

Nov. 17, 2021

Dear Councilmember Cheh,

I am submitting written testimony for the record of your recent roundtable on automated traffic enforcement, on behalf of Greater Greater Washington, where I serve as policy manager.

There is no role for the police in traffic enforcement. Automated traffic enforcement is the way forward, and GGWash is extremely supportive of it. As the District's ATE program expands, we would, of course, like the council and the mayoral administration to work aggressively on reciprocity with Maryland and Virginia. This may not necessarily need to take the form of fines and fees, which are regressive, not reliably collected from out-of-state residents, and, most insultingly, [do not](#) change the behavior of the most dangerous drivers.

Shifting the penalty for traffic infractions from fines and fees to points would make it clear that traffic laws aren't about revenue collection: They're about keeping people safe from drivers, who, by virtue of piloting a 3,000-pound vehicle, are more capable of harming or killing someone than anyone traveling by any other mode. A potential alternative revenue source could be tolling, or pricing, entry to the District via its roads.

And, of course, issuing tickets isn't enough. I would like the council to treat the ATE program as, primarily, a data-collection mechanism that informs other programs, such as Vision Zero, and subsequent policies, such as suspending the licenses of those who have committed severe, repeat infractions; funding Department of Public Works to boot or impound license plates linked to severe, repeat infractions; and booting or impounding cars with expired or fake temporary tags.

The ultimate outcome of the ATE program should be to prevent drivers who have demonstrated that they are not capable of driving safely from driving at all. We need to make considerable progress toward that outcome quickly. GGWash welcomes creative budgeting solutions in the short term, such as, perhaps, continuing to pause street sweeping—which we lived without during the pandemic—and reallocating the money saved toward more full-time equivalent positions for DPW to boot, ticket, and tow. We also look forward to aggressive oversight of DPW, as we do not believe that the agency is carrying out the services DC residents expect, such as ticketing, booting, and towing illegally parked and falsely registered cars.

GGWash is prepared to support any action from the DC Council to prevent drivers who have demonstrated that they are not capable of driving safely from driving at all, as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Alex

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