

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEETING

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OPEN SESSION

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**THURSDAY,
JULY 7, 2022**

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The meeting convened via Videoconference, at
1:00 p.m. EDT, Beth White, Chairman, presiding.

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

BETH WHITE, Chair
LINDA ARGO, Mayoral Appointee
EVAN CASH, Office of the Chairman of the Council
of the District of Columbia
ANITA COZART, D.C. Office of Planning
ARRINGTON DIXON, Mayoral Appointee
WENDY GINSBERG, U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
PETER MAY, Department of the Interior
PAUL MCMAHON, JR., Department of Defense

PHIL MENDELSON, Council of the District of
Columbia

MINA WRIGHT, General Services Administration

NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director

**MATTHEW FLIS, Senior Urban Designer, Urban
Design & Plan Review Division**

**CARLTON HART, Urban Planner, Urban Design & Plan
Review Division**

**PAUL JUTTON, Graphic Designer, Office of Public
Engagement**

JULIA KOSTER, Secretary to the Commission

TAMARA LEWIS, Director, Office of Administration

ANNE SCHUYLER, General Counsel

**DIANE SULLIVAN, Director, Urban Design & Plan
Review Division**

**LEE WEBB, Historic Preservation Specialist, Urban
Design & Plan Review Division**

**MICHAEL WEIL, Urban Planner, Urban Design & Plan
Review Division**

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(1:00 p.m.)

ROLL CALL

CHAIR WHITE: Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Capital Planning Commission's July 7th, 2022 open meeting. First, Ms. Koster, can you please take the roll call.

MS. KOSTER: Certainly. Commissioner Cozart?

COMMISSIONER COZART: Here.

MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner McMahon?

COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: I'm here.

MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner May?

COMMISSIONER MAY: Here.

MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner Argo?

COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here.

MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Chair White?

CHAIR WHITE: Here.

MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner

1 Wright?

2 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Here.

3 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner

4 Dixon?

5 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Here.

6 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner

7 Mendelson?

8 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Present.

9 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner

10 Davis, I believe, is not present today. And

11 Commissioner Ginsberg?

12 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Here.

13 MS. KOSTER: Marcel Acosta, the

14 Executive Director, Ann Schuyler, General

15 Counsel, and Diane Sullivan, Urban Design and

16 Plan Review, are also in today's meeting.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Noting the

18 presence of a quorum, I'd like to call this

19 meeting to order.

20 Today's meeting is live-streamed and

21 will be available in the next few days as a video

22 on NCPC's website. At this time, we will play a

1 short video clip of the Pledge of Allegiance.

2 (Pledge of Allegiance)

3 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

4 CHAIR WHITE: NCPC's offices are
5 currently under renovation, so NCPC will continue
6 to conduct its meetings online until this work is
7 complete. We also are continuing to monitor
8 public health requirements for in-person
9 gatherings.

10 I'd like to share how we will be
11 conducting Commission business. During Commission
12 deliberations, I will use a round robin format to
13 ask each commissioner if they have any comments.

14 As a reminder, during deliberations,
15 all commissioners should be on video during that
16 time unless you are experiencing technical
17 issues. At other times when commissioners wish
18 to be recognized, they should unmute and ask to
19 be recognized.

20 Next is agenda Item 2, which is the
21 Report of the Chair. I'd like to report that
22 during June, the commissioners had field trips to

1 Arlington National Cemetery, Joint Base
2 Myer-Henderson Hall, and Union Station to learn
3 more about the plans and projects we will be
4 reviewing.

5 And I'd like to thank the respective
6 teams that provided these tours because they are
7 invaluable for the Commission to understanding
8 on-the-ground context for often complex
9 proposals.

10 On June 6th, Executive Director Acosta
11 and I had the opportunity to meet with Nina
12 Albert, GSA's Public Buildings Commissioner, to
13 discuss projects of mutual interest to our
14 agencies.

15 Next is agenda item 3, which is the
16 report of the Executive Director, Mr. Acosta.

17 **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

18 **MR. ACOSTA:** Thank you, Chair White,
19 and good afternoon. NCPC recently received a
20 Commuter Connections 2022 Employer Services
21 Organization award from the Metropolitan
22 Washington Council of Governments.

1 This achievement award recognized our
2 comprehensive planned transportation element and
3 its impacts on shaping federal and regional
4 transportation choices. Thanks to Johanna
5 McCrehan, Kael Anderson and Michael Weil for
6 their excellent work.

7 We also welcome our new Director of
8 Administration, Tamara Lewis. Tamara joins us
9 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
10 Administration's National Weather Service. While
11 at NOAA, Tamara held senior administrative and
12 budget officer positions. Tamara holds a
13 Master's in Social Work from Howard University
14 and is pursuing a second Master's degree in
15 Project Management at Georgetown University.
16 Welcome aboard, Tamara. And if you could just
17 turn on your camera. There you go. Welcome.

18 MS. LEWIS: Thank you. Happy to be
19 here.

20 MR. ACOSTA: That concludes my
21 presentation. I'd be happy to answer any
22 questions that you might have.

1 CHAIR WHITE: Well, thank you,
2 Director Acosta, and congratulations on the
3 recognition for the great work, and welcome, Ms.
4 Lewis. We look forward to working with you as
5 you've joined our team. Appreciate you being
6 here.

7 MS. LEWIS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 CHAIR WHITE: Are there any questions
9 for Mr. Acosta? Hearing none, we will move to
10 agenda item 4, which is the legislative update.
11 We will be hearing from Ms. Schuyler.

12 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

13 MS. SCHUYLER: Thank you, Madam Chair.
14 I do, in fact, have a brief report today.

15 Last month, I reported to you on Bill
16 H.R.3525. This bill establishes a commission to
17 report and recommend a plan of action for
18 establishing and maintaining a national museum of
19 Asian-American history and culture. At my last
20 report, I advised that it had passed both the
21 House and the Senate but had yet to be signed by
22 the President.

1 Well, the bill was signed by the
2 President on June 13th, and it is now public law.
3 So we can look forward to a new museum in the
4 future. Thank you.

5 CONSENT CALENDAR

6 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Schuyler.
7 Does the Commission have any questions for Ms.
8 Schuyler? Hearing none, our next agenda item is
9 number 5, which is the Consent Calendar.

10 There are two items on this month's
11 Consent Calendar. The first is for approval of a
12 preliminary site development plan for an
13 infrastructure project at the Foreign Missions
14 Center in Washington, D.C. This project was
15 submitted by the Department of State.

16 The second item is for approval of
17 preliminary site development plans for a new
18 design for Cobb Park located at 200 H Street NW.
19 This was submitted by the D.C. Department of
20 General Services. Are there any questions or
21 discussion on the Consent Calendar items?
22 Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the

1 Consent Calendar?

2 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So moved.

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Seconded.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Commissioner Wright. I
5 heard a second, I believe, from Commissioner
6 Dixon? Ms. Koster, can you please confirm the
7 motion and the second and take the vote by roll
8 call.

9 MS. KOSTER: Certainly. The motion
10 was made by Commissioner Wright, and the second
11 was provided by Commissioner Dixon. With that,
12 Commissioner Cozart?

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

14 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

15 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yes.

16 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner May?

17 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

18 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Commissioner

19 Argo?

20 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

21 MS. KOSTER: Chair White?

22 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

1 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Wright?

2 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

3 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

4 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

5 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Mendelson?

6 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Yes.

7 MS. KOSTER: And Commissioner

8 Ginsberg?

9 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG? Yes.

10 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. The motion
11 is carried.

12 UNION STATION EXPANSION

13 PROJECT

14 CHAIR WHITE: Agenda item 6A is a
15 request to approve comments on revised concept
16 plans for the Washington Union Station expansion
17 project, and we will be hearing first from Mr.
18 Flis. Welcome.

19 MR. FLIS: Thank you. Good afternoon,
20 commissioners. Hopefully, you can see my screen.
21 The Federal Railroad Administration has submitted
22 revised concept plans for the Washington Union

1 Station expansion project, which you last
2 reviewed back in 2020. The project components
3 include Amtrak as well as the Union Station
4 Redevelopment Corporation or USRC.

5 So this is a concept review. The
6 Commission as providing comments on the general
7 project approach, including reviewing the project
8 for consistency with the comprehensive plan and
9 identifying planning issues to be addressed prior
10 to the next review. As a reminder, this review
11 is focused on the project which is located on
12 federal land for which NCPC has approval
13 authority.

14 You will also hear, both through my
15 presentation, as well as later testimony about
16 the private air rights development, which is
17 located nearby. This is a project that's subject
18 to local zoning and a separate District review
19 process.

20 So just as a reminder, here you can
21 see Washington Union Station. I think everybody
22 is familiar with the location north of the U.S.

1 Capitol, highlighted here in yellow.

2 Washington Union Station is the second
3 busiest station in the Amtrak network. It
4 includes high-speed Acela service as well as the
5 northeast regional service. The VRE and MARC
6 also serve the station, as well as local and
7 regional bus.

8 So USRC oversees the station
9 operations. This includes maintaining the
10 station as a multi-modal transportation center as
11 well as enhancing the retail and amenities within
12 the station.

13 You will recall that this is a very
14 complex site. It includes the historic station
15 here as well as an existing bus facility and
16 parking garage you can see here. These are
17 located on federal land, which is highlighted in
18 yellow and maintained by USRC.

19 There are other important owners in
20 the area, including Amtrak, which controls the
21 tracks; WMATA, which controls the Metrorail
22 station; the Park Service; as well as Akridge,

1 which is a private air rights owner, which
2 controls these areas that are hatched above the
3 tracks.

4 So moving to the expansion project
5 itself, before pre-pandemic, the station saw
6 about 40 million visitors a year, and the project
7 proponents are still anticipating significant
8 growth through 2040 and, hence, the need for the
9 project.

10 The major components include
11 reconfiguration of the station tracks, a new
12 train hall, bus facilities and parking
13 facilities. Other components include new
14 concourses as well as support spaces, pedestrian
15 and bicycle improvements as well as new pick-up
16 and drop-off areas, or "PUDO" for vehicles.

17 You'll recall back in 2020 that the
18 biggest components of this project are the
19 parking, the bus facility and the train hall.

20 So just going back to 2020, this was
21 the original preferred alternative. This
22 included a new east-west train hall highlighted

1 here in blue, the historic station is retained
2 here at the front, as well as a new bus facility
3 here in purple and parking above, which is kind
4 of in a tan color. This facility, again, was
5 above the tracks located in relatively close
6 proximity to the current facility today. So this
7 is from back in 2020.

8 So when you reviewed the project at
9 concept review back then and later during the EIS
10 process, you expressed a number of concerns and
11 provided comments in a few key areas. Overall,
12 you did express support for the transportation
13 improvements but asked that the parking be
14 reduced substantially.

15 You also found that the overall urban
16 design approach, particularly the layout, did not
17 seem to provide a quality experience for users,
18 and then you also found that additional
19 coordination was necessary, particularly with the
20 District agencies as well as the private air
21 rights owner to address some of these issues.

22 So given all these comments as well as

1 those that were received through the EIS process,
2 the FRA has been working closely with a number of
3 stakeholders, including the district and Akridge
4 to revise the project layout.

5 So this is moving on to the revised
6 concept. As I mentioned, back in May with the
7 informational briefing, there are basically a few
8 big changes that have occurred since your last
9 review.

10 These include changes to the parking
11 location, a reduction in the parking program and
12 a reconfigured bus facility and pick-up and
13 drop-off area as well.

14 The new east-west train hall is
15 essentially retained in the same location, which
16 you saw before, and this is right behind the
17 historic station. However, the other moves,
18 including moving the parking and the bus
19 facility, essentially free up the deck level
20 behind the station for some future air rights
21 development, which we'll talk a little bit about
22 later.

1 So talking about the project, I think
2 it's probably most helpful to use this image to
3 start. This is a section through the train hall
4 and some of the other components like the bus
5 facility, looking towards the west essentially.

6 I'm going to start at the lowest level
7 and then work my way up through the projects.
8 And so much of this is happening sectionally.
9 It's really important to see that.

10 So first, in terms of the big changes,
11 the parking has been moved underground. Here you
12 can see that. That's a level below the concourse
13 level, so again, it's moving it from that
14 structure above the tracks down below the
15 station.

16 Secondly, the parking program, which
17 includes pick-up and drop-off as well as rental
18 spaces, has been reduced substantially, almost 50
19 percent from 1600 spaces to around 860 spaces.
20 This is down from over 2,000 spaces in the
21 station today.

22 So the location of that parking area

1 below the tracks and concourses as well as the
2 pick-up and drop-off area does require some ramps
3 to get access to it. The proposed design has
4 identified a few locations, including the east
5 ramp, the 1st Street entrance, and then a
6 potential ramp on G Street.

7 The design of these ramps is going to
8 continue through the design process. The
9 vehicular circulation will also be analyzed as
10 part of updated environmental review.

11 I do want to point out that the ramp
12 on G Street will require particular attention.
13 It's located in the middle of the right-of-way,
14 and we request further details about the design
15 of this element and also its operation and also
16 request that they, the applicant, coordinate with
17 the adjacent landholders, particularly the
18 Smithsonian Institution, which controls the
19 property at the south, as this element is further
20 designed moving forward.

21 So moving up to the next level, this
22 is above the parking. This is the concourse

1 level. This is similar to what you saw in 2020.
2 A new H Street concourse is going to be provided
3 here, linking east to west. This is essentially
4 under the Hopscotch Bridge area. This will bring
5 passengers closer to the trains at this end of
6 the station so no longer just from the historic
7 train hall. There will also be new concourses
8 connecting from north to south.

9 This layout also includes access and
10 incorporates the new WMATA 1st Street entrance,
11 which is a project you reviewed several years
12 ago. WMATA has said that they will be moving
13 forward with that entrance improvement and that
14 they will need to continue to coordinate that
15 project with the station project moving into the
16 future.

17 So just here is a rendering of the new
18 concourses. Again, these are happening below the
19 track level. You can see this rendering of the
20 train tracks, which are located just above.

21 Again, this provides opportunities for
22 connectivity but again, it brings the passengers

1 closer to the trains in a few locations for that
2 easier access.

3 Here is a rendering of the, just the
4 1st Street entrance to the H Street concourse.
5 Again, this is providing an additional entry
6 point, both from the NoMa neighborhood side as
7 well as Capitol Hill, and I believe in your
8 information you've received testimony and comment
9 from both of those neighborhoods regarding their
10 support for the project.

11 So above the concourse level is the
12 track level. These are needed modernized tracks
13 as well as platforms to meet both accessibility
14 and future growth needs. These have not
15 substantially changed since what you saw back in
16 2020.

17 And then moving up again, this is
18 another area of a substantial change. This is
19 the new bus facility, which has been, again,
20 relocated from the kind of parking garage area to
21 a new east-west alignment that better integrates
22 with the train hall.

1 This single level is located at the
2 deck level and provides access from H Street with
3 about 38 or 39 potential bus slips. This would
4 accommodate both inner city as well as tour and
5 charter bus activity. Local buses, including
6 WMATA buses, would likely still be circulating at
7 the street level just to provide that better
8 passenger service.

9 Again, the access for this facility is
10 provided from H Street, which allows for full
11 movement for bus service.

12 Here you can just see a plan view of
13 the new bus facility. Again, it's adjacent to
14 the train hall. We'll note that there is,
15 because of this new proximity, there's a better
16 direct intermodal connection between the bus
17 facility, the train hall and the concourses
18 below.

19 And, therefore, we do find the
20 proposed location of this new bus facility
21 provides a more direct connection to the train
22 hall, the station platforms as well as the new

1 pick-up and drop-off facility, which is above it,
2 and I'll talk about it in a second.

3 We do find that the placement of this
4 facility at the top level also emphasizes the
5 equitable standing of this mode of transportation
6 and also provides an opportunity for day lighting
7 to help really improve that user experience.

8 So here's just a rendering of the new
9 bus facility. Modernization of the facility will
10 certainly be a benefit, but it will require
11 continued coordination and so as the project is
12 further developed, the details are developed, we
13 do recommend the applicant continue to work with
14 the bus operators and other related stakeholders
15 regarding the new bus facility operations as well
16 as opportunities for future vehicle charging
17 stations, thinking about future electrification.

18 And so here's a rendering of the new
19 train hall. Again, this is going to provide both
20 a gathering space but also a connector between
21 the modes of transportation, so in this view, you
22 can actually see the station, the tracks and the

1 trains at this level, the bus facility here and
2 then I'll talk about the top here, the new
3 pick-up and drop-off area.

4 So again, moving up to the top level,
5 this is where there is incorporated a new pick-up
6 and new drop-off area. This would be, again,
7 access from H Street. This is in addition to
8 pick-up and drop-off both at the front of the
9 historic station as well as in the parking level
10 that I talked about earlier.

11 The intention with this, again, is to
12 help distribute that access to several locations
13 around the station, and so it brings the
14 passengers closer to different modes, so at this
15 level you're closest to the bus facility, and it
16 gives you, again, more opportunities for access.

17 So here is just a view of the deck
18 level with the pick-up and drop-off facility and
19 from here, you would be able to circulate down to
20 the buses as well as the trains and concourses,
21 which are below you.

22 So at this level, there is also a

1 proposed new central open space. This would
2 lengthen the pick-up/drop-off area with H Street.
3 It includes new skylights, which would help
4 daylight the concourses below as well as a new
5 headhouse to provide some vertical circulation
6 down to the concourses and tracks.

7 The remainder of this that you see are
8 just essentially illustrative footprints that
9 show how potential air rights could be developed
10 in the future. So as I mentioned, with the
11 relocation of the parking and the reconfiguration
12 of the bus facility, it essentially frees up this
13 area for future air rights development.

14 I'll note that portions of this area,
15 particularly this side, are controlled by the
16 private air rights developer and as such,
17 additional coordination will be necessary between
18 the project proponents and Akridge as these kind
19 of elements are further developed.

20 So here's just a rendering. This is
21 looking from H Street to the south towards the
22 station here in the distance.

1 This new central open space appears to
2 be an improvement from the previous concept. It
3 does provide both that visual and physical length
4 between H Street and the station.

5 And we recognize that the details of
6 this space still need to be developed, but it
7 will be important to understand how this
8 component will be implemented or phased, if by
9 the air rights developer, by UC or USRC or a
10 combination of others and how the public access
11 will be managed.

12 And so we do request that the
13 applicant provide, as part of the next
14 submission, additional details about the
15 operation, maintenance of this open space as well
16 as how this space will be phased in relationship
17 to the rest of the expansion project.

18 In addition to freeing up the deck
19 level as I mentioned earlier for this better
20 urban design approach, relocation of the bus
21 facility also establishes a more, a larger
22 effective setback from the historic station to

1 the future air rights development. This setback
2 has been increased about 35, 40 to 45 feet, which
3 we do find could help provide that additional
4 visual separation between the historic station.

5 We do find that the increased setback
6 may help minimize the impacts to the views of the
7 historic station, which you'll recall was one of
8 our considerations back in 2020, particularly as
9 you look from Columbus Circle, the open space in
10 front of the station and some of the radiating
11 main streets that look towards the station.

12 The applicant has said that they will
13 be preparing additional viewshed analysis as part
14 of the Section 106 process to help better
15 understand these changes.

16 And then, finally, another new project
17 component is the creation of a west ramp, here
18 you can see in the distance. This would connect
19 from the front of the station up to the H Street
20 level. It would be used primarily for bicycles,
21 bicyclists and pedestrians, but could also be
22 used for vehicles at some times.

1 In general, we support the use of the
2 ramp for pedestrian and bicycle use, but for the
3 next submission, it would be helpful to better
4 understand the actual design of this element,
5 particularly to understand the circulation of
6 pedestrians and bicyclists as well as to
7 understand the conditions during which the ramp
8 could function for vehicular use.

9 So just as I wrap up here, staff does
10 appreciate the revised concept's responsiveness
11 to the previous comments. As the project design
12 advances, it may be helpful to remember that the
13 really, the essential importance of the historic
14 station building itself, including the train
15 hall, is the focal point of the entire facility
16 and to continue to retain its role as the primary
17 entrance and the activity and vibrancy of its
18 public spaces should be, should continue to be
19 enhanced.

20 As such, we advise that through both
21 architecture and programming, the historic
22 station should retain its role as the symbolic

1 and functional center of the larger multimodal
2 facility as well as a gateway to the nation's
3 capital.

4 Related to this, staff finds that the
5 proposed expansion project architecture should
6 not try to emulate the historic train station
7 and, therefore, we do support a contemporary
8 architectural design approach for the expansion
9 project that is distinct but compatible with the
10 historic station.

11 So since 2020, the project proponents
12 have worked together with a number of
13 stakeholders, including the private air rights
14 developer to address NCPC comments as well as
15 other comments received through the environmental
16 and historic preservation review process.

17 Overall, we find that the revised
18 design is very responsive to those comments and
19 concerns, and we recommend the Commission express
20 support for the revised concept, particularly the
21 parking program reduction and relocation as well
22 as the reconfiguration of the bus facility along

1 with the other improvements to access an urban
2 design.

3 While the project will continue to be
4 developed and refined as the process advances, we
5 also want to recommend commending the applicant
6 for developing this new plan that substantially
7 responds to previous comments, particularly those
8 regarding parking, urban design, and
9 coordination.

10 I will just end by saying that this is
11 a large complex project. It will return for
12 additional reviews before the Commission, and we
13 do request that the applicant continue to work
14 with the District agencies, other federal
15 partners, as well as the stakeholders, some of
16 which -- some of whom you will hear from today.

17 And so with that, I've already gone
18 through the rest of the recommendations. I'm
19 going to now turn it over to David Valenstein
20 with FRA who will provide some brief remarks as
21 well as introduce representatives from USRC and
22 Amtrak.

1 That will be followed by a short
2 animation of the expansion project. Immediately
3 after that, representatives from Akridge will
4 provide remarks about the Burnham Place projects,
5 also followed by a short animation, and they will
6 conclude with a few slides just talking about
7 their project and the planning work, how their
8 planning and design work intersects with the
9 expansion project. And then, of course, after
10 that, we will move into additional public
11 testimony.

12 So with that, I will now turn it over
13 to Dave Valenstein with FRA.

14 MR. VALENSTEIN: Thank you, Matthew,
15 and good afternoon, members of the Commission.

16 My name's David Valenstein, and I'm a
17 Senior Advisor with the Federal Railroad
18 Administration. I've led FRA's engagement on
19 this project since the public process began in
20 2015.

21 We appreciate the opportunity to
22 provide some remarks and context from the

1 applicants and project proponents' perspective.

2 Commission comments from 2020 and
3 those we received on the draft EIS statement have
4 informed steps to refine project design and
5 develop their revised alternative. Many of the
6 comments requested further consideration of the
7 scale and placement of the parking garage, the
8 volume and location of the pick-up and drop-off
9 functions in coordination with the station
10 expansion project with adjacent private air
11 rights development.

12 It was clear at that time that project
13 changes were necessary. The revised alternative
14 being presented today is a reflection of this, of
15 stakeholder feedback, including the Commission's
16 feedback in coordination with the project teams
17 that I will detail in a moment.

18 Turning to the process of discovery
19 for this revised alternative, it reflects
20 extensive collaboration and engagement with
21 stakeholders and among the project team members.
22 In embarking on collaboration, FRA was guided by

1 two primary design refinement objectives,
2 definable low-grade solution with good ramp
3 access to accommodate vehicle functions. And
4 second, to achieve a one level bus facility of
5 sufficient size and good ramp access that is well
6 integrated with the station.

7 Additionally, a foundational objective
8 of the station expansion project is the
9 preservation of the end use of the historic
10 building. It will remain the primary hub for
11 passenger amenities and front door to the
12 station.

13 Another foundational objective is to
14 integrate the station expansion project with
15 adjacent neighborhoods, businesses and planned
16 plan uses. During 2020, FRA brought the
17 proponents together with the private air rights
18 developer to find a solution that meets
19 objectives, both the station expansion project
20 and the air rights development above it.

21 The balance achieved is a testament to
22 the effective coordination among the project

1 teams for separate projects. While
2 well-coordinated, the station expansion and air
3 rights development remain two projects, funded
4 separately and each subject to their own
5 regulatory framework and approvals.

6 The revised alternative reflects the
7 many months that FRA and the proponents have
8 spent engaging stakeholders, including bus
9 representatives and District Department of
10 Transportation and other members of the District
11 government.

12 The essential needs and requirements
13 of stakeholders have been met. FRA will shortly
14 resume NEPA and the Section 106 processes that
15 were paused in 2020. FRA will prepare and post
16 an additional public hearing on a supplemental
17 draft EIS in the first half of 2023.

18 The environmental review process will
19 provide the public and agencies with further
20 comment opportunities under the revised
21 alternative. I am confident that the revised
22 alternative provides the station expansion

1 project with a solid footing on which to build a
2 successful future for this critical
3 transportation facility.

4 I thank the Commission members for
5 your engagement today, and proponents would now
6 speak about their steps that they took to advance
7 the revised alternative and how it advances their
8 organizations' missions and goals. I will first
9 introduce Kevin Forma from USRC who will speak
10 for that organization.

11 MR. FORMA: All right. Hello. Good
12 afternoon, everyone. My name is Kevin Forma. I
13 am the 2nd Century Program Manager for Union
14 Station Redevelopment Corporation, USCR.

15 As many of you are aware, USRC manages
16 and operates Washington Union Station on behalf
17 of the federal government. I would first like to
18 thank all the commissioners and the staff for the
19 opportunity to speak to you today regarding the
20 Washington Union Station expansion project.

21 USRC, as one of the proponents along
22 with Amtrak, worked with FRA to develop the

1 potential revised alternative you saw today, to
2 address the public comments that were received
3 following the release of the draft environmental
4 impact statement during 2020 and through our
5 close collaboration with stakeholders, including
6 a private developer, Akridge, the inner city bus
7 carriers, the Guild of Professional Tour Guides
8 and the District, we were able to re-imagine the
9 project by moving beyond the constraints of the
10 existing property lines and shift the focus to
11 the importance of Washington Union Station as a
12 regional transportation hub.

13 This also allowed the station
14 expansion project to provide increased focus on
15 the quality of the original design while still
16 recognizing and respecting the relationship with
17 the adjacent air rights development.

18 The public transportation project, our
19 primary focus was on expansion that manages the
20 anticipated growth and improves the passenger and
21 visitor experience for all travelers regardless
22 of what mode they make depart from or arrive to

1 Washington, DC.

2 Over the past two years and through
3 numerous meetings, USRC and the station expansion
4 team have worked extensively with all
5 stakeholders to create a design and program that
6 we believe is a great foundation for the future
7 of the station.

8 To further advance and refine the new
9 alternative, USRC drew from its unique
10 relationship with the bus drivers and with an
11 effort to refine the bus facility. The process
12 included many meetings and additional analysis to
13 involve and improve the program we shared here
14 today.

15 The program, we believe, is based on
16 the best currently available information and is
17 designed to meet the future needs of the station.
18 Moving forward, you will USRC and the project
19 team will continue to engage the carriers
20 throughout the remaining planning, design and
21 implementation of the project to further refine
22 the plans for the facility and ensure the bus

1 depot will continue to meet the needs of the
2 carriers.

3 The new train concourse will provide
4 the necessary space to expand the capacity of the
5 stations, while being thoughtful and mindful of
6 the historic significance of the existing
7 station.

8 The new bus facility, to paraphrase
9 the comments we received from the Commission of
10 Fine Arts, is highly responsive by including the
11 bus station in the development as a bright and
12 dignified convenience for travelers.

13 The new rail facility will provide the
14 additional capacity necessary for the future
15 growth of the Amtrak, MARC, and VRE, and the new
16 passenger concourses will provide new amenities
17 for travelers and visitors while enhancing
18 connections to Metrorail, streetcar, local buses
19 at H Street.

20 The project will also reestablish
21 connections with the surrounding neighborhoods of
22 NoMa and Capitol Hill via the H Street concourse.

1 All of these important upgrades are
2 being accomplished while maintaining the primacy
3 and historic significance of the existing station
4 building. Where its venture provides new access
5 points to the station, USRC is keenly focused on
6 keeping the historic station as an active and
7 vibrant part of the overall multimodal complex.

8 Given the significant increase in
9 expanded and development activity, we anticipate
10 the historic station will remain active as it is
11 facilitating over 50 percent of the future
12 passenger demand. This happens greater than the
13 total volumes we see today.

14 We anticipate the historic station
15 will be continued to be enjoyed by the traveling
16 public and visitors alike for generations to
17 come. This project will be a once-in-a-lifetime
18 opportunity to significantly upgrade the
19 station's capacity for that century, and to
20 provide equitable access to the station for all
21 members of the traveling public.

