

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



d. Office of the Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: ANC 3E

FROM: DDOT Safety Team
Transportation Operations Administration
James M. Cheeks, Jr. FITE
Chief Traffic Engineer

DATE: July 24, 2013

SUBJECT: **42nd Street, NW and Military Road, NW Intersection Improvements**

This memorandum provides a response to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E resolution regarding DDOT's Notice of Intent 11-34-TS for the intersection of Military Road and 42nd Street in Northwest Washington, DC.

The improvements proposed at this location are the result of a number of evaluations done by the District in an effort to address safety concerns at the intersection and the other impacts that were brought to our attention. We have hired one of the premier experts on pedestrian and vehicular safety, Richard Retting of Sam Schwartz Engineering to conduct a third party review of our recommendations. As stated in both the SAMMAT Engineering/Sam Schwartz Engineering document and the DDOT August 12, 2011 memorandum, during the six year period between 2005 and 2010 there were 24 crashes at this intersection. Ten (10) of those crashes involved right-angle collisions. Additionally, it was noted that staff recognized low compliance with the northbound right turn only restriction. As such, DDOT decided to install channelization to restrict left turning and through movements for northbound and southbound 42nd Street, NW at Military Road, NW.

The following section generally addresses the issues, concerns, and suggestions (paraphrased) presented in the ANC 3E resolution regarding DDOT's NOI 11-34-TS:

- 1) Issue/Concern: Existing inhibitions on traffic flow in the immediate vicinity (including the traffic diverters at 43rd and Jenifer and 44th and Harrison, as well as the prohibition on turns from westbound Western to southbound Wisconsin). Some streets bear a disproportionate share of the neighborhood's traffic burdens (42nd Street and Military being one such intersection).

Response: It must be noted that based on the most recent traffic counts (shown on the DDOT website) that 41st Street and 42nd Street, and also even 39th Street and 44th Street do not have substantially differing daily vehicle volumes. These improvements were undertaken in order to address a safety based issue by addressing a specific type of crash as well as a visible lack of compliance with turn restrictions.

- 2) Issue/Concern: Consider the impacts of any changes at 42nd and Military on 41st Street before proceeding with any changes.

Response: Based upon the document provided by SAMMAT Engineering and Sam Schwartz Engineering, field reviews of the area and their analysis indicated that there would be no adverse impact to prohibiting through and left turns at 42nd Street. As was also stated, because this is a safety based issue DDOT was "obligated to move forward with this installation." It must also be noted that there were already turn restrictions for the northbound 42nd and Military approach, so technically no changes were proposed here that would create a change in traffic patterns in that direction.

- 3) Issue/Concern: 5300 block of 43rd Street is a narrow street and is already dealing with high volumes of traffic, and the 5300 block of 42nd Place is too narrow for two-way traffic.

Response: Neither 43rd Street nor 42nd Place provide substantial long term connectivity beyond local travel and access to the parcels along those roadways. As such, the effect of changes at 42nd Street should not create major impacts for 43rd Street or 42nd Place.

- 4) Issue/Concern: The 2004 Friendship Heights Transportation Study found on page 24 that 42nd Street NW between Jenifer and Ingomar Streets was handling an average of 428 northbound cars per day and 460 southbound cars per day. Additionally, DDOT has not implemented any of the recommendations on page 78 of the 2004 Friendship Heights Transportation Study or conducted a comprehensive examination of the intersection of 42nd and Military as a part of this process (or has not shared the results with ANC 3E or immediate neighbors).

Response: Per the SAMMAT Engineering/Sam Schwartz Engineering document, it is felt that the study is "too old to be relevant to current traffic safety investigation efforts," although items from that study were reviewed and considered in an effort to be thorough.

- 5) Issue/Concern: In the August 12, 2011 memorandum, it was stated that access to the neighborhood streets south of Military Road, NW will continue on southbound 41st

Street or will use the adjacent intersections of 43rd Street and 43rd Place (42nd Place actually) from westbound Military Road NW. No directional signage is proposed, although all existing pavement markings should be refurbished as part of the new traffic restrictions. Nothing else is said about adjoining streets which indicates DDOT expects adjoining streets to bear the burden of the additional traffic while making no preparations to better manage it.

