

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THE
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES AGENCY PERFORMANCE
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON FISCAL YEARS 2021 – 2022**



Testimony of
Gabriel Robinson, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles

Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Mary Cheh, Chairperson

February 4, 2022
Virtual Hearing

Good morning, Chairperson Cheh, Committee members, councilmembers, and staff of the Committee. I am Gabriel Robinson, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). I am pleased to testify before you today.

Prior to sharing the major FY21 and year-to-date FY22 DMV accomplishments, on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser, I would like to thank our customers, Chairperson Cheh, this Committee, and the rest of the Council for your support. The feedback you provide to this agency is valued and critically important in guiding our decision-making process for service improvements. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all my colleagues at DMV for their dedication and hard work as the agency transitioned from “appointment only” to walk-in service in FY21.

During FY21, DMV provided service to over 561,000 licensed drivers/identification card holders and over 298,000 registered vehicle owners at four service centers. Additionally, we provided adjudication services, including conducting over 160,000 in-person, mail, and virtual hearings. DMV also collected ticket payments for more than 2.2 million tickets. We inspected over 170,000 vehicles, including approximately 8,000 inspections completed using our self-service OBD emissions kiosk. The agency also processed and mailed product generated from more than 420,000 online transactions. DMV interacts with District residents and non-residents, with an average of 3,200 daily customer contacts—more than almost any other District government agency.

The mission of DC DMV is to promote the safe operation of motor vehicles and public safety, while providing outstanding customer service. As I frequently tell my team, our agency is truly “saving lives every single day.”

The agency has three operational divisions: Adjudication, Vehicle, and Driver Services. Our Adjudication Services team provides ticket processing, ticket noticing, hearings, and hearing support services to residents and non-residents, in order to render legally sound decisions on parking, photo enforcement and minor moving violations. Additionally, driver license revocation and reinstatement hearings are provided through Adjudication Services. The Adjudication team also ensures proper processing of violation and penalty payments for these infractions. Vehicle Services provides certification and inspection services to residents, businesses, and government entities so they may legally park, drive, and sell their vehicles in the District of Columbia. Driver Services provides driver certification and identification services to residents, ensuring they have the proper credentials to reflect identity, residence, and driving qualifications, so they may legally and safely operate their vehicles.

Through much of FY21, as the public health emergency remained in effect, DMV continued to operate on an “appointment only” basis with a focus on the safety and health of our customers and employees. To limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) at all DMV locations during appointment only service, all customers and employees were required to wear a face covering prior to entering any of our facilities. Additionally, only customers obtaining service could enter our facilities (with limited exceptions for customers who required additional assistance). We also ensured customers and employees at all DMV locations maintained social distancing of six feet or more. The agency continued our enhanced cleaning and sanitation program, specifically at our service centers where in-person volume was the highest.

In March 2021, to help address the high demand for appointments, DMV increased the

availability of appointments for residents who required in-person services by adding approximately 6,000 new appointments each week. That number increased to 10,000 new appointments in June 2021 as DMV employees returned to work and the agency was able to increase its operating capacity. Appointment only service was available from June 2020 through July 2021. During that time, the agency released a total of 256,857 appointments for individuals requiring in-person services before transitioning back to walk-in service on July 19, 2021.

While the public health emergency continued to present challenges to the agency's operations in FY21, DMV was still able to launch several new initiatives. On January 26, 2021, DMV opened our new Deanwood Road Test/CDL Services Office located in Ward 7 at 1421 Kenilworth Avenue, NE. The new Deanwood Office replaced the agency's Brentwood Road Test/CDL Center, which closed on January 23, 2021. Then, starting on May 4th, DMV added a new road skill requirement, parallel parking, for drivers taking the non-commercial road test. To assist residents with learning how to parallel park, DMV worked with a third-party to produce a customized parallel parking video, which the agency shares with residents when they schedule a road test appointment. It has useful tips to help them master this skill prior to their road test. Later in the fiscal year, DMV added a fleet of six (6) new vehicles at Deanwood for non-commercial road tests. Since September, customers who schedule a road test appointment have the option to take the test in one of the agency's new hybrid sedans. The vehicles are customized with essential safety features such as a passenger-side braking system and GPS tracking, thus prioritizing the safety of both customers and DMV Driver License Examiners.

