



## Testimony on DC Mayor's Dept. of Transportation 2021 Budget

Jim Smalles, Trustee; Chair, Transportation Subcommittee

Meg Maguire, Trustee

June 4, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, extensively engaged with streetcars since 2009, opposes funding for the Benning Road streetcar extension as proposed in the Mayor's Capital Improvement Program for FY 2021 and 2022.

While we strongly support the need for expanded public transit, the proposed extension fails to address long-standing systemic problems. Unless and until there is a comprehensive plan of how to govern, operate, finance and maintain a world class streetcar system as C100 has called for repeatedly<sup>1</sup>, no further money should be invested in this poorly conceived system.

Further, building the Benning Road extension to Minnesota Ave. would perpetuate the use of outmoded streetcar technology that will never be used elsewhere in the city, when and if the system is expanded. The Benning Road extension as planned is not world class; it is third rate.

**DC Code § 9-1174. Comprehensive assessment** requires that by January 1, 2014, and by that date every three years thereafter, the Mayor will submit to the Council an evaluation of the advances in propulsion technology; and an examination of the feasibility and costs of using non-aerial motive power on new segments of the proposed streetcar system as well as converting to non-aerial motive power along the current route of H Street and Benning Road. The last report was February 2017; DDOT should have submitted an update in January 2020.

There are several better uses for the more than \$37 million proposed for the extension:

- improve bus service throughout Wards 7 & 8 with more routes and shorter headways,
- support public and private investment in housing for a broad range of incomes,
- increase job opportunities in the community, and
- increase support for public health.

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<sup>1</sup>See BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS STREETCAR SYSTEM FOR A WORLD-CLASS CITY: System Recommendations and Route Assessment. A Report to the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia. Prepared by the Streetcar Working Group of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Committee of 100 on the Federal City: Meg Maguire, Dorn McGrath, Monte Edwards, Dick Wolf, 2010. [committeeof100.net/download/transportation/dc\\_streetcars/reports\\_and\\_presentations/A-World-Class-Streetcar-System-for-a-World-Class-City.pdf](https://committeeof100.net/download/transportation/dc_streetcars/reports_and_presentations/A-World-Class-Streetcar-System-for-a-World-Class-City.pdf)

The impact on our economy from the Covid-19 pandemic means we cannot afford to waste funds on an obsolete technology for a streetcar system that fails to meet the most fundamental requirements of public investment.

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