Response: Based upon the document provided by SAMMAT Engineering and Sam Schwartz Engineering, field reviews of the area and their analysis indicated that there would be no adverse impact to prohibiting through and left turns at 42nd Street. It also must be noted that the comment in the August 12, 2011 memo discussing southbound traffic using the 43rd Street and 42nd Place intersections was referring to local traffic that in theory is already accessing the neighborhoods along those two roadways through those intersections.

- 6) Issue/Concern: The intersection of Western Avenue and Livingston Street is problematic for both pedestrians and vehicle movements and reducing through traffic on 42nd Street should make the intersection safer.

Response: Noted.

- 7) Issue/Concern: It is currently illegal for northbound vehicles on 42nd Street to turn left at Military Road and it is also illegal for northbound vehicles to proceed straight through (this restriction is rarely enforced by MPD) but there are no such restrictions for southbound traffic.

Response: Noted. It must be stated that as a part of this project, additional enforcement has been requested of the Metropolitan Police Department.

- 8) Issue/Concern: DDOT has not supplied a list of the alternatives considered to address the safety issue at 42nd and Military, an analysis of the pros and cons of each alternative considered, and an explanation as to why DDOT chose the alternative selected.

Response: DDOT staff and Consultant Teams reviewed the accidents reports at this location and we determined, based on the crash analysis that we use throughout the District of Columbia, the appropriate countermeasures. Our Traffic Engineers follow the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Manuals and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standards:

Remove sight obstructions- geometric of these roadways cannot be modified

Restrict Parking near corners – signs are installed

Install Stop Signs – does not meet warrants

Install Rumble Strips- annoying to neighbors

Improve Lighting- lighting is sufficient

Install advance intersection warning signs – signs will not address the specific accident types at this location

Increase enforcement – MPD has been a partner and is monitoring this location

Channelize intersection – done to address specific accident type

ANC Resolutions:

- 1) Resolution: Temporary barrier to force vehicles northbound on 42nd Street NW to make a right turn onto eastbound Military Road with the following conditions:
 - DDOT must also consider implementing the additional recommendations concerning 42nd and Military contained in the Friendship Heights Transportation Study and report back to ANC 3E and the nearest neighbors on why the additional recommendations are not being implemented
Response: As discussed above, the SAMMAT/Sam Schwartz document addresses this concern (more detail about some of the proposed solutions are discussed below).
 - DDOT must simultaneously reduce weekday green time for 41st Street at the intersection of 41st and Military to 15 seconds of green time for southbound traffic and 10 seconds of green time for northbound traffic before erecting any barrier
Response: As shown in the SAMMAT/Sam Schwartz document, providing such minimal amounts of green time is “inconsistent with standard traffic signal timing practices, and may increase the risk of crashes.” Additionally, short timing such as this has “the potential to negatively affect safety and traffic flow at other intersections.”
 - DDOT must paint sharrows on 41st Street between Western Avenue and Chesapeake Street before erecting any barrier
Response: DDOT will install sharrows on 41st Street.

- 2) Resolution: ANC 3E objects to a barrier to restrict southbound traffic on 42nd Street. Respond to the February 9th, 2012 resolution regarding the impact of a traffic barrier at 42nd and Military on 41st Street and also study and report on the impact of both the barriers on the 5300 blocks of 43rd Street and 42nd Place and the 4100 and 4200 blocks of Jenifer Street and the 4100 block of Legation Street.
Response: It must be stated that technically channelization is being provided and not actual barriers that would also prevent movements on Military Road similar to the ones at 43rd Street and Jenifer Street and 44th Street and Harrison Street. However, as stated in the SAMMAT/Sam Schwartz document, no adverse impacts are expected due to the prohibition of through and left turns from 42nd Street.

- 3) Resolution: Written report and presentation of findings to ANC3E with regards to adjacent streets and intersections as well as the efficacy of the temporary barrier for northbound traffic 6 months after it is erected. Such report should identify reasonable alternatives to making the barrier permanent, the pros and cons of each alternative considered, and an explanation as to why DDOT selected the alternative it will recommend to the Commission.
Response: DDOT will continue to evaluate the location in terms of compliance and crash reduction at this location.