22 USRC looks forward to continuing to

1 work with the partners to advance and refine this
2 alternative as the process continues. Thank you
3 for your time, and I believe I am turning this
4 back over to David to introduce our next
5 proponent.

6 MR. VALENSTEIN: Thank you, Kevin. I
7 would now like to introduce Dan Sporik who is
8 speaking on behalf of Amtrak, also a project
9 proponent.

10 MR. SPORIK: Thank you, David, and
11 good afternoon, commissioners. My name is Dan
12 Sporik, and I'm the Director of Portfolio
13 Management for Amtrak's capital investments at
14 Washington Union Station. As Amtrak is a product
15 proponent, I appreciate the opportunity to
16 provide some commentary on the Washington Union
17 Station expansion project.

18 As previously mentioned, Washington
19 Union Station is the second busiest station in
20 Amtrak's national network, and it is the nexus of
21 multiple lines of rail service, all of which have
22 considerable growth plan in the coming years.

1 The station expansion project will
2 contribute significantly to the transformation of
3 Amtrak and inner-city rail in America. It is
4 consistent with Amtrak's goals of modernizing its
5 assets and working together with our state and
6 local partners as well as FRA, the United States
7 Department of Transportation, to expand our route
8 network.

9 The station expansion project will
10 result in the full reconstruction of tracks and
11 platforms. This will not only create a more
12 efficient and effective rail terminal, but it
13 will also provide for the tremendous growth that
14 is planned along the northeast corridor and
15 national network.

16 Of the overall number of tracks and
17 platforms, the overall number of tracks will be
18 reduced. The project will allow for more than
19 double the number of rail passengers and trains
20 that we experience today for both Amtrak and our
21 commuter rail partners.

22 By both lengthening and widening the

1 platforms, operational efficiencies can be
2 captured to accommodate more trains and quicker
3 train times. Additionally, the project will
4 provide new concourses and passenger access for
5 easier connections, more circulation space and an
6 overall enhanced passenger experience.

7 Finally, the multimodal nature of the
8 improvements will provide increased connectivity
9 to other modes, such as Metrorail, streetcar,
10 rideshare, bike and buses. Amtrak is encouraged
11 and supportive of the work that has been
12 undertaken by the full team over the last
13 year-and-a-half to refine the station expansion
14 project and believes the product is poised for
15 success going forward.

16 And I look forward to working with
17 all parties to moving the station expansion
18 project forward. Thank you for your time today,
19 and I'll turn it back over to Dave.

20 MR. VALENSTEIN: Thank you, Dan. It's
21 my pleasure now to introduce our last speaker
22 with the lead design architect, Niko

1 Dando-Haenisch.

2 MR. HAENISCH: Good afternoon,
3 commissioners. My name is Niko Dando-Haenisch.
4 I'm a principal with Grimshaw. They are the
5 design architects working in close collaboration
6 with Beyer Blinder Belle, EHP, and our joint
7 design team to prepare this new concept for the
8 station expansion project.

9 It gives us great pleasure to work on
10 this new concept, and we're pleased today to be
11 able to share some additional information. We'd
12 like to thank the Commission for allowing us to
13 share this additional information as part of this
14 presentation that will be a relatively short
15 animation, which is composed of two parts.

16 The first part goes through the basic
17 elements of the projects and explains a bit more
18 how they all come together, and the second part
19 of the animation provides some initial sense of
20 how all the different spaces will come together
21 to form an expanded Union Station for the future.

22 And with that, I believe we will play

1 the animation from the NCPC computers and will
2 let that roll from this point. Thank you.

3 (Video presentation played.)

4 MR. VALENSTEIN: With that, I'd like
5 to thank the commissioners again for taking the
6 time to allow us to share this information, and I
7 believe that concludes the presentation by the
8 station expansion team and projects, and we will
9 now move on to the separate presentation for the
10 air rights. Thank you.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Flis, Mr.
12 Valenstein, Mr. Forma, Mr. Sporik, and Mr.
13 Dando-Haenisch. Very impressive video. That was
14 really helpful to see and experience.

15 So at this point, do the commissioners
16 have any questions before we move on? Hearing
17 none, we have seven people signed up to speak.
18 Our first speaker will be David Tuchmann from
19 Akridge. NCPC will separately review Akridge air
20 rights development project as well as this
21 project.

22 The two projects, while distinct, are

1 physically and programmatically linked so our
2 intent is to make sure we hear from all parties
3 throughout the review proceedings to ensure a
4 fully coordinated outcome.

5 As such, the first speaker will have
6 more time allotted. Mr. Tuchmann, I understand
7 you have some remarks followed by a short video
8 and presentation from Mark Gilliland of Shalom
9 Baranes. So Mr. Tuchmann, we're here to hear
10 from you.

11 MR. TUCHMANN: Great. Thank you very
12 much, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. My name is
13 David Tuchmann, and I'm a Senior Vice President
14 at Akridge, a real estate development firm
15 headquartered here in Washington since 1974.

16 Today I would like to express
17 Akridge's strong support for the FRA's revised
18 concept submission. In the past, we sharply
19 criticized the previous proposal as fundamentally
20 flawed. In contrast, we believe the new planning
21 framework includes station components, open
22 spaces and circulation elements in optimal sizes

1 and locations.

2 The new concept achieves its principal
3 transportation and policy goals while
4 facilitating high quality urban design and
5 opportunities for air rights development. While
6 the station expansion and Burnham Place have
7 different approval processes, the two projects
8 will be planned and constructed concurrently.

9 The station master plan will determine
10 the framework for development opportunity, open
11 spaces and circulation routes for Burnham Place.
12 To assist the Commission and the public in
13 understanding the urban design and developmental
14 implications of the revised SEP concept, Akridge
15 created materials to show what is conceptually
16 possible for Burnham Place within this framework.

17 While the specific building massing
18 uses and architectural styles depicted in the
19 imagery are not formal proposals, the building
20 sites, roadways and open spaces shown do reflect
21 the parameters set by the SEP.

22 This Commission has previously

1 recognized the need for the FRA and Akridge to
2 coordinate carefully, to align visions for our
3 respective projects. I'm pleased to report that
4 from Akridge's perspective, that mission has been
5 accomplished.

6 During the past 18 months, our teams
7 coordinated intensively and productively. After
8 working personally on these projects for 15
9 years, I believe their level of planning, design
10 and engineering complexity are unmatched by any
11 project in our region.

12 In three dimensions, the size and
13 location of each program element must be finely
14 calibrated to its maximum level of efficiency.
15 We set out to develop complementary visions,
16 which address stakeholder feedback and concerns
17 and adhere to these technical constraints.

18 The revised SEP concept and new
19 Burnham Place planning vision you will see
20 momentarily are the products of this
21 collaboration.

22 We believe the three major new

1 additions to parking, PUDO and the bus facility
2 effectively respond to our previous concerns.
3 The revisions open the station's perimeter for
4 pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented activation.

5 The bus facility size and its
6 location, nearly half of which is on Akridge
7 property, unify intercity travel services and a
8 train hall of grand proportion. The bus
9 station's position in section is inventive,
10 making it prominent while minimizing the visual
11 and acoustic impacts of buses at grade level.

12 The removal of the deck level garage
13 and reconfiguration of public and private
14 property lines facilitate a public, two-block
15 long central space, the opportunity for high
16 quality adjacent development and buildings in the
17 open spaces with appropriate relationships to the
18 historic station building.

19 Burnham Place will comprise a dozen
20 buildings flanking both sides of H Street, parks,
21 plazas, and new circulation routes connecting to
22 the station and adjoining neighborhoods. While

1 projects like the Wharf and the Yards center
2 their focus on the waterfront, Burnham Place will
3 define its identity in relation to Union Station
4 and the neighborhoods that surrounded it.

5 Akridge believes that the SEP and
6 Burnham Place can and must be symbiotic. Urban
7 design, historic preservation and neighborhood
8 connectivity all must be strategically integrated
9 by the two projects. We think that our planning
10 efforts now underway will yield built forms and
11 spaces between them that are optimized and in
12 harmony.

13 For 16 years, I lived within walking
14 distance of the station. I cannot recall a
15 single time going to Union Station purely to
16 experience the environment surrounding the
17 building.

18 Our vision in the future is that
19 people will come to this area not just when they
20 have to travel through the station but because
21 they choose to experience a caliber of urban
22 development normally associated with great

1 European and Asian stations, here in our nation's
2 capital.

3 Neighbors, tourists, and travelers
4 will explore a remarkable public building with
5 national significance that is seamlessly
6 connected to unique open spaces with both civic
7 and neighborhood character.

8 We believe we are now well on our way
9 toward achieving this shared vision. Thank you
10 for the opportunity, and I'll now turn things
11 over to our lead designer, Mark Gilliand, Senior
12 Principal at Shalom Baranes Associates.

13 MR. GILLIAND: Thank you, David. As
14 was noted earlier, we're going to start our
15 presentation by sharing with you today another
16 animation, one that describes aspects of the
17 revised SEP certainly but focuses in on the
18 Burnham Place project in particular with -- part
19 of this will describe opportunities and
20 possibilities for the public accessible open
21 spaces in and around the air rights buildings and
22 its illustrative vision of what's possible.

1 Please roll the video.

2 (Video presentation played.)

3 I hope that video was useful in
4 orienting everyone. Hopefully, the following
5 presentation, which is brief, will help to answer
6 any questions the video may have raised for you.
7 Please bring up that presentation.

8 So the deck that we put together here
9 includes selected pages from the larger package
10 of Burnham Place presentation materials submitted
11 earlier to NCPC, and it's really intended to give
12 you all a succinct and high-level overview of
13 Burnham Place and importantly to describe its
14 complementary relationship to the revised SEP.
15 Next, please.

16 So the side area is large, covering
17 roughly 20 acres and its location is prominent.
18 It's situated directly behind historic Union
19 Station, and the public and private projects will
20 together reinforce a niche of the federal city, a
21 niche that was envisioned with the McMillan Plan.

22 It's also important to note that the

1 site extends into it. It is embraced by flanking
2 D.C. neighborhoods. Next, please.

3 So again, there are some really
4 amazing precedents for integrative transportation
5 in new development projects. Some are shown
6 here.

7 Among the things that we've gleaned
8 from looking at projects like these from around
9 the world is that with planning framework that is
10 complementary and coordinated between station and
11 neighborhood projects, harmonized and successful
12 projects result. Through integrated planning,
13 the whole should be greater than the sum of its
14 parts. Next, please.

15 Development at this site will serve
16 important federal, city and neighborhood
17 interests. It will complement the gateway to
18 D.C. that is historic Union Station. It will
19 also offer an incredible opportunity, an
20 opportunity to stitch together neighborhoods,
21 neighborhoods that have been long separated by
22 the elevated rail yard. Next, please.

1 The air rights development sitting
2 directly above the SEP requires vertical
3 integration. It's really fundamental to the two
4 projects. At the level labeled here in this
5 axonometric drawing is train hall, deck and bus
6 facility. Horizontal integration is required at
7 that level.

8 So over the past year-and-a-half as we
9 mentioned, the revised SEP and Burnham Place
10 revisions have been carefully coordinated to work
11 towards that integration. Next, please.

12 So this is a diagram of that train
13 hall, deck and bus facility level, sort of a
14 composite, but it describes the SEP program with
15 circulation components that establish the
16 fundamental aspects -- certain fundamental
17 aspects -- of air rights planning framework.

18 Those components are shown here, and
19 they include the train hall, the bus facility,
20 the skylight zone over the central concourse, a
21 new station entrance on H Street, and the
22 circulation loop for station pick-up and drop-off

1 for cars and buses.

2 You can see that the bus and station
3 PUDO -- pick-up and drop-off --
4 functions run from H Street to the bus station
5 and the train hall, respectively.

6 Buses will enter on the east service
7 road up against Station Place and exit to the
8 west. Station PUDO vehicles enter from the west,
9 ramp up and above that bus facility and then back
10 down on the east side to H Street. Next, please.

11 Air right circulation can build on
12 that perimeter's regulation that is established
13 by the SEP utilizing that same loop south of H
14 Street and extending it to the north side of H
15 Street. Along with that loop, the introduction
16 of central roadways through the center spaces
17 provide important access to the front doors to
18 air rights buildings.

19 The loop and the central roadways
20 together create a functional circulation that
21 work for the projects. Next, please.

22 So this next diagram demonstrates that

1 we're not just thinking about cars. In addition
2 to providing for vehicular access and
3 circulation, the SEP framework enables critically
4 important pedestrian and bicycle access up to and
5 at the air rights deck level.

6 For example, as a result of the SEP
7 modifications around that west edge, the west
8 ramp, which of course runs parallel to 1st
9 Street, pedestrian and bicycle access is enabled
10 between Columbus Circle up to H Street, providing
11 an important connection, particularly for bikes,
12 up to Burnham Place within air rights
13 development. Next, please.

14 The SEP framework also provides for
15 open spaces south of H Street. Those spaces can
16 be linked to additional spaces north of H Street,
17 creating a connected, rich and diverse open space
18 network, an open space network that is embraced
19 and framed by air rights development sites.
20 Next, please.

21 In this illustrative site plan for a
22 mixed use air rights development, you can see how

1 air rights building preference delineate the
2 edges of that open space network. A mixed use,
3 transit oriented development is envisioned, a
4 combination of office, residential and hotel uses
5 that would typically set at top, activated ground
6 floor uses across the site.

7 And as you saw in the animation, there
8 is an aspiration to include a cultural and
9 institutional use to enhance the viability and
10 vibrancy of the planned neighborhood. Next,
11 please.

12 So this is the final image in the
13 presentation of the illustrative rendering that
14 was developed to describe what an air rights
15 development that is thoughtfully coordinated with
16 the revised SEP can provide. It's obviously an
17 aerial view looking south towards the Capitol
18 grounds and the mall, and it describes a
19 connection between and extensions to existing
20 flanking neighborhoods.

21 The tear in L'Enfant's urban fabric
22 that was created with the rail yard when it was

1 established, that tear was created when it was
2 established, can be mended and long-separated
3 neighborhoods on both sides of the tracks can be
4 bridged and reconnected by both the public and
5 the private projects. So this is the final image
6 of our presentation. Thank you very much for the
7 opportunity.

8 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you very much, Mr.
9 Gilliland and Mr. Tuchmann. Does the Commission
10 have any questions for our presenters? Hearing
11 none, our next speaker is Gregory Cohen with
12 Greyhound Bus Lines.

13 Mr. Cohen, welcome. You have three
14 minutes to speak.

15 MR. COHEN: Thank you very much,
16 Madame Chair and Members of the Commission. I'm
17 Greg Cohen representing Greyhound Lines.
18 Greyhound provides the backbone of intercity bus
19 transportation in America serving more than 2,000
20 communities.

21 Intercity bus is the greenest mode and
22 the mode of choice for cost conscious travelers

1 seeking the most affordable transportation. The
2 Union Station Redevelopment Act created a new
3 vision which was once a train station as to
4 become a complex primarily as a multiple-use
5 transportation terminal and secondarily as a
6 commercial complex.

7 The law specifically recognizes the
8 importance of intercity buses in the redeveloped
9 complex. We worked for decades to relocate
10 Greyhounds into Union Station and succeeded in
11 2012.

12 And say, without the support of
13 Congresswoman Norton, we might still be three
14 blocks away with our passengers rolling their
15 luggage over the sidewalks to get there.

16 Today we support implementation of a
17 world-class redevelopment that provides a walk
18 main gateway for all. Washington is the southern
19 terminus of the most well-traveled bus corridor
20 in America.

21 At the northern terminus Boston is
22 building a major expansion of its intercity bus

1 facility at South Station while New York is
2 planning to do the same at the new Port Authority
3 terminal.

4 The goal in these cities is to get
5 away from inadequate facilities that push
6 intercity bus pickups into the neighborhoods and
7 onto local city streets.

8 However, in Washington, all of the
9 working alternatives call for bus slip capacity
10 to be substantially reduced from our current 61
11 to 69 spaces while rail capacity and commercial
12 development are dramatically increased.

13 This suggests the transportation needs
14 of bus customers are of secondary importance.
15 I'm here to ask the NCPC to make sure that the
16 intercity bus mode is treated equitably and with
17 dignity by increasing capacity for intercity
18 buses.

19 The DEIS recognizes that minorities
20 and low-income persons rely on the bus for
21 intercity travel much more than other
22 demographics. That is certainly the case with

1 Greyhound which is a majority/minority provider.

2 Greyhound has worked with the planners
3 and stakeholders to increase bus capacity. This
4 included engaging with one of the most, world's
5 most experienced intercity bus facility
6 architects to show how with minor modifications,
7 the architect's work, the bus slip capacity could
8 be increased from 34 to 56 slips.

9 We have made some progress in that the
10 latest design from the architects include 39 bus
11 slips on the bus deck and room for 12 staging
12 spots on the PUDO level above with direct access
13 to the loading and unloading areas on the bus
14 deck.

15 While Greyhound strongly prefers
16 growth in capacity rather than reduction, we are
17 open to a compromise based on the FRA's plans,
18 but only under some key conditions.

19 First we do request that the 56-slip
20 plan that we proposed and the other bus deck
21 carriers agreed to receive more detailed analysis
22 and more thoughtful consideration.

1 Second, if that plan is ultimately
2 rejected, we request --

3 MR. JUTTON: That's three minutes.

4 MR. COHEN: Well, sir, we're an
5 organization. We understood that originally that
6 organizations had five minutes.

7 CHAIR WHITE: Please continue, Mr.
8 Cohen.

9 MR. COHEN: Okay. If the 56 plan is
10 ultimately rejected, we request that the latest
11 39 plus 12 plan that FRA is working on includes a
12 written commitment that the 12 staging area spots
13 be guaranteed to be available to intercity buses
14 on demand.

15 Three, the plan should recognize and
16 commit to keeping access costs at current levels
17 plus inflation. And fourth, the scheduled
18 service open to the public have priority access
19 to the bus deck.

20 Again, we have developed a positive
21 working relationship with the planners, but we do
22 not yet support the latest plans. If we can

1 reach an agreement that meets the conditions like
2 discussed that would help to keep the project
3 moving quickly.

4 I also want to take a moment to thank
5 the Fine Arts Commission participants at the
6 latest Norton hearing for recognizing the
7 importance of bus access. Thank you, again, for
8 the opportunity to testify.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Cohen.
10 Do Commissioners have any questions for Mr.
11 Cohen? Hearing none, we will move to our next
12 speaker, Mr. Dan Rodriguez with Coach USA.

13 Mr. Rodriguez, welcome and you have
14 three minutes to provide your testimony.

15 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. I am
16 before you as a representative of both Coach USA
17 and subsidiary Megabus and Bus Association of New
18 Jersey of which I am President of.

19 By way of background, Coach USA is one
20 of the largest transportation operators in North
21 America. We operate more than 2,500 buses and
22 coaches and employ hundreds, thousands of across

1 the nation and Canada.

2 We bring service to financially
3 insecure diverse families who depend on our
4 services for fast and affordable transportation
5 to their jobs and other important destinations.

6 Megabus has served more than 55
7 million customers throughout more than a hundred
8 cities and most importantly, our passengers who
9 rely on economical and efficient transportation
10 to the D.C. area.

11 We have carefully reviewed the draft
12 environmental impact study and find it's
13 disconnected between the alternatives provided
14 and the motor coach traveler needs.

15 To displace and significantly reduce
16 the bus capacity of Megabus would rupture the
17 very specific intent of what the Union Station
18 set out to achieve in the Union Station
19 Redevelopment Act of 1981.

20 Specifically, it empowers the
21 Secretary of Transportation to and I quote,
22 "provide the rehabilitation and redevelopment of

1 the Union Station complex primarily as a multiple
2 use transportation terminal service for the
3 nation's capital and secondarily, as a commercial
4 complex" end of quote.

5 While the Union Station Redevelopment
6 Act was enacted in 1981, a bus deck was not
7 offered to the public at Union Station until
8 2012.

9 The popularity was instantaneous as it
10 increased over the years and now provides Megabus
11 and other carriers 61 bus slips to use on a
12 regular basis for the loading and unloading of
13 passengers.

14 These bus slips offer a safe way for
15 customers to avoid traffic and protects them from
16 the elements of weather. And it's no action
17 alternative that the DEIS provides that intercity
18 bus service is projected to increase from 2.5
19 million passengers annually to 3.17 million
20 passengers annually or an increase of 27 percent.

21 Moreover, the DEIS also notes an
22 increase in the rail service to grow 24 percent.

1 These increases for both rail and bus are
2 necessary to point out for this insofar as they
3 are not only projecting a similar rate increase,
4 but also reflects the need to provide multiple
5 use options for travel.

6 The DEIS provides a variety of the
7 alternatives, but in every instance, there is a
8 reduction to the bus facility area and
9 significant increase to the rail tracks and
10 platforms.

11 Our concern lies with the ability to
12 meet the same increased demand and still continue
13 to have a fully operational and functional home
14 at Union Station that is satisfactorily equipped
15 to achieve this purpose.

16 A reduction of bus slips would create
17 a disparity of choice for those who depend on us
18 the most. This disparity does not serve the USRA
19 --

20 MR. JUTTON: That's the three minutes.

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: -- purpose, but rather
22 falls back to a time where there is multiple use

1 terminal, one that will affect financially
2 insecure families the most.

3 The data is provided and the DEIS
4 shows that there is a clear need for less costly,
5 efficient, and reliable transportation options.
6 Bus transportation provides a myriad of
7 opportunities that will only increase over time.

8 To stifle and protract those
9 opportunities would be a disservice to the
10 public, especially the underserved. Our
11 preference would be to preserve the current
12 levels of bus slips.

13 The alternatives that are proposed in
14 the DEIS are woefully lacking in meeting our
15 operational needs. The proposed reduction to 40
16 bus slips capacity is a reduction from the July
17 7th, 2016, Memorandum which originally provided
18 an allowance of 47 bus slips.

19 Between 2016 and 2019, Megabus
20 increased its trips to Union Station by 22
21 percent. In May of 2020, that continues to
22 support the 47 slips as is noted in the

1 alternatives.

2 Also the bus slips at a range from 17
3 to 27 would not be conducive for either bus
4 passenger operating carrier or surrounding area
5 of Union Station as it will dramatically decrease
6 economic activity generated by tourism and
7 business travel.

8 For Thanksgiving of 2019, Megabus
9 added 40 extra buses to ensure we met demand for
10 Union Station as a final destination. Seventeen
11 or 40 bus slips could not handle this event and
12 others in any practical efficient manner.

13 Simply put, the reduction of slips
14 does not address or acknowledge how much reduced
15 bus facility would accommodate the influx of bus
16 travelers.

17 Coach USA considers itself a part of
18 the mosaic of Union Station and it's optimistic
19 and enthusiastic to help bring the project to
20 fruition.

21 But it must be done in preserving and
22 retaining a sufficient number of bus slips to

1 accommodate the increasing volume. I thank the
2 Commission for the opportunity to address it and
3 this important issue. I look forward to its work
4 in this regard. Thank you.

5 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr.
6 Rodriguez. All right, do the Commissioners have
7 any questions for Mr. Rodriguez? Yes,
8 Commissioner Mendelson?

9 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I may have
10 some questions, but I thought I'd wait until all
11 of the witnesses if that's okay?

12 CHAIR WHITE: Oh, that would be
13 perfect. Thank you. Well, thank you, Mr.
14 Rodriguez. Our next speaker is Anthony Williams.
15 Mr. Williams, you are speaking on behalf of the
16 Federal City Council and have five minutes to
17 speak. Welcome.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you. I'm
19 trying to start my video. Can you guys allow me
20 to do that?

21 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: You don't want to see

1 me, it's okay.

2 CHAIR WHITE: We can see you now.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, Madam Chair and
4 Executive Director Acosta, thank you so much for
5 the opportunity to testify before the Commission.
6 Thank you for your work in general of the work,
7 for example, you're doing on Pennsylvania Avenue
8 which is another example of your contribution to
9 the District. We appreciate that.

10 I also want to acknowledge the
11 commitment of the District Government to the
12 Union Station expansion project in general. In
13 particularly, not only the Mayor, but the
14 leadership of Council Chairman Phil Mendelson in
15 making the initial launch investment in the H
16 Street bridge which is really on the critical
17 path of the project with platform work that has
18 to be done along with some work now studying
19 various alternatives to get this project
20 underway.

21 So we're thrilled to support the
22 revised concept. We really believe that FRA's

1 revised concept truly listens and effectively
2 responds to stakeholder concerns raised during
3 the environmental impact statement public comment
4 period.

5 And as this happens, the expansion
6 plan now embodies we think the best practices in
7 safety and accessibility in station operations,
8 historic preservation and urban design, are the
9 revised concept we believe provides a bold vision
10 for stakeholders to rally behind and with it to
11 finally get very importantly the necessary
12 political and financial underpinning necessary to
13 realize this expansion project.

14 Why do we support this so strongly?
15 We've heard a lot of the reasons already, right
16 size, optimally located parking facilities not
17 only respond to our customer needs as people
18 ingress, egress from Union Station via cars, but
19 balances just for the other uses at the station.

20 We believe that the bus facility not
21 only effectively accommodates, efficiently
22 accommodates bus ridership including the number

1 of slips, but very importantly, as a matter of
2 equity and inclusion, I am very excited about the
3 fact that the Union Station expansion project
4 really celebrates bus along with rail travel.

5 Bus travel is an important element of
6 a modern city's transportation needs. Whether we
7 came to America in American cities in steerage or
8 bondage, you know cities were about upward
9 mobility, upward mobile access and bus transit is
10 an important part of that.

11 And celebrating that as part of the
12 public spaces and the internal workings of the
13 station I think is really worthy of praise. I
14 talked about the parking, I will mention that
15 again.

16 Integrating a number of modes of
17 transit, I always say, if you take the south
18 lines of Pancras station, I always say if you
19 took Pancras station, Paddington station in
20 London, and Charing Cross and threw them all
21 together, you would have the important intramodal
22 complex transportation network that you'd see at

1 a revised expanded Union Station project.

2 This does it and I'm very excited to
3 support it. And last, but not least, the station
4 really gets that in a very, I think, impressive
5 way. Not only through the air rights that we've
6 seen, but in the station itself really
7 celebrating the monumental character of the
8 original Burnham Station.

9 But really in an important way, and in
10 a compatible way, blending that with the rest of
11 the neighborhood making it not only a place for
12 transportation as we heard, but a place to come
13 and celebrate and really recreate and really
14 enjoy what a modern city like Washington, D.C.
15 can offer by having a Union Station expanded as a
16 key anchor on the northeast quarter.

17 So, Madam Chair and Members of the
18 Commission, thank you for allowing me to testify.
19 Let's go get them with the project. Appreciate
20 it.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you so much, Mr.
22 Williams. Do Commissioners have any questions

1 for Mr. Williams?

2 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Madame Chair.

3 CHAIR WHITE: Commissioner Dixon.

4 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I would just like
5 to say hello to our former Mayor and thank him
6 for pulling the excellent point during his career
7 as Mayor. So good to see you, Tony. Good,
8 thanks. Nice hearing from you. Bye, bye.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you,
10 Commissioner. Appreciate it. Thank you for your
11 service.

12 CHAIR WHITE: And we appreciate that
13 gift to the Commission, Mr. Williams, Mayor
14 Williams. Our next speaker is Stewart Schwartz
15 with the Coalition for Smarter Growth. Mr.
16 Schwartz, you have five minutes to speak.

17 MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you.

18 CHAIR WHITE: You're welcome.

19 MR. SCHWARTZ: I'll try to be
20 efficient. It's hard to top Mayor Williams and
21 those amazing videos showing the great design
22 work that's been done.

1 I want to thank you, Madam Chair, the
2 fellow Commissioners and staff for your great
3 work on behalf of our great capital city. We are
4 enthusiastic supporters of the updated and much
5 improved plan.

6 My organization just reached its 25th
7 anniversary and we advocate for walkable,
8 bikeable and trans-running communities as the
9 most sustainable and equitable way for the
10 Washington, D.C. region to grow and to provide
11 opportunities for all.

12 When we last commented on the plans
13 for Union Station back in January 2020, we
14 affirmed our strong support for extending rail
15 service and the station and the Burnham Place
16 development, but did share significant concerns
17 about the proposal's mention of thousands of
18 above-ground parking spaces which we felt
19 undermined the entire design of the facility.

20 Therefore, we've been very pleased to
21 see removal of the above-ground garage and
22 significant reduction in parking spaces.

