

**Background Paper on Planning for a new Southeast Boulevard**  
**Prepared by Commissioner Oldenburg**  
**Updated October 2017<sup>1</sup>**

Since early 2013, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B has been heavily invested in the planning for a new Southeast Boulevard and redesign of Barney Circle into an actual traffic circle. As of October 2017, the process has proceeded through three phases and has entered a fourth phase.

Phase 1: The NEPA Study

Initially, ANC 6B's involvement was focused on participation along with the community in public meetings held by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) under the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) and its National Environmental Protection Assessment (NEPA) study: *Barney Circle and Southeast Boulevard Transportation Planning Study*.

<https://www.anacostiawaterfront.org/awi-transportation-projects/barney-circle-southeast-boulevard/>.

DDOT held two public meetings as the study progressed: February 21, 2013 (Scoping meeting) and November 21, 2013 (at which several alternatives were proposed). ANC 6B sent formal comments to DDOT after each of these meetings. These letters dated April 11, 2013, and January 15, 2014, are available at [http://www.anc6b.org/?page\\_id=235](http://www.anc6b.org/?page_id=235).<sup>2</sup>

An interruption of the NEPA study occurred because of the Commission's January 2014 letter. In it ANC 6B was highly critical of the alternatives presented by DDOT. One key element of that criticism was that the study suffered from a lack of neighborhood planning to establish a context for the new boulevard. The Commission also felt that its comments of April 2013 had been largely ignored. Thus, the Commission decided to ratchet up the pressure by meeting with the Office of Planning (OP) and then-Councilmember Tommy Wells. Councilmember Wells ultimately gathered all the parties together for a meeting. After hearing from everyone, he encouraged OP to conduct a neighborhood study and OP agreed. DDOT agreed to suspend its NEPA study in the meantime.

Phase 2: OP's Southeast Boulevard Planning Study

This study got underway in May 2014 with the active participation of ANC 6B Commissioners, Councilmember Wells staff, and DDOT. The Commission held a public meeting in August 2014 to review the 7 concepts that had evolved from the study. Feedback from these reviews and further study resulted in "3 finalists" that were presented by OP at a community meeting lead by Councilmember Wells in December 2014. Two of these concepts included housing and parks in addition to the boulevard; the third included park space along with the boulevard. All provided access to the Anacostia waterfront.

OP released its final report on the study in July 2015. An overview of the study and links to the final and other reports are available at <http://planning.dc.gov/publication/southeast-boulevard-planning-study>. As the overview says, the next step in this process was a feasibility study on the 3 concepts to be conducted by DDOT to answer a number of technical questions.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally written in January 2016

<sup>2</sup> Scroll down to the "Background on the SE Boulevard" paragraphs.

Phase 3: DDOT's SE Boulevard Feasibility Study

At the ANC 6B Transportation Committee meeting in July 2015, DDOT presented an overview of the planned scope of the feasibility study. The scope included analysis of travel demand (a 2-lane vs. 4-lane boulevard), a bus garage option, right of way issues, and an estimate of costs. The Commission was presented with the draft results of the feasibility study at its Transportation Committee's January 2016 meeting and provided comments to DDOT in a February 2016 letter.

Phase 4: Back to the NEPA Study

At the conclusion of DDOT's Feasibility Study, DDOT committed to restart the *Barney Circle and Southeast Boulevard Transportation Planning Study*. DDOT plans to ultimately produce a recommended alternative for the boulevard and for Barney Circle and held the first public meeting of the study on September 16, 2017. In the parlance of NEPA studies, this "Scoping Meeting" defined the study area and provided an overview of what the study will focus on and asked for feedback from the community. The ANC will comment on the DDOT presentation at its October 2017 meeting.

DDOT's study website is <http://www.seboulevard.com>