

District Slugging Plan

An Analysis of Slugging Activity for Recommending Curbside Locations in
Washington, D.C

Submitted by:

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Introduction

Due to the recent concerns regarding slug line operations and traffic violations in the District, DDOT has conducted an analysis of the existing locations where slugging activity occurs. Based on this analysis, this report includes recommendations for the relocation of several existing slugging locations to improve traffic conditions while providing safe and convenient locations for ongoing slugging activity.

To engage members of the slugging community and collect feedback about proposed changes to slugging locations, PPSA conducted an online survey and field observations. The survey was designed to collect baseline information about slugging activity in the District from both passengers and drivers. Such as; which slugging locations respondents typically used, what time respondents typically engaged in slugging activity, and how many days per week they typically engaged in slugging activity. In addition to this general information, the survey also asked for feedback about specific proposed location changes. A full analysis of the results of this survey is provided in Appendix A. The survey was publicized through the distribution of flyers at slugging locations and was posted on slug-lines.com, a primary source of information for those who participate in slugging. The survey began on September 7, 2010. The results presented in this report are from responses collected until October 5, 2010. The survey is still open to the public and comments are being monitored for ongoing feedback about the proposed changes.

Slugging in the District

For the purposes of this report, a slugging location is defined as an area in which drivers collect passengers in an ad hoc fashion between the hours of 3:30 and 6:00 pm in order to use the HOV lanes that operate on highways outside of the District during these same hours. Currently, nine (9) curbside locations in the District exist where slugging activity occurs.

As an initial phase of the District Slugging Plan, DDOT implemented a trial location to change the slugging location at 14th St between New York Avenue and H street NW to 15th street between New York Avenue and H street NW. This pilot was established to asses a new location and to better understand implementation measures. DDOT has engaged the slugging community in providing feedback about this pilot location change and results are provided in the Slugging Location Survey Feedback and Observations section of this document.

In order to effectively manage curbside usage on busy District thoroughfares, DDOT has developed a set of criteria by which slugging locations, both existing and proposed, will be assessed to determine a final set of recommendations. These criteria of the existing locations are provided in the chart on the following page.

Table 1: Criteria for Existing Slugging Locations

Criteria for Existing Slugging Locations									
Existing location	Is the location close to a major corridor that provides direct access to HOV lanes?	Is the location easy to access for drivers?	Does the location have sufficient sidewalk space to accommodate slug-lines?	Does the location provide a sheltered area for inclement weather?	Is the location in close proximity to a commuter bus stop?	Is the location in proximity to major employment centers?	Does the location abide by curbside regulation signage?	Is the location in an area with low to medium traffic volume?	Is the location determined to have limited impact on traffic flow?
14th & New York, NW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
14th & G Street, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓			
14th & F Street, NW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
14th & D (Commerce Department), NW	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
14th & Constitution Ave, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓			
14th & Independence Avenue, NW	✓	✓			✓	✓			
D & 7th Street, SW	✓	✓	✓			✓			
19th & I Street, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
19th & F Street, NW	✓	✓			✓	✓			

Key Survey Findings

- 72% of the 295 people who responded to the survey were passengers and over 90% of both passengers and drivers who responded to the survey indicated that slugging was their primary way of commuting to and from work in the District.
- Survey responses and observations indicate that the two highest volume slugging locations are at 14th and New York Avenue, and 14th and Constitution Avenue.
- Slug-lines and Commuter Bus stops are commonly located in close proximity to one another so commuters can choose from alternative modes of transportation. While this is not the case at every slugging location, many respondents were concerned that some of the proposed moves would eliminate this flexibility by separating the two modes.
- While the majority of respondents expressed concerns about the District's involvement in regulating slugging activity, many people were also appreciative for the opportunity to provide their feedback and were happy that the District was taking an interest in supporting this important transportation option.
- Respondents were concerned about how the changes would be communicated to those involved in slugging, especially the drivers.
- A number of people raised concerns about the existing congestion on 15th Street and asserted that moving the slug-lines there will only compound this issue. However, this has not been observed to be the case with the initial move to 15th and New York Avenue.
- Several people were concerned about increasing congestion as drivers tried to gain access back to 14th Street. However, observations of the trial location change to 15th Street indicate that the majority of drivers are continuing down 15th Street rather than merging back onto 14th from G or F Streets.
- People expressed concerns about combining several slug-lines anticipating that this may cause drivers to wait for passengers at one location, as they would no longer have the option to collect passengers at a location further south. As DDOT is considering the placement of slugging locations we need to be mindful of the operation of the system as a whole, and the relationship between the different locations serving the same destination.
- A number of respondents raised concerns about the frequency with which the White House closes 15th Street to traffic for special events.
- Respondents indicated that consolidating the 19th and I Street slugging location to the 19th and F Street location would create significant congestion because 19th and F is already a high volume location that has trouble accommodating the existing activity.
- Feedback about the proposed move for the slugging location at D and 7th Street was mixed with some respondents indicating that the new location on D Street west of 7th would be an improvement. The current location poses a safety concern because the area is designated federal government parking which means that drivers must double park to collect passengers.