1 However, in our view, if it is indeed 860, it's
2 probably still too many and we've heard that 400
3 to 700 spaces was possible.

4 And we urge the selection of the lower
5 end of the range. The overwhelming focus of this
6 downtown hub must be on transit, pedestrian and
7 bicycle access as well as pick up and drop off.

8 But the removal of the parking garage
9 in place of the parking underground is
10 transformative. It's allowed for the amazing
11 train concourse or the natural light, included
12 access to the trains, the bus station and a
13 pickup and drop off.

14 So I think a testament to the value of
15 public input, your input, the effort by the city
16 to reduce the impact of cars and the
17 consideration of creative alternatives.

18 We like the location design and
19 single-level bus station placing it in a
20 prominent location next to the train hall and
21 encourage reaching operational solutions to meet
22 the demand.

1 We concur with the vehicle access
2 points, but ask you to ensure that the ramp on G
3 Street and other vehicle access points do not
4 endanger safe pedestrian, bicycle access.

5 The upper pick up and drop off roadway
6 must allow for safe ped bike access to the public
7 spaces in the Burnham Place development and it
8 should include well-marked crossings, traffic
9 coming and unseen safety monitors as necessary.

10 Bicycle access to this station is
11 important. It's good to see the new additional
12 bike connectivity and it should include, I don't
13 think I saw an illustration of it, a well-located
14 secure, modern and easy to use bike station
15 similar to those in Europe that accommodate
16 thousands of bicycles.

17 We ask that you restore seating to the
18 main hall of the historic station and to the new
19 concourses. People need a comfortable place to
20 sit while awaiting the train and the buses and
21 good seating contributes to a positive experience
22 of using transit, helping rail service compete

1 with driving.

2 Please ensure the short plan haul
3 remains an active part of the rail service
4 operations and that we give special attention to
5 easy connections to Metrorail and frequent bus
6 service by Columbus Circle.

7 Finally, we commend your attention to
8 the positive letter of support from ANC-6C from
9 people who live in the immediate neighborhood who
10 told me they were unable to attend in person
11 today and who worked closely with the planners to
12 improve the design and circulation and
13 integration with the neighborhood.

14 So we urge your approval with
15 appropriate recommendations to the issues we've
16 highlighted and have to say that the plan is
17 extremely exciting.

18 You're following in the spirit of
19 Daniel Burnham here. It's a great new vision for
20 our region's premiere transportation hub. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Do

1 Commissioners have any questions for Mr.
2 Schwartz? I will wait until the end. Our next
3 speaker -- thank you, Mr. Schwartz.

4 Our next speaker is Monte Edwards on
5 behalf of The Committee of 100. Mr. Edwards, you
6 have five minutes to speak.

7 MR. EDWARDS: Thank you. First let me
8 say that The Committee of 100 is very pleased
9 that the Union Station expansion plan project is
10 moving forward.

11 The update to the Union Station
12 revised expansion plans to eliminate the existing
13 parking garage and thereby allow, excuse me,
14 thereby allow re-alignment of the tracks and, but
15 there is no discussion about the re-alignment of
16 the tracks and only very limited and dated
17 information about the lower level tracks that
18 provide access to the First Street tunnel and
19 south.

20 That was shown on Sheet 17 of the NCPD
21 presentation. The new rail bridge across the
22 Potomac and the additional southwest tracks that

1 the new rail bridge will provide will allow
2 increased Amtrak service south and increased MARC
3 service.

4 And the new rail bridge in southwest
5 tracks will result in separation of passenger and
6 freight rail operations south of Union Station.
7 This momentous change in rail operations will
8 transform our rail system into a more modern,
9 efficient and inclusive rail network and will
10 better serve the D.C. Region and the East Coast
11 rail network.

12 But this dramatic change in rail
13 operations is completely ignored in the Union
14 Station draft environmental impact statement. In
15 fact, the draft environmental impact statement
16 clearly states the contrary.

17 That passenger and commuter rails
18 south of Union Station will be controlled by CSX.
19 The quote at Appendix D of the DEIS is the 2040
20 simulation retains operation variability for
21 trains arriving from the south given assumed
22 continued ownership and dispatch by freight

1 railroads in the future.

2 The run through tracks on the lower
3 level will need to accommodate the increased
4 passenger commuter traffic to and from the south.
5 But Sheet 19 of NCPC file 7746 Modernized Tracks
6 and Platforms, which I believe was Sheet 17 in
7 the NCPC presentation, shows only seven run
8 through tracks.

9 The same number of run through tracks
10 in the June 2020 Union Station DEIS, and does not
11 take into consideration the new two-track Long
12 Bridge railroad crossing, substantial CSX
13 trackage in Virginia that FRA has and will
14 acquire as well as the new fourth track in
15 Southwest that will separate passenger and
16 commuter from rail operations.

17 The 2020 Union Station DEIS failed to
18 take into account this increased number of Amtrak
19 trains to and from the south as well as the MARC
20 through running to Virginia and Virginia through
21 running to Maryland.

22 Appendix B of the Union Station DEIS

1 showed 29 Amtrak trains, eight MARC trains and 46
2 VRE trains would use the new Long Bridge by 2040.
3 But Page 329 of the Long Bridge DEIS shows 44
4 Amtrak trains, eight MARC trains and 92 VRE
5 trains and eight Norfolk Southern trains that
6 would use the southwest tracks and Long Bridge by
7 2040.

8 The updated Union Station expansion
9 analysis needs to account for this increased rail
10 traffic and design of the lower run through
11 tracks.

12 We would like to emphasize in closing
13 that Union Station is a rail station and needs to
14 be a keynote essential of the Union Station
15 expansion. Thank you very much for allowing me
16 to speak.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you Mr. Edwards.
18 Do Commissioners have any questions for Mr.
19 Edwards? Commissioner Mendelson?

20 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Well my
21 question is related to Mr. Edwards' testimony as
22 well as the two bus companies. Does FRA have, I

1 would like to hear the response, I don't know if
2 they have their transportation expert or engineer
3 present to answer.

4 CHAIR WHITE: So you'd like FRA to
5 respond to the concerns raised by the bus
6 operators as well as the concerns from Mr.
7 Edwards about track and operations?

8 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Yes.

9 CHAIR WHITE: I think this would be a
10 great time to do that and we do have one more
11 speaker.

12 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Oh, I'm
13 sorry.

14 CHAIR WHITE: Mr., oh no, that's okay.
15 Shall we go ahead since Mr. Valenstein is ready
16 here and if there comes, if something comes up in
17 the next one, we will ask you to come back.

18 But thank you, Mr. Valenstein, for
19 addressing these issues.

20 MR. VALENSTEIN: Thank you, Madam
21 Chair. And I will call on some of the other
22 SEPs, the SEP sponsors to also and help answer

1 these questions.

2 In terms of the bus operations, we
3 have to keep in mind the existing condition of 61
4 bus slips as not, they're not 61 active used bus
5 slips, but 61 spaces for buses in the existing
6 facility.

7 Whereas the new facility, the number
8 count is all for very active use, ped, I mean
9 passenger access slips that are meant, designed
10 to modern standards.

11 The, in terms of capacity, there are
12 many studies that we've completed about capacity
13 and forecasting and they will be well documented
14 in the supplemental draft DEIS and so in terms of
15 additional response on the bus, I would ask Kevin
16 Forma if he would join.

17 MR. FORMA: Yes, so I think just
18 looking on or connecting to what David said, you
19 know, we do have 61 slips today, however, there
20 are only a portion of those are actively used for
21 intercity carriers.

22 There are a lot of ancillary uses on

1 the bus deck for circulator or some trebles,
2 other allotted vehicle parking that were not
3 accounted for moving forward or I should say they
4 were not counted in the structure facility moving
5 forward.

6 You know, regarding the circulator,
7 we've pledged to work with the District on
8 something that makes sense campus wide approach
9 to that.

10 The analysis that we did with taking
11 the carriers' comments in mind allowing for ample
12 room to put the carriers to lay over in the
13 facility and really looking at the existing
14 schedules and applying them appropriate growth
15 methodology to 2040.

16 So I hope that answers your question
17 on the carriers and the amount of spaces that we
18 have. We, of course, continue and will continue
19 to work with carriers and all stakeholders moving
20 forward on further refining the alternative as it
21 advances.

22 Also definitely as the Commission

1 recommended or the Staff recommended, working on
2 an operations plan that works for both the
3 intercity carriers and for the two unchartered
4 tour groups that we can see there at the station.

5 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I can follow
6 up on the buses. Right now are the slips
7 actively managed or is it more passive and going
8 forward is it possible to get greater efficiency
9 by having I'm going to say by having active
10 management of the utilization?

11 MR. FORMA: The future concept is
12 definitely a change in operations and that is why
13 we will plan on moving, working with the carriers
14 to refine that operation as future technology
15 develops and that to direct response to your
16 question today, no, we do not have an active
17 management approach as such.

18 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Today?

19 MR. FORMA: Today, yes. I mean that,
20 you know, the existing station does get
21 overwhelmed at times with tour and charter
22 activity especially if there's protests or some

1 event on the National Mall so we do get up to
2 capacity during those events.

3 I believe, you know, the plan moving
4 forward would be what was mentioned is the PUDO
5 facility on top, on top of the bus station as
6 sort of a relief and safety valve when it's
7 needed to allow for additional bus activity.

8 So those were the 12 spaces that I
9 believe a great, they come from Greyhound
10 mentioned so again, we are actively working on
11 refining the operational program moving forward.

12 But, you know, we'll need to continue
13 to develop that as the technology arises and we
14 see what best practices are as we get closer to
15 building the facility.

16 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: What about
17 the testimony, Mr. Valenstein, regarding the,
18 what is it called, the run through rail?

19 MR. VALENSTEIN: Certainly. Thank you
20 for the question. There's actually the two
21 projects, the Long Bridge project and the Union
22 Station project, have been well coordinated as

1 FRA has been the lead federal agency in planning
2 both projects.

3 Specifically, what I, you know, while
4 there may be some specific documentation
5 alignment issues from the 2020 draft DEIS for
6 Union Station and documentation around the Long
7 Bridge project, there may be some confusion
8 around that.

9 We see the capacity and a forecast as
10 harmonized and aligned. The Union Station
11 project has been carefully planned to provide the
12 necessary capacity anticipated in the south
13 corridor going to Virginia.

14 The increase is in the area service
15 increases in Amtrak service and in the potential
16 for MARC and VRE through running trains that, you
17 know, it's a VRE train to the south and it's a
18 MARC train to the north, but it's the same train
19 and it continues in both directions.

20 It, my colleague Dan Sporik, is there
21 anything, would you like to join? Is there
22 anything else you'd like to add on that topic?

1 MR. SPORIK: Yes, certainly, David.
2 Sorry, am I coming through now? Yes, I think in
3 terms of overall capacity, in the future as
4 before, I mentioned we're actually producing the
5 number of tracks, however, tracks, platforms will
6 be wider and longer.

7 So we're increasing the linear feet of
8 platform length available for revenue service.
9 So this does a lot for us operationally. We're
10 able to operate more efficiently, we're able to
11 double stack trains, and particularly in the
12 lower level.

13 While we're not increasing the number
14 of revenue tracks, we're also adding special
15 track work. It doesn't exist today so this
16 allows for movement of trains, switching and
17 entering into the tunnel and heading south.

18 And just to echo with David, you said
19 earlier, you know Amtrak and our state partners
20 are working directly with FRA on both projects as
21 well and we're well aware and aligned on capacity
22 increases south of Washington, but then also

1 north as well.

2 MR. EDWARDS: I would like to mention
3 that the attachment to my testimony contains
4 extracts from both the Long Bridge EIS which is
5 now a record of decision and the draft EIS for
6 Union Station.

7 Both of them are 2020 dates, however,
8 we have 29 Amtrak trains in the Union Station
9 analysis, 44 Amtrak trains in the Long Bridge
10 analysis.

11 I'm concerned that we know that both
12 now Maryland and Virginia have authorized through
13 running and through running of MARC to Maryland,
14 MARC to Virginia and VRE to Maryland was not
15 taken into account in these figures.

16 And we're concerned that are we
17 adequately allowing capacity for the railroads to
18 do what they're planning and for this Union
19 Station as we rebuild it and expand it to serve
20 as an efficient rail station. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Edwards.
22 Mr. Valenstein, I would ask if you want to take

1 some time with that question perhaps and the next
2 presentation and come back and respond to that.

3 I'm sure it's a very complex answer
4 and something that you're working out throughout
5 the process since we're at conceptual stage. But
6 thank you very much for answering the previous
7 questions.

8 Commissioner Mendelson, did you have
9 further questions you wanted to pose?

10 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: No, I think
11 that it would be helpful if Mr. Valenstein came
12 back with the further comment.

13 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

14 MR. VALENSTEIN: Very well.

15 CHAIR WHITE: The last speaker is
16 Laura Moore. Ms. Moore, you have three minutes
17 to speak.

18 MS. MOORE: Thank you so much. I
19 actually am speaking towards the tour bus issue.
20 I'm a licensed, VCR Licensed D.C. Tour Guide and
21 I live in D.C. also.

22 So I use Union Station for many

1 reasons, but professionally meet tour guides
2 regularly at Union Station. Groups arrive by
3 motor coach from out of state. Often in convoys
4 of several buses that bring hundreds of tourists
5 at a time to Washington.

6 During our busy spring season, there
7 may be thousands and I do mean thousands of
8 tourists, mostly students, eighth graders are our
9 bread and butter, using Union Station at the same
10 time for lunch or dinner so one way to think
11 about this is that tour buses bring in lots of
12 dollars and could under the right conditions
13 bring in lots more. I'm also a board member of
14 the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of
15 Washington, D.C.

16 The professional tour guide, tour
17 association, professional association of about
18 500 local guides and affiliated tour operators
19 and I'm Co-Chair of the Guild's Government and
20 Tourism Committee which has been liaising for the
21 last few years with USRC on these redevelopment
22 plans.

1 Tour guides are an important
2 stakeholder in the project. Our business will be
3 greatly impacted by these proposals. So I'm
4 really grateful to be able to speak for my three
5 minutes here.

6 We did have profound objections to the
7 2020 DEIS plans which would have routed tour
8 buses into local neighborhoods, increased
9 congestion and pollution and vast greatly
10 inconvenienced tour groups accessing the station
11 and at worst, put them into actual dangerous
12 situations.

13 So I'm really grateful to USRC and a
14 shoutout especially to Kevin Forma who's great to
15 work with, for taking our comments seriously in
16 this new plan.

17 The Co-Chair, my Co-Chair of this
18 committee and I are pleased to see that there
19 will now be enough space for tour groups to
20 unload and move safely through the station.

21 And that motor coach operators will be
22 able to park their buses safely and for the

1 amount of time necessary for tour groups to shop
2 and eat which is the main reason they come to
3 Union Station. We also really appreciate the
4 analysis of data on usage and the projections on
5 usage in deciding on the number of parking slips
6 for buses.

7 We do, however, share concerns with
8 our friends at the bus carriers in continuing to
9 worry that there will not be enough parking
10 spaces especially during our busy seasons, during
11 mealtimes when we can be really slammed.

12 So I do want to really emphasize as
13 much as possible that need to safely drop off and
14 pick up groups and by group I do mean it could be
15 hundreds of people at the same time. Honestly,
16 those wonderful animations would be realistic in
17 my view of these and the images of dozens of
18 13-year olds in matching neon t-shirts.

19 So I'd like to suggest perhaps
20 dedicating slips specifically for drop off and
21 pick up, something like that, but our feeling is
22 that at this point our concerns are mostly

1 operational rather than with the design. An
2 example of that is that tour groups usually
3 arrive without reservations and cannot
4 realistically hold to a specific drop off and
5 pick up times.

6 So those are some conversations we're
7 looking forward to continuing to have with USRC
8 as they move on into these next stages of
9 planning. Thanks so much.

10 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Moore.
11 Did Commissioners have any questions for Ms.
12 Moore? Hearing none, you have our thanks for
13 reminding us about the eighth graders and such a
14 traditional thing for eighth graders to do is to
15 visit the capital.

16 So your concerns about operations I'm
17 sure will be taken to heart and I hope you stay
18 engaged in the communications in the rest of the
19 process. That concludes the public testimony on
20 this proposal. Copies of all of the testimony
21 are also included on our website.

22 In addition, we received comment

1 letters from the NOMA Business Improvement
2 District, ANC-6C, the Washington Area Bicyclist
3 Association and from Council member Charles
4 Allen.

5 I will now open up the item to
6 discussion with the Commission. Could everyone
7 please turn on your cameras. I will start with
8 Commissioner Mendelson and then go in a round
9 robin format using our normal seating order and I
10 ask that you keep your webcams on during the
11 discussion. So Commissioner Mendelson?

12 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Thank you,
13 Madam Chair. You had suggested that Mr.
14 Valenstein or FRA or Amtrak respond to Mr.
15 Edwards' last comments and I'd like to hear that.

16 CHAIR WHITE: Yes, I did and I don't
17 know how detailed their answer will be, but I
18 would love to give Mr. Valenstein an opportunity
19 to at least speak to the issue today and, of
20 course, come back with a more examined answer for
21 us. Please, Mr. Valenstein.

22 MR. VALENSTEIN: Thank you and I

1 appreciate the opportunity of a couple of minutes
2 to look at some material. The data in the
3 station expansion project documentation is about
4 round trip train trips, and the data in the Long
5 Bridge EIS is about one way, sorry, is about
6 one-way trips. So to compare, am I saying that
7 the wrong way, the Union Station data would need
8 to be doubled to make it the same as the Long
9 Bridge data. I'm sorry, so it's the other way
10 around.

11 Yes, the Union Station data is about
12 one-way trips. And the Long Bridge data is about
13 round trips so they're not apples and oranges.
14 They are apple and oranges.

15 They're not constant apples so the,
16 Mr. Edwards cited 44 Amtrak trips, those are in
17 both directions. The Union Station data showed
18 29 Amtrak trips. You would need to double that
19 to make it comparable data to the Long Bridge
20 document which would be about 30 and, or sorry,
21 it would be about 60 actually.

22 So it's a higher number than the Long

1 Bridge document and that was, we were stress
2 testing the station and so we're not constraining
3 it by what was planned for the Long Bridge
4 project.

5 So it's actually higher, a higher
6 number in terms of capacity. I'm not, I hope I'm
7 making sense. I'm muddling answers. But the,
8 this is the core of the issue is that we
9 represented the number of round trips in the
10 Union Station document.

11 We represented one-way trips in the
12 Long Bridge document so it was a different and
13 the data meant different things.

14 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: I think he
15 also spoke to VRE and MARC.

16 MR. VALENSTEIN: Yes, he did. So in,
17 for instance, in the SEP document, Mr. Edwards
18 cited 46 VRE trains and in the Long Bridge
19 document, 92.

20 If you do, if the 46 are round trips
21 and you double them for one-way trips, that would
22 equal 92.

1 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: So in
2 essence, the data is comparable between the two
3 studies.

4 MR. VALENSTEIN: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: More
6 importantly, what you're saying is the FRA has
7 looked carefully at the increased capacity or
8 usage on Long Bridge. And looked at that in
9 connection with Union Station or vice versa.

10 MR. VALENSTEIN: That's accurate.

11 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Thank you.

12 CHAIR WHITE: Commissioner Mendelson,
13 any other comments or --

14 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Not at the
15 moment. Thank you.

16 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Ginsberg?

18 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Thanks. I am
19 here. I have a couple of things. One is I just
20 wanted to thank everybody for the tour that we
21 took I guess it was last week.

22 That was really helpful so thank you

1 for bringing us on that tour. Second, I just
2 want to mention that I think a lot of what we're
3 hoping to happen here will be supported by the
4 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

5 So I just want to put that out there
6 saying we're really excited that this legislation
7 that we've enacted in Congress can be so helpful
8 in the communities that matter a lot to everyone
9 every day.

10 Third, I want to state that I was in
11 touch with Ms. Norton and her staff and they just
12 wanted to reiterate through me that they support
13 all the needs for the buses to get in and have
14 visitors get safely on and off the buses and to
15 make sure that we are planning for continued
16 growth and surge capacity when surge capacity is
17 needed at the facility.

18 And to make sure that we go back and
19 ensure that we can accommodate the needs of
20 everyone who wants to come to the city by
21 whatever means of transportation they choose and
22 whatever means of transportation they can afford.

1 I'm glad to see the data and evidence
2 are being used to help make that planning
3 possible. But it seems like there might need to
4 be a little more thinking on that.

5 Some of the other things that just
6 came to mind, I know that when we took the tour,
7 David Tuchmann, I'm not even sure I'm saying his
8 name right, but we talked a little bit about
9 civic spaces.

10 And I've been thinking about what that
11 means and I looked at a lot of the renderings
12 that they have about the civic area designed out
13 back and that looks really good if it's spring or
14 fall, but maybe not when it's summer or winter.

15 And I'm going to put on my
16 Commissioner Cash hat for a second and warn
17 against water fixtures for a brief moment and
18 think that through.

19 But I understand the complexity of
20 trying to figure out what a civic space actually
21 means and I took something that we learned when
22 we were visiting the facility the other day is

1 that there was a community that was interrupted
2 that was divided when Union Station was
3 originally built just after the turn of the
4 century.

5 And I'm thinking maybe this is the
6 moment to rebuild that community and show that
7 community through that civic space and tell the
8 story of what it was called, I guess it was
9 called Swampoodle back in the day.

10 And maybe bringing that community back
11 into reality presented more vividly and remember
12 the communities and the people who lived there
13 and how they were disrupted by this space and
14 celebrate that community.

15 Just me thinking out loud about what
16 could be possible with this space. Plus, they
17 had apparently like a really cool baseball club
18 and a baseball stadium which gives you a lot to
19 work with.

20 Let's see if there's anything else.
21 The other thing I was just thinking about like
22 this gives you like a very big opportunity to

1 talk about like the history of locomotives, the
2 history of transportation and the history of
3 amazing architecture and historical design in
4 D.C.

5 There's just so many things you could
6 do with that space that would make it I think a
7 civic destination plus maybe more useful year
8 around than just a bunch of water spaces and
9 water fixtures that you walk through.

10 And as a final pitch and this is where
11 I put on my Commissioner May hat, and I talk
12 about the use of bikes. I know when we visited
13 the facility, the movement of bikes with
14 pedestrians and with vehicles. It already is not
15 good.

16 It was pretty dangerous and confusing.
17 I'm hoping that the re-design can help that, but
18 I'm also curious to see what is going to be done
19 in terms of where you can leave your bike.

20 It doesn't look like the existing bike
21 rack structure is maintained. I'd love to see
22 what is brought through there and I'd love to

1 learn more about sort of this signage about how
2 you're going to use customer experience to make
3 sure that the traffic flow that you've envisioned
4 by design is actually the traffic flow that
5 you're going to see in reality once this is
6 finished and how you're going to make that as
7 intuitive as possible.

8 And I think those were the things that
9 came into my head, but thank you for this
10 opportunity.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you so much for
12 those thoughtful comments. Commissioner Cozart.

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes, thank you.
14 I'm happy to follow Commissioner Ginsberg on this
15 because I think some of my comments are aligned
16 there.

17 We're really pleased to see the
18 refinements from the FRA on those concept plans
19 that were summarized there. And also
20 particularly around reducing parking and a second
21 look at the bus facility and a second look at the
22 pick up and drop off areas.

1 I also really appreciated the videos
2 that were shared. That's a significant level of
3 work and I'm really impressed with the racial and
4 age diversities I saw in the videos.

5 I didn't see as much diversity around
6 kind of personal mobility, didn't see a lot of
7 people in wheelchairs or using mobility assisted
8 devices.

9 I think that is actually important to
10 think about in the same way that we think about
11 folks who are traveling as pedestrians like
12 cyclists and vehicles so just wanting to
13 encourage continued thought about that.

14 We are really interested as the
15 project moves forward and support it moving
16 forward, really focusing in on again pedestrian
17 and multi-modal connectivity, retaining the
18 historic stature and civic character of the
19 station and the environments is really important
20 both for the station extension itself and the air
21 rights that are related to the surrounding
22 communities.

1 So this is very much tied to the
2 policies and most recently about the
3 comprehensive plan and so I just wanted to flag
4 the issues related to accessible pedestrian
5 connections, making sure that as we move forward
6 there's better, there's greater, certainty around
7 that and making sure that there's linkages to the
8 adjacent neighborhoods from that perspective.

9 And that we look forward to seeing
10 more information about that. Also, those
11 multi-modal connections really honing in on how
12 those are going to play out both from a design
13 perspective, but then also from a feasibility
14 perspective in just making sure that the
15 experience of a traveler is one where it's
16 accessible and streamlined.

17 Also, really thinking about what are
18 those arrivals and departures that happened at
19 the historic grand entrance at Columbus Circle,
20 how is that well aligned? Also, want to think
21 about what are the kind of the ground floor
22 treatments and the activations at the street

1 level and just making sure that as we have ramps
2 and access to parking structures, that we're
3 avoiding those blank facades and making sure that
4 the kind of character around those are ones that
5 folks who are traveling to Union Station will
6 enjoy.

7 And really I appreciate in the
8 presentation the piece that NCPC staff flagged
9 around the D Street ramp. That's a really
10 important component that probably would benefit
11 from a design charrette between both District and
12 federal partners there. Also want to, from a
13 historic preservation standpoint and overall
14 urban design standpoint, really reflect on kind
15 of the south entrance and its distinct and clear
16 character reading as a civic space that's
17 inviting to all, that's one that everyone belongs
18 in.

19 We need to make sure that the best
20 elements of that and are treated for the north
21 entrance too so that reads clearly like a
22 specific space, not like a private space but like

1 one that folks would want to be a part of.

2 So I really, like I said, want to
3 second what, some of the ideas from Commissioner
4 Ginsberg because I think those speak to that more
5 civic kind of space.

6 As it relates to the air rights
7 portion, you know, that piece around kind of the
8 central green, it being, feeling like a civic
9 space designed for all is really important.

10 Really thinking about the buildings
11 that are closest to the new train hall, what is
12 their design character and thinking about making
13 sure that there's good transitions there.

14 That's the kind of thing that will be
15 important for us to think about. But certainly
16 on behalf of Mayor Bowser, we're very supportive
17 of this project moving forward, the approval of
18 the comments from the NCPC is providing to this
19 and very much the next steps around continuing to
20 engage the community are very important.

21 I was happy to see the information
22 come in from Councilmember Allen and the ANC and

1 a number of civic groups commenting on this and
2 looking forward to continuing to move forward
3 with this to fund the station expansion and the
4 air rights development.

5 And so want to see that to, that
6 continue in terms of next steps. So that's,
7 those are my main comments. I don't really have
8 questions.

9 Really appreciate the staff
10 presentation and we know this has been a
11 complicated project or complex project and so
12 appreciate the staff for all of the coordination
13 that they have done and will continue to do as we
14 go forward.

15 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
16 McMahon.

17 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Yes, thank you.
18 Not a whole lot of questions. I'm just going to
19 listen to the other members of the Commission who
20 have very good comments and recommendations which
21 I've heard and so far I agree with.

22 The only thing I'm watching and just

1 would note is this continuing conversation about
2 capacity both for rail, especially rail south,
3 and also for buses, making sure that's right.

4 We've heard a discussion on both sides
5 about what's needed compared to what they're
6 building. The only other thing I just note in
7 here, we haven't talked about it much is whether
8 we are providing the appropriate connections in
9 the new designs for Metro, having taken that much
10 of station, I think about a month ago to have
11 weekend dinner with guests from out of town.

12 It's not an afterthought. Many of you
13 know more about how that was built at Union
14 Station than I do, but I didn't see much
15 discussion of it in the presentation or in the
16 plan so I think moving forward with, overall, it
17 looks to be a well thought out design that
18 responded to many of your comments as well as
19 others over the last year that that's looked at
20 and given the due, it's, I think that WMATA will
21 need to succeed in the future. Thanks.

22 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner

1 May.

2 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes, thank you. So
3 it will be a challenge, but I'll try to be brief.
4 So the first thing I'll say is that all right,
5 I'll, you know, people are channeling other
6 people in this meeting so I'll channel Daniel
7 Burnham and say, you know, this has probably been
8 done, but you know, make no little plans for they
9 have no magic to stir a man's hearts. Right?

10 Well so this is no little plan. And
11 it is very exciting so I am very encouraged, I'm
12 very encouraged by the changes that have been
13 made.

14 I will also comment that, you know,
15 one of the challenges from Union Station
16 historically has been its size. And I don't mean
17 the fact that it's too small, I mean the fact
18 that it's too large and that the distances that
19 people have to walk to get from a vehicle that
20 delivers them there whether it's a bike, a car or
21 a bus to the tracks has always been too big.

