

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION & THE ENVIRONMENT
PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

January 5, 2025

Dear Chair Balasubramanian:

The Committee on Transportation and the Environment will hold performance oversight hearings on agencies under its purview in February and March of 2025. The performance oversight hearing for the Multimodal Accessibility Advisory Council is tentatively scheduled for **February 11, 2025**. In preparation, attached is a set of pre-hearing questions for your response. Please submit your responses no later than the close of business on **Monday, February 3, 2025**, in PDF format and *minimize the use of attachments*. If you need to discuss any of the questions, please contact Kevin Whitfield, Committee Director, at (202) 412-3481 or kwhitfield@dccouncil.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Allen", with a stylized, flowing script.

Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chair, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

Questions

1. Please provide a list of the Multimodal Accessibility Advisory Council's ("MAAC") current active membership. For each member, please provide the following:
- The member's name;
 - The ward, agency, or organization the member represents (if applicable);
 - Who appointed the member;
 - When the member's term expires; and
 - The member's attendance record.

Member	Representing	Appointed By	Term Expiration	2024 Attendance	2025 Attendance
Karthik Balasubramanian	Mayoral	MOTA	6/12/27	12/12	1/1
Kelly Mack	Mayoral	MOTA	12/16/25	10/12	1/1
Naomi Hess	Mayoral	MOTA	1/16/26	10/12	1/1
Elizabeth Ragan*	Mayoral	MOTA	6/12/27	6/12	1/1
Zackary Smith	DDOT	Agency Rep	Not Applicable	12/12	1/1
Susie Mc-Fadden-Resper	ODR	Agency Rep	Not Applicable	10/12	0/1

** Elizabeth Ragan was appointed in June 2024

2. Please provide a list of any vacant MAAC seats, including who is responsible for making a nomination to fill the seat, any requirements for a nominee to fill the seat, and how long the seat has been vacant.

Vacancy	Appointment	Requirements	Length of Vacancy
Community Member	MOTA	MOTA	December 2023
Community Member	MOTA	MOTA	June 2024

3. Please provide a list of the MAAC's meeting dates, times, and locations for FY24 and FY25, to date.

(MAAC Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm)

- January 10, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- February 14, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- March 13, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- April 10, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Hybrid: MLK Library Accessible Conf Room)
- May 8, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- June 12, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Hybrid: MLK Library Accessible Conf Room)
- July 10, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- August 14, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Hybrid: MLK Library Accessible Conf Room)
- September 11, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- October 9, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- November 13, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- December 11, 2024 – 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)
- January 8, 2025, at 5:30–7:00 PM (Virtual)

4. Did the MAAC receive funds in FY24 or FY25, to date? If so, please provide the following:

- a. The amount;
- b. The funding source;
- c. A list of all expenditures; and
- d. A description of how the expenditures furthered the MAAC’s mission.

We received \$10,000 from the Government of DC, and we spent a total of \$4,026.89 last year. Our primary expenses were administrative support and web applications. \$2,085 was used to pay assistant Neha Bhanot. Assistants attend meetings, do various administrative duties, and website management. The balance was spent on software packages and office materials. Specifically, \$1941.89 was used for the Google Workspace Account, Hubspot, Rebrandly, and creating Braille business cards. Google Workspace is used for administrative duties, scheduling meetings and hosting meetings. Hubspot is used to edit and maintain the website, and Rebrandly helps manage branded web links. Lastly, Braille business cards were created for members who requested them. These expenditures furthered the MAAC mission as we are able to reach more people due to our online presence, using google workspace allows for reliable communication. Administrative assistance has helped coordinate with all members and outside contributors.

5. Please provide a copy of all official correspondence sent, or formal resolutions adopted, by the MAAC in FY24 and FY25, to date.