The agency also launched a new Commercial Driver License (CDL) Human Trafficking Awareness Training initiative on July 12, 2021 in partnership with the nonprofit organization

Truckers Against Trafficking. The training includes an educational video designed to assist commercial drivers with recognizing the signs of human trafficking and understanding the actions to take if they suspect someone may be a victim. The training video is available online and at the Deanwood Road Test/CDL Services Office. All new drivers seeking a Commercial Learner Permit (CLP), and drivers seeking to convert an out-of-state CDL, are required to complete the training prior to being issued a commercial credential in the District.

To further simplify services for our customers, DMV made several transactions available online at dmv.dc.gov. Effective February 1, 2021, customers can title and register a vehicle purchased through a private sale transaction for the first time via a hybrid online and mail transaction. Also, as of February 1, 2021, residents have the option to convert a provisional license online to a full REAL ID driver license with conditions and add the Motorcycle “M” Endorsement to their license.

In FY21, DMV announced several fee and enforcement updates. Effective June 1, 2021, a new tiered structure for the residential parking permit (RPP) fee went into effect. A one-year RPP sticker for the first vehicle registered at a legal mailing address increased from \$35 to \$50, and additional fees applied to other vehicles in the household as follows:

- \$75 for the second vehicle;
- \$100 for the third vehicle, and
- \$150 for each vehicle beyond the first three vehicles.

An exemption was included for one resident 65 years of age or older per household, and the individual (senior) now pays a \$35 annual RPP fee for the first vehicle registered at a legal mailing address. Additionally, following a moratorium on enforcement during the public health

emergency, all vehicle registrations and inspections had to be valid on June 1, 2021. Residents with expired inspection stickers started accumulating the requisite fees beginning on that date. DMV also ended the extension of expired driver licenses and identification cards effective September 9, 2021. Originally, the enforcement deadline for expired driver licenses and identification cards was July 1, 2021; however, the deadline was extended to give residents more time to renew credentials that required an in-person visit to a DMV Service Center.

Knowing these changes would impact many residents, DMV was proactive in announcing these updates early through multiple communication channels, including its social media outlets, website, direct mail, emails, and electronic newsletter that is distributed to more than 460,000 subscribers. In partnership with the Deputy Mayor of Operations and Infrastructure (DMOI), DC DMV also focused its communications resources to extensively promote the Mayor's four-month ticket amnesty program launched on June 1, 2021, as well as the program extension to December 31, 2021.

In August 2021, DMV announced that we had significantly increased capacity at our Test Proctoring Center in Alexandria, Va. with the availability of up to 300 knowledge test appointments each day. This announcement, along with the return to walk-in service at DMV service centers, helped to alleviate the high demand for knowledge tests, as residents had to renew their driver license or identification card that had originally expired during the public health emergency by September 9th. Additionally, DMV is finalizing legal terms with a third-party provider in FY22 to implement a virtual knowledge testing process, allowing residents to complete the test from the comfort of their own home.

As we transitioned into FY22, DMV continued to launch new initiatives to better serve our customers and simplify our operations. The agency recently launched a new communications platform called Zendesk, which has significantly streamlined our external communication processes. Customer inquiries submitted through multiple channels, including social media and the DMV website, are now captured through the customized Zendesk software allowing our Correspondence Team to respond to most inquiries on a single platform. In December 2021, we also announced the agency is participating in the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) to protect consumers from fraud and unsafe vehicles and to prevent stolen vehicles from being sold. The system allows DC DMV to verify information in real time and reliably on a paper vehicle title by comparing it to electronic data submitted by the jurisdiction that issued the title. Additionally, Adjudication Services expanded virtual hearings last month to include parking and photo enforcement tickets. The virtual hearing pilot was originally introduced in response to the health emergency and hearings were only available for minor moving violations, permit suspensions and revocations, and license reinstatements. The agency also updated content on our website to reflect the new Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations for CDL drivers. The new requirements will go into effect on February 7th and establish a regulatory standard for training CDL applicants.

