

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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COMMISSION WORK SESSION

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OPEN SESSION

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WEDNESDAY,
JULY 24, 2013

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The meeting convened in Room 5115,
Suite 500, 401 9th Street, N.W., Washington,
D.C. 20004, at 10:00 a.m., Preston Bryant,
Jr., Chairman, presiding.

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS
PRESENT:

PRESTON BRYANT, JR., Chairman
Presidential Appointee
HOWARD A. DENIS, U.S. House of
Representatives
ARRINGTON DIXON, Mayoral Appointee
PETER MAY, Department of the Interior
ROBERT E. MILLER, Mayoral Appointee
BRADLEY PROVANCHA, Department of Defense
HARRIET TREGONING, Office of the Mayor of
the District of Columbia
BETH WHITE, Presidential Appointee
MINA WRIGHT, General Services Administration

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NCPC STAFF PRESENT:

MARCEL C. ACOSTA, Executive Director
LUCY KEMPF

ALSO PRESENT:

TOM LUEBKE, Commission of Fine Arts
PHILIP ENQUIST, Skidmore Owings and Merrill
ROD GARRETT, Skidmore Owings and Merrill
JENNIFER SKOWLUND, Skidmore Owings and
Merrill

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:07 a.m.

OPENING REMARKS

CHAIR BRYANT: Good morning. We can bring the meeting to order.

This is a special meeting of the National Capital Planning Commission, kind of a special summertime meeting on this issue. This is the first time that the Commission has met just to look solely at -- to get an update, to look solely at the Height Act that's going on.

[INSERT - MEMO AND AGENDA]

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CHAIR BRYANT: There are many Commission members who, over the last number of months, have attended a number of public meetings, public outreach meetings, public hearings, or have otherwise been engaged. So, none of this subject is new to any of us. Quite the contrary, we've been very much engaged.

However, this is the first time that we will have seen, along with you, an update of the modeling that's been going on.

What we will hear today, we have a long presentation, but what we'll hear today will raise a number of interesting questions about the urban form and the character of our very unique Capital City.

We have with us today Tom Luebke, from the Commission of Fine Arts. We worked, NCPC worked very closely with the Commission of Fine Arts, and so we wanted Tom to be here today and engage with us, and share the conversation, and contribute.

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The District Office of Planning, and its consultant, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, they are going to brief us today on the visual modeling study. This is going to be what we typically call an information item. We are not going to be taking any votes or other formal actions today whatsoever.

But, the studies will show a range of possibilities for what potential strategic changes to building heights might look like from a number of vantage points around the City.

These views will offer an important tool for us, as we evaluate those features and characteristics of our City, and wish to be protected. This includes careful consideration of important Federal interests, and it is protecting the Federal interests that's at the heart of the NCPC mission.

It will include views of the U.S. Capitol and other civic landmarks within

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L'Enfant City.

Visually, this visualization work is one of several studies that are part of the overall Height Master Plan effort. These modeling images depict what we would call what if scenarios, purely, what if scenarios.

These are not recommendations, not whatsoever.

So, they are intended to help inform us as we go forward.

This meeting of Commission members is a workshop styled meeting. Again, no votes, no formal actions whatsoever, but we want to let SOM and DCOP get through the entire presentation before we start interrupting and asking questions, and then engaging.

The terms of recommendations and such, those discussions will come later in the fall. So, today is not that time.

I will note that this is being streamed live, so everyone be aware of that.

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For Commission members, as you work -- as you look through this and pay attention to the presentation, be thinking yourselves, what's important to you. What lines in the sand might there be that you just think in our role of protecting the Federal interest we just cannot cross.

Likewise, where's their flexibility in working with our D.C. partners and other stakeholders. So, think broadly on that as well. Where's the Federal interest? Where isn't? Where can we be flexible? Where can we not be?

So, with that, I will turn it over to Lucy, Lucy Kempf, from the National Capital Planning Commission staff.

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

MS. KEMPF: Good morning. Thank you for coming here today for a work session to talk about heights. We welcome the team from the D.C. Office of Planning, as well as the folks from Skidmore, Owings and Merrill,

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who will present the modeling work.

So, you all know why you are here. I'm not going to spend too much time on the background, but just to give you a sense of a few of the key steps that have led us here today.

Of course, we had an important hearing last July, held by the Committee on Oversight on Government Reform, and followed by a letter from the House Committee, Congressman Issa, formally asking NCPC and DCOP to embark on a heights master plan study. And, ever since that time, we've been working together on that study.