1. [Principles for Street Space Usage](#)
2. [Capital Project Consultation](#)
3. [Daylighting letter](#) and [DDOT response](#)
4. [Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles Availability](#)
5. [DDOT AV Regulations Comments](#)
6. [Insurance Minimums Support Letter](#)
7. [Questions for the DDOT Director](#) and [Responses](#)

6. Please describe the MAAC’s activities in FY24 and FY25, to date, including:

- a. **The MAAC's participation in any public hearings or roundtables;**
- b. **The MAAC's three biggest accomplishments in FY24 and FY25, to date; and**
- c. **A status update on the goals identified by the MAAC in last year's pre-hearing responses, including what actions, if any, the District government or the MAAC took on them in FY24 and FY25, to date.**

Our most significant achievement was the unanimous adoption of our [Principles for Arterial Street Space Usage](#) in October 2024. These principles establish a clear hierarchy for street space allocation, prioritizing accessible sidewalks and transit lanes over private vehicle storage. This framework now guides our recommendations to DDOT and provides a consistent foundation for evaluating transportation projects.

Second, the MAAC has provided substantial policy guidance to DC agencies on improving transportation accessibility in 2024. In December 2024, we issued an urgent letter to DFHV highlighting [systemic failures in wheelchair accessible vehicle](#) (WAV) service after a MAAC member was forced to navigate city streets alone at 1:30 AM due to complete unavailability of accessible transportation. The letter demanded concrete action including a formal definition of "24/7 availability," mandatory response times, real-time tracking of WAV availability, and clear penalties for non-compliance. We also provided detailed feedback on [DDOT's autonomous vehicle testing regulations](#), pushing for 50% of AVs to be wheelchair accessible to avoid repeating historical accessibility failures. Our recommendations included specific technical requirements around accessible vehicle interfaces, adequate boarding time allowances, visual/audio cues for safety, and strict adherence to speed limits and bus lane restrictions. Both letters emphasized that accessible transportation is a fundamental civil right, not a convenience, and provided specific, actionable steps agencies must take to fulfill their legal and moral obligations to disabled residents.

Third, we have led sustained advocacy around [daylighting implementation](#). When DDOT characterized daylighting as optional rather than a legal requirement, we issued a detailed response highlighting how blocked sightlines create dangerous conditions for people with disabilities. While DDOT's January 2025 response was disappointing, our advocacy has helped elevate this critical safety issue and build momentum for change.

Looking back at our goals from last year's pre-hearing responses, we have made meaningful progress in several areas. Our principles for street space allocation directly addressed our goal of establishing clear priorities for accessibility improvements. However, some goals remain works in progress. While we continue to push for faster implementation of accessible pedestrian signals and dedicated bus lanes, DDOT's pace of change remains slower than needed. Our goal of strengthening data collection around accessibility barriers has advanced through our website launch, but we still need better metrics and tracking.

These activities reflect our commitment to creating a more accessible transportation system through both policy development and sustained advocacy. While much work remains, we have established strong foundations for continuing progress in FY25 and beyond.

7. What challenges does the MAAC face, if any?

The main challenge the MAAC currently faces is 2 community member vacancies. In a council composed of only 6 community members, a vacancy of even 1 community member limits the reach we have.

8. Please describe the state of multimodal user accessibility, infrastructure, and safety in the District. What is the MAAC's assessment of the progress on the Mayor's Vision Zero program, specifically as it relates to persons with disabilities, in FY24 and FY25, to date?

The goal of Vision Zero is defined as having zero deaths or injuries on our roads. Last year, over 50 people died and we had over 6,600 injuries on our roadways. Objectively, the vision zero program can be described as nothing other than an unmitigated failure. While we applaud courageous line staff at DDOT for taking small steps in the right direction of making streets safer for vulnerable road users, we remain perplexed and saddened at why DDOT leadership continues to move forward with unsafe roadway designs. DDOT leadership remains unable and unwilling to muster the courage to make Vision Zero a reality.

[DDOT's January 2025 response](#) to our daylighting concerns perfectly exemplifies this failure of leadership. When presented with clear evidence of systematic non-compliance with the District's own laws requiring clearance at intersections, DDOT responded by characterizing daylighting as merely "one of many treatments within our toolbox" rather than acknowledging it as a legal requirement. Their response went on to tout that 462 intersections have received some form of daylighting treatment - failing to acknowledge that this represents just 6.6% of the District's 7,000 intersections.

