



**Committee on Transportation and the Environment
FY 2027 Budget Oversight Hearing
for the District Department of Transportation**
Chairperson Charles Allen
Monday, April 27th, 2026

Testimony of:
Laura Miller Brooks
Director of Transportation and Infrastructure
Federal City Council

Dear Chairperson Allen and the members of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment:

My name is Laura Miller Brooks, and I serve as Director of Transportation and Infrastructure for the Federal City Council. I'm here today on behalf of FC2's 250 trustees — civic and business leaders who are deeply invested in the long-term success of this city.

I want to begin with a hard truth before we talk about roads and bridges and buses, and to raise the broader fiscal conditions shaping this budget proposal. The District's fiscal situation is not a temporary rough patch. The challenges we face are not cyclical or short-term; they are structural conditions with lasting implications for the District's financial position.

In recent years, the District has balanced its budget by drawing down fund balance and enacting tax increases to support new spending. Repeating this approach will only reinforce the downward pressures the District faces. The path forward is to make D.C. a city that works by strengthening core systems, removing barriers to housing and economic activity, delivering services reliably, and building infrastructure that signals to the world that Washington, D.C. is open for business. This is the broader context which brings me to my comments on DDOT's FY 27 Budget:

On the DDOT FY 2027 Operating Budget:

DDOT is being asked to do more with less. The 14.3% reduction in DDOT's operating budget from FY 26 to FY 27 is significant, and FC2 recognizes that DDOT leadership is making difficult, responsible choices. FC2 supports continued resources for all six of DDOT's major divisions, including Transportation Planning and the Traffic Safety Administration, because investing D.C.'s planning capacity today helps our city avoid far more expensive problems tomorrow, and the safety of residents and visitors is priceless.

We also strongly support continuing the Chief Advisor for Economic Development, a role created just last year that is already proving its worth connecting DDOT's role in our economy. We appreciate the capacity this role adds to DDOT for coordinating utility partnerships, developer relationships, and public space regulations. While this may not make headlines, these are the issues and the connective tissue that makes projects actually get built, or makes D.C. seem unattractive to investors and business owners. We want to see that role protected, and for DDOT to have more capacity to focus on the role between transportation, infrastructure and economic development.



Where DDOT simply doesn't have the capacity right now, D.C. Sustainable Transportation (DCST) can be a partner. We encourage Council to consider DCST to help add capacity to DDOT to keep critical analysis moving forward including an updated road pricing study, curbside automation analysis, and innovative safety policies. The questions about new, evolving policies and innovative technology won't wait. We should fund the thinking to set DDOT up for success, and to maximize taxpayer ROI.

And we urge DDOT and the Council to work together on Autonomous Vehicles. FC2 supports legislation and policy that allows D.C. to lead on new mobility. That includes permitting AVs to deploy on D.C. streets this year. Other cities are moving. We should be setting the standard, not watching from the sidelines.

On the DDOT FY 2027 Capital Budget:

DDOT's capital budget has grown 24.7% from FY 2026 — and FC2 believes that growth is justified. These are not expenditures. They are investments with direct economic returns for every resident and every neighborhood in this city.

We support the \$92 million for the Bus Priority and Efficiency program, and the additional \$2 million to study a Crosstown Bus Rapid Transit system. But we want to be clear: the Crosstown BRT study should be ambitious. We urge DDOT to evaluate a full deployment of this crosstown BRT program, from Minnesota Ave. and Benning Road all the way to Georgetown, or even a Rosslyn alignment, not just the Union Station to RFK segment as a first phase. Think big and commit full resources for infrastructure from the start, or like the Streetcar you constrain yourself before you begin and risk future funding and political support.

We support the \$202 million for multimodal transportation improvements around the RFK campus — for pedestrians, bus and rail riders, drivers, and cyclists — along with the \$18 million for RFK bridge campus improvements and the investments in Benning Road. These are not just transportation projects. They are the foundation for one of the most significant economic development opportunities this city has seen in a generation.

We also support DDOT's investments in D.C. Water infrastructure. State of good repair investments are not glamorous, but a city that lets its water and stormwater systems deteriorate is a city paying far more later.

One item that is not in the FY 27 capital budget for DDOT at the levels we would like are for the H St. Bridge. FC2 urges the Council to commit additional capital resources to the H Street Bridge reconstruction. The full cost is \$360 million. That is not a small number. But this project is a catalytic investment, one that directly unlocks the Union Station Expansion Project and is transformational for the region's rail capacity and for D.C.'s position as an economic hub. A safe, modern H Street Bridge is not just infrastructure. It is a key that opens a much larger door. We ask the Council to treat it that way.



I want to close by thanking DDOT Director Sharon Kershbaum, Chief Project Delivery Officer, and the entire DDOT leadership team. They are being asked to build the city's future under real constraints, and they are doing it with professionalism and purpose. The Federal City Council stands ready to support that work, and we urge this Council to do the same.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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