22 I mean, it is indeed a train of

1 magnificent distances. Right? To throw in
2 another quote. Anyway, it's a, but I do think
3 that there had been some very important moves
4 that bring the tracks closer to people so having
5 those entrance points both at the top and then
6 the concourse that connects from one side of the
7 station to the other under the Hopscotch Bridge
8 is a huge improvement and will make it easier to
9 get to a train.

10 And now I will also say I think there
11 are a few things that have been pointed out by
12 some of the other folks who have testified today.
13 The need, you know, to see seating in the
14 station.

15 I mean, I appreciate the fact that
16 they want to show these grand halls and lots of
17 room to move around and, you know, chairs,
18 seating, benches, whatever clutter things up.

19 But seating is really important.
20 Especially in a train station where you could be
21 waiting for several hours for your train. And so
22 those sorts of things are, I mean, really do have

1 to be part of what we see in these spaces.

2 And they need to be, they can't just
3 be an afterthought. Right? You can't just go to
4 the catalog and buy a whole bunch of, you know,
5 sturdy seating and fill it up. So try to plan
6 that.

7 The bike station need also mentioned
8 earlier, I mean, I think that, you know, we'll be
9 losing that bike station on the west side of the
10 current station. It's not used at the moment.

11 I guess this is a COVID after effect
12 or at least not very used, but I remember in
13 years past, even with that station there, going
14 to Union Station and not being able to find a
15 place to lock up a bicycle.

16 So I appreciate Commissioner Ginsberg
17 bringing up this issue as well. We need to make
18 sure that there are good places to park bikes and
19 good places that are where people want to put
20 their bikes.

21 Because you know, I'm a cyclist around
22 town. I know Commissioner Ginsberg is as well.

1 And you know, we want to have good access and
2 good connections, but we also don't want to park
3 a block and a half away from the destination.

4 That's the thing about bikes is that
5 you can jam them in and jam them in real close.
6 So make sure there's enough place to park bikes
7 close to where the action is.

8 And let's see, what else? Oh, the bus
9 capacity issue, I think this is a critical moment
10 and we should not be selling short the need for
11 adequate bus space.

12 And it seems to me that the way it's
13 currently configured there might be another way
14 to lay things out to make sure that you get
15 enough bus spaces in there.

16 I mean, this is, you know, you're not
17 going to be able to create new space once you've
18 done this and if you find out that you really do
19 need, you know, 20 or 30 percent more bus bays in
20 order to accommodate all of the needs, you know,
21 the opportunity won't be there so, you know, plan
22 for it now even if it isn't necessarily going to

1 be all used or implemented.

2 I just, I wouldn't want to just see
3 this falling short because I don't think buses
4 are going away any time soon. And yes, I think
5 the last thing I would just mention is that, you
6 know, everything that's happened is great.

7 I agree with so many of the comments
8 that have been said both by the people who
9 testified and my fellow Commissioners. But the
10 overriding message from my perspective is
11 remember this is still a train station and a bus
12 station and don't lose sight of that.

13 Don't let it get confused with the
14 need to have sufficient retail to, you know, pay
15 for this, that or the other thing. I mean, I
16 think too many efforts in the past to revitalize
17 this station, including those in which my agency
18 has been involved, kind of junked it up with
19 other stuff that's not necessary.

20 And I wouldn't want to overdo that
21 stuff and sacrifice the critical means of
22 efficient transit needs. So I've already talked

1 too long, so I'm done. Thank you very much and
2 on to Commissioner Argo.

3 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
4 May. Commissioner Argo.

5 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I'm laughing. You
6 didn't junk it up, you like gave me everything,
7 reminded me of everything that I needed to
8 mention, but I don't have to repeat it.

9 Your comments are always so
10 insightful. Thank you, Commissioner May. I had,
11 this was, I don't know if it was spoken to
12 directly, but indirectly the whole comments about
13 tracks closer to people and the people that
14 they're using, you know, that are using them
15 echoes some of the comments about that.

16 I do have some concerns and I think,
17 I'm trying to remember what Commissioner May
18 said, but something about the main hall and not
19 ignoring the main hall, but remembering that we
20 had that, you know, that beautiful main hall
21 entrance providing some seating capacity.

22 I can't imagine what it would be like

1 without it, but also not and I think the words
2 that he used were not junk it up with just to
3 fill the space, but keep the expansive feeling,
4 but make it, you know, sort of reasonably
5 utilitarian for the people that will be there.

6 That, I think that's hugely important.
7 I agree with the comments about paying attention
8 to the south as well as the north entrances and
9 not forgetting that entrance and focusing on how
10 that entrance is going to be used and who is
11 going to be using it.

12 I think that I should also add I agree
13 also with the comments about bus capacity and
14 having been, I am a regular bus user for trips to
15 New York and I've taken the train, but I take the
16 bus much more often than I take the train.

17 And it's so much easier for me, I
18 won't even mention it, to go someplace else to
19 get the bus. And at least it has been in the
20 last five to ten years, then Union Station. I
21 would love to be going to Union Station to get a
22 Megabus or a Vamoose bus or one of the intercity

1 buses that go north from D.C.

2 I think that wraps up my comments and
3 would support yes, the additional slips that are
4 being provided for intercity bus transport.
5 Thank you.

6 This has been not overwhelming, but
7 really stimulating and this is such an important
8 project at such an iconic place. Thank you.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
10 Argo. Commissioner Wright?

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Well a lot of
12 what I would comment on has been said, but a
13 couple of things are worth repeating. First of
14 all, I mean, this is such a major improvement.

15 Commissioner well, Cozart, please make
16 sure that Andrew Trueblood sees the animation. I
17 thought he was going to have an aneurism last
18 time and rightly so.

19 So pushing the parking and the drop
20 off, pick up, all this stuff under the ground
21 does a whole lot of wonderful things not least of
22 which among them is allowing for this east, west

1 -- I just had a panic moment, I'm like is it
2 east, west connectivity that Commissioner
3 Ginsberg referred to.

4 We did spend some time talking about
5 that on the tour and that seems really important.
6 Standing in the H [Street Concourse], what was
7 the word for that? The H, under the ground, the
8 H Street, I don't know what they, how they
9 referred to it, but that was super helpful to
10 understanding the whole thing.

11 As the project progresses, I would
12 urge the sponsors to include links to the
13 animations for the public every time and ask the
14 press coverage also include the animations or
15 links to them in digital press because it's so
16 helpful.

17 This is a complicated project for
18 even, even for people who are used to imagining
19 in three dimensions and who are pretty good at
20 it. So I think that would be helpful.

21 Also I complained about this before,
22 I'm really, and I would urge you to continue to

1 keep doing so and that is for the station and the
2 air rights development to be presented together
3 because presenting them separately just doesn't
4 make any sense.

5 Even if they're, you know, one after
6 the other. Just make sure that there's never one
7 side of the project is not divorced from the
8 other. And then I have to, I can't help myself.

9 After 12 years, it's pretty clear that
10 I'm much more in the design lane than in the
11 planning lane and I, I, I would urge you to
12 ignore the comments that at least I've heard
13 publicly about, you know, actually it was almost,
14 it was rather insulting, that you were unfamiliar
15 with the work of Daniel Burnham and that you
16 should revisit it and look at a more historicist
17 approach to the architecture. Wrong.

18 Couldn't disagree with it more. I
19 think actually one of the things that comes out
20 comes, becomes very clear in the animation as
21 well as the renderings is you're onto something
22 gorgeous for the train hall.

1 And I would encourage you through
2 design development to hew very closely to the
3 aesthetic which you have already established. It
4 might be a little too clean because train
5 stations get dirty, but the architecturally I
6 think there's some illusions almost, some very
7 subtle illusions to Dulles which are beautiful
8 and appropriate and are appropriately lofty and
9 yet still subservient to the station as, I mean,
10 the historic station building as it should be.

11 I think the air rights development has
12 a way to go. In terms of design development, I
13 agree with Commissioner Ginsberg and would
14 caution not only against the seasonal dead zones
15 that you might be creating with so many water
16 features.

17 But they and I get that they're
18 cosmetically making some design allusions to the
19 train station as designed by Grimshaw, but you
20 might be overdoing it.

21 And I think that the practical reality
22 of having that much water, I mean, the engineers

1 in the crowd are going to say, well we can do it,
2 we can do it.

3 And that's what they always say. But
4 when you're talking about putting all of these
5 water features on top of what is going to be a
6 consistently vibrating environment, I don't know
7 if that's advisable.

8 And I think on a more pedestrian
9 level, not literally but figuratively, it's going
10 to be a pretty tough sell in the winter with all
11 of those water features either turned off or
12 frozen if they're not skim pools or something
13 like that.

14 So I don't know. I mean, I know at
15 this point, it's just concept so this is a lot of
16 hand wringing about nothing maybe, but the
17 integration of these two aesthetic languages I
18 think could use a little bit more work.

19 But if I had to pick between the two,
20 right now I think I would go with the train shed
21 because I think it hits just the right note and
22 is really I don't know, I think that, you know,

1 to Commissioner May's point, if you're having to
2 sit in that place for a couple of hours waiting
3 for a train, it wouldn't be such a bad
4 experience. It's beautifully conceived.

5 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
6 Wright. Commissioner Dixon.

7 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes, I just would
8 associate myself with the eloquent remarks given.
9 Or I would like to mention one thing. I'm sure
10 that handicap accessibility is going to be dealt
11 with. I didn't hear much about it, but I'm sure
12 that's going to happen.

13 I also am interested in whether or not
14 these new vertical takeoff and landing, I know
15 that there is a restriction in the District of
16 Columbia for air space whereas time goes on,
17 there's going to be a lot of these DTOLs and UAVs
18 and these drone-type devices taking you from one
19 building to the other or from one place to
20 another.

21 And I don't know whether or not they
22 going to accommodate those with the tops of these

1 buildings. I think you ought to think about
2 access with and accommodating maybe those
3 technologies for the future.

4 I have to make it, I have not been as
5 excited about the station as I was when I was a
6 kid and went down and seen the devastation that
7 occurred when the train went through the wall.

8 I don't know how many of you all
9 remember that, but it ended up in the foyer. And
10 they had to recover from that and they did and
11 did a lot of improvements then.

12 I also remind myself of the joke that
13 was told about this guy who came up, a person who
14 came to Washington to visit and, of course, he
15 had to go in the Union Station and when he got
16 home he told folks he was just really taken back
17 about Washington, but he didn't know they had a
18 top on it.

19 He didn't ever get out of the station
20 because there was so much going on there for him
21 from a rural town. And I think if he came back
22 now, we all would be able to say, if we do this

1 thing, it's going to almost be a world class
2 place that you could spend a lot of time in
3 waiting for trains or even as a place to come as
4 a resident.

5 So I'm very excited about it and good
6 luck, and I'm just challenged by the engineering
7 that's going to have to take place to do this
8 work, but we can get to the moon or Mars and all,
9 I'm sure we can make this happen.

10 Thank you, staff, thank you all for
11 the presentations and just keep on working on it.
12 Good. Thank you.

13 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
14 Dixon. Well I would love to make a couple of
15 comments about the project. First, to thank the
16 Commission members themselves for the
17 thoughtfulness and the careful review and the
18 real attention to the important details that all
19 make such a difference in the millions of
20 people's lives who will pass through this train
21 station and live in those buildings.

22 And I want to thank the team behind

1 this work because we recognize that you did a
2 major reset button from the last time we saw this
3 project.

4 It has changed considerably over the
5 past two years and obviously the effort was well
6 worth it given what you've heard today. These
7 are significant revisions that you've made.

8 They are a game changer and it's had
9 a positive impact on the design. It's the kind
10 of planning and collaboration that we always look
11 to see and that should be a model coming out of
12 Washington, D.C.

13 And we know it's still at conceptual
14 design. I agree with Commissioner Wright and we
15 can't help but be designers, but whether we're
16 trained for it or not, but I will say that I
17 really love how modern and open the new train
18 hall feels.

19 And I think it can be an incredible
20 space and I will, I want to echo a few comments.
21 All of the comments I think were relevant and
22 need to be really carefully considered.

1 A couple I want to highlight
2 particularly around the mobility issues and I
3 appreciate Commissioner Cozart and Commissioner
4 Dixon for calling attention to those.

5 And I noted in the video there's one
6 particular scene where you're exiting the
7 building and it shows you going up the staircases
8 and it's a lovely scene, but there's no
9 indication of ramps or an elevator nearby.

10 I agree there were very few examples
11 of people who may be mobility impaired and given
12 the incredible expanse of the space as
13 Commissioner May pointed out, I think those are
14 really important items that need a little more
15 consideration.

16 I also agree about the civic space and
17 the opportunities that are there to bridge some
18 of the places where the community was and is
19 split in two.

20 And I thought Commissioner Ginsberg's
21 ideas were particularly creative in terms of how
22 you work through those issues and make this a

1 very, incredibly positive space.

2 And then, finally, with the issues
3 around the bus parking or transportation and how
4 we work that out, I think it's really important
5 to continue that dialog and keep thinking about
6 the people who are on those buses and what their
7 experience is like and the idea of trying to
8 corral a group of eighth graders.

9 I would not want that job, but I'm
10 glad that people like Ms. Moore and her Guild are
11 so devoted to it because think of their
12 experience from the moment they step off that bus
13 and what it's going to be like for them to
14 navigate that space and celebrate the fact that
15 they're in the nation's capital.

16 So their experience should be first
17 class and any of us passengers should be first
18 class, but I'm particularly focused on those
19 eighth graders.

20 I think that really concludes my
21 remarks. If there are no further comments or
22 questions, I would like to call for a motion to

1 approve the revised concept plans for the
2 Washington Union Station Expansion Project.

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: So moved.

4 COMMISSIONER COZART: So moved.

5 CHAIR WHITE: I'm sorry, who made the
6 motion?

7 COMMISSIONER COZART: I'm willing --
8 it sounded like Commissioner Dixon and I'm
9 willing to second.

10 CHAIR WHITE: Well, thank you both
11 very much. Ms. Koster, can you please confirm
12 the motion and the second and take the vote by
13 roll call.

14 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. The motion
15 was made by Commissioner Dixon. The second by
16 Commissioner Cozart. And with that, Commissioner
17 Cozart?

18 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

19 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

20 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Yes.

21 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner May?

22 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

1 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Argo?

2 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

3 MS. KOSTER: Chair White?

4 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

5 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Wright?

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

7 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

8 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

9 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Mendelson?

10 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Yes.

11 MS. KOSTER: Thank you, and

12 Commissioner Ginsberg?

13 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Yes.

14 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. The motion
15 has carried. And I should have made this
16 comment, but I really appreciate the work of the
17 staff. They have really dug into this project
18 and hung in there through the last two years of
19 conversation and dialogue so thank you to the
20 team.

21 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, I wanted to
22 say that too. That the EDR just nailed it I

1 thought. It was really good.

2 THE LONG BRIDGE CORRIDOR
3 PROJECT

4 CHAIR WHITE: Well done. Thank you.
5 Next is Agenda Item 6B for the approval of
6 Preliminary Site Development Plans for the Long
7 Bridge Corridor Project. I believe Mr. Weil is
8 going to be presenting today.

9 MR. WEIL: Thank you very much,
10 everyone.

11 COMMISSIONER MENDELSON: Before you
12 proceed, Madam Chair, this is Phil Mendelson.
13 I'm going to step away and Evan Cash, my
14 alternate, is going to fill in for the rest of
15 the meeting for me. Thank you all very much.

16 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you for very much
17 for joining us, Commissioner Mendelson, and
18 welcome Commissioner Cash.

19 MR. WEIL: Okay, can everyone see my
20 presentation?

21 MS. KOSTER: Yes.

22 MR. WEIL: Okay, thank you. Good

1 afternoon, Madam Chair White and members of the
2 Commission. The National Park Service, in
3 coordination with the Virginia Passenger Rail
4 Authority or VPRA has submitted preliminary plans
5 to improve a portion of an existing railway
6 corridor that crosses over the George Washington
7 Memorial Parkway over the Potomac River and
8 through East Potomac Park into the southwest
9 commercial area of Washington, D.C.

10 The corridor is an important link in
11 the regional and metropolitan area rail networks
12 with a connection to Union Station which you just
13 heard about in the previous Commission
14 presentation.

15 And here I would like to note that we
16 have made a revision to our staff EDR report that
17 you should have in front of you. It's also been
18 posted to our NCPC website.

19 The previous version incorrectly noted
20 that the new piers and bridge walls crossing the
21 Potomac and through East Potomac Park would be
22 constructed of granite stone. And that was

1 incorrect.

2 It will be the piers and walls will be
3 cladded with a large block ashlar cladding
4 instead. So we did make that revision and posted
5 that to our website and circulated it to you all
6 as well.

7 And with that, I will continue on with
8 my presentation. As a preliminary submission in
9 for comment, we are considering planning issues
10 like landscaping, the project's surrounding
11 context, mitigation, views and view sheds and the
12 projects role in promoting walking and biking in
13 the area.

14 Here is the total 1.8 mile corridor
15 improvement area shown here in yellow which spans
16 between Arlington, Virginia near the Pentagon and
17 L'Enfant Plaza in southwest Washington, D.C.

18 The current project submission
19 includes proposed site improvements to the
20 National Park Service property that would be a
21 part of the larger corridor expansion effort
22 which is highlighted here in purple.

1 The Long Bridge Act of 2020 authorized
2 the future conveyance of approximately 4.4 acres
3 of land from the National Park Services to CSX
4 which is highlighted here in yellow.

5 And then VPRA has an agreement to
6 purchase the land for the proposed future rail
7 corridor improvements that are part of the
8 project before us here today.

9 As shown here on this aerial view of
10 the Potomac River, there are currently five
11 bridges that cross the river in this area
12 including the historic existing Long Bridge as
13 the southernmost band and moving to the north
14 upriver, the Charles R. Fenwick Bridge is used by
15 MetroRail Yellow line and then three highway
16 bridges further to the north of that, the Arland
17 D. Williams, Rochambeau, and George Mason
18 Memorial Bridges.

19 The project would connect, construct
20 to a new separate two-track span to the north of
21 the existing Long Bridge outlined here in white
22 as well as a new pedestrian bicycle bridge to the

1 north of that which is outlined here in green.

2 And here is a closer view of the two
3 new river crossings just to the north of the
4 historic Long Bridge. The existing Long Bridge
5 is listed on the National Register for its
6 historic character and is also a contributing
7 element to both the East and West Potomac Parks
8 and George Washington Memorial Parkway historic
9 districts.

10 As such, VPRA has adopted the design
11 approach to approximate the historic features of
12 the existing Long Bridge including its structure,
13 material and form.

14 And this is in an effort to avoid
15 potential adverse effects to the surrounding
16 historic resources that would arise from a less
17 compatible type of bridge design.

18 The existing Long Bridge is a through
19 plate girder bridge with granite piers from Port
20 Deposit, Maryland comprised of 22 through girder
21 stands and a distinctive double span swivel swing
22 truss that is no longer operational.

1 The bridge has a total length of
2 approximately 2,530 feet and crosses over the GW
3 Parkway Mount Vernon trail, Potomac River and
4 East Potomac Park.

5 The current structure contains
6 elements of the original 1904 bridge as well as a
7 number of additional improvements that were made
8 in 1942 to accommodate the movement of heavier
9 goods across the river.

10 The current project is the product of
11 a multi-year alternatives analysis study starting
12 in 2011 which assessed a number of potential
13 river crossing alternatives.

14 In addition, the District Department
15 of Transportation and FRA led a comprehensive
16 NEPA study that assessed two different action
17 alternatives eventually selecting alternative A
18 as the preferred alternative which included the
19 construction of one new bridge across the Potomac
20 and preservation of the existing historic Long
21 Bridge.

22 This study concluded with a signed

1 record of decision and a Section 106 programmatic
2 agreement in 2020. The purpose of the corridor
3 improvement project is to create greater railroad
4 capacity between Virginia and the District of
5 Columbia while alleviating the rail congestion
6 caused by the existing two track Long Bridge.

7 And this slide shows the plan corridor
8 improvement as part of VPRA's long term effort to
9 enhance passenger rail service throughout the
10 state of Virginia.

11 The National Park Service submission
12 before us here today separates the project area
13 into three geographic segments. And I will go
14 through each area describing the existing
15 conditions, the proposed site improvements and
16 note our comments, recommendations and findings
17 for the project as I proceed along the corridor
18 from west to east.

19 Starting in Virginia with Area One,
20 VPRA would construct a new separate bridge
21 starting from the west of the George Washington
22 Memorial Parkway close to Long Bridge Park and

1 the new bridge would cross over the Parkway,
2 Mount Vernon trail and then continue east out
3 over the Potomac River.

4 Here you can see some photos of the
5 existing Long Bridge over the GW Parkway at the
6 top of the slide and the bridge crossing over
7 Mount Vernon trail on the bottom.

8 And here I would like to note the
9 arched through girder bridge stands that
10 currently cross over the parkway. And this
11 differs from the straight through girder stands
12 over the Mount Vernon trail which continue east
13 for the remainder of the length of the bridge.

14 The new bridge would replicate the
15 arched through girder stands over the parkway as
16 shown in the top rendering and then transition to
17 the straight through girder stands over the Mount
18 Vernon trail to mirror the existing historic Long
19 Bridge structure.

20 The new bridge piers abutments and
21 walls would be constructed of concrete with a
22 broken ashlar stone cladding to approximate the

1 traditional parkway materials.

2 And this type of treatment would be
3 used throughout the park with the exception of
4 the two bridge piers closest to the Mount Vernon
5 trail which would have columns to increase ground
6 level visibility and safety along the trail and
7 also help preserve the open quality of the park
8 and prevent a tunneling effect for trail users
9 that would occur with the use of solid piers
10 here.

11 Here we can see a closer view of the
12 broken ashlar cladding with its fine pointed
13 stone shapes, coarse pointed accent finish and
14 with a mix of light tan, gold, brown and blue
15 shades and occasional darker interspersed stones.

16 And we include a finding in the
17 Executive Director's Recommendation that supports
18 the use of the ashlar cladding based on its
19 consistency with the character of the historic
20 parkway.

21 As the new rail bridge continues to
22 the east out over the Potomac River, the new

1 bridge would approximate the existing Long
2 Bridge's characteristic structure, material, and
3 form with weathered steel through girders similar
4 to pier spacing and with large blocky piers which
5 would use large block ashlar cladding to
6 approximate the exiting bridge's larger granite
7 block piers.

8 The new bridge would align 40 feet to
9 the north of the existing Long Bridge as shown
10 here in this view looking west back toward
11 Virginia.

12 Staff, NCPC staff concurs with VPRA's
13 overall design approach to approximate the
14 existing bridge's features in an effort to avoid
15 adverse visual impacts to the historic bridge
16 itself or surrounding historic district areas.

17 And we note our support in the final
18 Executive Director's Recommendation. And while
19 we do support VPRA's design approach, we request
20 that VPRA continue to refine the bridge's
21 architectural detailing and consider modifying
22 the size of the new piers to give them a more

1 authentic look similar to the existing Long
2 Bridge piers today.

3 And we include these requests as part
4 of the Executive Director's Recommendation. As
5 the new Long Bridge crossing would be one of
6 seven bridges here in the future, with the Long
7 Bridge's relative position compared to the other
8 three nearby highway bridges, staff finds that
9 the proposed new bridge design is appropriate
10 given its close proximity to the historic Long
11 Bridge.

12 And we note that this would not
13 preclude the opportunity to think more broadly
14 about redesigning the other highway bridges
15 should they be improved in the future.

16 We believe the proposed new bridge
17 design would complement the existing Long Bridge
18 without overwhelming its recognizable historic
19 character.

20 And we note these points in the final
21 Executive Director's Recommendation. In addition
22 to and parallel to the new Long Bridge rail

1 crossing, the project would construct a new
2 bicycle pedestrian bridge between Long Bridge
3 Park in Arlington and East Potomac Park in the
4 District with a direct connection to the Mount
5 Vernon trail.

6 The new bridge would align
7 approximately 25 feet to the north of the new
8 rail bridge with a prefabricated truss design
9 that is based on its necessary length, required
10 clearances and intended use.

11 The new ped bike crossing was
12 identified as 4F mitigation for the project's
13 required change in land use from federal park
14 land to the railway corridor infrastructure.

15 And the new bridge would be the only
16 free-standing bike ped crossing, only crossing
17 over the Potomac River within the District of
18 Columbia thereby serving as a valuable connection
19 within the larger Arlington and D.C. multimodal
20 networks.

21 Here is a view of the new pedestrian
22 bicycle bridge over the GW Parkway along the

1 north side of the new rail bridge. And here are
2 renderings of the new bridge ramp and stair
3 connections to the Mount Vernon trail on the left
4 and in the middle and the right-hand photo shows
5 a view looking down the connector ramp toward the
6 Mount Vernon trail.

7 Here are several ground views of the
8 access ramp on the left and the bridge span over
9 the Mount Vernon trail and here is the other side
10 of the new pedestrian bicycle bridge as it lands
11 in East Potomac Park adjacent to Ohio Drive west.

12 The VPRA design team is in the process
13 of studying several different color schemes for
14 the new bridge. And here is the bridge, here are
15 the bridges painted with standard department,
16 District Department of Transportation light grey.

17 And here is the bridge painted with
18 Federal standard red. And here is a third color
19 known as Federal standard brown. And these are
20 several initial colors that VPRA is considering
21 for the new pedestrian bicycle bridge.

22 We note, the proposed truss design is

1 based on a number of engineering considerations.
2 It's required length, clearances and intended use
3 and these considerations were reflected in the
4 previous Long Bridge environmental impact
5 statement.

6 However, staff believes that the
7 design still appears to be overly complicated and
8 large in scale with its many side members and
9 vertical side heights which may diminish the user
10 experience for pedestrians and bicyclists as well
11 as other users of East Potomac Park, Mount Vernon
12 trail and the GW Parkway.

13 So staff encourages VPRA to consider
14 ways to lighten the look of the bridge in
15 coordination with NPS, Commission of Fine Arts,
16 D.C. SHPO, the Virginia Department of Historic
17 Resources and NCPD and other stakeholder agencies
18 with potential design modifications that include
19 reducing the size of the bridge elements and
20 painting the structure with a color that better
21 blends in with background features.

22 Finally, as the new bridge is meant to

1 be an important pedestrian and bicycle connection
2 across the river, we believe that VPRA should
3 maximize its width to accommodate future travel
4 with adequate spaced provided directional travel
5 and passing movements.

6 And we reflect this point in the final
7 Executive Director's Recommendation. In follow
8 up to my presentation here today, you will hear
9 testimony that advocates for a wider 20-foot
10 width and one public comment points out the
11 current proposed 14-foot width would effectively
12 be reduced to eight feet of usable width since
13 bicyclists would tend to shy away from the
14 bridge's vertical side elements while riding.

15 And so we hope that with this
16 additional input that VPRA can take another look
17 at the width of the new bridge as they continue
18 to develop this component of the project.

19 Area 3 at East Potomac Park includes
20 the new rail bridge crossing over interstate
21 I-395, Ohio Drive east and west and the
22 Washington channel where the higher capacity

1 railway would continue east into Washington,
2 D.C.'s southwest commercial district spanning
3 over Maine Avenue southwest which is not included
4 in the current project submission.

5 However, DDOT and VPRA plan to submit
6 this segment of the corridor project to NCPC for
7 review at our upcoming September meeting where we
8 will review a proposed site improvements to
9 adjacent district and effective district property
10 within our advisory capacity.

11 Here are some photos of the existing
12 railroad bridge today as it crosses over I-395,
13 Ohio Drive East, and the Washington Channel. The
14 new two-track bridge would cross over I-395 as a
15 weathered steel through girder bridge with
16 concrete column piers as shown here in this
17 rendering.

18 And the bridge walls would be
19 constructed of concrete with large block ashlar
20 cladding to approximate the historic large block
21 granite stone that is used in the nearby existing
22 historic Long Bridge structure.

1 Here's the proposed new Ohio East
2 crossing as a new through girder design with
3 concrete parapet walls and a large block ashlar
4 clad solid pier and abutment walls.

5 And this span would accommodate the
6 new wider combined four-track width with two
7 existing CSX tracks and two new VPRA tracks. And
8 here is the new Washington Channel crossing again
9 with the same through girder design that we saw
10 on the previous slide.

11 And this span would also accommodate
12 the future four-track width. VPRA is committed
13 to constructing the new bridge through East
14 Potomac Park with a design that is compatible
15 with the historic character of the area and as
16 such, VPRA will continue to meet with stakeholder
17 agencies, NCPC, CFA, NPS, DDOT and the D.C. SHPO
18 and others to develop the projects as its
19 elements are sensitive to the character of their
20 surroundings.

