



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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MARY M. CHEH
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Everett Lott, Interim Director
District Department of Transportation
250 M Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Director Lott,

As you know, yesterday morning, a pedestrian bridge along I-295 collapsed after being struck by a truck. At least five individuals were injured, and the roadway did not reopen until many hours later. Although it appears that the immediate cause of the collapse of the bridge was this collision, not the condition of the bridge, a more intensive investigation into the matter is nevertheless warranted. Specifically, that investigation must identify the cause of the collision (for example, was the bridge lower than typical, or sagging), such that this does not happen again. In addition, should a bridge in good condition be able to withstand a collision with a truck, and could signs regarding bridge height or other warnings have helped prevent the collision?

At the same time as you conduct this investigation, I also encourage you to enhance your ongoing work to inspect, maintain, and repair or replace the many bridges maintained by the agency. Yesterday's events made clear the great harm caused by a bridge failure—even one meant for people, not cars—and it is essential that we do all we can to avoid a similar bridge failure in the future.

It is my understanding that this bridge was in fact recently slated to be replaced. Please share with me DDOT's timeline for the replacement of this bridge. Has funding already been identified for this work, and when is construction anticipated to begin? If not immediately, would you be able to accelerate this project? As the bridge is clearly no longer operational and there is no alternative in place to cross the interstate at the location, I would encourage you to prioritize its replacement.

In that vein, I do want to underscore that this pedestrian bridge provides a key connection between the neighborhoods of Deanwood and Kenilworth. The bridge served as a primary method for Kenilworth residents to access the Deanwood metro station and other services on the southern side of the interstate. Of note, the bridge also provided access to Kenilworth Gardens for residents across the District. With those uses in mind, how will residents be able to cross I-295 until a new bridge can be built? Are there safe, temporary measures that can be put in place to allow

residents to cross the interstate at this location while a new bridge is constructed? I encourage DDOT to immediately communicate with area residents about any interim measures or alternate routes that will be offered, as well as the agency's work (including anticipated timing) to replace the bridge.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary M. Cheh', written in a cursive style.

Mary M. Cheh

Cc: Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Christopher Geldart