Most troubling was DDOT's explicit statement that they are "unable to build a program singularly devoted to intersection daylighting at this time." This is not a matter of creating a new program - it is about compliance with existing District law. Their suggestion that we should continue submitting individual 311 requests for violations demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of both their legal obligations and the scale of the problem. The law requires compliance at all intersections, not just those where citizens take the time to file complaints.

DDOT's dismissive reference to Hoboken's success in achieving zero deaths as being due to "a safe systems approach and not a singular tactic such as daylighting" ignores the fact that Hoboken achieved its results precisely by ensuring universal compliance with daylighting requirements - not by treating them as optional when convenient. The District's geography and population may indeed be different from Hoboken's, but the physics of sight lines and pedestrian visibility remain the same.

This pattern of deflection and delay has real consequences for people with disabilities. Every intersection where parked cars block sight lines creates potentially lethal conditions for our most vulnerable road users. DDOT's continued framing of basic safety requirements as optional "treatments" rather than legal obligations reflects a deeply problematic culture that prioritizes convenience over safety and compliance.

Until DDOT demonstrates the courage to follow our own laws and its own regulations, Vision Zero will remain an empty promise. The lives lost and injuries sustained on our streets are not

inevitable - they are the direct result of choices made by DDOT leadership to maintain the dangerous status quo rather than take the bold action needed to protect public safety.

9. Please identify the MAAC's top recommendations for improving multimodal user accessibility, infrastructure, and safety in FY25. How does the MAAC consider furthering racial equity when developing recommendations?

First, we must rebalance street space on arterials to prioritize bus lanes. [MAAC's principles](#) are clear - after accessible sidewalks, dedicated transit lanes should be our highest priority for street space usage. Yet most of our arterial streets still prioritize car storage over efficient bus service, even though nearly 40% of District residents and an even higher percentage of disabled residents live in zero-car households. When we preserve parking over adding bus lanes, we force the most vulnerable residents to endure slower, less reliable transit service. Every arterial street should have dedicated, protected bus lanes by default, with any deviation from this requiring extraordinary justification.

Second, we face an urgent accessibility infrastructure crisis that demands immediate, systemic action. DPW's appalling record of snow and ice removal from sidewalks routinely forces wheelchair users to miss work and essential activities, effectively trapping them in their homes during and after winter weather. The human cost is severe - disabled residents lose wages, miss medical appointments, and face dangerous isolation due to this basic maintenance failure. This same pattern of neglect is evident in the systemic failure of wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) service, exemplified when a MAAC member was forced to navigate city streets alone at 1:30 AM due to complete unavailability of accessible transportation. Despite legal requirements for 24/7 WAV availability, disabled residents regularly face service denials, excessive wait times, and complete gaps in overnight coverage. As we look toward future transportation options like autonomous vehicles, we're pushing for strong accessibility requirements including 50% wheelchair accessible vehicles, accessible user interfaces, adequate boarding times, and clear audio-visual safety cues to avoid perpetuating these failures. The District must learn from its past accessibility failures - from inadequate snow removal to non-existent late-night WAV service - and build robust accessibility requirements into new transportation systems from the start.

Third, we need immediate implementation of [intersection daylighting requirements](#). Our principles establish that street space near intersections should be used for hardened safety infrastructure and bike/scooter parking, not car storage. The District already has laws requiring clear sightlines at intersections, but these are routinely ignored to preserve parking. This creates particularly dangerous conditions for people using wheelchairs, who sit lower and may be harder for turning drivers to see. Daylighting is not complex - it simply requires following existing law.

Lastly, we must address a troubling culture at DDOT where 27% of employees drive in from out of state. How can we expect the agency to implement our progressive street space principles when over a quarter of its staff experiences our city primarily through a windshield? These employees collect District salaries while making decisions that prioritize their own driving convenience over the needs of District residents. We need leadership that understands firsthand why our principles place market-rate car parking last in our hierarchy of street uses. This means hiring more District residents, particularly those who rely on transit, walking, and cycling for daily transportation.