21 The new bridge is currently designed
22 to comply with CSX standards and would allow the

1 existing CSX tracks to continue to operate during
2 the construction phase of the corridor
3 improvements.

4 Staff requests that VPRA consider
5 several design, potential design modifications
6 for the Ohio Drive East and Washington Channel
7 crossings including using concrete column piers
8 to increase ground level visibility and to reduce
9 the tunneling effect that may result from solid
10 piers, reusing stone from the existing structures
11 if possible and detailing on the parapet walls to
12 add more depth and visual interest.

13 And we include these design
14 considerations in the final Executive Director's
15 Recommendation. In terms of landscaping, the
16 project would restore the area along the corridor
17 with a mix of evergreen, flowering, and canopy
18 trees to screen the new bridge and to help
19 mitigate project impacts.

20 And this plan is based on historic
21 planting plans for the George Washington Memorial
22 Parkway and East Potomac Park as well as other

1 relevant cultural landscape and National Register
2 sources.

3 Here are three views of the new rail
4 bridge across East Potomac Park which show the
5 mix of trees in the front of the bridge's new
6 retaining walls.

7 Here is a cross section of the future
8 four-track bridge that illustrates its higher
9 elevation where the new bridge would be relative
10 to the existing right-of-way and existing trees
11 and how VPRA would restore the trees adjacent to
12 the future retaining walls.

13 Moving to the Virginia side along the
14 GW Parkway, we can see the proposed mix of new
15 trees adjacent to the new rail and bike ped
16 bridges. And here is a section of the new bridge
17 crossing near the GW Parkway which shows its
18 comparative location to the existing tracks and
19 with new landscaping to help screen the bridge's
20 retaining walls.

21 Staff supports the use of evergreen,
22 flowering, and canopy trees to help soften the

1 appearance of the new infrastructure on National
2 Park Service property as well as the effort to
3 base the project's proposed new tree locations
4 and landscaping on relevant historic planting
5 plans, cultural landscapes and other referenced
6 documents.

7 And we note these points in the final
8 Executive Director's Recommendation. In
9 addition, we recommend that VPRA use ornamental
10 canopy trees, at the bicycle pedestrian entry,
11 exit areas and vehicle parking areas to provide
12 visual interest and shade.

13 And to locate the new trees so that
14 they would allow for intermittent views of new
15 stone-clad walls and also allow for outward views
16 from the railway corridor.

17 And finally, we recommend that VPRA
18 explore ways to incorporate pollinators into the
19 proposed landscape design pursuant to Federal
20 policies.

21 Regarding the bridges and the new
22 bridges' retaining walls, VPRA would use two

1 different types of ashlar cladding for the new
2 bridge piers and walls with broken ashlar
3 cladding used on the Virginia side along the GW
4 Parkway to reflect its traditional historic
5 materials and large block ashlar cladding in the
6 rest of the project area to approximate the block
7 here look of the existing historic granite stone.

8 And we note this in the final
9 corrected Executive Director's Recommendation for
10 you as the previous version of the EDR
11 incorrectly stated that VPRA would construct the
12 new bridge walls and piers with the granite
13 stone.

14 So here's the information that we are
15 requesting in the final project submission in
16 addition to the finalized plans to NCPC.
17 Landscape plans that include a detailed tree
18 removal inventory and future tree replacement
19 locations and a planting schedule, lighting
20 strategy and plans for the new rail and
21 pedestrian bicycle bridges, information on how
22 the project would comply with current Federal

1 flood risk management guidelines and whether this
2 addresses the standards identified in Executive
3 Order 13690 and a signage plan for the new
4 pedestrian bicycle Potomac River bridge crossing
5 as well.

6 And with that, that concludes my
7 presentation. And I will not read through the
8 final Executive Director's Recommendation since I
9 have already covered each point already through
10 the course of my presentation.

11 And after the conclusion of our
12 scheduled upcoming testimony, I would like to
13 mention that we have four project representatives
14 here with us today who are available to answers
15 any questions that the Commission may have
16 including our colleague Tammy Stidham from the
17 National Park Service, Kate Youngbluth who is the
18 Director of Planning for VPRA, Shirlene Cleveland
19 who serves as the Senior Director for the Long
20 Bridge project and Mark Colgan who is the Project
21 Consultant and a Vice President Regional
22 Transportation Director at VHP. Thank you.

1 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Weil. Do
2 any of the Commissioners have questions for Mr.
3 Weil or the Project Representatives?

4 COMMISSIONER CASH: I actually had a
5 question.

6 CHAIR WHITE: Mr. Cash.

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: So in response I
8 noticed --

9 CHAIR WHITE: Welcome.

10 COMMISSIONER CASH: -- was a letter
11 from the Mandarin Oriental Hotel that mentioned
12 concern over the construction which isn't so much
13 my question.

14 But also mentioned concerns over the
15 current pedestrian bridge that links the portals
16 project over to the other side of Maine Avenue.
17 And I didn't see any of the slides or in the deck
18 any real detail there so could you maybe tease
19 out a little bit of what the concern is.

20 Like is it going to require tearing
21 down the existing bridge or what's going on
22 there?

1 MR. WEIL: Sure, absolutely. So first
2 of all, one of the testifiers today, Mr. Grigg,
3 he is a representative of the Portal's property
4 development. He represents Republic Properties
5 and he will speak to the bridge.

6 I think, I believe one of their
7 concerns is they are concerned about the project
8 sequencing. They absolutely would like to see
9 their new bridge fully reconstructed before the
10 existing bridge is demolished.

11 Basically now it's within the limit of
12 disturbance for the widened four-track
13 right-of-way and so that has to be demolished and
14 VPRA does have plans to reconstruct it.

15 Kind of a little further to the south
16 I believe along Maine Avenue so it would still
17 provide a connection to the Portal's development.
18 However, they want to make sure that's done, the
19 new bridge is fully constructed before the old
20 bridge is demolished.

21 And we actually will be covering that
22 segment of the property in September at the

1 Commission meeting.

2 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay. That's all
3 for, so is a tear down of the old bridge
4 necessitated by the new train tracks?

5 MR. WEIL: Sure.

6 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay.

7 MR. WEIL: And if you will indulge me,
8 I do have a graphic here that shows in plan view
9 Maine Avenue and here is the new four-track
10 widened bridge over Maine Avenue and this is the
11 existing portals pedestrian only bridge today.

12 And so that would be demolished and
13 the, VPRA would be constructing a staircase and
14 an access ramp up to the new bridge that would
15 cross over Maine Avenue.

16 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay and you said
17 that's going to be a separate presentation that
18 we have in the next few months as a --

19 MR. WEIL: VPRA and DDOT will be, yes,
20 will be submitting that section of the project to
21 NCPC for review at our September meeting next, or
22 in two months.

1 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay. That's
2 helpful and I'll look forward to the testimony
3 coming up.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
5 Cash. Any further questions? Hearing none, we
6 do have correspondence on this project from
7 Nicholas Dubort (phonetic), Cynthia Palmer,
8 Melissa Riggio (phonetic) and Chris Slatt.

9 In addition, yesterday the Commission
10 received 45 public comment letters all in support
11 of a greater width for the bike ped bridge. In
12 addition, we have two people signed up to speak
13 today.

14 First up is Andrea Cowley. Ms.
15 Cowley, you will have three minutes to provide
16 your remarks. Welcome.

17 MS. COWLEY: Thank you. My name is
18 Andrea Cowley. I'm a former NASA engineer so not
19 really into bridges usually, but make an
20 exception this time.

21 Yes, the 14 inch or the 14-foot deck
22 I did think would be quite a bit too small. That

1 can be split evenly into two seven-foot lanes,
2 but bicycle handlebars and actually also
3 wheelchair widths are about 800 millimeters or
4 two foot, eight inches.

5 And since the siding rail is 42 inches
6 from the deck, the cyclists have to cycle away
7 from the railing to avoid clipping it and
8 becoming injured.

9 So you might see a much more inward
10 stance than usual especially among novice
11 cyclists or people riding heavy cycles like the
12 CaBi share bikes.

13 Pedestrians also don't tend to walk
14 directly against a bridge rail so that does take
15 up more space. So the passable passing distance
16 of one bicycle in each direction and then two
17 passing cyclists, that gives you about six inches
18 of space which is about the same as two credit
19 cards laid together which can be a little
20 daunting at high speeds going towards to each
21 other.

22 So 20 inches, 20 feet is a much better

1 width as it brings us up to 18 inches of space
2 between passing traffic in either direction. The
3 second point is that the bridge deck rail height
4 which I noticed was I can't tell if it's
5 completely separated from the truss structure or
6 not, but it is shown in the drawings as being 42
7 inches high which is about, which is fine if
8 you're standing.

9 But I went and measured my bicycle
10 seat and my center of mass and that puts me above
11 the safety rail and I have a partner who's nine
12 inches taller than me so her safety factor would
13 just be completely gone.

14 She would be going into the truss
15 structure rather than the rail so I would propose
16 to consider adding either some sort of rail
17 structure that is, that goes from the floor to
18 the top or at least reaches to at least like
19 eight feet or something like that to account for
20 the increased center of mass of cyclists.

21 Additionally, that deck rail is
22 perfectly vertical which doesn't allow you full

1 utilization of the deck space. If you have
2 something overhanging, like a bicycle that has,
3 you know, handlebars that hang over the side, you
4 could utilize more deck space by bringing the
5 rails out at a 45 degree angle before bringing
6 them up vertically.

7 I will also say that the bridge is
8 placed between two very loud other bridges. If
9 there's trains going on all the other bridges at
10 the same time, I do worry that it would exceed
11 safe noise exposure limits without hearing
12 protection.

13 The Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge has
14 clear barriers in place at least on the Virginia
15 side and they're amazing at blocking out the
16 sound of traffic there.

17 And I would really love to see
18 something like that included on this bridge
19 structure. A clear panel does double duty in
20 that it allows people to see through and see all
21 the views.

22 It doesn't get in the way of the

1 bridge aesthetics, but it's also very, very
2 protective.

3 MR. MORGAN: That's three minutes.

4 MS. COWLEY: I have one final item if
5 you would grant me just --

6 CHAIR WHITE: Yes, continue.

7 MS. COWLEY: -- grant me just a little
8 more time.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

10 MS. COWLEY: Finally, is the east
11 landing there is a double 90 degree turn. I feel
12 this is not very conducive to safety and traffic
13 flow.

14 I would recommend to visit the Mount
15 Vernon trail at the Theodore Roosevelt Island
16 Parking. There's another double 90 degree turn
17 like this and a heavy bicycle or if you're
18 carrying a load, we have a lot of people now I
19 see bicycling around with two or three children
20 or with groceries.

21 It's very difficult to handle that
22 turn and then a flat and then a turn back up a

1 slope. But it appears that there is sufficient
2 space in the parking lot where the bike ped
3 bridge lands to have a full length one to 20
4 climb without a bend.

5 So I would recommend either removing
6 the bend entirely to allow for better traffic
7 flow or changing it to be a curve instead of a
8 double 90 degree turn. So I will stop there.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you --

10 MS. COWLEY: Thank you.

11 CHAIR WHITE: -- so much. Do the
12 Commissioners have any questions? Hearing none,
13 thank you again for your testimony. Earlier I
14 mentioned we had two people signed up to speak.
15 We actually have three so please forgive me.

16 Next is Bernard Berne. Mr. Berne, you
17 will have three minutes for your remarks.

18 MR. BERNE: Yes, hello. I live in
19 Arlington and I cycle frequently in Washington on
20 the various bridges across the Potomac River. An
21 illustration in the Railroad Authority's
22 submission shows that a bicycle pedestrian bridge

1 will have both ramps and staircases that will
2 connect this bridge to the platform and stairwell
3 within the George Washington Memorial Parkway
4 onto Ohio Drive on the East Potomac Park.

5 These connections will be located
6 inside environmentally sensitive areas within or
7 very close to public rivers of research
8 protection area, RPA.

9 They are mostly incompatible with use
10 of these national parks for protecting state
11 watersheds says new construction here within the
12 RPAs must be closely monitored and limited to the
13 greatest extent feasible.

14 Such limitations are also necessary
15 within some of the other areas of the national
16 parks including the George Washington National
17 Parkway and East Potomac Park.

18 In 1987, the sidewalks on the key
19 bridge were widened to 10 feet. The bicycle
20 pedestrian bridge on the Wilson, Woodrow Wilson
21 bridge which opened in 2009 is four feet wide.

22 The paths on both of these bridges are

1 wide enough for safe pedestrian and can be used
2 by cyclists and by other motor scooter users,
3 operators even during peak hours.

4 I have experience with all these
5 bridges frequently. I don't have problems on
6 them. The paths on, wider paths are hazardous
7 and as users often spread out to walk and to
8 cycle side by side and the wide widths encourage
9 cyclists to speed especially on downhill slopes
10 as those ramps.

11 This is dangerous. There is no real
12 need for both wide ramps and wide staircases to
13 connect the bridge and a street within this RPA
14 in national parks.

15 Few people will use this stairs, if
16 any. They're going to use the ramps. In
17 addition, of course, a lot of people are going to
18 use the George Mason Bridge.

19 The ramps and stairs which increase
20 stormwater runoff into the Potomac River and will
21 detract from the views of the river and the
22 parks.

1 I therefore ask you to please vote to
2 one, recommend the remove of the stairs
3 containing the bicycle pedestrian bridge and the
4 Mount Vernon trail and the Ohio Drive.

5 Those stairs are simply redundant and
6 no one will use them. Reduce the width of the
7 ramps connecting the bridges and the trail and
8 drive to 13 feet.

9 Again, because that's sloped and
10 people speeding down the slope if you're walking
11 by the side, man, it's dangerous. That is all
12 that is necessary to provide safe and convenient
13 connections between the bridge and the drive.

14 However, if implemented, if there's a
15 design it would be a classic example of
16 overbuilding and overengineering within the
17 Washington area's national parks, especially that
18 staircase. It simply is not needed.

19 So if you take no other point from
20 this, get rid of the staircase. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Berne.
22 Do the Commissioners have any questions for Mr.

1 Berne? Hearing no questions, I will move on to
2 Steven Grigg. Mr. Grigg, you will have three
3 minutes for your remarks. Welcome.

4 MR. GRIGG: Thank you, Madame
5 Chairman. I'm Steve Grigg, CEO and Chief
6 Development Officer of Republic Properties
7 Corporation. Republic and its principals are
8 general partners of PDA which developed the
9 portals project.

10 I am also Director and Officer of the
11 Portals Public Improvement Association which I
12 represent which represents all six parcel owners
13 that comprise the Portals private property and
14 operate the common space which the Portals
15 provide to its property owners and residents and
16 visitors to our capital.

17 RPC and its affiliates are owners of
18 four of the six properties. The Portals project
19 is a gateway landmark project to the city as you
20 know.

21 We reclaimed a public monumental,
22 elevated Maryland Avenue by building it over the

1 tracks and a major monumental circle in a series
2 of public landscape plazas that provide access
3 not only to the residents and tenants of the
4 Portals, but also the public in providing
5 overviews and access to the Tidal Basin and the
6 Southwest waterfront.

7 We also provide connections for the
8 many visitors and residents moving from the Mall
9 to not only the waterfront, but also the Tidal
10 Basin.

11 The public, the Portals Public
12 Improvement Association owns that pedestrian
13 bridge. We improved it providing landscaped
14 edges and a pathway that's wide enough for people
15 to walk their bicycles or move across in
16 wheelchairs from across Maine Avenue to the Tidal
17 Basin and the waterfront walkways that are part
18 of our system down there near the Portals.

19 We have about 1.6 million square feet
20 of commercial office and government space, a
21 Mandarin Oriental hotel, 373 apartment residents
22 are accommodated in our first building and a

1 final building of 356 additional residential
2 units are going to be developed at the Portals
3 starting later this fall.

4 The 14th Street bridge and Maine
5 Avenue in the Tidal Basin, this whole general
6 area is a very important and complicated node in
7 the city.

8 It has significance from a symbolic
9 sense and it's really a gateway area into the
10 city and it also unfortunately or fortunately is
11 a transportation hub between 14th Street, the
12 railroads and the vehicular traffic that connects
13 into Maine Avenue.

14 The Long Bridge will have a
15 significant impact not only on the PPIA and the
16 property owners and residents and tenants of the
17 portals, but also the general public.

18 We've written comments and spoken with
19 NCPC staff. And you have comments from, which
20 are provided, by one of our property owners, the
21 Mandarin, which included a letter that I wrote to
22 CFA.

1 And we've met with planners of the
2 Long Bridge program over the last several years
3 at various times and expressed our concerns with
4 regard to the impacts as we begun to understand
5 the evolving plans.

6 We realize these are in a preliminary
7 stage, but they're clear enough to understand
8 that they will have huge impacts. Our concerns
9 include the contemplated project not only in its
10 completion, but also the impacts during its
11 phasing and construction on not only the Portals,
12 but the very critical surrounding areas.

13 These include disruption of
14 connectivity of vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
15 the impacts of noise and vibration and the visual
16 impacts of widened tracks and structures
17 associated with them. We've made significant --

18 MR. JUTTON: That's three minutes.

19 MR. GRIGG: I have only a few moments
20 more. We've made suggestions as we've become
21 aware of the plans to develop the bridge. We
22 hope and anticipate that these impacts will be

1 mitigated and removed and we trust that NCPC will
2 do its part to use its authority and position to
3 encourage improvements that will inure to the
4 benefit of the government, D.C. residents and
5 workers and the visitors to our nation's capital.
6 Thank you very much.

7 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Grigg.
8 Do Commissioners have any questions for Mr.
9 Grigg? Hearing none, that concludes the public
10 testimony regarding this project.

11 I'll now open it up to Commission for
12 discussion so if everyone would please turn on
13 their webcams. I will start with Commissioner
14 Cozart and then go in a round robin format using
15 our normal seating order.

16 Please keep your webcams on during
17 discussion. Commissioner Cozart?

18 COMMISSIONER COZART: Thank you. I
19 don't have any questions or comments at this
20 moment. Just want to really thank the staff for
21 a really great presentation that made it clear
22 what the plans are and what other things still

1 left to be resolved, those key details. So thank
2 you very much.

3 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
4 McMahon.

5 COMMISSIONER McMAHON: Yes, thank you.
6 Good presentation. Thanks from the staff for
7 putting this all together. Obviously a critical
8 linkage and, you know, continued development on a
9 mass transit throughout the east coast not just
10 in the Washington D.C. area.

11 So the overall project I've got no
12 comments on. As one of the cyclists, I guess on
13 the Commission, I've got a couple of comments on
14 the cycle bridge.

15 I don't have a whole lot of objections
16 to the size and the design. I think as pointed
17 out by one of the members of the public who
18 commented that the height is important.

19 I suspect the height's okay, but
20 frankly that's going to - I guess as some of the
21 issues staff had in terms of the visual of that
22 truss I suspect is necessary.

1 But I do, am concerned about is the,
2 at the end points, the bridge at both ends.
3 Certainly the way you've tied it into the
4 parkway. The bike trail is critical because
5 right now it's very hard to get to, you know, the
6 14th Street bridge on a bicycle and across, you
7 know, in connection side from Virginia so that's
8 a major improvement as it ties into Crystal City
9 through the Long Bridge Park which will increase
10 the traffic.

11 So I'm concerned about a 90 degree
12 terminus there. I'm also concerned about the
13 terminus at the District side there on Ohio
14 Street.

15 There's no pedestrian, really
16 facilities on that side of Ohio Drive. They have
17 it terminating. It comes to a T itself there so
18 I'd almost recommend it take a look at carrying
19 that bridge across Ohio Drive and maybe down into
20 that parking lot to tie into existing pedestrian
21 passageways.

22 Don't know whether the 14 feet is the

1 right number or not, but certainly as the other
2 public member testified, that may actually serve
3 to somewhat constrain speeds of bicycles.

4 That may be an issue. I know on 14th
5 Street bridge there's a fair amount of traffic
6 even today. Thanks. Over.

7 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
8 May.

9 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes, thank you. So
10 I'll make a few comments. The, first of all you
11 know, we've been working the VPRA for a very long
12 time on this project. And the design element has
13 already come a long way, but it's still got a
14 ways to go before it's really complete.

15 There are details having to do with
16 the design of piers and planting and things like
17 that I think that need some further development.
18 And we are working through that with the VPRA,
19 their design team.

20 The new bike and pedestrian bridge is
21 a critical component of the project. I mean
22 that's one of the reasons why we were able to

1 support this in the first place creating that
2 connection across the river improving a vital
3 connection for bikes for example.

4 Because right now the connection
5 across 14th Street bridge is not very good. And
6 so this will be a huge improvement in that
7 regard. I do think that there are a number of
8 the details there that still need to be worked
9 out.

10 Some of those were highlighted in the
11 testimony that we heard today. I do think some
12 of those issues are already addressed in the
13 design or will be.

14 Not everything is clear from the
15 amount of information that's been presented
16 today. There is further development that I think
17 that addresses some of the safety concerns with
18 the design.

19 And I will say also, I mean, this is
20 very important to us, not just for providing a
21 commuter route, but providing a way for our
22 visitors on the George Washington Memorial

1 Parkway to connect to national and memorial parks
2 on the other side of the East Potomac Park.

3 So it is a big, big benefit from our
4 perspective. It is a major project in support of
5 the -- not sure what was going on there. Anyway
6 --

7 CHAIR WHITE: At least it's gone away.

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes. Anyway, it's
9 a component or it supports the national capital
10 region, National Park Service paved trail plan
11 that we developed many years ago and we are
12 looking forward to further development and making
13 sure that this works for everyone who's involved
14 in it.

15 I don't know, I mean I maybe somebody
16 from the VRPA wants to address some concerns that
17 came up today. I'm not sure that there are
18 specific answers, but you may want to give an
19 opportunity to Kate to respond to that.

20 CHAIR WHITE: That would be great. I
21 would welcome it.

22 COMMISSIONER MAY: Or Shirlene. I'm

1 not sure who's the best.

2 MS. YOUNGBLUTH: Yes, Shirlene will
3 take this one. Shirlene.

4 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay, so which concern
5 you want to start with, the bike path?

6 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

7 MS. CLEVELAND: So we are looking at
8 the -- go ahead. I'm sorry.

9 COMMISSIONER MAY: We have the safety
10 concerns of the 90 degree turns, things like
11 that.

12 MS. CLEVELAND: Actually, Mark, do you
13 want to talk about the 90 degree turn because I
14 know we've looked at that, but you would be most
15 familiar with early stand. Mark, are you there?

16 MR. COLGAN: Yes, I am. I think I got
17 my video working, but I don't see it. Anyways,
18 yes, we've received the comments and we'll take
19 another look.

20 We have developed the details based on
21 what we thought was best practice and really
22 looked at a lot of design criteria to address all

1 the comments that were already brought up today,
2 but happy to take those back and discuss more
3 with the project team and react and adapt to
4 appropriately for the design.

5 MS. CLEVELAND: And also I've been
6 looking at impacts of widening the bridge based
7 on the main comments that we received, and so
8 that will change some studies. So we'll be able
9 to get back to you, though, with what we are able
10 to accommodate. Obviously, the corridor is very
11 narrow, and we have to fit two bridges in between
12 an existing, you know, railroad, and then we'll
13 modernize the existing this existing Yellow Line
14 bridge. So we'll see what's possible, and then
15 we'll have the whole report back to you.

16 Then regarding Mr. Grigg's testimony,
17 we are meeting with him. We have our third,
18 well, I think, fourth meeting this year. Three
19 since I've started in March. We have another
20 meeting with him tomorrow to go over their
21 concerns, you know, impacts to the project, and
22 we will do our best to, you know, address all of

1 those in the final design.

2 COMMISSIONER MAY: Thank you. I don't
3 have any other comments, and I appreciate the
4 VPRA's stepping up and trying to address some of
5 these concerns and letting folks know that all
6 these things are being considered and will be
7 addressed.

8 MS. CLEVELAND: Yes. We're only at 15
9 percent design.

10 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yeah.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
12 May. Thank you for the comments.

13 Commissioner Argo?

14 (Technical issues.)

15 CHAIR WHITE: I'm going to ask our
16 technical team if there's any suggestion for how
17 to address this.

18 COMMISSIONER MAY: I'm glad it wasn't
19 just me that got hit by that.

20 MS. KOSTER: No, we'll try to unmute
21 Commissioner Argo again, it was something on her
22 end that was giving us the reverb. So perhaps

1 what we could do is just pop to the next
2 Commissioner, and we'll take a look, and if we
3 can figure this out, we'll come up with a tech
4 strategy for it.

5 CHAIR WHITE: Perfect.

6 Well, Commissioner Argo, we'll move
7 onto Commissioner Wright while they address the
8 technical issue, and we'll come back to you.

9 So Commissioner Wright?

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yeah, I just
11 have what, I mean, what everyone else has said.
12 But also, Michael, can you take us to what was
13 slide 35 in the original deck?

14 MR. WEIL: Sure.

15 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So or there
16 abouts. It shows, and several people have
17 commented this, but this really struck me, not as
18 a -- whoop, that back up, back up, hold on, keep
19 going, one more. Well, that's a good one. Okay.
20 Can you blow up this slide? So the bottom image.

21 What I'm getting at is it's a study in
22 contrast. Aesthetically this thing is too heavy

1 handed in some places, and then what really
2 struck me were these little weirdo, you know,
3 very slight fences. They look like those, kind
4 of, temporary fences that are set up at events,
5 and they look particularly frail, and sort of
6 silly in contrast to these heavy trusses. And I
7 would just urge that you think again.

8 I think Commissioner McMahon mentioned
9 how these things -- I have no objection to the
10 bridge forms themselves and the trusses. The
11 truss work is beautiful in some ways, but the
12 contrast with how each bridge lands on both
13 banks, is really disconcerting and I think could
14 use a little -- that's another good one. The one
15 I had in mind was this lower right hand, also
16 right where you see the staircase and these very,
17 sort of, dainty pickets. And I don't know. They
18 almost, again, look like those temporary event
19 fences which conjure up all kinds of associations
20 that are unpleasant. So I would urge that you
21 think through this a little bit how each
22 structure hits the ground, and the contrast

1 between the trusses.

2 The piers are fine, and I don't have
3 a -- I think the color is, I mean, I actually
4 learned something today. I didn't know there was
5 a federal brown and a federal red, and a D.C.
6 gray. So I mean, I don't -- I'm not particularly
7 picky about any of that.

8 This is just the one thing that struck
9 me kind of uniformly throughout the presentation
10 that there's a certain amount of discord in
11 aesthetics to the -- where each of the bridges
12 land on the ground on either bank. That's it.

13 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

14 Commissioner Dixon?

15 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I'm okay. I have
16 nothing to add. Thank you.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

18 Commissioner Cash?

19 COMMISSIONER CASH: Just a few things.
20 So I do -- now that I've heard the testimony and
21 gone back and looked at those images we were just
22 looking at of the landing on the Virginia side, I

1 will say I don't really see the point so much of
2 the stairs because it seems to unnecessarily
3 elongate the bridge just to then go back when it
4 could just gently land over there. So I'd urge
5 looking at that. I just don't see that they
6 would ever get used because it's actually a
7 longer walk both ways, and it's really high up,
8 like those are a lot of stairs going up.

9 So and I agree with everything else
10 that has been said about the pedestrian bridge
11 and I appreciate that you're only at what, 15
12 percent design, and you're going back and looking
13 at that.

14 And also on the D.C. side, just to the
15 questions that I had earlier, and I know that
16 we'll looking at this now separately, but I
17 really would encourage between now and when we
18 hear this and as plans go forward, that we really
19 address the concerns of this bridge, this
20 pedestrian bridge connecting the Portals, to the
21 other side because I think that's a major D.C.
22 development, and it's an amenity that was built

1 there by that project in 2004. So I just want to
2 make sure that those folks are happy to the
3 greatest extent possible. So as we move to that
4 next review, I'll look forward to that.

5 And then, finally, I just want to
6 acknowledge that this is, kind of, a strange
7 project because we have Virginia facilities that
8 will be very much coming into D.C. As soon as
9 you cross the river out of Virginia, remember
10 you're in D.C. So it's an interesting project
11 that I understand will have some swaps of some
12 land or some purchases of land, especially on the
13 D.C. side. And I just hope that as there are
14 issues that are raised on the D.C. side from
15 either our planners or DDOT and all that, that
16 the Virginia pass through railway folks work
17 really hard to make sure that the D.C. people are
18 as happy as possible.

