDonalds were to be moved north of Columbia, it would be combined with the current 1801 Calvert bus stop. Commissioner Broaddus indicated that it likely would be.

Tony Harvey of the InTowner Newspaper asked if the construction of a new parking garage would necessarily bring more people to the neighborhood. Commissioner Broaddus responded that conventional wisdom would indicate that this would happen. Greg Walker said that if a garage were built, bottlenecks would be created at the garage's entrances, particularly at closing time, but that fewer cars would be circling in the meantime.

Thompson of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association reported that the 20009 zip code has eight times the national bike-to-work rate.

Resident Tannenbaum stated that he is opposed to angle parking and/or median removal on Adams Mill Road. He said that the creation of 40 new spaces didn't merit the disadvantages that would be created.

Resident Roncevil said she thought the alley between Lanier and Calvert was already too busy, and would not be a good entrance for the gas station. She asked if the new configuration would allow for legal left turns from Calvert Street onto Adams Mill Road. Finally, she stated that while a roundabout might keep car traffic moving, she didn't see it as being beneficial to pedestrians. Robert Irwin responded that roundabouts do in fact work, but that there are pedestrian concerns.

Resident Thibault suggested that it was misleading to judge the pedestrian threat at an intersection based on the number of accidents rather than the accident rate per quantity of pedestrians. Additionally, he stated that roundabouts are good for cars, questionable for pedestrians, but very negative for bicyclists.

Commissioner Miscuk discussed alternatives, legal and illegal, to turning left from Calvert Street onto Adams Mill Road.

Resident Minjares pointed out that it is currently difficult and dangerous to cross Calvert Street at Adams Mill Road when cars are turning right from Lanier Place. He also stated that transportation is so central to our life that we should be certain to take advantage of the opportunity this study and this forum provides.

Resident Meyer asked about the status of alley repaving in the neighborhood. Robert Irwin responded that he was given \$900,000 for the year for both alley repaving and sidewalk replacement in Wards One and Two. Due to this low funding level, few alleys can be repaved. He also indicated that the District would soon be undertaking its first-ever alley survey, which will reveal which alleys are in most desperate need. Meyer also asked who would be making the final decision on whether the McDonalds bus stop would be moved. Greg Walker said that WMATA and DDOT jointly make the decision. Finally, Meyer stated that there is not enough bus parking in the neighborhood.

Resident Olgay expressed opposition to angle parking on Adams Mill Road, indicating that not only is the street narrow but also curved and with a significant drop in grade.

Resident Fitch asked how the various plans being discussed all fit together, and if a decision had been made on if the new Adams Morgan transit line would be a trolley or a dedicated bus line. Greg Walker responded that no decision had been made yet on this point.

Resident Wright asked if the Burden plan would result in narrower sidewalks. Commissioner Roth replied that it would not, and that space regained from a lane closure would instead lead to wider sidewalks, new bike lanes, or a new center delivery lane. Wright also said that buses currently block travel lanes and ignore the bus slips. Commissioner Broaddus replied that the new plans foresee the bumping out of sidewalks to the bus, instead of the contrary.

Resident Fenn was pleased that the roundabout concept was being considered for the 18<sup>th</sup> Street/Columbia Road/Adams Mill Road intersection.

Resident Yourish supports pedestrian bulbouts at intersections, and the creation of a legal left turn option for those on Calvert Street seeking to turn onto Adams Mill Road.

Resident O'Rourke indicated concern with the roundabout concept, thinking that it would distance people and detract from the urban energy of the neighborhood. She was also against the angle parking concept, since it would reduce the residential character of the community. O'Rourke would also oppose the streetcar plan if it eliminates parallel parking or narrows sidewalks on Calvert Street.

Resident McMillan works with the Federal Highway Administration. She stated that roundabouts are pro-traffic flow, not pro-pedestrian. She also said that bulbouts strangle the road, making it too narrow for bicyclists. She stated that the sidewalks on 18<sup>th</sup> Street are in a horrible condition, and particularly rough for the disabled.

Lisa Duperier stated that a neighborhood-wide bike parking plan would soon be underway. Commissioner Roth indicated that the current narrow sidewalks make bike parking difficult.

Commissioner Roth conducted an informal poll: would people rather see 18<sup>th</sup> Street remain as it is currently, or would they prefer to see a lane eliminated and replaced with an additional five feet of sidewalk on both sides of the street. A large majority of attendees opted for the latter choice.

Resident Osbourne stated that she loves that the experts are challenging conventional road design. She asked if traffic calming was to be added to Adams Mill Road between Harvard Street and Ontario Road, and if the missing sidewalk on Adams Mill Road would be built. Bob Irwin replied that Adams Mill Road would be repaved between

Lanier Place and Clydesdale Place, and that “speed tables” were being considered for used at crosswalks as traffic calming devices.

Resident Falls asked about the benefits of trolley use. Greg Walker responded that the higher number of larger windows on trolleys promote transparency and that riders are more comfortable since they have a clear idea about where a trolley would stop.

Resident Leonard suggested that the District fund the creation of satellite parking lots built at the edges of busy neighborhoods. Greg Walker said that the bus turnaround on Calvert Street was currently being considered for a public-private redevelopment, but that no one was interested since the bus turnaround use would have to be maintained. Leonard asked about the creation of parking that would be for neighborhood residents only, and Bob Irwin responded that this would be part of the upcoming 18<sup>th</sup> Street transportation study.

Resident Johnson said that she opposes widening sidewalks on 18<sup>th</sup> Street, and that the second northbound lane should continue to be used by pedestrians. She supports closing 18<sup>th</sup> Street entirely on weekend nights. She is opposed to the roundabout concept, and the redevelopment of the Marie Reed site. She indicated that Euclid Street is the eastern entrance to Adams Morgan, and that traffic calming needs to be installed for westbound traffic.

Resident Pinkus stated that the bike lanes on Calvert Street should be extended down 18<sup>th</sup> Street, and that too many revelers in SUVs complicate our traffic. He suggested that businesses offer discounts or other incentives to those demonstrating that they came to the neighborhood via transit. As to light rail, he suggested that while the result may well be worth it, it will be “hell” getting there.

Mr. Costello of the DC Bike Courier Association stated his opposition to angle parking, saying that it is bad for bicyclists. He asked if center bike lanes would be a possibility.

Resident Leonard stated that any plans should take human nature into account, and that the absence of proper enforcement of existing laws creates many of the problems we are trying to solve through construction and redesign.

Commissioner Broaddus offered a resolution supporting the installation of bike lanes on Columbia Road. The resolution failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn. Commissioner Miscuk seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:52PM.

Commissioner Gibson, Acting Secretary