These recommendations reflect the urgency of creating a truly accessible transportation system. The data shows that people with disabilities are twice as likely to live in zero-car households, yet our streets remain designed around private vehicle storage. By following MAAC's clear hierarchy for street space allocation and hiring leadership that understands these priorities firsthand, we can transform our transportation system to serve those who need it most.

The time for incremental change and excessive deference to parking preservation has passed. We need bold implementation of our street space principles to create the accessible, equitable city our residents deserve.

Our recommendations are fundamentally shaped by the reality that transportation inequities in DC fall heaviest on communities of color. Black residents in DC are significantly more likely to live in zero-car households and rely on public transit, yet historically have faced longer wait times, less reliable service, and higher safety risks. Our street space principles, which place accessible sidewalks and transit lanes at the top of our hierarchy, aim to correct decades of infrastructure decisions that prioritized the convenience of more affluent, predominantly white neighborhoods over the essential mobility needs of communities of color. By elevating the challenges of those who have faced the greatest transportation barriers - particularly disabled residents of color who are most impacted by inaccessible infrastructure - we ensure our recommendations advance both disability rights and racial justice. This isn't just about technical changes to our streets; it's about reversing historical patterns of discrimination and creating a transportation system that truly serves all District residents.

10. Please describe the MAAC's goals for the remainder of FY25 and FY26. How do these goals account for or further racial equity in the District?

Our first priority is expanding DC government's understanding of lived experience with disability in DC's transportation system. While our monthly meetings with DDOT are valuable, we need deeper engagement across all levels of the agency – and other agencies as well, such as DPW, and DFHV. By helping DDOT staff understand firsthand how their decisions impact residents' daily lives, we can shift the agency's culture toward truly prioritizing accessibility.

Second, we must fill our two community member vacancies to ensure we have full representation in our important work. We will conduct focused outreach in communities that have historically been underrepresented in transportation decisions, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. We seek members who bring both lived experience with disability and deep connections to their communities. Having a full council is essential for properly representing the diverse needs of disabled District residents and maintaining strong connections with communities across the city.

Third, we will work to establish clear metrics to track DC Government's progress on accessibility priorities and hold the agency accountable. This includes attempting to measure implementation of our street space principles - like the percentage of intersections properly daylighted and miles of dedicated bus lanes added. We also hope to track critical accessibility measures like APS installation, curb ramp compliance. These metrics will be disaggregated by

ward and neighborhood to ensure improvements are equitably distributed. By establishing baseline data and regular reporting requirements, we can better advocate for communities facing the greatest accessibility challenges.

These goals reflect our commitment to creating lasting change through sustained engagement, strong representation, and data-driven accountability. By elevating the challenges of those most impacted by transportation barriers - particularly disabled residents of color - we can help transform DDOT's approach to accessibility and equity. The experiences and needs of disabled District residents must be at the heart of transportation decisions, not an afterthought.

11. Please describe any collaboration between the MAAC and the Pedestrian Advisory Council or the Bicycle Advisory Council.

We see significant potential for partnership, particularly around shared priorities like intersection safety and street space allocation. Many of our concerns overlap - for instance, cars blocking sightlines at intersections create dangers for pedestrians and cyclists while making navigation particularly challenging for wheelchair users. Similarly, our recently adopted principles for arterial street design could benefit from sharing with both PAC and BAC to ensure we're creating spaces that work well for all vulnerable road users.

In FY25, we hope to establish more regular communication channels between the councils and potentially hold joint working sessions on issues where our interests intersect. This could include developing unified positions on key DDOT projects and policies, sharing data and insights about transportation barriers, and coordinating our advocacy efforts for safer streets.

By working together while maintaining our distinct missions, we can more effectively advocate for the transformative changes needed in our transportation system. I look forward to strengthening these relationships in the coming year.