19 So that's really all the comments, but
20 I think that it is a great project moving
21 forward. It's a vital transportation link for
22 the District. And I think that adding the

1 pedestrian facilities and bike facilities really
2 adds a lot to this. So thanks.

3 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

4 Commissioner Ginsberg?

5 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Hi, yeah.

6 Thank you. As somebody who rides the 14th Street
7 Bridge almost every day, I am excited for another
8 option to get me across the river. And I look
9 forward to the future presentations as we go
10 forward. Thank you for the presentation, and I
11 look forward to more.

12 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

13 Let's go back to Commissioner Argo.

14 MS. KOSTER: We are in contact with
15 Commissioner Argo if she can go ahead, and she's
16 rejoining right now. And hopefully, that will
17 solve the issue. Well, and if it takes any
18 length of time --

19 CHAIR WHITE: So let's give her
20 another moment. I see that Commissioner Argo has
21 --

22 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Here I am.

1 CHAIR WHITE: Oh, there you are.

2 COMMISSIONER ARGO: That was quick.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Commissioner Argo, while
5 we, have you?

6 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Just in time to
7 say I have no comments at this time. Thank you.

8 (Laughing.)

9 CHAIR WHITE: Well, thank you so much.

10 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Thank you. Sorry.

11 CHAIR WHITE: I see Commissioner
12 McMahon has his hand raised and then Commissioner
13 May.

14 So Commissioner McMahon?

15 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yeah. Thanks
16 Commissioner Argo. So that's good because
17 Commissioner May and I will take the additional
18 time from you.

19 (Laughing).

20 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Just maybe VPRA
21 can address this issue of the stairs on the
22 Virginia's side, or perhaps Arlington County. It

1 looks like Commissioner May may have even more
2 better information with his daytime job. Because
3 if I take a look and just a look at those
4 comments on the bridge -- the pedestrian bridge,
5 keep in mind that if you are a pedestrian coming
6 from the Long Bridge area coming up the
7 pedestrian bridge starting down at the new
8 Recreation Center, it's actually a fitness center
9 that Arlington County built, you're not going to
10 walk all the way, you know, across over the
11 Potomac River and make that turn and walk back
12 down the bicycle ramp. You're going to want to
13 take those stairs going down to the parkway of,
14 you know, a multi-use trail, which is heavily
15 used by pedestrians in addition to the cyclists.
16 That's all. Thanks.

17 COMMISSIONER MAY: I was essentially
18 going to make the same point. What is not clear
19 from the visualizations that are shown in the
20 presentation is that the stairway is, you know,
21 will be very convenient for the next component of
22 the bridge because that bridge continues across

1 the George Washington Memorial Park already and
2 it's a long bridge. So yeah, I mean, it will be
3 used by people who are walking, and even if
4 you're on a bike you'd have to go all the way
5 down and double back. But it's not -- we can't
6 get by, I think, without that stairway.

7 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: And I'll just
8 say I'm now going back and looking at it at a
9 different angle, and it makes more sense from a
10 different angle.

11 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yeah, okay.

12 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

13 Ms. Cleveland did you want to comment
14 on that?

15 MS. CLEVELAND: I was basically going
16 to say the same thing, so.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Great. Everyone's in
18 concurrence. Are there any further comments or
19 questions?

20 I would just like to add that it's
21 interesting we have this significant
22 infrastructure project, a few today, on the

1 agenda. And a very important one for both rail
2 capacity, and as everyone has noted, the
3 pedestrian and the biking capacity.

4 There are a lot of different segments
5 to these improvements. A lot of considerations,
6 the impact on the Portals, the historic
7 preservation, and while we're in this design
8 phase and only at 15 percent, it does seem that
9 the overall approach is going in the right
10 direction. That as we saw with the last
11 presentation, these details are really important.

12 And I appreciate and encourage VPRA to
13 keep looking at this question about the proposed
14 width and design of the new bike-ped bridge. And
15 I'm very sensitive to the dynamics of building
16 trails. That's what I do in my day job, and I
17 have 130 miles open to the public in widths of
18 trails and what's beside those trails is a really
19 important consideration. So I appreciate you
20 taking a strong look at this. There's a lot of
21 debate in this world about if you widen them,
22 people will go faster, if they're too narrow,

1 you'll have more accidents, but in thinking about
2 mobility and pedestrian cycles, people in
3 wheelchairs, it's a really important thing to get
4 right when you have such a constrained space.

5 I also wanted to echo what
6 Commissioner Wright was saying about at least how
7 the rendering's come across with that very light
8 touch of a rail when you're coming off of the
9 bridge and you're adjacent to moving cars. I do
10 encourage you to take a stronger look at that
11 from a pedestrian safety point of view. Not just
12 the aesthetic, but the safety aspects that are
13 involved there.

14 So it's all about the user experience.
15 It's great that we have so many users on our
16 Commission to give you first-hand experience as
17 to what that is like. So I appreciate, again,
18 the thoughtfulness of our Commission Members, and
19 the coordination to date and to the staff for
20 working through this, and frankly, to the 45
21 people who have sent in letters and our folks who
22 showed up to give testimony because I think

1 community engagement we are always advocating for
2 that, so it's really heartening to see this kind
3 of response to this project.

4 So if there are no further comments or
5 questions, is there is a motion to approve the
6 Preliminary Site Development Plans for the Long
7 Bridge Corridor Project?

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: So moved.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you Commissioner
10 May.

11 Is there a second?

12 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Second.

13 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you Commissioner
14 McMahon.

15 Ms. Koster, can you please confirm the
16 motion and the second and take the vote by roll
17 call?

18 MS. KOSTER: Certainly. The motion
19 was made by Commissioner May, the second by
20 Commissioner McMahon.

21 With that, Commissioner Cozart?

22 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

1 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

2 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yes.

3 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner May?

4 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

5 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Argo?

6 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

7 MS. KOSTER: Beautiful. Chair White?

8 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

9 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Wright?

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

11 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

12 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

13 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Cash?

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

15 MS. KOSTER: And Commissioner

16 Ginsberg?

17 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Yes.

18 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. The motion
19 is carried.

20 All right. At this time, we're going
21 to take a five minute break, so I would ask the
22 Commissioner's to turn off your cameras and we

1 will come back at 3:28 by my clock.

2 MS. KOSTER: I think that's 4:28 for
3 everyone else.

4 (Laughing.)

5 CHAIR WHITE: Oh, excuse me. That's
6 my time. I didn't mean to confuse everyone.

7 MS. KOSTER: That's okay.

8 CHAIR WHITE: How about we say 4:30?

9 MS. KOSTER: Okay. And off we go.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
11 went off the record at 4:23 p.m., for a short
12 break, and resumed at 4:31 p.m.)

13 ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY REAL

14 PROPERTY MASTER PLAN

15 CHAIR WHITE: The next item on our
16 Agenda is to approve comments on Arlington
17 National Cemetery's draft Real Property Master
18 Plan. Lee Webb will be presenting. He is having
19 some connection issues so we won't see him on
20 camera, but we will be hearing his voice as he
21 goes through his presentation. So welcome, Mr.
22 Webb.

1 MR. WEBB: Thank you, Chair White.
2 And I can assure you I still look like my head
3 shot, and I am wearing a jacket and tie. So good
4 afternoon, Chair White, and members of the
5 Commission.

6 Arlington National Cemetery has
7 submitted a Draft Master Plan for Commission
8 comment. The Commission last approved a Master
9 plan for ANC in 2015. ANC is a 639 acre cemetery
10 located in Arlington County, Virginia, surrounded
11 by major roadways, joint based Myer Henderson
12 Hall, developed areas of Arlington County, and
13 lands under this jurisdiction of the National
14 Park Service.

15 As a reminder, the Commission approved
16 two expansions to the cemetery in the last few
17 years. The Millennium Expansion was approved in
18 2015 with construction completed in 2019, and the
19 subject expansion received its final approval
20 from the Commission in 2021. Both of these
21 expansions will provide ANC much need burial
22 capacity.

1 I will also note that in 2020 a land
2 swap occurred between the Park Service and ANC in
3 which the land associated with the approach into
4 ANC via the Memorial Avenue to the Women in
5 Military Service for American Memorial or WIMSA,
6 including the road and area on both sides of the
7 hedgerow, was transferred from NPS's jurisdiction
8 to ANC. ANC had used the land under a memorandum
9 of agreement, but not it is fully under ANC's
10 jurisdiction.

11 Today approximately, 400,000 veterans
12 and their eligible dependents are buried at ANC.
13 Service members from every one of America's major
14 wars, from the Revolutionary War to today's
15 conflicts, are interred at the cemetery. ANC
16 hosts over three million visitors annually and
17 almost six thousand funerals. The cemetery staff
18 is comprised of, roughly, 200 federal workers, 80
19 military personnel, and up to 300 contract
20 support staff.

21 At the draft review for its Master
22 Plan for a facility such as the cemetery, the

1 Commission should be focused on issues such as
2 land use and impacts to history or cultural
3 resources. Staff analyzed this draft using
4 guidance from the comprehensive plan,
5 particularly those related to the parks and open
6 space, preservation and historic features, and
7 federal transportation elements. The staff finds
8 the proposed Draft Master Plan is consistent with
9 the comprehensive plan. The purpose of the
10 Master Plan is to assist ANC in addressing the
11 changes that have occurred since the last Master
12 Plan was approved in 2015, and to address new
13 challenges and opportunities for the cemetery.

14 This draft plan does not propose any
15 additional expansions of the cemetery outside its
16 current boundaries. The proposed projects
17 identified in the draft are notional with
18 potential locations identified, but no specific
19 massing, scale, or designs included at this time.
20 The Draft Master Plan was informed by four
21 primary goals identified by ANC to frame the
22 discussion of future projects. Those include

1 maximizing available space to extend the life of
2 the cemetery, modernize and expand existing
3 facilities and infrastructure to enhance the
4 cemetery operations, enhance the visitor
5 experience while maintaining the iconic image of
6 the cemetery, and maintaining a safe and secure
7 operating environment.

8 The Draft Plan divides the cemetery
9 into four area development plans or ADPs, which
10 we'll use for discussion. They include the Entry
11 Corridor, the Memorial Amphitheater, the Service
12 Complex, and the Meigs Tanner area near Arlington
13 House. A fifth area is the Soldiers and Airmen's
14 Home National Cemetery, which is actually located
15 within the District of Columbia, and it's
16 included in discussion under this draft as it is
17 under ANC's purview and maintenance. I will go
18 through each of the ADPs noting proposed projects
19 called out in the draft plan and include our
20 recommendations.

21 In preparing the Draft Master Plan,
22 ANC undertook a thorough process to identify

1 problems and challenges particularly related to
2 the visitor experience and pedestrian safety, as
3 well as addressing pedestrian and vehicular
4 conflicts.

5 The first area we'll look at is the
6 Area Development Plan One, which is the Entry
7 Corridor, and this area includes Memorial Avenue,
8 the Main Entrance to the cemetery, the Welcome
9 Center, WIMSA Memorial, the Visitor Parking
10 Garage, and the Administration Building. Under
11 this draft, most of the proposed future projects
12 involving new structures are located in ADP 1,
13 and include projects to address, excuse me, to
14 address pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and
15 enhancing the visitor experience. It also
16 includes security-related projects such as a new
17 standalone Pedestrian Security Facility to the
18 east of the Welcome Center, a new Vehicular
19 Screening Facility along Memorial Avenue, and one
20 at the Visitor Parking Garage. Other projects
21 identified for ADP 1 include potential new
22 columbarium located in flex space areas north of

1 Memorial Avenue.

2 For ADP 1, staff supports the
3 applicants' efforts to identify projects that
4 improve the visitor experience, security, and
5 eliminate existing pedestrian and vehicular
6 conflicts. The new Visitor Screening Facility,
7 east of the Welcome Center, will allow the
8 Welcome Center itself to better function as a
9 place for visitors to seek information on the
10 cemetery. The new drive into the Visitor Parking
11 Garage and the vehicular screening will help
12 eliminate the existing pedestrian and vehicular
13 conflicts around the Welcome Center that exists.

14 Staff supports the applicant's intent
15 to reconfigure the Tram Space, excuse me, the
16 Tram Plaza and queuing area to further enhance
17 the visitor experience and avoid pedestrian and
18 vehicular conflicts. However, staff does find
19 that proposed vehicular screening on Memorial
20 Avenue is problematic as any permanent structure
21 would impact the historic character of Memorial
22 Avenue.

1 Therefore, staff recommends that the
2 applicant explore options for mobile vehicle
3 screening on Memorial Avenue that are not
4 permanent and do not negatively impact the
5 historic character and the views shared at
6 Memorial Avenue, including fully mobile units
7 that can be removed when the cemetery is closed.

8 In addition, staff finds that the
9 applicant has proposed these flex area spaces, to
10 the north of Memorial Avenue behind the existing
11 fencing and holly hedge rows, that could
12 accommodate various facilities and possibly new
13 columbarium. These areas north and south of
14 Memorial Avenue behind the holly hedges are
15 documented contributing landscape features for
16 the Arlington Memorial Bridge and Arlington's
17 National Register Historic District.

18 Therefore, staff recommends that the
19 applicant avoid siting any future columbarium
20 area or any new structures in the areas
21 identified as flex space, and here is a picture
22 showing the area north of Memorial Avenue, as any

1 development may impact the mature oak trees and
2 the character of these landscape features. Staff
3 recommends that the applicant identify other
4 areas in ADP 1 that may serve as desired flex
5 space and may be more appropriate for future
6 developments such as needed columbarium.

7 The next area we will discuss is ADP
8 2, which is the Memorial Amphitheater ADP, which
9 covers an area in the southwestern part of the
10 cemetery. It contains the Memorial Amphitheater
11 and Reception Building, the Tomb of the Unknown
12 Soldier, and considerable burial space
13 particularly to the south and west of the
14 Memorial Amphitheater and also includes, of
15 course, the grounds around the Amphitheater.
16 Proposed projects in ADP 2 are primarily to
17 improve mobility and ADA access, and the visitor
18 experience as well as interior space
19 reconfigurations at the Amphitheater to improve
20 functionality.

21 Therefore, staff recommends that the
22 Commission supports the rehabilitation projects

1 and improvements and visitor experience,
2 including enhanced grave finding, new visitor
3 comfort stations, and sidewalk access, and
4 enhanced ADA and mobility access, particularly,
5 at the Memorial Amphitheater.

6 The next ADP is the Service Complex,
7 and the area for the Service Complex ADP actually
8 spans the entire cemetery which makes it
9 different from the other ADPs we've discussed.
10 Staff notes that the existing Service Complex
11 adjacent to the southern expansion in this area
12 shown here, will be demolished to provide
13 additional space for burials for the cemetery.

14 The purpose of this ADP is to examine
15 the broader reassignment of the Service Complex
16 functions across the cemetery. Staff finds that
17 the draft plan identifies areas to improve
18 functions of necessary service in construction
19 needs while recognizing the limitations of space
20 within the cemetery.

21 In particular, the plan proposes to
22 convert the north parcel, which is in this area,

1 which is a 2.3 acre parcel under ANC's
2 jurisdiction adjacent to Joint Base Myer-
3 Henderson Hall, into a permanent service
4 satellite. Due to this location and potential
5 for full screening from any visitors, staff
6 supports locating new laydown and storage yards
7 in the north part of the parcel as it is a
8 location separated from visitor access areas.

9 In addition, due to the solemn
10 character of the cemetery, staff recommends the
11 applicant ensure that any other new areas for
12 service functions and laydown areas identified
13 are not located within cemetery areas with
14 sensitive viewsheds or adjacent to burial sites.

15 The next area is ADP 4 which is termed
16 the Meigs-Tanner ADP located in the northwestern
17 portion of the cemetery and lies west of the
18 President John F. Kennedy grave site in Arlington
19 House, and which Arlington House serves as one of
20 the primary guest destinations for visitors to
21 this cemetery. This area also includes Sherman
22 Drive, which is immediately to the west of

1 Arlington House, Meigs Drive, the James Tanner
2 Amphitheater, the Receiving Vaults, the old
3 Administration Building, and also sited are
4 Buildings 313 and 314, which we'll discuss.

5 For ADP 4 the plan includes
6 opportunities to improve the visitor experience
7 and safety with grave finding, visitor stations,
8 improved sidewalk access, expanded tram stops,
9 and traffic improvements. Staff supports the
10 opportunities to improve the visitor experience
11 and safety within the cemetery where feasible and
12 appropriate and in the areas controlled by ANC.

13 However, staff notes that some of the
14 proposed projects in this ADP may conflict with
15 the existing National Park Service operations and
16 cultural landscape features and would require NPS
17 review and approval. In their comments, NPS
18 noted that Building 313 was already under their
19 jurisdiction prior to the 2020 land swap, with
20 only Building 314 coming under their jurisdiction
21 in 2020.

22 As such the Draft Master Plan should

1 be updated to remove any references to these
2 buildings if not under ANC's jurisdiction. Staff
3 also requests that the applicant coordinate with
4 NPS regarding strategies to address pedestrian
5 safety and desired new walkways in the areas
6 adjacent to Arlington House that may conflict
7 with NPS's existing programs.

8 As I mentioned earlier in the
9 presentation, the draft plan does include the
10 Soldiers' and Airman's Home National Cemetery,
11 which is located in the District as it is under
12 ANC's purview. It is one of the oldest national
13 cemeteries in the United States containing 16
14 acres and is located immediately northeast of the
15 Armed Forces Retirement Home. Future projects
16 identified in the Draft Master Plan include the
17 rehabilitations of buildings such as the
18 Superintendent's Lodge and finding more active
19 uses for these historic buildings.

20 Therefore, staff supports the
21 applicants' effort to maintain and rehabilitate
22 the historic buildings located at the Soldier'

1 and Airmen's Home National Cemetery while
2 identifying future functional uses for these
3 buildings including possibilities for visitors'
4 amenities.

5 Finally, in respect to transportation
6 needs under this plan, the staff finds that ANC
7 functions differently from other federal
8 installations related to transportation
9 management and that transportation management
10 plans to reflect its mission, while noting that
11 this plan does not add any additional parking and
12 the bulk of vehicular access is from visitors to
13 the cemetery. Staff commends the applicant in
14 identifying a key goal of the Draft Master Plan
15 is to reduce the pedestrian and vehicular
16 conflicts along Memorial Avenue and within the
17 cemetery. Staff recommends that the applicant
18 continue to identify ways to improve and support
19 bus and tram use and the Metro for workers and
20 visitors, alike.

21 Finally, staff recommends that the
22 applicant explore opportunities to improve the

1 tram service from the Metro Station to the
2 Welcome Center to assist visitors with mobility
3 issues.

4 In conclusion, staff recommends that
5 the Commission comments favorably on the goals
6 and overall approach presented in the Draft Real
7 Property Master Plan for Arlington National
8 Cemetery while supporting the stated vision,
9 goals, and objectives.

10 Finally, staff commends the plan's
11 commitment to maintaining the mission and
12 historic character of Arlington National
13 Cemetery.

14 This concludes my presentation. As
15 I've incorporated all the recommendations into my
16 presentation, I will not repeat them here. I'm
17 here to answer any questions the Commission may
18 have, and I am joined by Arlington National
19 Cemetery's Colonel Thomas Austin and Agnes
20 Sullivan. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Webb.

22 Do Commissioners have any questions

1 for Mr. Webb or the representatives?

2 (No audible response.)

3 Hearing no questions, I will now open
4 it to the Commission for discussion. If the
5 Commissioners would please turn on your cameras,
6 I will start with Commissioner Wright and go in a
7 round robin format using our normal seating
8 order, so please keep your web cams on during the
9 discussion.

10 And now we will go to Commissioner
11 Wright.

12 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: You know, I
13 think you're going to be shocked, but I don't
14 have any comments or questions on this one.

15 I was sorry that I missed the field
16 trip. So I -- so I don't -- I confess to not
17 having as deep an understanding as I did with the
18 other projects, but I was around for 2015 and it
19 all made sense to me. I thought the EDR was
20 pretty good.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

22 Commissioner Dixon?

1 COMMISSIONER DIXON: As to what the
2 staff has presented, I have no comments.

3 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

4 Commissioner Cash?

5 COMMISSIONER CASH: I really
6 appreciate the field trip out there. It helped
7 to understand a lot of this. I think the EDR
8 does a great job. I just want to emphasize with
9 the transportation elements that were mentioned
10 in the EDR to really work as we move forward with
11 this on just a better kind of pedestrian
12 management towards those conflicts and not be too
13 heavy handed and maybe we can come up with some
14 better solutions. But overall I think this is
15 great. Thanks.

16 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

17 Commissioner Ginsberg?

18 COMMISSIONER GINSBERG: Thank you for
19 the presentation. I don't have any comments.

20 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

21 Commissioner Cozart?

22 COMMISSIONER COZART: I also

1 appreciate the presentation, and I'm also sorry
2 that I missed the field trip. I appreciate the
3 staff's work on this, and no comments.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And I did want
6 to say one thing though. I forgot.

7 CHAIR WHITE: Go ahead.

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: The piece about
9 -- I'm particularly a fan of the part of the EDR
10 that talks about this mobile, to make sure that
11 the screening apparatus is not permanent. That's
12 such a beautiful vista and putting -- plunking
13 that stuff down on a permanent basis would really
14 be a shame. So and it can be done pretty easily
15 to have removable equipment. So I just wanted to
16 say that I'm really -- that I think that's super
17 important.

18 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
19 Wright.

20 Commissioner McMahon?

21 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yes, thanks,
22 and thanks to the staff again for a great report,

1 a great EDR. I have second -- a couple of
2 comments about Memorial Drive, and I also want to
3 take the time, since they're here today, to thank
4 the staff from ANC who spent their morning with
5 us with the threat of rain, to take us around and
6 give us a good visual of what their trying to get
7 to, and what the cemetery looks like. Thank you.

8 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

9 Commissioner May?

10 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes. I have just
11 a few comments. I do want to thank the staff for
12 a very thorough report, and it's, I mean, we do
13 get -- we do sort of expect these thorough
14 investigations and I think today we really there
15 are several that have been very thorough, but I
16 think in this one in particular, since it's of
17 concern to the Park Service, I really wanted to
18 make sure I said thank you to the staff for the
19 work on this report.

20 I do appreciate also the particular
21 attention that's been given to the concerns that
22 the Park Service has already expressed to the

1 Cemetery, and potential conflicts with our
2 operations at Arlington House, the fact that
3 certain actions will need our approval as they
4 are currently envisioned. And so that means a
5 lot of cooperation and collaboration as it moves
6 forward. And in particular, visitor pedestrian
7 safety concerns in the vicinity of Arlington
8 House, I just want to underscore that point.

9 You know, we understand and appreciate
10 the very important mission of Arlington National
11 Cemetery, but the National Park Service has a
12 mission as well. And it's easy when you have
13 important things that you have to do, to forget
14 the needs of your neighbors. And we are
15 neighbors. We're an in-holding, essentially,
16 within Arlington National Cemetery. So we really
17 want to make sure that the leadership of
18 Arlington National Cemetery pays close attention
19 to what our visitors will need because, frankly,
20 our visitors in many cases are their visitors as
21 well, so.

22 I think I would also want to

1 underscore Commissioner Wright's comments about
2 any sort of screening that could occur on
3 Memorial Avenue. I mean this has been on an
4 ongoing discussion for, I don't know, all the
5 time that I've been at the Park Service and, of
6 course, up until 2020, Memorial Avenue was under
7 our jurisdiction, and we're just, you know, we
8 don't want to see that junk up with crummy
9 looking equipment and bike rack which is the
10 material that Ms. Cozart was referring on the
11 Long Bridge Project, right, the part of a bike
12 rack kind of stuff.

13 There are ways to do this well, and I
14 think that there has to be some very strong
15 attention around getting that right and keeping
16 it as minimal as it possibly can be and still be
17 safe.

18 And then the last think I want to
19 mention, is just to underscore again one of the
20 staff comments having to do flex space just north
21 of Memorial Avenue where, you know, that's --
22 those are -- it's a fully designed landscape for

1 Memorial Avenue with the allees of trees that
2 line that area. And granted, many of those trees
3 are not there now, but they should be
4 replenished, and that area should be restored.
5 And I think that was an inherent conflict with
6 the aspirations to make that some sort of flex
7 space. I just don't see how that can work.

8 But we'll see what comes in the future
9 development of this Master Plan. Thank you.

10 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
11 May.

12 Commissioner Argo?

13 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I don't have any
14 additional comments. I'd like to align with the
15 words from Commissioner May and, yeah, and also
16 underscore the fact that flex space always makes
17 me nervous just in terms of, yeah, what the
18 parameters of that really entail. No, I don't
19 have any other comments. Thank you.

20 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
21 Argo.

22 I believe that is everyone, and I

1 would just like to say I want to thank the
2 leadership at the cemetery for coming in early
3 with this plan. It seems like there are a lot of
4 positive improvements especially for visitors as
5 they experience the Welcome Center and start
6 their visit to the cemetery. It's a really
7 important entry point.

8 And I also want to thank you for
9 providing the Commission with a great field trip.
10 I regret I was unable to attend, but I did hear
11 from those who attended that it was really very
12 helpful to see all the nuances of the plan and
13 understand the issues that you're trying to
14 resolve as you move forward.

15 I also want to underscore the previous
16 comments about the visitors screening on Memorial
17 Avenue, and thank you for taking this under
18 consideration to have the least amount of impact
19 on that vista, and just the function of that
20 screening process.

21 We look forward to seeing the next
22 submission. And with that, we would ask if

1 there's a motion to approve comments on Arlington
2 National Cemetery's draft master plan?

3 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: So moved.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
5 McMahon.

6 Is there a second?

7 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Second.

8 CHAIR WHITE: And Ms. Koster, can you
9 please confirm the motion and the second and take
10 the vote by roll call?

11 MS. KOSTER: Certainly, the motion was
12 made by Commissioner McMahon, the second was by
13 Commissioner Wright.

14 And with that, Commissioner Cozart?

15 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

16 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

17 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yes.

18 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner May?

19 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

20 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Argo?

21 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

22 MS. KOSTER: Chair White?

1 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

2 MS. KOSTER: Okay. Commissioner

3 Wright?

4 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

5 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

6 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

7 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Cash?

8 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

9 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. And

10 Commissioner Ginsberg?

11 (No Oral Response.)

12 MS. KOSTER: And then Commissioner

13 Ginsberg?

14 I will note her as not present.

15 I believe with that, the motion has
16 carried.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Koster.

18 BELVOIR NORTH AREA DISTRIBUTION CENTER

19 CHAIR WHITE: The next item, 6D, is a
20 request to approve comments on concept plans for
21 the Fort Belvoir North Area Distribution Center.

22 Mr. Hart is here to present the staff

1 report. So welcome, Mr. Hart.

2 COMMISSIONER MAY: Madam Chair? Madam
3 Chair?

4 CHAIR WHITE: Why, yes.

5 COMMISSIONER MAY: I'm sorry to
6 interrupt but just for a moment.

7 CHAIR WHITE: Commissioner May?

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yeah. I was hoping
9 to --

10 CHAIR WHITE: I'm sorry. I didn't see
11 your hands. Excuse me.

12 COMMISSIONER MAY: So like I said, I
13 was trying not to disturb your rhythm. Anyway,
14 given where we are in the run of the day, I was
15 just going to make a suggestion that perhaps we
16 might bypass the presentation and go straight to
17 discussions. I don't there are a whole lot of
18 questions about this. I'd be ready to move its
19 approval even if the rest of the Commission would
20 be so willing. But of course, if people do want
21 to hear the presentation, I'm fine with that too.

22 CHAIR WHITE: Well, I think because it

1 was on the agenda and there may be people who
2 were looking forward to seeing this who don't sit
3 on the Commission, I would prefer if people can
4 hang in there and to go ahead and have the
5 presentation.

6 COMMISSIONER MAY: Fine. Fine by me.
7 I just thought I would make the suggestion.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIR WHITE: No, I appreciate that.
10 So why don't we move forward and maybe
11 we'll go through the presentation at a little
12 faster clip.

13 So, thank you.

14 MR. HART: Thank you Chair White, and
15 good afternoon, Chair White, and members of the
16 Commission. Hopefully, you all can see the
17 presentation and hear me?

18 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

19 MS. KOSTER: Yes.

20 MR. HART: The Department of the Army
21 has submitted concept site and building plans for
22 a new Distribution Center at the Fort Belvoir

1 North Area in Fairfax County, Virginia. You may
2 recall that this project was identified in the
3 Fort Belvoir North Area Development Plan which
4 the Commission approved in March of this year.