Slugging Location Survey Feedback and Observations

This section provides a brief overview of the survey feedback received regarding each slugging location and information gathered during field observations. Final recommendations can be found further in this document.

Table 2: Observations of Slug Locations

Slugging location	Observations and Feedback
14th & New York, NW/ Test location at 15th and New York Avenue, NW	The trial move of this slugging location to 15th and New York has been fairly successful. Although the lines seem to be moving slower than at the 14th Street location, drivers are using the new stop. Survey respondents were concerned with the potential for increased traffic congestion on 15th Street and side streets, and separation from the commuter bus stop at the new location. However, traffic does not seem to have been affected on 15th Street and the majority of drivers appear to be continuing down 15th Street to exit the city rather than merging back onto 14th Street at G or F Streets.
14th & G Street, NW	This is a low volume location. Survey responses indicate that drivers are most concerned about gaining access to the 14th Street HOV lanes from the proposed location on 15th Street. Passengers expressed similar concerns and also commented about the lack of shelter at the proposed location.
14th & F Street, NW	This is a low volume location. Survey responses indicate that drivers are most concerned about gaining access to the 14th Street HOV lanes from the proposed location on 15th Street. Passengers were also concerned about separating this slugging location from the commuter bus stop.
14th & D (Commerce Department), NW	This is a medium volume slugging location that experiences significant conflicts with commuter buses and Metrobuses. Respondents expressed concerns about consolidating several slug lines to one location at 15th and G, anticipating that this would create confusion. However, the destinations that this location serves are the same as those served by the destinations that are now located at 15th and New York. Therefore, relocating this stop would combine these lines to the 15th and New York location and eliminate the incentive for drivers to use 14th Street.
14th and Constitution Ave, NW	This is one of the highest volume slugging locations. Observations and feedback indicate that the majority of conflicts at this location are caused by cars parked on 14th Street between Constitution and Independence. Several respondents suggested moving this location to 15th Street at either Madison or Constitution.
14th & Independence Avenue, NW	This is a fairly low volume slugging location. However, there are large employers in this area and respondents were keen to retain a slugging location south of Constitution Avenue. Several people suggested relocating the slugging location to C Street SW between 12th and 14th. Parking meter times would have to be changed to accommodate such relocation.
19th and I Street, NW	This is a low volume location with few traffic conflicts. Moving it to 19th and F would create additional congestion at that high volume stop, and create confusion with multiple destinations at one location.
19th & F Street, NW	This is a high volume location that has trouble accommodating the existing number of passengers and cars. Adding additional lines to this location would exacerbate this problem.
7th and D Street, SW	This is a high volume location where cars are currently double parking to collect passengers. Survey results indicate that a large number of drivers travel down 7th Street to access this stop and that moving the stop east of 7th Street would require cars to detour in order to collect passengers. Respondents were also concerned about the Metrobus stop at the proposed location and the potential sidewalk congestion with both slugs and Metrobus passengers waiting in close proximity.

The above information outlines the specific feedback that was provided by survey respondents regarding the proposed changes to each slugging location. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they could

foresee any conflicts with proposed location changes and to provide comments. Respondents were also asked to suggest additional alternative locations as indicated in the comments above. The feedback provided by survey respondents led DDOT to reconsider many of the alternative locations that it had initially proposed. In order to gain additional input from the slugging community on revised locations, DDOT conducted a public meeting, the details of which are provided below.

