

A Protected Bike Lane on Grant Circle Will Drive Congestion into Side Streets *Deadline for Comment June 12*

The city has announced its plan to install a protected bike lane on Grant Circle NW, with installation to begin this summer. It is a momentous step in DC's contentious network of bike lanes, ostensibly to make the streets safer and more bike friendly. The problem is that intersections are the place where accidents most likely occur and traffic circles are where intersections converge. Grant Circle has 8. On the advice of high-priced consultants like Toole Design, DC has embraced the most dangerous options, rather than the obvious, safer and less expensive option of avoiding them.

Studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that protected bike lanes (PBLs) are not safer on urban streets. Depending on the frequency of interruptions in the bike lane - like intersections, PBLs cannot provide the promised 'protection.' Traffic circles are particularly inappropriate as intersections interrupt the bike lane every 30 or 50 feet, rendering them unsafe.

Under this plan, the city will remove traffic lanes and close access to the Circle from 5th St., diverting the traffic to smaller, residential streets. It moves congestion to side streets. Needless to say, it would be better to

divert bike traffic to side streets. Residents on Capitol Hill saw a rise in vehicular traffic on side streets after the city installed PBLs on Pennsylvania Ave. SE. The plan predictably will frustrate traffic flow, particularly in rush hour, causing congestion, which admittedly will slow traffic, but there are better ways to slow traffic, if that is really the goal.

A failure to communicate

Upon a request of a resident, DDOT conducted a walking tour of Grant Circle on May 14 but did not advertise it. Only half a dozen residents attended. DDOT has notified the ANC (NOI-25-124), but the ANC has not yet called a public meeting. Residents urged DDOT to use door knockers and flyers to get the word out. The deadline for comment is June 12.

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