5 And I'll note that you received a
6 revised EDR on this project, and this was really
7 so the staff could add in some information
8 regarding the nature, scope and recommendations
9 for the proposed perimeter fence that is part of
10 the project. And those changes are on pages 3
11 and 7 of the EDR, and they should be either
12 highlighted or underlined in it.

13 So to orient you, the FDNA, the Fort
14 Belvoir North Area as it is known, is an 804 acre
15 campus located northwest of the Main Fort Belvoir
16 Installation in Virginia. West of the
17 installation is the Fairfax County Parkway --
18 west and south of the installation, and then to
19 the east of the FD&A is Interstate 95. During
20 commission review the Commission should be
21 focused on issues such as is the project
22 consistent with a comprehensive plan and other

1 NCPC plans? Is the project consistent with the
2 installation master plan? Is it appropriate for
3 this site and are there put together unique
4 and/or complex issues? And I'll cover these
5 topics throughout the presentation, and we'll
6 first briefly summarize the existing conditions,
7 then move to the proposal, and then end with
8 staff analysis and content recommendations.

9 So this is a closer look at the
10 installation. In addition to the National
11 Geospatial-Intelligence Agency Headquarters,
12 which is shown here in the middle of this slide,
13 there are also other existing development --
14 some other existing development at the FBNA which
15 includes the Child-Development Center and Fire
16 Station on the northeastern portion of the
17 installation, and then the Remote Inspection
18 Facility which is located southwest of the NGA.

19 I'll also point at that Accotink
20 Creek, which is highlighted here, bisects the
21 campus, and there are stream valleys that
22 continue off of Accotink Creek but to the east

1 and west of it.

2 Before we get to the proposal, I
3 thought it would be helpful to see the three
4 developable areas for the FBNA that were
5 identified in the recently approved ADP. Areas A
6 and D included future development projects in the
7 Master Plan. Area D was the location of a new
8 Distribution Center, which is the project that is
9 before you today. And I'll note that while a
10 Distribution Center was mentioned in the ADP for
11 Area D, the specific site location and building
12 massing were not described within the Master
13 Plan.

14 So here's the proposed Distribution
15 Center Facility. It as a 525,000 square foot
16 facility that consists of the elements that you
17 see here. There is a high bay warehouse, which
18 is circled here in the middle of this screen, a
19 three-story administration building, which is
20 northeast of that storage warehouse area, an
21 entry control facility, a vehicle maintenance
22 facility, storage buildings, and the utility

1 yard. In addition, there are two parking lots
2 that are located just north of the main building
3 here.

4 The main building will have solar
5 panels for a portion of the roof and the other
6 portion of the roof will be a green roof, and
7 I'll note that the parking areas also have solar
8 canopies on top of them. The parking consists of
9 450 spaces, and the parking ratio for this part
10 of the installation is 1:5, and there are over
11 400 personal vehicle spaces and 50 government
12 vehicle spaces.

13 This is a rendering helping to show
14 where the facility is in a little bit more
15 detail. With that entry control facility here
16 closest to us. This view is actually looking
17 towards the west, and you'll see the main
18 warehouse building with the admin building to the
19 top of the slide here.

20 The Commission action on the ADP
21 provided guidance on several topics including
22 environmental impacts, energy efficiency,

1 transportation, and further coordination with
2 Fairfax County for the entire campus. Staff
3 found this proposal complies with some of these
4 recommendations regarding seeking early
5 consultation with NCPC staff, completing a survey
6 of existing trees, incorporating and providing
7 alternative environmental compensation measures
8 earlier in the design process, and continuing
9 coordination with Fairfax County.

10 Staff also found additional
11 information is necessary to address the
12 Commission's action regarding prioritization of
13 off and on site tree replanting, locating the
14 facility on previously disturbed land to the
15 greatest extent possible, and providing
16 quantitative data demonstrating how the
17 alternative environmental compensation will be
18 equal to the loss of trees on the site. This
19 presentation will describe what information the
20 Army provided with this submission and additional
21 information that the staff needs to help to
22 understand the proposal better.

1 After reviewing the submission
2 materials, staff supports certain elements of
3 this project, namely, the high bay warehouse and
4 the three story admin building, the vehicle
5 maintenance facility, as well as the covered
6 storage, and the utility yard. We support these
7 items because they are generally within the 26-
8 acre boundary identified in the recently approved
9 ADP because its size doesn't allow it to be
10 located in areas A or B from the ADP, and it has
11 been decided not to disturb on-site wetlands or
12 stream valleys.

13 You can see that the wetlands are
14 identified here. There's one to the north, and
15 then there are two that are located here, south
16 of the building. The stream valleys are the
17 purple areas with the stream one's being the
18 blue. The staff's main concern with the
19 Distribution Center proposal is because of the
20 amount of tree removal that's proposed in Area D
21 has increased. It was 26 acres in the final ADP
22 that you approved in March, and it's nearly 40

1 acres as described here.

2 Although the Army didn't provide a
3 tree removal and protection plan, they did
4 provide a tree stand delineation plan, and a map
5 showing where trees will be removed. They've
6 also provided the Fort Belvoir tree removal and
7 protection policy, which is applicable to this
8 project. It's identified here on the first
9 bullet. They note that the Accotink Lake will be
10 an offsite area to receive some of the trees that
11 will be removed, which is a result of the
12 continued coordination between the Army and
13 Fairfax County. Unfortunately, they didn't
14 describe how many trees will be planted at
15 Accotink Lake, and that's the information that
16 we'd like to understand.

17 In addition, some of the trees will be
18 needed to be removed because of the perimeter
19 fence, which I'll discuss in an upcoming slide,
20 and you can see the fence line here that's, kind
21 of, reddish line that's shown here.

22 In order to understand the added

1 impacts on forested areas, the staff overlayed
2 the new plan on the Area D outline. And just so
3 that you're understanding this, the blue dotted
4 line is the new plan which is proposed now. The
5 purple line that's shown here is what was the
6 delineation for the Area D in the ADP. The
7 outline is shown here is helpful, and I'll switch
8 to a black and white image so that you can see
9 where the areas are that are additional tree
10 removal.

11 And it appears the difference is a
12 result of a few things being larger than
13 anticipated, the parking area to the north, as
14 well as the main entry area to the east. In
15 addition there's the alignment of the perimeter
16 fence. Therefore, staff requests the U.S. Army
17 to reevaluate how more trees can be preserved
18 either by reducing the size and configuration of
19 the parking lots, interior roads, and building
20 footprints.

21 So next we get to the perimeter fence
22 impacts on the forested areas. The perimeter

1 fence project itself includes a three-foot wide
2 swath with a ten-foot pathway within it. It also
3 includes lighting and monitoring devices along
4 the fence line. The perimeter fence was not
5 described in the ADP, and as I noted, it includes
6 the removal of trees. It does cross a few
7 streams, and there are potential impacts to
8 those. We haven't received much information on
9 this fence and aren't sure this alignment which
10 has environmental impacts is necessary.

11 While we haven't received this
12 information, we are requesting the Army to
13 provide additional information regarding why it
14 is needed in an already secured campus, the
15 number of trees that will be removed for the
16 fence, and how the fence proposal will be altered
17 to reduce the amount of tree loss and impacts to
18 streams and wetlands. As there are a significant
19 number of trees being removed and there are
20 limited areas to plant new trees on the campus,
21 the Army noted it would provide alternative
22 environmental compensation to offset the loss of

1 the trees.

2 These measures include locations
3 offsite to replant trees at a 2:1 ratio, the
4 consideration of solar and/or wind powered
5 generation installations on and off posts, the
6 implementation of stream restoration on Fort
7 Belvoir, and/or stream restoration mitigation,
8 excuse me, and/or stormwater restoration in our
9 mitigation issues through the post. The staff
10 report notes the Army has committed, as part of
11 the final ADP in March, to alternative
12 environmental compensation measures to mitigate
13 tree loss because of the future development at
14 the FBNA.

15 However, it's unclear how much of the
16 proposed solar panels are mitigation for the tree
17 loss, as no information was provided describing
18 the tree removal and replacement plan.

19 The staff recommends that the
20 Commission requests the Army to submit a tree
21 replacement plan. A requirement for the
22 Commission's preliminary review that addresses

1 the following: The number of trees removed and
2 how the replacement ratio of 2:1 tree for every
3 tree removed will be met on on or offsite with a
4 priority for onsite planting; An identification
5 of onsite preservation areas and areas for
6 replanting; and then, finally, an analysis that
7 demonstrates how additional environment
8 compensation measures will equal the loss of
9 trees removed.

10 The final ADP indicated that new
11 facilities are intended to support onsite
12 renewable energy production and that the
13 installation should consider this during the
14 project review stage. The Army noted the
15 proposed Distribution Center will include solar
16 panels on the building rooftop, green roofs on
17 other portions of the rooftop, solar canopies
18 over the surface parking spaces, as well as eight
19 percent of the parking spaces will be equipped
20 with electrical vehicle charging stations. Under
21 the current proposals, new facilities would be
22 constructed to a standard of LEED silver, and

1 staff supports this designation as we find the
2 Army is prioritizing renewable energy by
3 incorporating the alternative environmental
4 compensation measures that I've already
5 described.

6 The staff acknowledges that the
7 applicant has provided some limited information
8 regarding stormwater management. You see the
9 stormwater management plan here. However, as
10 staff notes, there is insufficient information to
11 understand how the project will address
12 stormwater management, the alternate providing
13 some onsite below grade storage.

14 And finally, there are 450 parking
15 spaces proposed for the Distribution Center's
16 600 employees and government vehicles. The ADP
17 however, identified the number of distribution
18 center employees as 650, and the amount of
19 parking for the facility was between 436 and 390
20 spaces which were for the nearer term and long
21 term. This would equal a parking ratio of either
22 1 to 1:5 in the nearer term, or 1 to 1:7 in the

1 long term. And as this proposal includes 600
2 employees and 200, like, new employee parking
3 spaces, the proposed facility would have a
4 parking ratio of 1 to 1:5. It is unclear to
5 staff how the installation will achieve a 1:2
6 parking ratio given this proposal will have a
7 parking ratio that is less than that.

8 And then while staff understands that
9 parking may be necessary here as it's located far
10 from the existing development at the FBNA, the
11 entire installation will still need to meet the
12 1:2 long term parking ratio goal as described and
13 approved in the Master Plan. And the staff also
14 reminds the Army, the Commission's March approval
15 requested the Army to return in two years with an
16 update to the TMP to demonstrate, among other
17 things, how the TDM strategies will help if the
18 installation can achieve a 1:2 parking ratio goal
19 in the long term.

20 And with that, it is the Executive
21 Director's Recommendation that the Commission
22 support the following elements of the

1 distribution center complex: The high bay
2 warehouse, the three-story administration
3 building, the truck maintenance refueling
4 building, the covered enclosed storage buildings,
5 and the utility yard. And defers support for the
6 two surface parking lots with 450 spaces, the
7 entry control facility, and the perimeter fence
8 until additional information is submitted for
9 review.

10 As I've already incorporated the rest
11 of the recommendations into my presentation, I
12 won't repeat them here. I'm available for any
13 questions, as are representatives from Fort
14 Belvoir. This concludes my presentation, and I'd
15 be happy to answer any questions. Thanks.

16 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you so much, Mr.
17 Hart.

18 Are there any questions for Mr. Hart
19 or the applicants?

20 (No oral response.)

21 CHAIR WHITE: Hearing none, I will now
22 open it up to the Commission for discussion if

1 everyone would turn on your cameras and keep them
2 on during deliberation. I will start with
3 Commissioner McMahon and then go in round robin
4 format.

5 So first, Commissioner McMahon.

6 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Okay, thanks.
7 I actually do have one question. Do we have the
8 applicant here today?

9 MR. HART: They, yeah, they should be.

10 DR. BELLAMY: Yes, we're here.

11 MR. HART. Sorry. I think that's
12 probably Dr. Bellamy?

13 DR. BELLAMY: Yes, how are you?

14 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Hey, Dr.
15 Bellamy, yeah, good afternoon. So just one
16 question for Dr. Bellamy and then probably one
17 question for Mr. Hart.

18 MR. HART: Sure.

19 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: I'll start with
20 Mr. Hart first. Looking at the TMP and those
21 requirements and the way the brief is put
22 together, is the intention from the Commission

1 staff is that the Area D of North Area is going
2 to be handled separately or is that part of an
3 overall TMP for Fort Belvoir North Area?

4 DR. BELLAMY: It's, in a way, separate
5 because its functionality is very different from
6 the campus core. You know, the campus core is of
7 administrative nature. The Distribution Center
8 is legitimately that. It is a Distribution
9 Center with very different transportation
10 requirements than the campus core. But we're
11 more than willing to increase that information as
12 the design progresses. And along with the new
13 information on the two parking lots, those are
14 intended to be light handed to speak to earlier,
15 so that there isn't a lot of earth moving that
16 has to happen. And but we're more than happy to
17 continue to provide you information as time
18 progresses.

19 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Okay. And I
20 look forward to your next -- your team and your
21 part of the Master Plan where you committed to
22 meet in the next two years. Okay. I really had

1 no other comments on the plan itself. I think
2 the recommendations are solid, and I think there
3 is time in this project for Fort Belvoir to
4 respond to them before they move forward and come
5 see us again.

6 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

7 Commissioner May?

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yeah, I don't have
9 a lot to add. I think the EDR sums up the major
10 concerns and, I just would want to underscore the
11 issues with regard to tree removal and the
12 perimeter fence development, how that will be.

13 I would also just want to mention, I
14 mean, there was one perspective rendering toward
15 the end, which showed an overall view of the
16 facility, and it's a lot of roads, and a lot of
17 grass, and some pancake buildings, and really,
18 that's not great.

19 And I think, you know, they could be
20 a little more creative in how they treat the
21 landscape, at the very least. But you still need
22 to have all that road, and you still need to have

1 those large flat buildings, then some, you know,
2 something other than grass because grass is not
3 the most sustainable thing. I mean, it's cheap
4 and it's easy, and I understand there may be
5 benefits from the security perspective from
6 things like that, but, you know, could you be
7 thinking about meadow plantings or things that
8 might spark some more pollinators, I mean,
9 there's just, it can be a little bit more
10 creative than that. So that's it. Thank you.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
12 May.

13 Commissioner Argo?

14 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I appreciate the
15 opportunity to see this, and I don't have
16 additional comments. I think that, you know,
17 anything that we can, you know, anything that
18 they can do to keep that parking ratio where
19 we've asked them to keep it, making sure that
20 they have that incorporated tightly into their
21 plans, I'd appreciate it. I don't have any other
22 comments. Thank you.

1 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

2 Commissioner Wright?

3 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yeah, I have a
4 -- it was kind of a question, and I'm almost
5 afraid to ask it, but I'm going to go ahead.
6 Carlton, you said something about a thirty-foot
7 swath at the perimeter fence. Is that a
8 requirement, and how come? A swath of what? I
9 mean, because --

10 MR. HART: It's a --

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Go ahead.

12 MR. HART: Yeah, it's a, basically,
13 what we've been told is that it's a three foot
14 wide area that they need clear, and a ten foot
15 wide pathway within that. So it's about the
16 fence. Basically, it's for the fence.

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So they need it
18 clear for construction or for visibility for
19 security reasons after the perimeter fence is in?

20 MR. HART: My understanding is it is
21 for after. It may be for security for
22 visibility.

1 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: For visibility,
2 okay. Which brings me to Mr. May's comment,
3 which I second, about the grass. There's a lot
4 of stuff you can do that won't interfere with
5 site lines, and might even discourage, what's the
6 word, trans, not transgressing, what's -- you
7 know what I mean, crossing it.

8 (Laughing.)

9 MR. HART: Oh, yes, yes. Traversing.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: It slipped --
11 thank you. That's a good word for it. I'm
12 tired.

13 MR. HART: I know.

14 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So I think
15 anything but grass, would cut down on your
16 maintenance, would not interfere with your site
17 lines and would also just be prettier. And not
18 to mention, yes, the pollinators, you know, the
19 bees would love you. And it would just be cut
20 down on a lot of greenhouse gas from cutting all
21 that grass.

22 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner

1 Wright.

2 Commissioner Dixon?

3 COMMISSIONER DIXON: I'm happy with
4 what I've heard. Thank you.

5 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

6 Commissioner Cash?

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: No additional
8 comments. Thanks for the presentation.

9 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

10 Commissioner Ginsberg?

11 (No oral response.)

12 CHAIR WHITE: Do you think Ms.
13 Ginsberg probably had to leave?

14 MS. KOSTER: Has Commissioner Gins --
15 Yes, Commissioner Ginsberg has had to leave the
16 meeting.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

18 Commissioner Cozart?

19 COMMISSIONER COZART: No additional
20 comments. I appreciate the presentation and the
21 EDR report. Very well done.

22 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you.

1 Well, and I'd like to add, you know,
2 we recognize it's a difficult project to site. A
3 distribution center is large, and it has a big
4 footprint. We know it's a necessary function.
5 So I do want to just echo the comments about the
6 impact to the trees, that it will be an extensive
7 impact. And I really want to stress how
8 important it is to continue working as you have
9 to think about replacement and other
10 environmental mitigation in addition to seeing
11 that the footprint is as small as it can be.

12 Taking to heart, Mr. May's comments
13 about creativity. There's a lot of interesting
14 work going on in the private sector with
15 distribution centers and green roofs and, you
16 know, I would welcome an exploration of those
17 ideas to mitigate the impact. And it will be
18 very helpful to hear more information on why the
19 perimeter fence is needed and environmental
20 impacts related to its constructions,
21 particularly, the impact on the creeks. And I
22 know you'll be supplying that to us.

1 I do appreciate the amount of solar
2 energy that you have included in the project, and
3 I'm glad that again, you are coordinating with
4 the County on tree replacement. So we look
5 forward to hearing more information, when you
6 come back, about all those aspects.

7 So with that, is there a motion to
8 approve comments on concept plans for the Fort
9 Belvoir North Area Distribution Center?

10 COMMISSIONER ARGO: So moved.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Moved by Commissioner
12 Argo. Is there a second?

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Second.

14 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
15 Dixon.

16 Ms. Koster, can you please confirm the
17 motion and the second, and take the vote by roll
18 call?

19 MS. KOSTER: Certainly. The motion
20 was made by Commissioner Argo, seconded by
21 Commissioner Dixon.

22 And with that, Commissioner Cozart?

1 COMMISSIONER COZART: Yes.

2 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner McMahon?

3 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: Yes.

4 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner May?

5 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

6 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Argo?

7 COMMISSIONER ARGO: Yes.

8 MS. KOSTER: Thank you. Chair White?

9 CHAIR WHITE: Yes.

10 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Wright?

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes.

12 MS. KOSTER: Commissioner Dixon?

13 COMMISSIONER DIXON: Yes.

14 MS. KOSTER: Thank you, and

15 Commissioner Cash?

16 COMMISSIONER CASH: Yes.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. The motion
18 is carried.

19 INFORMATION PRESENTATION NEW

20 SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS SITE EVALUATION STUDY

21 CHAIR WHITE: The last item on our
22 agenda is an information presentation on the New

1 Smithsonian Museums Site Evaluation Study, and
2 today we'll be hearing from Mr. Flis. Welcome
3 back.

4 MR. FLIS: Thank you, and good
5 afternoon again. Let me make sure I can --
6 hopefully, you can see that?

7 MS. KOSTER: We can, but we also see
8 all of the frame. Oh, there it goes. Yeah, it
9 looks good.

10 MR. FLIS. There you go. Great.
11 Thank you. So the purpose of today's information
12 presentation is to provide an update on the
13 Smithsonian Institution's Site Evaluation Study
14 for two new museums. The National Museum of the
15 American Latino and the American Women's History
16 Museum. This study will cover both museums and
17 is occurring concurrently. You saw an
18 introduction to this process back in December of
19 2021, followed by an update and review of the
20 candidate sites in March.

21 So just as a reminder, the legislation
22 establishes that the Smithsonian organization

1 should identify sites by December of 2022. The
2 legislation also requires that the Board of
3 Regents consult with, among others, the Chair of
4 NCPC, so NCPC has an advisory role in this
5 effort.

6 Generally, in the past and with the
7 most recent museum, the Chair has provided
8 letters with recommendations and comments to the
9 Board of Regents. We do expect that they will
10 return to the Commission for a final briefing in
11 September of this year with some additional
12 analysis, which I'll talk about a little bit
13 later. And then, of course, following site
14 selection, NCPC, pursuant to the Planning Act,
15 will have review authority over this site and
16 building plans for the museums.

17 So I mentioned in March you saw 14
18 Tier 1 sites that had been identified from the
19 original 26 sites you saw previously. The
20 Smithsonian has identified four focus sites, and
21 of those three you saw previously, and one new
22 site which they'll talk a little bit about in

1 further detail today.

2 So with that as background, I'm going
3 to turn it over to Ron Cortez, Under Secretary
4 for Administration with the Smithsonian. He will
5 provide some remarks and introduce the rest of
6 their team. Thank you.

7 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you, Mr. Flis, and
8 good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the
9 Commission.

10 As Mr. Flis mentioned, we are here
11 today for what will be the third of four
12 briefings to your Commission as our evaluation of
13 sites progresses. We appreciate your including
14 us on your packed agenda today. As you can see
15 on the agenda, we will provide the following:
16 Museum updates, an update on our site evaluation
17 process, and discuss next steps with you.

18 And we're very anxious to receive
19 feedback and comments that we can incorporate
20 into the process. And as Mr. Flis mentioned, we
21 will plan to be back here in September to respond
22 to questions and feedback that you have from us

1 here today. So with this, I will go ahead and
2 turn this over.

3 So before we provide an update on our
4 evaluation study, I would like to briefly
5 introduce our museum directors, who we are very
6 proud of, and who will update you on some of our
7 recent activities.

8 First of all, we have Lisa Sasaki, our
9 interim director at the Smithsonian American
10 Women's History Museum, and Jorge Zamanillo,
11 recently hired, who joined the Smithsonian as the
12 director of the National Museum of the American
13 Latino from his previous position as director and
14 CEO of the HistoryMiami Museum, and he will say a
15 few words.

16 First, I'd like to introduce Lisa
17 Sasaki. Lisa?

18 MS. SASAKI: Thank you very much, Ron.
19 Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the
20 Commission. I have been honored to be working on
21 the building of the foundations of the new
22 American Women's History Museum which will

1 amplify the accomplishments of American women,
2 the history they've made, and that made them, and
3 the communities that they represent. The museum
4 is committed to chronicling the millions of
5 stories that exist throughout out past and
6 present so that they can education and inspire
7 future generations.

8 One of the most significant first
9 steps that has happened since I was asked to
10 serve as interim director, has been to work with
11 the museum's advisory council and developing
12 their recommendations to the Smithsonian Regents
13 surrounding the selection of a site.

14 Depicted here on the next slide is a
15 photo of the Women's History Museum Council when
16 they visited potential sites on March 30th. The
17 National Museum of the American Latino and the
18 Smithsonian Board of Regents have also toured the
19 sites this spring. I'm not going to take up too
20 much time because I know you have had a very long
21 day, so I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to
22 my colleague, Jorge Zamanillo, so he can say a

1 few words about the National Museum of the
2 American Latino.

3 MR. ZAMANILLO: Thank you, Lisa, and
4 good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the
5 Commission. I look forward to working with you
6 over the next many years in the realization of
7 our new museum. I'm honored to join the
8 Smithsonian team and take on this incredible
9 opportunity. Two weeks ago, I joined the
10 leadership of the Smithsonian, the National
11 Museum of American Latino, the Molina family, and
12 the First Lady of the United States, and
13 President Joe Biden, in opening the Molina Family
14 Latino Gallery as a National Museum of American
15 History. This gallery is the first generation of
16 the National Museum of the American Latino, and
17 provides a preview of the Latino Museum's
18 potential, and how visitors can envision the
19 museum. The Molino Family Latino Gallery
20 inaugural exhibition, Presente: a Latino History
21 of the United States, introduces critical
22 conflicts, moments, and biographies that shine a

1 light on a historical and cultural legacy of U.S.
2 Latinas and Latinos. I will now turn it back to
3 Ron Cortez. Thank you so much.

4 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you, Jorge.

5 Next slide.

6 We would like to update you on our
7 progress and evaluate the potential sites for the
8 two museums. It's been a very thorough process,
9 and one in which we take pride in taking feedback
10 into the process.

11 The next slide.

12 As you recall at the March meeting, we
13 shared that our initial due diligence had
14 characterized the 26 sites into our list of Tier
15 1 sites, those with greater potential for a new
16 museum, and tier two sites, those with limited or
17 no potential for the new museums. Following the
18 meeting, one additional site was added for
19 consideration and evaluation. Since then, site
20 visits have been conducted with the Smithsonian
21 Board of Regents, the Smithsonian of the American
22 Women's History Museum Council, and then lastly,

1 the Museum of the American Latino Board.

2 In addition we've held numerous
3 outreach meetings to members of different
4 congressional staff, and the Women's Caucus,
5 Congressional Caucus, and a number of other
6 stakeholder groups.

7 In addition, we focused on qualitative
8 feedback and quantitative feedback, we conducted
9 a national survey which generated input,
10 represented input from across the country from
11 the public regarding the Smithsonian site
12 evaluation process.

13 Next slide.

14 We are currently conducting the
15 following steps: We're reaching out to
16 leadership of agencies with jurisdictions over
17 the sites to discuss acquisition potential for
18 each. We're analyzing a smaller group of focus
19 sites in greater depth, which I'll describe later
20 in this presentation. We're refining the
21 planning level programs for use and massing
22 studies and cost studies to inform site

1 evaluations. In other words, going into further
2 detail of the analysis of these focus sites.
3 We're developing more detailed costs estimate for
4 each of the sites, and we plan to return to NCPC
5 in September to share our massing studies, cost
6 analysis, and responses to your feedback today.

7 And based on this fully developed
8 evaluation, we would anticipate receiving former
9 written comments and, on the site selection from
10 NCPC, as well as many others named in enabling
11 legislation, prior to our submittal of the final
12 site recommendations to the Smithsonian Regents
13 in October.

14 Next slide.

15 This map illustrates where we started
16 our evaluation process for the long list of sites
17 drawn from the study by the two Commissions that
18 developed the Presidential Congressional
19 Commission reports that preceded the enabling
20 legislation. Earlier in the process, we added
21 two sites located beyond the map for
22 consideration, Walter Reed and Barry Farms, and

1 as Mr. Flis mentioned, since we last met with
2 this group we had an additional site, a Tidal
3 Basin site which was brought to our attention by
4 a member of the public.

5 I would like to now introduce Luanne
6 Greene, president of Ayers Saint Gross who will
7 present an overview of the evaluation criteria
8 which we are using to evaluate the slides.

9 Next slide.

10 Luanne?

11 MS. GREENE: Great. Thanks, Ron. We can
12 go ahead to the next slide.

13 There are six high-level criteria that
14 we're using to help us understand each of the
15 sites. Each of the high-level criteria also has
16 defined sub-criteria, and the sub-criteria are
17 weighted to reflect (Audio interference.)
18 critical, important, or desirable
19 characteristics. Next slide.

20 As an example, here are the sub-
21 criteria for the location. They are:

22 - Proximity to the National Mall. Is

1 this site on, near or off-Mall;

2 - Prominence of site location - how
3 visible is the site?

4 - Significance to constituent groups;
5 - Visitation potential and proximity
6 to the other Smithsonian museums and other active
7 areas on the Mall;

8 - Preservation of key views and site
9 lines, of course.

10 Next slide.

11 As the sites are analyzed against the
12 criteria, the results are summarized. This is an
13 example of an early summary for the Arts and
14 Industries Building, one of the four. This is a
15 living document.

16 It's updated to reflect ongoing input
17 from stakeholders. Our tours were amazing, the
18 survey work, all of the work we're doing, as well
19 as further analysis of the sites. Next slide.

20 So we have gathered quite a bit of
21 data on many sites. That analysis is instrumental
22 in identifying the Tier 1 sites that Ron

1 mentioned earlier. So, Ron, I'll turn it back to
2 you to pick up from there.

3 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you so much, Luanne,
4 for that overview. Next slide.

5 These sites include three of the four
6 sites named in the enabling legislation. The
7 Smithsonian Arts and Industry Building, the
8 Northwest Capital site, the Southwest Monument
9 site, opposite of the National Museum of African-
10 American History and Culture Museum, plus the
11 additional site at the tidal basin.

12 One thing was clear in hearing
13 feedback from our stakeholders and the surveys
14 that was of interest to both of the museums to be
15 located on the Mall, which was definitely one of
16 our influential factors in us developing these
17 focus sites. And to be clear, we did not
18 eliminate any sites. We're just continuing to
19 focus our efforts in a greater detail in the
20 remaining sites that are left.