District Slugging Plan Meeting

In an effort to increase communication with the slugging community and solicit additional feedback regarding the proposed changes to slugging locations, DDOT held a District Slugging Plan meeting on October 26, 2010 at the Reeves Center. Approximately forty people attended the meeting including representatives from the slugging community, commuter bus agency Potomac and Rappanhannock Transportation Commission (PRTC-Omniride), the Downtown Business Improvement District, and various District agencies including the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Transportation (DDOT). The majority of slugging representatives were focused on recommendations concerning the test site at 15th and New York Avenue. Representatives were also present from the existing 14th and Constitution, 14th and G, and 19th Street slugging locations. In addition, several drivers also attended the meeting.

Gabe Klein, Director of DDOT, addressed the group reaffirming the District's support of slugging as an important form of transit for many commuters. He indicated how impressed he was with slugging as an innovative transportation alternative and how well it worked as an informal and organic activity. Director Klein stressed that while there is a need for the District to take some action to formalize slugging activity, DDOT will not be regulating the operation of the slugging system. He also highlighted that slugging helps to support the District's core values of livability and sustainability by reducing congestion and pollution. Moreover, he outlined DDOT's continued commitment to working in partnership with the slugging community to identify a sustainable outcome for slugging activities in the District.

General Comments

Initial comments focused on why DDOT decided to take action to formalize slugging activity. DDOT noted that slugging activity has reached a critical mass in the District and that DDOT is responsible for effective management of curbside space which includes commuter bus and slugging activities.

Slugging representatives highlighted that DDOT needs to consider the slugging system as a whole and recognize that if one location is moved while other locations serving the same destination are retained on 14th Street drivers will just continue to use other locations to pick up slugs along 14th Street. DDOT responded that this was a challenge that they recognized and that this will be addressed in the final implementation recommendations. The recommendations will be focused on establishing continuity between slugging locations that serve the same slug-line destinations.

The group wanted to know if, given the relationship between the slug-lines and the commuter buses, DDOT has been coordinating with the commuter bus companies. DDOT confirmed that they have been coordinating with the commuter bus agencies to get their input on proposed moves. DDOT assured the group that they recognize the synergy that exists between the slug-lines and the commuter bus stops and will continue to work closely with commuter bus agencies to ensure that this relationship is taken into

account in the final recommendations. PRTC (Omniride) representatives were present at the meeting to confirm the working relationship.

At the conclusion of the meeting, DDOT indicated that they would be releasing notes from the meeting and additional information regarding the District Slugging Plan. DDOT requested that meeting participants continue to provide feedback on the proposed plans and highlighted that this input would be used to inform the decision making process regarding the proposed changes. Finally, DDOT committed to developing and releasing a schedule for the implementation of the District Slugging Plan.

Final Recommendations

This table outlines the existing slugging destinations in the District, the slugging locations that currently serve these destinations, and the slugging locations that will serve these destinations under the District's slugging plan. These final recommendations were formulated based on feedback from the slugging community and in consideration of the slugging system as a whole. Consequently, every effort has been taken to maintain continuity between the slugging locations serving the same destination. The following table (**Table 3**) shows the locations for slugs to be picked up in the District based off of destination of the slug-lines.

