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**Testimony before the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
Budget Oversight Hearing DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department  
March 29, 2023**

Chairperson Pinto and members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner representing Single-Member District 5C07, which covers northern Langdon. Before I proceed, I'll warn that this testimony will, out of what I consider necessity, contain descriptions of traffic violence.

On Friday, February 3rd, 2023, at 11:40 pm, the driver of a 2004 Infiniti G35 Coupe was stopped on the 2700 block of 20th St NE, adjacent to Langdon Elementary School. I know a lot about what happened next thanks to detailed video footage captured by a neighbor's security camera<sup>12</sup>.

- They waited at the red light as cross-traffic cleared the intersection, before proceeding slowly through the red light.
- Once through the intersection, they began accelerating. Past a 15 mph speed limit sign. Past both sides of Langdon Park, the Chuck Brown Memorial, the playground, and the Rec Center
- They didn't slow down for the four-way stop at 20th and Hamlin Sts; rough calculations put their speed through the intersection at between 87 and 109 miles per hour
- No more than 950 feet and 15 seconds from a stop, they crashed into a row of three parked cars on the opposite side of the street, with one launching 20 feet along the sidewalk and against a retaining wall.

The driver's car landed in the middle of 20th St NE, where DC FEMS had to extract the driver<sup>3</sup>, 22-year-old Andy Jose Cariño of Severna Park, Maryland, from the mangled wreckage. He was pronounced dead on the scene.

This story illustrates two important points:

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<sup>1</sup> More media and information about this crash and the ongoing Vision Zero investigation can be found here: <https://anc5c07.com/issues/20thst/>

<sup>2</sup> MPD press release on this crash can be found here: <https://mpdc.dc.gov/release/traffic-fatality-3000-block-20th-street-northeast>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/dcfireems/status/1621733208709545984> screenshotted in Appendix A

1. The heroic and critical work that DC's Bravest must stay ready and respond quickly to perform for our community every day
2. The urgent and critical need to implement traffic safety infrastructure on our subarterial roadways, like 20th St NE, to make reaching fatal speeds like this impossible

The details surrounding Cariño's crash came as little surprise to me and my neighbors. We have been calling attention to the dangers of 20th St here for years. This area of 20th St NE is 32 feet wide with two minimally used parking lanes, one driving lane in each direction, and no lane markings between intersections. The stretch of 20th from Franklin to Hamlin, where Mr. Cariño gained speed before crashing, is 750 feet steeply sloping downhill from each side, with no traffic controls or safety mitigations of any kind, save for a single unsignalized crosswalk connecting the two halves of Langdon Park. Besides the park, the roadway runs along multiple schools and kid-centric facilities, including Langdon Elementary School and Woodridge Library.

In my subsequent discussion with DDOT's Vision Zero team, I was told, as I had been many times before, that one of the reasons it would be difficult to install traffic calming on 20th St NE is the impact on emergency vehicles. This is one of many reasons that I'm concerned about the proposed relocation of FEMS Engine 26 to an interior block of my neighborhood, directly south of the subject area of 20th St NE at the forest patch at the junction of 20th St NE, Evarts St NE, and Queens Chapel Rd NE.

I am told that this site has been the subject of studies on unit response time to the growing Engine 26 service area, but I'm left to only imagine the degree to which inaction on improving the safety of my community's subarterial roadways, ones emergency vehicles would be using for every single engagement, are baked into these studies.

Unfortunately, a lack of consideration for my community's safety is inherent in the plans I've so far seen, which are isolated to stray diagrams on a Public Space permit application from July/August 2022. For instance, the notional plans:

- include two separate curb cuts for the adjacent surface parking lots of the co-located Models Cities and Engine 26 facilities, needlessly creating two conflict zones for *non-emergency* vehicle use, in an area of sidewalk likely to be frequented by children and seniors
- would put loud emergency vehicles adjacent to Langdon Elementary School and the Washington Center for Aging Services, a condition that (negative effects)
- remove large swaths of natural tree canopy, which (tree stuff), primarily to add surface parking lots, an inherently inefficient use of land. While underground or structured parking is costlier to construct, the cost differential pales in comparison to the cost of disrupting additional square footage of this forest.

During the March 29th hearing, FEMS Chief Donnelly stated that a third site was under consideration in addition to the Langdon and similarly interior Fort Lincoln sites, stating ""

I believe all efforts should be made to put this facility on a principal arterial, similar to Engine 26's current site on Rhode Island Ave NE. To facilitate moving the site further south and east, brownfield sites along Bladensburg Rd and South Dakota Ave should be considered.

While I do hope the Committee and the Council fund the important work of providing adequate facilities for Engine 26, I ask that:

- funding for FEMS Engine 26 site selection, design, and construction be provisioned with conditions that existing forest canopy will be preserved
- If needed, additional allowances and funding be made to facilitate site selection on land not already owned by DC, to secure adequate facilities without compromising public health and safety

I thank you again for your time.

## Appendix A: Social Media post screenshots