Early on, we agreed to three key principles that we would use as we moved through the work. First, to ensure the prominence of Federal landmarks and monuments. We understand that we have a very unique skyline and setting, and we want to preserve the identity of the City.

Second, to maintain the

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horizontality of the monumental City's skyline. We have a skyline that's recognized around the world, and we understand that that's something that we cherish among the City.

Third, to minimize negative impacts to nationally significant historic resources, including the L'Enfant Plan.

So, the study is really broken out into three different phases, highlighted in red here is why we are here today. And, as you heard from the Chairman, this is really, the modeling work is really one tool in a much larger study.

And so, in Phase 1, we worked to bring together sort of the background research, and the best practices, and the information that we really need to come together to do this work. This included understanding practices and case studies around the world. We held a large public forum to help lay the groundwork for a good

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conversation about heights.

We have begun to document local and Federal interests, and that's sort of something that we are still building today. You've heard from a lot of District residents already about what the Height Act means to them and their communities. There may be economic goals that we think about.

On the Federal side, we've heard everything from urban design issues, such as views to the U.S. Capitol being something that's very important from a Federal perspective.

We also hear about infrastructure and security. So, all of these are going to be things that will be addressed when we get down to the recommendations phase. But today, we are here to focus on the visual modeling study, which again, is one tool for us. And then, we are also going to hear a bit about the economic study. We have our work session today, and then a series of

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public meetings, and I'll just run through those in a moment.

Finally in Phase 3, we will come together and prepare draft recommendations from the Commission that will be happening in the fall.

Okay. So, after the meeting today, we are going to go out. We understand community planning is about communities, and we want to hear from District residents. We are going to present this modeling, and so each of the meetings will have the same information. So, there are five shots that you have to see the modeling, and to view it.

We also have a really robust online presence that we have been building over time. We've already gotten a lot of really interesting feedback from the public.

Our plan is to post the presentation, as well as some of the boards that you see here today, on line, so if you want to go and learn more, and spend some

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time with the images, just go on our website.

I've starred at the end of the day tomorrow that we will be adding material over the coming weeks as they become available.

So, just to give you a sense, our rim is a little more colorful than it is normally, but just to give you a sense of some of the boards that you are going to be seeing at the public meetings. They are around the Commission chambers, and we invite you to spend some time after the presentation looking at them.

So, unless there are any other questions, I'd be happy to turn it over to Harriet, I believe, to talk through the economic study.

ECONOMIC STUDY SUMMARY

MS. TREGONING: Thank you, Lucy.

Good morning, Commission members, and members of the public. I'm really excited to see such a great turnout for today's work session.

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I'm going to talk a little bit about kind of one of the studies that we've done on economic feasibility. It raises and addresses some of the issues that get behind why we are looking at the Height Act.

As I think most of us would agree, the current Height Act has served Washington, D.C., pretty well for the last 100 years, and it's really delivered, you know, a very, very beautiful, very walkable, very human-scaled City, and I think most of us feel pretty pleased with the results.

You know, one of the questions that we've asked ourselves is, well, how well will the current Height Act serve us for the next 100 years? And, what are the things that might put pressure on the City with the height limits that we have?

We expect to see a number of changes. Some of the things are already underway. A lot more people in the City, a growing population, and more demand for

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housing. More employment, more jobs, and a more diversified economy. An interest, really, an imperative, for more sustainable practices, development practices and sustainable choices. Changing technologies and changing space needs. And, part of the consideration is that at some point in the next 100 years we would expect that we would more than exhaust the City's development capacity under the height cap and the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

So, with the consideration of any changes in height, we are looking at capacity, the economics of development in the City, our competitiveness with other jurisdictions, the impact of population changes, but also constraints, infrastructure, parking and other kinds of constraints, and finally, housing affordability.

So, this particular study looks at a variety of options, in terms of height,

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just in terms of the feasibility to build new or to expand at different heights. And then, we looked at a pro forma analysis of 15 illustrative sub-markets throughout the City.

Right now, we have, for example, many places in the City where we have the ability to build higher buildings, but there's not demand for higher buildings. So really, looking at how well near-term demand is anticipated. When I say near-term, over the next 20 years, how well demand might match up with potential supply, and some of the early potential economic impacts for the District.