Table 3: Final Slugging Locations

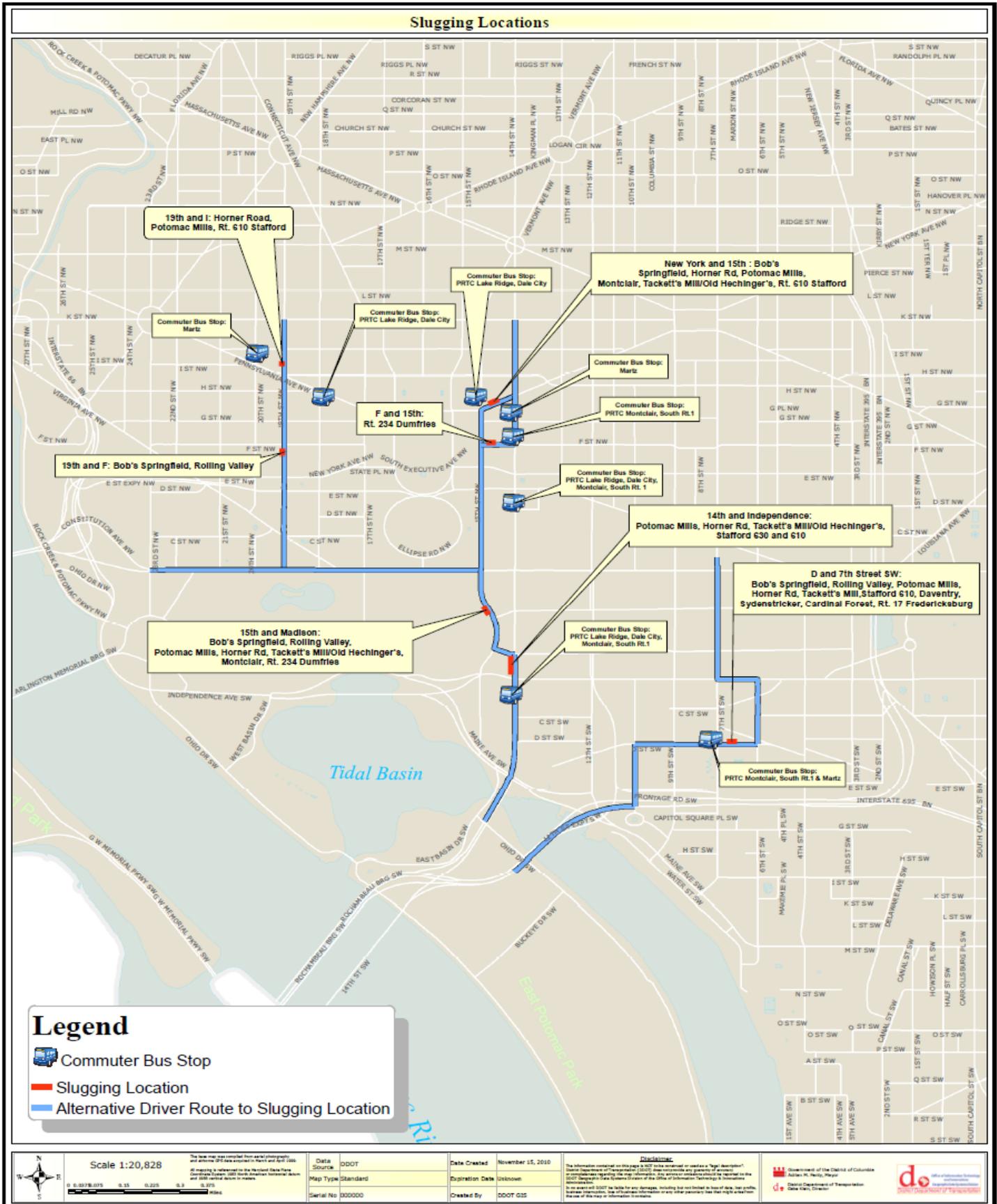
Destination	Existing Slugging Location	Proposed Slugging location
Bob's Springfield	15th and New York	New York and 15th
	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	19th and F	19th and F
	D and 9th	D and 7th
Horner Road	15th and New York	New York and 15th
	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	14th and Independence (southern corner)	14th and Independence (northern corner)
	19th and I	19th and I
	D and 9th	D and 7th
	14th and D (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison/ New York and 15th
Potomac Mills	15th and New York	New York and 15th
	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	14th and Independence (southern corner)	14th and Independence (northern corner)
	19th and I	19th and I
	14th and D (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison/ New York and 15th
Montclair	15th and New York	New York and 15th
	14th and D (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison/ New York and 15th
Tackett's Mill/Old Hechinger's	15th and New York	New York and 15th
	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	14th and D (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison/ New York and 15th
	D and 9th	D and 7th
Rt. 610 Stafford	14th and G	New York and 15th
	D and 9th	D and 7th
	14th and Independence (southern corner)	14th and Independence (northern corner)
	19th and I	19th and I
Rt. 234 Dumfries	14th and F	F and 15th
	14th and D (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison/ New York and 15th
Rolling Valley	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	D and 9th	D and 7th
	19th and F	19th and F
Cardinal Forest	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	19th and F	19th and F
	D and 9th	D and 7th
Daventry	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	D and 9th	D and 7th
	19th and F	19th and F
Mobile Station/Sydenstricker	14th and Constitution	15th and Madison
	D and 9th	D and 7th
Rt. 630 Stafford	14th and Independence (southern corner)	14th and Independence (northern corner)
Rt. 17 Fredericksburg	D and 9th	D and 7th

