

IN REPLY REFER TO:
NCPC FILE 6986

October 30, 2009

Mr. Faisal Hameed
Transportation Policy & Planning Administration
District Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Re: Comments on K Street Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Hameed:

We are pleased to provide the following comments on the draft environmental assessment for the K Street streetscape and transitway project. As a cooperating agency in the preparation of the environmental assessment and a continuing partner in District planning and development, NCPC looks forward to working with the District as this important project to improve K Street moves forward. Our comments follow:

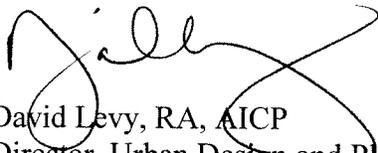
1. The environmental assessment should include a single overall “Cumulative Effects” section that describes the effects of each of the three alternatives considered along with the anticipated affects of other nearby and related projects. The current draft document includes a cumulative effects statement for each alternative within the context of each “environmental consequence” category (Social Characteristics, Traffic and Transportation, etc), but does not holistically address the cumulative impacts associated with each alternative.
2. There are many sensitive viewsheds along and adjacent to K Street. Views along the K Street right-of-way, including views of reservations and historic buildings, should be assessed for potential visual impacts from the project alternatives as fully as views across K Street intersections. The final environmental assessment should document and assess them. Viewsheds include but are not limited to:
 - a. Views down 16th Street to Lafayette Park and the White House from north of K Street, and views from Lafayette Park and the White House northward;
 - b. Views of Farragut Square and the adjacent intersections of K Street and Connecticut Avenue and K street and 17th Street from the north and south;
 - c. Views of McPherson Square and the adjacent intersections of K Street and Vermont Avenue and K Street and 15th Street from the north and south;

- d. Views of Franklin Square and the adjacent intersections of K Street and 13th Street and K Street and 14th Street from the north and south;
- e. Views looking north from Pennsylvania Avenue, toward K Street;
- f. Views along K Street and intersecting streets of historic buildings such as the University Club, the Tower Building, the Benjamin Franklin School, and the Southern Railway Building.
- g. Views to and from Washington Circle along K Street.
- h. Views to and from Carnegie Library and Mount Vernon Square along K Street.

NCPC is required to approve the plans for the selected alternative if the project moves forward to design, in accordance with the National Capital Planning Act. During this process, the project will also need to undergo Section 106 consultation in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

NCPC staff enthusiastically supports the District's effort to reconstruct K Street in a form that is more sustainable, multimodal, and commensurate with its significant place in the historic L'Enfant Plan. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please contact Michael Weil of my staff at (202) 482-7253 or michael.weil@ncpc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Levy, RA, AICP
Director, Urban Design and Plan Review Division

cc: Ms. Harriet Tregoning
District of Columbia Office of Planning

Mr. Michael Hicks
U.S. Federal Highway Administration, District Division

Mr. Thomas Luebke
U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

Mr. David W. Wallace
RK&K

Ms. Karina Ricks
District Department of Transportation