So, when we talk about development feasibility, what we are really talking about is based on what are the construction costs for different types of additional height increments.

We know that there are break points in construction. For example, you know, we've seen a lot of experiments in the

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District of Columbia with wood frame construction, which is the least expensive kind of construction. That used to be four, five stories max, but in the District we have now a lot of buildings going up, wood frame over concrete podiums, so it's kind of a hybrid construction type. So, now we can get six or seven floors, without having to go to steel, which is a much more expensive construction type. And, there are economies if scale even for steel, but one of the things that our feasibility study revealed, that those economies really come well above 250 feet, and that's really the limit of what we looked at for the City.

But, it's also true that at certain modest increases in heights, I think you'll see on the boards we've talked about something as modest as simply filling out the penthouse level, and allow that to be occupied, that some of the modest changes may not induce anybody to change any existing

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buildings, because the cost might be so considerable.

So, we looked at both new office construction costs and new apartment construction costs, and looked at the costs per square foot for different aspects. The site work, which, actually, goes down as height goes up, because you can spread the cost over more square feet. Same for the parking garages, which are limited in terms of their feasibility to maximum three levels.

But, the office building costs, actually, go up at higher heights, because the construction costs for high-rise construction is greater. And, that's true across both office and residential buildings.

If you are looking at a fairly modest vertical expansion to the four stories, that the incremental costs are what you see here, and they are, per square foot they are not insubstantial.

For new construction, a developer

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would simply look at a vacant site and consider factors like demand, the rent that they can get, the type of site, in terms of soils and suitability for high-rise construction, and they would make a build or no-build decision, depending also, the height of the building would depend on how quickly they could absorb the demand.

But, it's a little bit different for an existing building, whether they would renovate or expand, and whether or not it makes sense to go up some increments over what might already be built. And, that can be pretty complicated. In some of the focus groups that we had with developers really reinforced how complicated that is. It really depends on the age of the building, the structure of the building, how obsolete it might otherwise be, whether they have to do things with the heating ventilation system, for the entire building because of the increment, et cetera.

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So, it ends up, you know, not being a no brainer, that you would, necessarily, build. In many cases you wouldn't build an incremental, even four floors, depending on some of those factors.

So, basically, property owners and developers would pursue redevelopment only if they could substantially increase their space and get substantially higher rent. And that, even things like the status of their major tenant leases would affect those decisions. And, like I say, the degree of obsolescence that they believe that building currently has.

Constraints on new construction.

It has a lot to do with financing and the need to pre-lease buildings, so that would limit the absorption. So, this is a little bit more about how any changes in height might be implemented, that you couldn't flood the market with a lot of additional height, which also might argue for approaches in

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general that are more incremental, that we really have a hard limit in terms of how deep we can go with structure parking.

So, imagine having, for the sake of argument, a 300-foot building, that requires a lot more parking than 130-foot building, but we have real constraints on how deep we can go for garages. So, there are other practical limits, as well as other infrastructure constraints that in some cases we already see in the City.

So, vertical expansion is a more likely choice for buildings that have eight or more floors. It's less expensive than redevelopment, but it would only happen in the central business district or the fringe and at high-demand Metro areas, not everywhere in the City, more where the capacity might exist.

So, to get a better sense of well, which sites do we mean, and where might this happen, we, actually, looked at 15 or so

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total sites around the City that would illustrate a range of demand. So, some of them are within the central business district, but some of them, like Friendship Heights and NoMa, the Florida Avenue Market, Buzzard Point, the Old Soldier's Home, they are well outside the central business district.

So, when we asked the question, do market rents support the current land values, we identified that for the total 15 sites that the answer is yes for nine. And, would market demand support higher-rise buildings? The answer is, yes, for only seven of them. Both Friendship Heights and the IntelSat site dropped off, there's not enough incremental demand, at least judged now, for those additional office locations.

For high-rise apartments, higher-rise apartment locations, we have seven sites where market rents support current land values at 130-foot height, but only five

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sites do for more than 130 feet.

And, would market demand, in general, support a larger size? The answer is, yes, for seven sites in the City.

In terms of economic impacts, we compete with, you know, the office market is a regional market, and you know that, because people come in and out of Washington all the time, different businesses do. And, many of the places that surround the District have -- don't have height limits. And so, they are able to offer a much greater range of rents and amenities.

