

## **DC's Department of Aging must join the discussion on biking**

Over the last few years, especially during COVID, DC has pushed installation of bike lanes in what amounts to a radical transformation of traffic patterns, removing traffic lanes, adding bike lanes, deliberately causing congestion, creating confusion, and increasing hazards. One population most at risk to these changes is seniors, but the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), the agency charged with addressing senior issues, has stood by silently and done nothing. DACL must join the discussion on behalf of seniors.

Ironically, this dangerous traffic transformation is supposed to make us safer, but confusion is not a safety measure. The *Washington Post* in February reported that traffic fatalities have not gone down in the last three years. On Christmas eve, a motorist driving on the newly redesigned C St. at 16<sup>th</sup> St. NE struck and killed a pedestrian on the sidewalk.

At a public meeting on the plan to remove traffic lanes on Georgia Ave, I asked, Won't that create congestion. Without hesitation the project leader said, "Yes." The District intends to create congestion to discourage car traffic, and promote use of public transportation, but DC does not have reliable public transit. Seniors need their cars for grocery shopping and doctor appointments.

They need access to the curb and parking. Even Metro Access cannot park on the curb. Are seniors in wheelchairs supposed to get out of the van into on-coming traffic? DACL must join in the discussion for better public transit.

As our Coalition visits neighborhoods throughout the city, seniors are raising a voice of protest. Seniors complain that bikers are reckless. Bikers ride with impunity wherever they want - on the sidewalk, in the street, even avoiding the bike lanes built for their safety at great expense. Bikers appear suddenly, silently, surprising seniors on the sidewalk or in the crosswalk. Biking is the only mode of transit in DC that is unregulated. It is time we called for bike regulation, including certification, registration, licensing, insurance, and protective gear. Japan, Israel and New York City are making strides toward bike regulation. DC should do the same and DACL should join the discussion.

DC Safe Streets Coalition urges DC to pause bike lane installation, hold townhalls to better engage with the community, improve public transit and hold bikers accountable by regulating biking. We urge the Council to remind DACL of its responsibility to seniors and address issues around road design and bike lane installation.

Nick DelleDonne

Dupont East Civic Action Association

[DCSafeStreetsCoalition.org](http://DCSafeStreetsCoalition.org)

[Delledonne.n@gmail.com](mailto:Delledonne.n@gmail.com)

703 929 6656