



**Testimony from Christy Kwan on behalf of the DC chapter of Families for Safe Streets  
for the Committee on Transportation & the Environment  
budget oversight hearing for the District Department of Transportation  
held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024**

To the Committee on Transportation & the Environment:

My name is Christy Kwan and I am testifying on behalf of the DC chapter of Families for Safe Streets. Our mission is to confront the preventable epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been impacted by crashes. We do this work so no one else has to experience our unimaginable heartache. Eighteen days ago I marked the 23rd anniversary of my cousin's fatal crash. Jamie was 24 years old. I have mourned her death for nearly as long as she was alive. In those 23 years, [more than 850,000 people](#) have been killed in traffic crashes in the US.

We have painfully listened to the "shared sacrifices" in the Mayor Bowser's FY25 Fairshot budget. Last week we testified before this Committee that 68 people have unwillingly sacrificed their lives in preventable crashes in DC since January 2023. [That number grew over the weekend with an unnamed pedestrian who was killed in a hit-and-run crash on Georgia Ave NW.](#) Families have sacrificed too much in the name of an unjust, inequitable transportation system in the nation's capital.

[The DC Auditor last year published its significant finding that despite a public commitment to Vision Zero, there was a "failure to fully fund the Vision Zero Omnibus Amendment Act."](#)

*Fully* funding safety is critical. We thank the Council for its work last year to restore the funds originating from automated traffic enforcement (ATE) citations so that it could be reinvested into the Vision Zero Fund. However, we are dismayed to see that the FY25 proposed budget yet again eliminates this provision in the Budget Support Act. We are also further disappointed that DDOT Acting Director Kershbaum testified earlier this month saying that she "does not find it problematic" that ATE funds are proposed to be swept into the general fund, largely because she does not want to depend on funds that are not predictable. [\(See recording at the 3 hour 57 minute mark.\)](#)

We fundamentally agree that there should be predictable and dedicated funds for safety; however, **we ask that the Council work yet again to preserve the Vision Zero Fund as much as possible.** By allowing funds generated from ATE citations to be raided and used for the general fund further erodes the public's perception and confidence in ATE's ultimate purpose: safety. ATE should only exist to change reckless driving behavior—where the funds

are then reinvested back into safety—and not to balance the budget. Again, we ask who are the ones making the sacrifices in the Mayor’s FY25 Budget?

There is no shortage of potential uses of these funds. We offer some ideas on how to spend the money to improve safety:

1. Fund the [Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility \(STEER\) Amendment Act](#):
  - Please prioritize the intelligent speed assistance program, [as we testified last week](#) and as noted in today’s testimony from the National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB).
  - Ensure that the Office of the Attorney General has the funding for staff time to allow the District to recover costs owed by drivers from other states.
2. Fund the [Safer Streets Amendment Act](#):
  - The new traffic safety law prohibiting right turns on red is set to begin in *eight months* on January 1, 2025. DDOT should finally print and install the signs that were originally deemed too costly.
  - Add staff capacity or pay for consultants to convert tactical safety projects to permanent streetscape projects. This could potentially include hardening safety treatments also identified along the High Injury Network or within Bus Priority Projects, or simply pay for the materials needed for a daylighting-palooza.
3. Fully fund the [Vision Zero Enhancement Omnibus Amendment Act](#) and the [Safe Passage to School Expansion Act](#).
4. Supplement funding to cover staff time for the following teams and/or programs:
  - DPW’s Parking Enforcement team to ticket, tow, boot, impound, and/or remove abandoned and dangerous vehicles.
  - DDOT’s Safe Routes to School team to develop additional action plans.
  - DDOT teams to reduce 311 ticket resolution estimates for sidewalk repair (270 business days, as opposed to only 3 days for potholes); additional funding for the popular e-bike rebate program; or even expanding or paying for better wages for school crossing guards.

Lastly, we urge the Council to intentionally reflect and consider if DDOT is poised to meet the District’s goals to [\(1\) eliminate traffic fatalities](#), [\(2\) achieve carbon neutrality](#), and [\(3\) increase trips taken by transit, biking, and walking](#). We know that traffic fatalities have reached a 16-year high in the District. Our transportation agency needs to prioritize, fully fund, and implement the projects that will achieve these three major goals. Beyond being mere goals, these are also shared values among our members who have been personally impacted by traffic violence, the majority of this Council, and the key staff at DDOT who have been working to improve our buses, sidewalks, and bikeways. If we do not commit to these shared values through action, they will be yet another shared sacrifice. We hope that the Council will use its budgetary and oversight power to ensure that DDOT follows through on the District’s goals.

Thank you for listening and working to correct the FY25 budget.