Often, one of the predominant features of Washington office buildings is their generally low ceilings, because everyone wants to get as much, you know, square footage as they can into the building under the height limit. And, that means, you know, that, in general, they might be less attractive spaces than if that limit wasn't there.

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The retail floors have the same pressure, so the retail spaces are often not as nice.

So, if we were to look at what impacts the ability to build additional -- the maximum additional height in those illustrative areas, those 15 illustrative areas, it would be as much as 2 million, almost 2 million square feet over the next 20 years, and capture new office space, basically, double the capture rate of new office space in the City.

For apartments, you know, part of the calculation here is that these places, these delta where we would be providing additional apartments, aren't going to be the low-rent apartments in the City. I mean, to the extent that they are covered by inclusionary zoning they would be, but construction costs are high. But, what this does do is, it does allow more supply in the City than we'd otherwise have, which would

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overall have an effect on lowering rents and increasing affordability, and that the additional increments of height might provide up to between 10 and 18 percent of the needed growth in housing between 2020 and 2040.

So, job impacts, we'd be able to accommodate between 7,000 and 14,000 new permanent jobs in the first 20 years, and a considerable amount of annual construction jobs associated with the new construction.

So, this isn't a definitive analysis, and there's a lot of -- there are a lot of things that kind of countervail that, again, how we introduce any new supply to the market ends up being very important. Height and -- in general, height and additional density aren't, necessarily, equal. You can imagine, actually, offering more height, but not offering more FAR, more development potential, which allow you to have more graceful buildings, and a greater variety of rents that could be offered, high

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to low, without, actually, doing much to increase the FAR. So, there are all kinds of options, I think, that the study raised for us, not just a recommendation or set of analyses that talk about the increased density.

We think that some of the potential benefits, whether we are adding new capacity, or just adding some height, includes greater design flexibility, potentially, some lower construction costs in some cases, more ability to accommodate people near transit, more ability to accommodate housing near this job center that is the City, and a better ability to compete regionally with other office and housing markets.

So, with that I'll just say, some of the other things that came out of the discussion is, again, separating height and FAR from how we would look at implementing this, and even consider approaches like

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auctioning additional development potential over time, so that you wouldn't add a lot of new capacity all at once, if you were going to be making any changes in height, but also to make sure that you are using the incremental value to pay for needed infrastructure improvements, whether that's transit, or water and sewer infrastructure, and, in particular, to add housing to parts of the City that don't have a lot of housing, and to make sure that that housing is affordable.

So, with that, let me say another couple of words to introduce the modeling study that you are going to hear.

The modeling study is a visual analysis of height alternatives in locations throughout the District, and you'll hear kind of an exhaustive explanation of the approach that the consultants took, but to identify potential impacts of any changes in height on the City's form, including the skyline, it's

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most significant public spaces and streetscapes, and views to and from our most iconic buildings.

The models will images at a variety of perspectives, a panoramic view, which is the largest possible context, skyline studies, because a lot of what really characterizes our City is kind of what that skyline looks like, in the L'Enfant City, but also in the topographic bowl we have some very unique conditions around the City that really help to define the City, and topography is one of those things.

We look at illustrative sites across the District, and we'll talk a little bit more about that, what that is. We didn't intend to model the entire City, but we wanted to look at places where proximity to transit, Comp Plan designations for higher density, and existing development potential, might suggest that those are places where higher height might be able to be

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accommodated.

And finally, we looked a lot at street level. Corridor studies, some of our best views by design are down our avenues and major streets. But also, most of what we feel day to day and experience as residents and denizens of Washington is how our City feels on the street. So, the relationship of the height of the buildings to the streets itself, and the quality of those public spaces.

The modeling study and the economic feasibility analysis you just heard about were conducted as independent studies with a focus on their particular scopes. Both studies, along with the case studies of how other cities have managed height that we presented during the Phase 1 part of this process, and, most importantly, the feedback from the Commission and the public on these analyses, will then help us determine how we should move forward in responding to

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Congress' charge to the District and the NCPD.

So, we are eager to hear your feedback on these Phase 2 studies, and invite you to attend additional meetings that we are going to hold over the next month about these analyses.

So, with that, let me turn it over to our consultants, and we will hear about the visualizations.

MODELING PRESENTATION

MR. GARRETT: Thank you, Harriet.

Good morning, my name is Rod Garrett. I'm the Director of the Washington office of SOM. We are very excited to lead the modeling component of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan, as was mentioned earlier, has multiple parts. The modeling study, the intent of that is to visualize, as Harriet mentioned, the visual impacts of potential, or allowing potential heights in varying locations throughout the City, and

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also look at various vantage points that we can study and then put out for discussion.

