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Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G
Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne

ANC 3/4G Testimony before the DC Council
Committee on Public Works
Performance Oversight Hearing on the Department of Public Works
February 12, 2026

Good morning, Chair Nadeau and members of the committee. My name is Bruce Sherman. I am speaking today on behalf of ANC 3/4G, representing the Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, and Hawthorne neighborhoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will focus on the Department of Public Works' performance during the recent snow emergency that began January 25 and extended through much of the following week.

I want to begin by recognizing the dedication of DPW frontline workers and emergency responders who operated under hazardous conditions. Our commission appreciates their efforts and understands the logistical challenges created by heavy snowfall followed by sleet and compaction on neighborhood streets.

However, we must report that our communities experienced serious service gaps. Many local streets were not passable until January 28, three days after the storm. Even then, some were only navigable by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

These delays created real safety risks. The median age in our commission area is approximately 50, and more than 3,500 residents—about 25 percent of the population—are age 65 or older. Many live in single-family homes. During the multi-day period when streets were effectively impassable, residents were unable to reach medical appointments or obtain prescriptions. Emergency access would also have been severely constrained had it been needed.

Pedestrian access to public spaces was equally affected. Bus stops, curb cuts, and crosswalks remained covered in ice and snow long after most residents had cleared their sidewalks. Older neighbors, parents

with strollers, and those with limited mobility had to walk in the street to bypass the hazards. Residents reported slipping and falling while navigating uncleared snow and ice at crosswalks.

Operational issues exacerbated these impacts.

Service delivery was very uneven. We understand DPW prioritizes major arterial and significant secondary roads before servicing residential side streets. This said, with no apparent prioritization plan, many residential blocks in our commission area received multiple plowing and salting passes while adjacent or nearby streets received none. This inconsistency caused understandable frustration and undermined public confidence.

The District's GPS snowplow tracking system was rife with inaccurate data. Streets were repeatedly marked as cleared when they were not. This compounded resident frustration and made it difficult for the Commission to accurately advocate for missed blocks. These errors likely contributed to misallocation of resources and delayed service to overlooked areas. They also damaged public trust when official maps did not match on-the-ground conditions.

As a result of these failures, residents on several Chevy Chase streets pooled private funds to hire contractors to clear public roadways. This should never be necessary. When residents must privately finance basic public works services, it signals a breakdown in delivery.

Moreover, responsibility for public areas remains unclear. Which agency clears curb cuts, bus stops, and crosswalks? Is it DPW, DDOT, WMATA, or some combination? Lack of clarity following the past storm resulted in many areas going unaddressed – along Western Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and elsewhere in Chevy Chase. Dangerous conditions persisted for days.

Based on this experience, ANC 3/4G offers five recommendations.

First, DPW should adopt a policy ensuring every residential street receives at least one full-service pass before any residential street receives repeat service. While we understand the need to prioritize major roads, equitable minimum coverage on local streets must be the baseline.

Second, DPW should conduct a comprehensive review of its GPS tracking system to improve accuracy, operational reliability, and public transparency.

Third, the District should clarify and enforce responsibility for clearing snow from critical pedestrian infrastructure to ensure bus stops, curb cuts, and crosswalks are cleared with the same priority as streets.

Fourth, [DC 311](#) should add a snow plowing category to allow residents to specify the service for neighborhood streets, to include clearing intersections and the lead-ins to intersections used by pedestrians;

Fifth, close coordination among DPW, the Mayor's Office, and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions should continue to enable rapid identification of missed streets and mid-storm adjustments. Our commission appreciated the responsiveness of mayoral staff in escalating requests to address service gaps, helping mitigate some impacts.

In closing, our goal is not to criticize frontline workers but to strengthen the systems and policies that support them. Snow emergencies will continue to occur. The District's response will determine whether residents feel protected or abandoned.

Thank you for your time and attention.