



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

RESOLUTION #4B-21-0201

**Calling for Improved Mechanisms to Address Abandoned Cars
Adopted February 22, 2021**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B Commissioners have received numerous complaints regarding vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned on residential and non-residential streets within the Commission’s boundaries. These complaints include a car that did not move for months, had paint thrown on the car, and with a kicked in door; a car that did not move for months with a blown out wheel and a smashed in window; a car with expired tags that was parked without a permit for months in a restricted zone; among many others.
- Commissioners have worked with residents to submit 311 requests regarding these cars, as well as to communicate with the District Department of Public Works to address the issue, with mixed success. Residents and Commissioners have reported these cars as abandoned, dangerous, and/or for booting and impoundment. On occasion, Commissioners have communicated with DC Councilmembers regarding challenges addressing vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned. When cars are removed, it is unclear whether they are removed as abandoned, dangerous, or scofflaw vehicles, or something else entirely.
- The issue of vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned on neighborhood streets has worsened during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health emergency. The suspension of parking enforcement, including ROSA (registration of out-of-state automobiles) and RPP (resident-only parking), and limitation on processing registrations for vehicles that are new to the District make it nearly impossible to satisfy the requirements for declaring a vehicle abandoned, as described below.
- The District Department of Public Works defines an “[abandoned vehicle](#)” as any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer that is left, parked, or stored on public space, for more than 48 hours or on private property for more than 30 days, and to which *at least two* of the following conditions apply:

- (A) The vehicle is extensively damaged, including fire damage;
- (B) The vehicle is apparently inoperable, including a vehicle missing its transmission, motor, or one or more tires, and which is not undergoing emergency repair;
- (C) The vehicle serves as harborage for rats, vermin, and other pests;
- (D) The vehicle does not display valid tags or a valid registration sticker.

[DC Code § 50-2421.02\(1\)](#). Abandoned vehicles will be removed within five business days from public space and 45 days from private property, Notice is placed on the vehicle when the vehicle is in public space and mailed to the vehicle owner's last known address when the vehicle is on private property. A notice of infraction is placed on the vehicle in both situations. [DC Code § 502421.04\(a\)\(1\)](#); [DC Code § 50-2421.05](#).

- The District Department of Public Works defines a “[dangerous vehicle](#)” as any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer that, as a result of the presence of rats, vermin, or other pests, exposed glass or metal shards, or other dangerous condition poses an imminent hazard to the public health, safety, or welfare. Any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer that is in a wrecked, dismantled, or irreparable condition, or destroyed by fire, is per se a dangerous vehicle. [DC Code § 50-2421.02\(2\)](#). A dangerous vehicle may be removed from public and private property immediately, once it has been ticketed. [DC Code § 50-2421.04\(a\)\(2\)](#); [DC Code § 50-2421.05\(3\)\(c\)](#).
- A [scofflaw vehicle](#) is subject to booting and impoundment for two or more unsatisfied parking and/or photo enforcement tickets that are 60 days old. The District Department of Public Works mails an impoundment notice to the vehicle owner's last known address. [DC Code § 50-2421.07](#).
- The definitions of and mechanisms to address abandoned, dangerous, and scofflaw vehicles are confusing and ineffective. The definition of an abandoned vehicle is different than what many residents expect, which leads residents to contact Commissioners when their requests to address abandoned vehicles are closed without action. The requirement that an abandoned vehicle meet two of the listed criteria is onerous, particularly where the vehicle meets one of the criteria for an extended period of time. In addition, the definition of a dangerous vehicle is confusing since it includes one of the criteria for an abandoned vehicle – serving as harborage for rats, vermin, and other pests – but may be removed immediately based upon that criteria alone (contrary to the requirements

for an abandoned vehicle). Finally, many residents are not aware that they can request ticketing and impoundment for two or more unsatisfied parking and/or photo enforcement tickets that are 60 days old. Clarity is needed.

- Furthermore, resident and Commissioner confusion can lead to continued outreach to the District Department of Public Works and an inefficient use of employee hours through responses to multiple inquiries and repeated ticketing.
- While Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B recognizes the need for improved information regarding and mechanisms to address vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned, the Commission notes the current system may result in the accumulation of unnecessary ticket and booting debt for the vehicle owner. The Commission does not seek to punish vehicle owners who may need assistance via government social services programs that would allow them to access and claim their vehicle. In addition, the Commission is sensitive to possible concerns by undocumented individuals who may be wary of claiming their vehicle due to their status as undocumented.
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B recommends the following improvements to the District Department of Public Works webpages and 311 process to help residents better understand the definition of an abandoned vehicle and the mechanisms to address vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned, coordination with other government agencies to more swiftly remove vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned, and legislative changes to better address vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned and to engage in a more robust process to inform and attempt to contact owners and offer social services. The Commission encourages urgency in light of the breadth of the issue, due in part to increased challenges addressing vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned during the public health emergency.

Webpage/311 Improvements:

- Revise the District Department of Public Works webpage regarding [“Removal of Abandoned and Dangerous Vehicles”](#) to provide information about what to do if a vehicle does not meet that official definition of “abandoned” but appears to have been abandoned.
- Revise the District Department of Public Works webpage regarding [“Removal of Abandoned and Dangerous Vehicles”](#) to separate out the issue of an “abandoned vehicle” from a “dangerous vehicle” since they have different requirements.

- Include cross links to the District Department of Public Works webpage regarding “[Booting and Impoundment](#).”
- Consider one webpage that addresses all abandoned vehicle related issues clearly and more broadly.
- Revise the service request type description in the 311 system for “Abandoned Vehicle - On Public Property” and “Abandoned Vehicle - On Private Property” to include a link to the District Department of Public Works webpage regarding “[Removal of Abandoned and Dangerous Vehicles](#)” with a note that those service requests only apply to vehicles meeting the conditions described on that webpage.
- Direct residents to information regarding booting and impoundment (and any other available option to deal with an abandoned vehicle type issue) in the 311 system.

Agency Coordination:

- Coordinate with the Metropolitan Police Department to run the Vehicle Identification Number of a vehicle that is or appears to be abandoned to accelerate removal of stolen vehicles.

Legislative Changes:

- Consider adding Residential Permit Parking violations as a contributing condition to the determination of an abandoned vehicle.
- Consider adding the length of time that a vehicle has not been moved or cleaned off in the determination of an abandoned vehicle.
- In the case of an apparently-abandoned vehicle, develop a more robust process via a social services related DC agency or agencies to attempt to contact and inform the vehicle owner regarding the status of their vehicle and, depending on the results of that contact, connect that vehicle owner with services, as helpful, and either provide assistance to the individual to reclaim use of their vehicle or determine if they would like to abandon the vehicle.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Public Works to make various improvements to its website and work with the Office of Unified Communications to update the 311 system to help residents better understand the definition of an

“abandoned vehicle” and the mechanisms to address vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned.

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Public Works to coordinate with the Metropolitan Police Department to run the Vehicle Identification Number of a vehicle that is or appears to be abandoned to accelerate removal of stolen cars.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the DC Council to consider legislative changes to better address vehicles that are or appear to be abandoned, as well as legislative changes to engage in a more robust process to inform and attempt to contact owners and offer social services, where appropriate.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ADOPTED by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of eight members was present) on February 22, 2021, by a vote of 8 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.