So today, we have three chapters in the presentation. The first will describe responding to the Congressional request. The second is the methodology that we use to investigate the height study. And then, the third chapter Phil Enquist will come up and describe a series of approaches.

So, responding to the Congressional request, I won't read all of the words here that Representative Issa had requested the study to evaluate any changes to the Height Act that might affect the historic City, and how those should be studied.

The Master Plan, of which the modeling component is only one piece, has these three guiding principles that mentioned before. And, it's important that we keep these in mind as we are looking at the modeling study, so the result of that

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reinforces and goes back to these core principles, ensure prominence of Federal landmarks and monuments, preserving views to and from their settings, maintain the horizontality of the monumental City skyline.

This is critical, because it helps us to determine which views and vantage points to look at. And, minimize negative impacts to the nationally significant historic resources, including the L'Enfant Plan.

So, we should talk about the L'Enfant Plan for just a few minutes, because it becomes critical as we look through again how to approach the modeling study.

L'Enfant said on his original plan that the avenues were to be wide brand, lined with trees, and situated in a manner that would visually connect ideal topographic sites throughout the City where important structures, monuments and fountains were to be erected. And the graphic depiction of the plan, as you can see, sets up exactly that.

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It sets up a series of street grids, the connected avenues, the series of parks and squares, and in addition you can see the boundaries of the L'Enfant Plan, Rock Creek Park, Florida Avenue, the eastern branch of the now called Anacostia River, and then the Potomac River here, bounding the L'Enfant Plan and that organizing structure.

This is very important. At that same time, a building code was established, although it was only one page. But, it did set out some things that we know today. Maybe one page is good. All buildings should be parallel to the streets, that the wall of no house to be higher than 40 feet to the roof in any part of the City, nor shall be lower than 40 feet -- lower than 35 feet on the avenues.

Now, this is important, because it starts to set up and reinforce L'Enfant's original statement that I just had up there about the avenues having an importance.

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And then, of course, squares are designed for common use, and the property is reserved for the public. This goes hand in hand with the L'Enfant Plan.

So, in 1910, why did Congress enact the Height Act, Buildings Act? The Cairo Building was built in 1894, and it was built up to a towering height of 164 feet. And, I say that, at that time there was a big concern about light, and air, and fire safety. And, Congress was asked to investigate, as was happening across many cities in the U.S., the concern about buildings becoming taller and impacting light, safety and fire safety, and also access to air. In other words, environmental concerns.

The Height Act, essentially, set up across the City three basic principles, residential streets would have a width of the street, and the width equal to the height of the building, with a maximum of 90 feet.

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Typical residential streets were, approximately, 80 to 160 foot right-of-way. Commercial streets, which have a slightly larger right-of-way, 90 to 160, the commercial streets would allow the width of the street, the building heights could, actually, be plus 20 feet, so slightly higher than the commercial streets, and a maximum cap in that case of 130 feet.

Now, I'll slow down for just a second. This sets up two things. One is, is the general understanding of the relationship, the importance relationship between the width of the streets and building heights. And, it also established at that time a cap, 90 and 130.

There is one deviation from that on Pennsylvania Avenue in the Height Act, between 1st Street and 15th Street, there's allowability on Pennsylvania Avenue to be up to 160 feet tall for the Height Act.

So, if you look at a graphic

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here, so you can see this, this is the commercial version of what I just described in words, but you can see the one-to-one relationship of the right-of-way, and then right-of-way plus 20 feet, establishes the maximum height. And, the Height Act suggests that penthouses and other things would be above that line. And, you can imagine the same would be true for commercial.

This ratio, this understanding of the street to the building face widths, essentially, established what we all know makes Washington really unique. You can walk down most streets in Washington and appreciate some form of this ratio, although in different degrees. But, you can understand it, and it makes it somewhat unique in the U.S.

2009, the Monumental Core Framework Plan was established, with similar goals, although concentrated mostly on the Mall, but adjacent areas. I want to read

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this for just a second, because it's, again, important to our study as we model. This was about connecting new destinations within the Mall, transform the Federal precincts surrounding the National Mall into vibrant destinations, improve connections between the City, the Mall, and the waterfront, and achieve the highest level of liveability and sustainability in central Washington, something we considered as we were looking at vantage points and views.