Looking forward in FY22, DMV will continue to work on the development of a digital driver license and identification card, which will allow residents to display a DMV credential as an electronic image on a cellular phone or other portable electronic device. We are committed to completing this initiative with a focus on safe and secure technology that protects resident's privacy, while streamlining their ability to complete a variety of day-to-day transactions.

DMV has continued to see increased usage of the agency's mobile app. Currently, DMV has more than 48,000 users who have downloaded the mobile app. In September of 2020, we had 5,000 users. Recent upgrades have enabled customers to complete a variety of transactions from their smartphone devices including:

- Ticket Payment;
- Driver License and ID Card Renewal;
- Registration Renewal;
- Driver License and ID Card Replacement;
- Registration Replacement;
- Tag Cancellation;
- Insurance Lapse Payment;
- Personalized Tag Order;
- Certified Driver Record, and
- Organ Donor Status Update.

This fiscal year, DMV plans to add five more transactions. We continue to encourage the public to use DMV's mobile app and skip the trip. It's free and can be downloaded from Apple's App Store and the Google Play Store by searching DC DMV.

Educating residents about the importance of obtaining a REAL ID credential has continued to remain a key initiative of DMV throughout FY21 and into FY22. A REAL ID complies with federal security standards and assures residents have access to federal facilities as well as the ability to board an airplane. Currently, 92% of District residents are REAL ID compliant. In FY21, DMV facilitated more than 100 special appointments for residents to renew their credential early based on the expiration date of their non-REAL ID driver license or

identification card. Due to the public health emergency, the Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID compliance deadline to May 3, 2023.

During FY21 and into FY22, DMV has continued to communicate with the public about critical information via social media, live web chats, press releases, electronic notices, monthly newsletters, community meetings, and presentations at other public forums. In FY21, DMV leadership presented at 11 virtual ANC community meetings where residents were provided with important information related to the agency's operational status, as well as driver, vehicle, and ticket related services. Our Driver Services team presented virtually to a group of asylum seekers at the request of the nonprofit organization AsylumWorks. The virtual attendees received important information specific to the process of obtaining a credential in the District. DMV representatives also met with several recent DC high school graduates during a "Field Day" at Cardozo Education Campus hosted by DC Public Schools. Many of the students were preparing to leave home for the first time and were interested in learning the process to apply for a driver license or identification card. On December 15, 2021, DMV was present at the Mayor's 23rd Annual Senior Holiday Celebration, where agency representatives answered attendees' questions.

While the transition from appointment only to walk-in service was smooth and efficient, DMV continues to identify opportunities to offer more online transactions to the public, so they can skip the trip. DMV remains committed to serving the public at a high level as demonstrated by the large volume of work the agency has produced, including mailings generated from more than 526,000 online transactions completed between October 1, 2020 and December 30, 2021.

Additionally, we remain focused on continuing to operate our facilities in a manner that keeps everyone safe, including our customers and our employees. I personally want to thank Team

DMV for their perseverance and extraordinary commitment to keeping the District and our residents safe and moving over the past year.

Public safety and customer service will continue to be a priority for DMV throughout FY22. I look forward to working with my team to improve operational processes and make it easier for our customers to complete their transactions. Again, we appreciate the support we have received from the Council and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the quality of service to the residents of the District of Columbia. In closing, we would like to thank Mayor Bowser for her continued leadership, particularly throughout the past 22 months, and commitment to good government and accountability. I will now address any questions you may have.