The following table (**Table 4**) describes the criteria of the existing and proposed locations. It is important to note the benefits of the new locations as compared to the existing locations pertaining to traffic conditions.

Table 4: Criteria for Final Slugging Locations

Criteria for Slugging Locations										
Existing location	Proposed location	Is the location close to a major corridor that provides direct access to HOV lanes?	Is the location easy to access for drivers?	Does the location have sufficient sidewalk space to accommodate slug-lines?	Does the location provide a sheltered area for inclement weather?	Is the location in close proximity to a commuter bus stop?	Is the location in proximity to major employment centers?	Does the location abide by curbside regulation signage?	Is the location in an area with low to medium traffic volume?	Is the location determined to have limited impact on traffic flow?
14th & New York, NW		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	15th & New York Avenue, NW	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	New York Avenue & 15th, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
14th & G Street, NW		✓	✓	✓			✓			
	15th & G Street, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
14th & F Street, NW		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	15th & G Street, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
14th & D (Commerce Department), NW		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
	15th & New York Avenue, NW	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	New York Avenue & 15th, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
14th & Constitution Ave, NW		✓	✓	✓			✓			
	15th & Madison Drive, NW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
14th & Independence Avenue, NW		✓	✓			✓	✓			
	C & 13th Street, SW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
D & 7th Street, SW		✓	✓	✓			✓			
	D & 6th Street, SW	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
19th & I Street, NW	No change	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
19th & F Street, NW	No change	✓	✓			✓	✓			

Figure 1: District Slugging Map



Implementation

To implement the recommended location changes DDOT will work closely with a number of different stakeholders. These will include the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Department of Public Works (DPW), Commuter Bus agencies, the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), The National Park Service (NPS) and representatives from the slugging community. Every effort will be made to ensure that the transition to the new locations is as smooth as possible and DDOT will continue to address concerns as they arise.

DDOT is planning to implement these changes in three phases in order to minimize confusion and maintain the function of the slugging system as a whole. The first two phases of implementation include location changes. The third phase of implementation refers only to sign implementation at the existing locations and will not include any location changes for the slugging locations on 19th street.

Table 5: Implementation Schedule

Phase	Date	Existing Locations	Recommended Locations
One	January 2011	14th and New York Ave	New York Ave and 15th
		14th and F st/G st	F st and 15th
		14th and D st (Commerce Department)	15th and Madison Ave/New York Ave and 15th
		14th and Constitution Ave	15th and Madison Ave
		14th and Independence Ave	14th and Independence (North block)
Two	Early February 2011	D st and 9th, SW	D st and 7th, SW
Three	Mid- February 2011	19th and I st	No Change(signage will be installed)
		19th and F st	No Change(signage will be installed)

To communicate the location changes to those engaged in slugging activity, DDOT will be issuing press releases, distributing flyers at the existing locations prior to the move, posting signage at the former locations, and publicizing the moves on slug-lines.com. DDOT recognizes that it will be difficult to reach all slugging participants and asks for the slugging community to assist us in the process of communicating the proposed changes at the appropriate time. In addition to these efforts, staff from District agencies including DDOT and DPW will be on site during the location changes to assist slugging passengers and drivers and to facilitate a smooth transition.

Next Steps

DDOT recognizes that slugging is an organic activity and that participants may wish to establish new locations in the future. To facilitate ongoing communication with the slugging community, DDOT is establishing a Slugging Taskforce consisting of representatives from each slugging location who will act as liaisons to provide feedback and assist in resolving conflicts. Those wishing to establish a new slugging location will be able to submit their recommendations to the Taskforce, who will then work with DDOT to identify future appropriate locations. For further inquiries about the taskforce please contact us at amber.carran-fletcher@dc.gov.