And this, essentially, is L'Enfant City today. You can see, again, the established grid of streets, connecting networks, and interwoven parks and squares at the intersections. We'll use this map as we go through.

And here, you can see an aerial view of that same condition, connected streets, connected diagonal avenues, you can see the general horizontality of the City. However, you can also see where the avenues

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that go through start to have larger -- because of their widths, larger buildings and, therefore, the slight variety within the texture of the form.

You are, essentially, standing and looking down 16th Street at the White House up in the air, about 250 feet, I believe, this view is, maybe 300 feet, and then looking at the Washington Monument.

So, Chapter 2, the methodology for our study. First, we want to understand the existing conditions. We want to define the areas to be studied for potential building increased height. We need to update the City-wide GIS 3D in order to start this study. We'll talk about that.

We developed a photographic database, as was mentioned earlier, both aerial views and eye-level views, looking at a variety of vantage points and a variety of different conditions throughout the City. And then, we modeled varying heights

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increments, and then we merged that information together, and then we considered the visual impacts of increased building heights on the City's built form with respect back to those core principles.

So, updating the database, essentially, we have updated using a laser scan of the entire D.C. database, including 11,000 new buildings that were modeled from the last time the database was done.

We mapped parks and open spaces throughout the City, the entire City. We overlaid on that an understanding of all the street widths as part of the modeling. And then, we started to look at, what components of the model, that if we want to look at a realistic depiction, should be excluded from the modeling study, meaning they would not be -- we would not increase those particular areas for the view study for various heights.

In other words, they would be not included in the modeling study itself. It would stay

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as existing.

So, here's Federal properties, significant amount of which are, actually, parks and open space.

Historic sites, now, remember, these are components that we are removing from the modeling study. Low density historic districts, and then all of the low density areas, in other words, the residential areas, not for us to have a realistic look at how we can visualize, we want to make sure that we're identifying those areas. So, if I reverse that, and say these areas in red here are areas throughout the City that we would include in the modeling study, to look at different opportunities and vantage points.

We also overlay on top of that the City-wide transit network, so we understand exactly how that might influence some of our vantage points. And then, of course, the Comprehensive Plan future land

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use map, and what this is, this is, of course, the District's plan for all densities and uses throughout the City. The dark red, in this case, is the high-density commercial, and as you go further out to the yellow and the tan, you are going out to medium or low-density residential.

From that, we take the medium and high-density areas and identify those, so we pull those out of the model so we can look at those more specifically. And, you can start to see where those opportunities are for high -- currently, for high and medium density.

And, as was mentioned earlier, we've looked at several illustrative areas. Now, it's important to know that these are not meant to be areas that we are saying, specifically, are recommended for height. We are not making that recommendation. What we are suggesting is, these are areas that have high or medium density, have opportunities for transit-based connections, and they have

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development potential. And, certainly, these are also areas illustratively that we can put in the model from various vantage points, so that you can see what varying heights might be, and you'll see that as we go through some of the approaches.

Also, we picked illustrative areas to be both inside and outside the L'Enfant City, and as well as various quadrants throughout the City, to try to get as broad a study as we could.

As we modeled, we were looking at various visual impacts at various scales. That includes the City scale, the L'Enfant City scale, and then also the streets themselves. And, our photograph survey included that level of study, skyline, aerial views, and street views.

And, of course, we also need to consider through the study viewshed protection, and that's something we can note as we go through the various options, we are

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utilizing these tools.

Let's go through Chapter 3, Phil?

MR. ENQUIST: So, what I'm going to walk you through are four different scenarios, and as Chairman Bryant said, these are a range of possibilities, these are what-ifs. It's a way for us to, actually, examine how to diagram the idea of raising height, and how to put it into an approach that enables all of you to discuss and critique.

There are four different strategies or approaches. The first is -- they are organized sort of by order of magnitude. Number one is really looking at no height increase, and then the debate and discussion around the penthouse.

The second is really looking at the relationship of the building street wall to the street, reinforcing the L'Enfant Plan, but looking at how we can increase that building to street ratio.

The third is looking at raising

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building height in the selected areas.

And then, the fourth is looking at, really, a much broader increase in the height cap City-wide.

So, that's a summary of these four approaches. I'll come back to this at the end.

The first one, where we talk about no height increase, which is really broken into two parts. The first is to maintain the existing heights, and to understand the future capacity of the City's ability to build through this next century using the existing height limit. And, the second is the more focused discussion on the penthouse.