21 So it's more of a focused analysis, in
22 which we described earlier, which we're going to

1 be continuing doing massing studies, cost
2 studies, and additional analysis of these sites.
3 Next slide.

4 The Arts and Industry Building is one
5 of the first of the focus sites, and is the only
6 site under the Smithsonian's jurisdiction, and is
7 one we're looking very closely at its capacity to
8 house the main museum.

9 It has enormous advantages in its
10 central location, and is one of Washington DC's
11 most distinctive historic buildings, whose
12 exterior restoration was completed within the
13 past ten years. It's also on the National Mall.

14 It was listed in the enabling
15 legislation for the National Museum of the
16 American Latino. Its unique historical character
17 also brings several opportunities for
18 development. Next slide.

19 The Northwest Capitol is also one of
20 the second of our focus sites. The Northwest
21 Capitol is in the enabling legislation for both
22 of the museums as part of the US Capitol grounds

1 under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the
2 Capitol.

3 We are looking more closely at this
4 site's capacity to accommodate the new museum.
5 Although on the edge of the Mall's public museum
6 campus the site along Pennsylvania Avenue as well
7 as being on the Mall, is prominent, and the site
8 could accommodate a museum at its east end.

9 Like other sites on the Mall, this
10 site has challenges, including its location in a
11 flood plain, and the Capitol's need for physical
12 security measures. Next slide.

13 The third of our four focus sites is
14 the South Monument site, which enjoys a prominent
15 location near the Washington Monument, and across
16 the Mall from the National Museum of the African-
17 American History and Culture. It was identified
18 as a site for consideration for enabling
19 legislation for both museums.

20 The site is on the National Mall.
21 Although it is in the Reserve, the no-build zone
22 includes the central parts of the Mall, formed by

1 its major cross-axes.

2 The site is one of the smaller sites
3 under consideration, and we understand it must
4 conform to the McMillan Commission set-back line.
5 Next slide.

6 The fourth of our focus sites is the
7 Tidal Basin site, which enjoys a similar
8 prominent location of proximity to the Washington
9 Monument and to the west of the Holocaust Museum.
10 It is in the Reserve.

11 Our analysis has suggested building in
12 the vicinity of the current rugby field to avoid
13 the flood plain and the more sensitive cherry
14 tree landscapes to the south. Next slide.

15 Those were the four focus sites that
16 we're continuing to develop our analysis, and
17 I'll quickly just describe the survey.

18 Since we last met with you, we
19 completed the national survey to help us refine
20 our site selection criteria and its weighting. We
21 also wanted to get further outreach and input
22 into the process.

1 Those who were surveyed included
2 panels composed of those to reflect the national
3 demographics. That was one poll that we surveyed.
4 We also did an outreach variety group, which was
5 mainly stakeholders in the current National
6 Museum of the American Latino efforts, and the
7 Smithsonian American History Museum efforts as
8 well, so a more focused group with them.

9 Not much difference in the responses
10 between those interested in the Women's History
11 Museum, the American Latino Museum, although
12 there was a difference in that the American
13 Latino respondents had more affinity for
14 festivals and performances, bilingual signs,
15 parks, and youth and family-friendly space
16 outside of the museum. Next slide.

17 One last thing I was going to point
18 out -- Go back to the previous slide, I'm sorry.
19 I skipped one.

20 One thing is that we did ask in the
21 questions how receptive they were to either a new
22 building or a renovated building. Many of the

1 respondents were open to having a renovated
2 building, but needed to have more information
3 before committing, which we thought was positive
4 for feedback for some of our thoughts regarding
5 the AIB building. Next slide.

6 As far as the next steps, of course,
7 we're very pleased to be here today. We have a
8 busy summer ahead of us, with getting feedback
9 and getting our final analysis drafted. Next
10 slide.

11 We will plan to be back, as mentioned
12 earlier, to the NCPC in September, prior to our
13 final briefing. In the next few months, we will
14 continue our discussions with site owners to
15 understand their concerns and address their
16 feedback.

17 We'll be addressing feedback from
18 external stakeholders, including outreach to
19 solicit comments from agencies and individuals
20 identified at the legislation. We will further
21 develop our architectural programs, site
22 evaluation, the asking studies, cost studies, and

1 distance studies.

2 And finally, as I mentioned, we'll
3 return to NCPC in September. Next slide.

4 That concludes our presentation for
5 today. We are very happy to take questions. I'm
6 now going to turn it over to Ann Trowbridge, and
7 other Smithsonian Institution who are here to
8 assist any questions or comments that you may
9 have. Thank you very much.

10 MS. TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Ron, and if
11 there's any doubt who should answer a question, I
12 will direct it to a member of our team.

13 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Flis,
14 Undersecretary Cortez, Director Zamanillo,
15 Director Sasaki, Ms. Greene, and Ms. Trowbridge.
16 We really appreciate all of you being here with
17 us today, and hanging in there with us to this
18 hour.

19 Do any of the commissioners have
20 questions? I see that Commissioner May has raised
21 his hand, so Commissioner May.

22 COMMISSIONER MAY: My question's pretty

1 basic, and you note this in the presentation that
2 two of the sites are located within the Reserve,
3 and the language of the authorization per the
4 museums states pretty clearly that the museums
5 shall not be located within the Reserve.

6 So is there, are you planning some
7 sort of congressional strategy, because it seems
8 difficult to get from where you are right now to
9 a selection by the end of December, as required
10 under the authorization. I'm just curious what
11 your plans are with regard to that kind of
12 outreach.

13 MR. CORTEZ: I think that's a very good
14 question. I think our first approach was to, in
15 terms of the feedback that we received from the
16 stakeholders, which is they were definitely
17 interested in being on the Mall themselves.

18 And so we clearly looked at those that
19 were going to take their site that were located
20 on the Mall. We also looked at which sites were
21 occupied and which were vacant, and we're
22 continuing to develop our analysis now in regard.

1 We clearly understand that enabling
2 legislation for the museums asked us to look at
3 the South Monument site, which is both, which is
4 actually in the Reserve. So a little bit of
5 conflict there, and we believe that going through
6 this process will help us develop and be able to
7 convey what those complexities are to others as
8 we move forward.

9 So I think this is, I appreciate the
10 comments, really part of the process as we
11 believe in going forward.

12 COMMISSIONER MAY: I didn't hear you
13 mention the word Congress in there, so at this
14 moment you are just building up towards something
15 that may eventually involve going to Congress?
16 Because it does say, shall give consideration to
17 the South Monument site, which is, giving
18 consideration is not very specific. But, shall
19 not be located on the Reserve is.

20 So it seems pretty clear that there'd
21 have to be some sort of legislation, and
22 certainly that would be the case for the Tidal

1 Basin site, which is not one that was to be given
2 consideration.

3 I don't mean to press the point. I was
4 just hoping to learn a little bit more about your
5 broader strategy in that regard.

6 MR. CORTEZ: Yeah. I think the way I
7 would answer that is that this is a transparent
8 process, in that we haven't really jumped to that
9 part yet. We are in the evaluation analysis
10 phase, and the next part of this is, I mentioned
11 earlier, outreach into the different agencies who
12 oversee these particular pieces of property and
13 have that discussion with them.

14 So that's the phase we're sort of in
15 now. I know we did have the initial alerting of
16 the agencies that we were considering, but not
17 really a discussion, and really, now is the time
18 for the discussion. But we felt that having this
19 information available to them would kind of, some
20 people talked about we need that massing studies,
21 which we are nearly complete in doing. Then we
22 can have a better discussion.

1 That's sort of the part that we're in
2 right now.

3 COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay. I mean, it's
4 still, I think you're in a bit of a pickle given
5 the timing of what's required for the selection,
6 but we don't need to go into the details of that.

7
8 (Simul taneous speaking.)

9 MR. CORTEZ: Yeah. I appreciate that. We'll note
10 that as I convey this information back. Thank
11 you.

12 COMMISSIONER MAY: I know that you've
13 had some conversations already with our
14 Secretary, and of course I'm representing the
15 Department of Interior here, not really the Park
16 Service, but I know you've had contact with the
17 Secretary and the Secretary's office, and we have
18 been discussing this and discussing with our
19 lawyers as well.

20 Happy to start having those more
21 concrete conversations as soon as you are ready.

22 MR. CORTEZ: I appreciate that

1 outreach, and we'll be reaching out too, very
2 shortly, because we pretty much have all the
3 information I think will provide a good
4 discussion. That's all part of the process, so we
5 appreciate that.

6 COMMISSIONER MAY: Great. Okay. Thank
7 you. I will have comments when we get to that
8 stage, but for now that's it for my questions.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. CORTEZ: All right. Thank you.

11 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
12 May. Any other questions for the team?
13 Commissioner Cash.

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: One quick question.
15 Does the legislation specify whether it has to be
16 in a space that is owned by the Smithsonian, or
17 can it be a long term, 100-year lease or
18 something like that, of an existing building?

19 MR. CORTEZ: Let's have, Ann, can you
20 answer that?

21 MS. TROWBRIDGE: Yes. Commissioner
22 Cash, the legislation does specify that if an

1 agency agrees to transfer its site, they will
2 send a letter to seven congressional committee
3 leadership members of the House and Senate,
4 saying that they're willing to transfer.

5 And to me, transfer means transferring
6 jurisdiction, rather than leasing.

7 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay.

8 MS. TROWBRIDGE: However, if a
9 situation arose through these conversations that
10 Ron is talking about, I am sure there could be
11 some other agreement with another federal agency
12 that we could consider and they could consider,
13 and go back to Congress about.

14 COMMISSIONER CASH: And what's the
15 current relationship, or, I guess, who owns the
16 Postal Museum? Is that actually the Postal
17 Service, and you all have that kind of an
18 arrangement, or do you own half of the building?

19 MS. TROWBRIDGE: We have an agreement.
20 It's not exactly a lease, because I'm not sure we
21 pay much rent, if any, but we have an agreement
22 with the Postal Service, and I think there's some

1 others involved in the ownership of that
2 building.

3 COMMISSIONER CASH: Okay. I'll have a
4 couple of other comments, but I just wanted to
5 tee it up with those questions, so thanks.

6 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
7 Cash. Anyone else with questions for the team?

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes, I have a
9 question.

10 CHAIR WHITE: All right.

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: This is not an
12 easy one to answer, but I still want to know. How
13 much of a role did resistance play in your
14 decision matrix?

15 MR. CORTEZ: Resistance in the terms of
16 sustainability and recovery from --

17 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No, no, political
18 resistance.

19 MR. CORTEZ: Oh, political resistance.

20 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Yes. I mean, so
21 each site has a constituency, and I just wanted
22 to know how much that was considered.

1 MR. CORTEZ: I would say that it's
2 really the other way, in the fact that we really
3 heard strongly that people want to be located on
4 the Mall itself. And then we have this matrix of
5 different factors that's been developed by Ayers
6 Saint Gross, and that's how we push this forward,
7 with the weighting of location being stronger
8 than some of the others.

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I ask because
10 it's shaping up like a spreadsheet exercise, and
11 I'm not sure that that's the most reflective of
12 reality. And I'll just leave that right there.

13 I think there's some, that the matrix
14 all makes sense. I asked some questions as we
15 were going along. For example, how much attention
16 would be paid to recent investment in certain
17 properties that the federal government has made.

18 I'm a little concerned that some of
19 these sort of soft, subjective factors that are
20 in the end very pragmatic, may not have been
21 weighted as heavily as they should have been, and
22 I'll leave it at that for right now. It's a

1 worry.

2 MR. CORTEZ: Okay. Thank you. I'll
3 reflect that.

4 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
5 Wright. Are there any other questions before we
6 go to discussion? Hearing none, I will now open
7 it up to the commission for discussion.

8 If everyone would please turn on your
9 cameras, I will start with Commissioner Cozart,
10 and then go in round robin format, using our
11 normal seating order. Please keep your webcams
12 on, and let's begin with Commissioner Cozart.

13 COMMISSIONER COZART: I don't have any
14 real comments, just appreciate the presentation
15 and understanding what are some of the dynamics
16 that you're trying to balance. I look forward to
17 continued coordination with the District, as
18 appropriate.

19
20 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner May.

21 COMMISSIONER MAY: Did you mean to skip
22 over Commissioner McMahon?

1 CHAIR WHITE: I did not. I have you out
2 of order. Commissioner McMahon, I'm so sorry.

3 COMMISSIONER MCMAHON: We're all
4 flexible here. Thanks for the presentation. I've
5 got no questions or comments.

6 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, sir.
7 Commissioner May.

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes, I do have a few
9 comments. I will note for everyone's benefit that
10 there will be a consultation with the National
11 Capital Memorial Advisory Commission on July 27.
12 That's also pursuant to the authorizing
13 legislation, that there be consultation with the
14 chair, which is the role I play with that
15 commission.

16 I look forward to hearing that
17 presentation, and I appreciate the fact that the
18 Smithsonian is willing to present to the entire
19 commission, because that's not really what was
20 required. But I appreciate your having that full
21 discussion, so we can take advantage of the
22 insights of all the members of the National

1 Capital Memorial Advisory Commission.

2 And of course, we noted already
3 further consultation that will happen with the
4 Department of the Interior. I will note that,
5 putting aside even the question of the Reserve,
6 if any National Parks Service site is selected,
7 because it would involve a discretionary decision
8 on the part of the Secretary, it will require
9 compliance with NEPA, but I think this is
10 something I mentioned the last time around as
11 well.

12 But it's just a reminder. That's
13 another reason why the timing of this, again, no
14 matter what site is selected, if it's a Park
15 Service site outside the Reserve even, we would
16 have that complication and the time that it
17 takes.

18 I am a little curious, I mean I
19 appreciate the fact that what you are showing us
20 are focus sites. Those are the few that are the
21 most desirable because of their location on the
22 Mall.

1 And I'm encouraged to hear that you
2 actually suggested that no site has truly been
3 eliminated, because one of my suggestions would
4 have been to make sure that you have some backup
5 sites. Because if you are attempting to get
6 something done before the end of the year, that
7 may be the only way you can do, would be to
8 select some of these other sites, or one of these
9 other sites.

10 Of course it is possible that you
11 could select the Arts and Industries Building and
12 the Northwest Capitol site and then the Park
13 Service and Reserve issues would go away.

14 But I imagine you might have some
15 challenges at the very least with the Northwest
16 Capitol site, because I know that's been a site
17 that's been coveted by many groups for many
18 purposes over the years, and has been very
19 difficult to get approved something going there.

20 I would recommend, if you can do this,
21 for the sake of your transparent process, that
22 you actually begin to include what you think are

1 the other short-listed alternatives. I know that
2 you started out with a very large number. We were
3 down to a dozen or so last time around. I expect
4 that some of those have fallen out for technical
5 reasons.

6 It might be worthwhile stating what
7 the backup sites are, for the purposes of, again,
8 transparency and keeping folks informed, because
9 when the analysis came out that these are the
10 focus sites, it sort of shocked quite a few
11 people, including the people in my agency and my
12 department.

13 I would also say, I'm sure this point
14 has been made to you already in other ways, but
15 thinking about museums and the future of museums
16 in Washington, I think it is very important to be
17 thinking beyond the National Mall, because there
18 is only so much real estate there.

19 And in fact, at this point I don't
20 think there is any real estate that is actually
21 on the Mall that would be available for memorials
22 other than the Arts and Industries Building and

1 maybe the Northwest Capitol site.

2 Maybe you could go up a little bit
3 further to the west and be thinking about, maybe
4 there's a space along Independence or something
5 like that, but thinking more broadly about where
6 the future expansion of the Smithsonian complex
7 will go.

8 Will it go up 10th Street, or will you
9 develop a parallel row on Independence Avenue or
10 something like that? Those are the important
11 things that you should be considering, because we
12 already have one more museum that's gotten an
13 authorization for further study, the Asian
14 American and Pacific Islander Museum that will be
15 evaluated.

16 It may take ten years, like it has for
17 the Museum of the American Latino to get to this
18 stage. But in the scope of things which we do
19 work, the Smithsonian is not a young institution,
20 National Park Services is not a young
21 institution, we think in terms of forever, and I
22 think you do too.

1 So we think in that kind of a time
2 scale, what does the future hold for these
3 important cultural institutions? I think that
4 that's the bigger picture, consideration that
5 should be part of the thinking, and whether you
6 actually will address it at this stage or not, I
7 hope you are thinking in those terms.

8 I just want to repeat, everyone wants
9 to be on the Mall. We face that all the time with
10 memorials, and generally speaking memorials are
11 much smaller than the museums, but they can be
12 substantial.

13 The Congress gave us guidance in the
14 Commemorative Works Act to keep new memorials out
15 of the Reserve area, and to require a higher
16 threshold for memorials that come close, within
17 Area 1 as defined by the Act.

18 I think that that sort of perspective
19 should be embraced when it comes to new museums.
20 In fact, if you read the Commemorative Works Act
21 carefully, it actually prohibits new museums
22 within Area 1. Congress granted some flexibility

1 here, but we have to be thinking in a longer
2 view.

3 All that being said, of course we're
4 very supportive of the mission of both museums
5 and want to see them properly sited. We are
6 particularly interested in seeing some of the
7 other sites brought back into the picture, if
8 that's possible.

9 I think that's it, folks. Thank you.

10 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you. I don't know if
11 I'm allowed to talk, but great feedback. I wrote
12 that down, and I appreciate that.

13 COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay.

14 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
15 Argo?

16 COMMISSIONER ARGO: I appreciate what I
17 think for the Applicant, was a nice, thoughtful,
18 and guiding comments that Commissioner May has
19 just made. I will leave it at that. I don't have
20 anything to add to that. He's in a position to
21 give the applicant the kind of information that I
22 think will be most useful to them as they pursue

1 along this path.

2 So I appreciate that, Commissioner
3 May, and I really don't have anything to add.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
6 Argo. Commissioner Wright?

7 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I don't have much
8 to add, other than I would, again, everyone here
9 is familiar with the 2M plan. I would second Mr.
10 May's comments. As a member of NCMAC we see this
11 all the time. Everybody wants to be on the Mall,
12 and so there has been a lot of work done to
13 foresee the day that has arrived where real
14 estate is no longer available.

15 And I totally appreciate the position
16 that the Smithsonian is in. Having two museums at
17 once you could hardly give a Mall site for one
18 without selecting a Mall site for the other, so
19 it's a twofer proposition. I totally see that,
20 because a firestorm would ensue if one made it to
21 the Mall and the other didn't.

22 So I get that. But I can't help but

1 refer again to the work that's been done to
2 imagine this moment, and here we are. I do urge
3 that backup sites be disclosed, because I think I
4 also can say that at least among the people with
5 whom I discussed this revelation, that it was
6 already down to four.

7 We had thought it was at eight, and
8 the press release was embargoed and it was leaked
9 anyway. I assume that it was leaked by somebody
10 who didn't like the selections. I appreciate the
11 position that the Smithsonian is in, but I can
12 imagine this final four being a list that's going
13 to really be difficult to bring to fruition.

14 So I would hope that if there is a
15 process for revisiting, that perhaps we all keep
16 an open mind.

17 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
18 Wright. Commissioner Dixon?

19 COMMISSIONER DIXON: No comment. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. Commissioner
22 Cash?

1 COMMISSIONER CASH: I know that it's
2 late and I am the last one in line, but I just
3 had to put some strong thoughts on the record.

4 I worked in the Senate for ten years.
5 The idea that there is a big chunk of green space
6 adjacent to the Capitol is even under
7 consideration for this is bananas to me, when the
8 Senate has all these parking lots, there's one
9 right there at North Capitol and E. You're going
10 to get anything from the Senate or the Architect
11 of the Capitol, look at those kind of sites.

12 We have Union Station right now, which
13 is hemorrhaging any sort of tenants, maybe
14 there's some kind of partnership that could
15 happen where we could get a museum space in there
16 to clear out all these tenants and have a lot of
17 traffic right next to another Smithsonian
18 station. And we have all the new stuff that will
19 be coming on line over the next decade or so on
20 the back side.

21 Some of the other creative things that
22 I think, Federal Triangle. I'm sitting right here

1 on Federal Triangle right now, in the Wilson
2 Building, and I can tell you, I think that with
3 the pandemic and looking at how people are going
4 to be teleworking, there could be other
5 opportunities, maybe, within the FTC building or
6 other places. Or maybe making some space
7 available like we used to have in the Department
8 of Commerce with the aquarium.

9 I know the federal government is very
10 stovepiped, and there's, I don't own this, you
11 own that, but maybe just some more creative
12 thinking about if we want to stay close to the
13 Mall, look at Federal Triangle and pick up some
14 more leased space. God knows the District has a
15 lot of vacant office space right now that I'm
16 sure we'd be happy for the feds to be able to
17 enter into some leases with us.

18 I mean, it also struck me that Bureau
19 of Engraving and Printing, another project that
20 we've been looking at, because they're moving to
21 Maryland. That's a building right next to the
22 Mall.

1 So I think my frustration when I saw
2 this list, that none of these locations seemed
3 like the best that we could do, given the
4 conditions right now, and just all the other
5 options if we could just be a little bit more
6 creative.

7 I mean, I worked for the feds for many
8 years. I can only imagine what Commissioner
9 Wright and others go through all the time, but
10 you all have a lot of stuff downtown, really
11 close to the Mall, and DC has a lot of stuff that
12 we can offer that's further away from the Mall,
13 maybe more convenient to a Metro.

14 So I would just echo Commissioner May
15 in saying that if there is going to be
16 congressional strategy, perhaps instead of going
17 to Congress and asking if you can get on the
18 reservation, maybe the best thing right now, in
19 the next however many more months before the
20 December deadline, go to Congress and maybe try
21 and get a little bit of an extension. I really
22 think that maybe we need to look at this with

1 some fresh eyes and not being under the gun or
2 under some of the political pressure that's
3 causing some tension.

4 I think if we rush this, it's possible
5 that we'll get it wrong. I know the sponsors of
6 this legislation on the Hill want these things to
7 move, they want the site selected to move their
8 projects forward.

9 This is the National Mall and downtown
10 DC, and I think that if we're going to rush
11 something, we're more likely to get it wrong. I
12 would just urge that if you all feel like you
13 don't have enough good options or enough good
14 time, go back to Congress and see if you can get
15 another six months or another year so that we can
16 get this right, and that we don't make a mistake
17 that we can't correct on one of the most
18 important pieces of real estate in the United
19 States.

20 Kind of a vent, kind of a suggestion,
21 but thanks for listening, and sorry for going a
22 few more minutes past six. But thanks.

1 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
2 Cash, and I'm glad you didn't feel inhibited by
3 time. I think this is a really important
4 conversation, and I appreciate all the
5 commissioners being so passionate and thoughtful
6 about how they view the site selection process,
7 not just for these two museums, but for what
8 comes next.

9 I want to thank the Smithsonian for
10 being here and for this briefing. It is really
11 exciting to have these two new museums underway,
12 and hearing today that President Biden has signed
13 legislation for yet a third new museum.

14 As I mentioned in the previous
15 information presentation, the American story on
16 the Mall was incomplete. That's another way to
17 look at this. And both of these new museums
18 reflect populations that are significantly
19 underrepresented in the commemorative landscape.

20 So we appreciate the advocates for
21 these museums want to be on the Mall. We
22 understand that motivation, and it sounds like

1 you're continuing to make progress narrowing in
2 on the priorities for each of these museums, the
3 significance and the desire to locate on the
4 National Mall. The pressure must be enormous.

5 But it does seem that while every site
6 has its own complications, the Arts and
7 Industries Building and the Northwest Capitol
8 site could be viable contenders, and have the
9 benefit of being outside of the Reserve yet still
10 on the Mall. I was really intrigued by
11 Commissioner Cash's suggestion about the parking
12 lot. That's a very interesting question about
13 what we could do to be creative.

14 I'm also still intrigued by the
15 Whitten Building, which has one of the most
16 prominent locations on the Mall. I recognize it's
17 a building used by Department of Agriculture is a
18 complication, a big complication, but I do
19 encourage further exploration of that site, just
20 given its prominent location.

21 Again, more museums, I am sure, will
22 be coming your way as you consider these sites,

1 and we'll reach a point where I think as has been
2 said repeatedly, there simply won't be any sites
3 left on the National Mall, that we'll get the
4 L'Enfant Promenade and Independence Avenue
5 extension to the Mall.

6 And of course the Department of Energy
7 sites across the street from the Smithsonian and
8 Capitol could be very symbolic.

9 But in terms of next steps, I will
10 work with our staff diligently to summarize the
11 commission's comments here today, and send these
12 comments to the Smithsonian for further
13 consideration, as part of our process.

14 Again, I ask everyone to think about
15 representation. I think that's a very important
16 consideration that the Smithsonian is working
17 hard to address.

18 So with that, I'm going to ask Diane
19 Sullivan to give a quick overview of what we've
20 heard today, and once Ms. Sullivan is finished,
21 if the commissioners would raise your hand and
22 indicate if you think we've missed something in

1 the summary.

2 I'm going to put you on the spot, Ms.
3 Sullivan, so thank you very much.

4 MS. SULLIVAN: Thank you, Chair White,
5 and actually you did a pretty nice job on
6 summarizing a lot of the comments that we've
7 heard, so it's just to suggest that I think we'll
8 organize our comments around three ideas.

9 One is, it's early in the process, and
10 there's not a lot of planning analysis yet, of
11 these sites that we've seen. So we'll have more
12 to say to the Commission, I think, in September.
13 I know that we're asking for the analysis early,
14 so that staff and the commissioners can have time
15 to digest this, so hopefully that will be with us
16 in early August.

17 The overarching comment today is that
18 people were encouraged to hear that the other
19 Tier 1 sites have not been eliminated, and
20 there's strong encouragement to keep those on the
21 table if some of the four focus areas sites don't
22 work out, but also that there are going to be

1 more museums in the future as we have done with
2 numerous in the past.

3 We've worked with GSA and other
4 stakeholder agencies and there are wonderful
5 places to go off of the National Mall but right
6 nearby, on the Promenade and Independence Avenue.
7 Commissioner Cash mentioned a bunch of ideas
8 which we will capture, but we have to think more
9 creatively because we are going to be out of
10 space at some point in the near future.

11 There are huge opportunities could be
12 thought of very well as extensions of the
13 National Mall. They are so close, and could be
14 very powerful sites. We'll go through the
15 commissioners' comments and make sure that we
16 capture everything that was said to that main
17 point.

18 And then I think lastly, Commissioner
19 May's remarks is that there's still a lot of
20 discussions that have to happen between the plans
21 from the agencies and the Smithsonian. It sounds
22 like that's going to be starting in the very near

1 future.

2 I think I will leave it at that, but
3 anybody wants to add anything, But I did take
4 copious notes here, so we'll make sure we capture
5 just about everything that was said.

6 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Ms. Sullivan.
7 Do any of the commissioners have comments?

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I would ask that
9 you specifically include Banneker, the Banneker
10 Overlook site. We spent an awful lot of time on
11 the 10th Street plan to not mention them
12 specifically.

13 MS. SULLIVAN: Will do.

14 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you, Commissioner
15 Wright. If there are no further comments or
16 questions, a big thank you to Ms. Sullivan and to
17 our Smithsonian colleagues --

18 MS. SCHUYLER: Madame Chair, I'm sorry,
19 this is General Counsel. Mr. Cortez has his hand
20 up.

21 CHAIR WHITE: Oh, I'm sorry. It's hard
22 to keep all the faces and hands. I'm sorry, Mr.

1 Cortez. Please.

2 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you very much. I
3 just wanted to provide a slight bit of
4 clarification in the fact that I did mention that
5 we have not eliminated sites. We have focus
6 sites, so we do feel strongly about these four
7 focus sites.

8 CHAIR WHITE: Thank you. That's an
9 important clarification. We appreciate that.

10 MR. CORTEZ: Thank you.

11 CHAIR WHITE: And now I have everyone's
12 face on the screen. Does anyone else have any
13 comments or questions before we conclude the
14 meeting?

15 Again, I just want to extend our
16 thanks for the presentation today, and the very
17 candid dialog and the transparency in your
18 answers. It's very much appreciated. You have a
19 very tough task, and we look forward to working
20 with you toward a conclusion.

21 With that, this concludes our open
22 session agenda. We will not be meeting in August.

1 Our next regular commission meeting will be on
2 Thursday, September 1, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.

3 If there's no other business, this
4 session is now adjourned, and I wish you all a
5 very peaceful August.

6 Thank you.

7 (Whereupon the above-entitled matter
8 went off the record at 6:13 p.m.)

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