So, today we have, actually, a wide range of building heights, and even within L'Enfant City, where we talk about the horizontality of the skyline, we, actually, have a broad range of building heights, from 40 feet all the way to 160 feet.

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So, within that, though, we haven't achieved those height limits in many areas. So, for example, along the Anacostia River, where we have a height of 90 feet, we have many buildings that are maybe three, four stories high, maybe a fair number of surface parking areas. You have capacity in the City for future growth, without changing our height limits.

So, if we explore filling out the existing height limits, we took a few views.

So, for example, that red dot is on South Capitol looking north, that's the same view in plan. So, this is the view today, what we call existing conditions, looking at South Capitol, looking north towards the Capitol. There's a relatively new residential building that reached the height limit of 90 feet.

Now, what you are going to see are just computer models, not -- there's no character to this model, it's just really an envelope, so don't freak out. We are not

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proposing windowless sandstone buildings, but what this shows you are the other sides along South Capitol that would reach this allowed height limit, and what that means to the City and the street corridor. And, it starts to define this rather important street ratio of building to street width.

Now, this is K Street at 16th, existing conditions, and then you can see, this is an area of the City that's almost pretty much reached its height limit, so there would be sort of minimal change to an area such as this.

Now, the second part of this is if we look at not changing the height limits, but let's redefine what happens at the penthouse level. So today, we have, as Rod described, a height that's determined by the street width plus 20 feet, and then we have, in addition to that, with a setback from the street facade we have a penthouse which can go up to a maximum height of 18-1/2 feet. Is

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that right, 18-1/2 feet? Yes.

So, and today that can't be occupiable space, so the first question is what if that 18-1/2 feet above the height limit can become occupiable space, how much of that really is occupiable, because you have mechanical equipment and elevator overrides up there. But, you may have the possibility in your building to occupy space in the penthouse level without challenging the building height.

Now, the other more, I think, dramatic adjustment to the penthouse alternative is looking at the penthouse not having the setback, but if it becomes occupiable can you bring that out to the street, so it would be visible from the street, and it would really feel like you've increased the building height.

So, that penthouse at 18-1/2 feet, in this scenario, would be allowed to come out to the facade of the street. So, we

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have a few views that explain this. So, let's take, I think, that same view on K Street. Now, the penthouse you don't see, because it's set back. If you bring that penthouse at 18-1/2 feet out to the face of the building, you would see it. So, this is really an increase in the height limit by redefining the penthouse, and it does start to change the building to street ratio.

The second scenario, or approach, is really trying to work with the basic principles of the L'Enfant Plan, and reinforce that relationship of building height to street width, which we think is very unique to the City of Washington, D.C. You don't find this kind of definition of built envelope really in any other American city.

So, for example, let's look at F Street today. We have a street width of 100 feet, from building face to building face is 100 feet. Building height is 120 feet, and

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this is a pretty good example of a Washington, D.C. street. So, that shows you what I mean by the ratio of 1 to 1.2. So, 100 feet wide, 120 feet high.

Another example of this is 14th Street. The street width is 110 feet, the building height is 130 feet. So, that again, is this ratio of 1 to 1.2.

So, can we continue this tradition of street width to building height relationship, but look at how that could be utilized as we look at how to increase building heights.

So, let's take North Capitol Street looking south towards the Capitol. We have a building -- we have a street width of 130 feet, but our building height is only nine feet. So, the ratio is much less. The ratio is 1 to .7, not 1 to 1.2.

So, if we -- and we are going to see more of these windowless sandstone buildings, so just be ready.

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It's hard to, actually, model this, so when you start to show heights it gets sensitive. So, we understand that, so I'm just giving you advance warning.

So, we are at 90 feet. If we look at the 130, so the street -- this becomes 1 to 1, 130 feet wide, 130 feet high.

So, you can see this visualization that the buildings get higher. The Capitol is framed maybe a little stronger, and as Rod mentioned, we have to really critique these different approaches based on these view corridors to monuments and definitions of streets.

And, we also looked at increasing this to 160. This gets us to a 1 to 1.2, similar to those other streets I showed you, and this gets us to the height limit that is today along Pennsylvania Avenue, the 160 foot height limit on a portion of Pennsylvania Avenue.

And then, we took Pennsylvania

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Avenue, looking east. So, here we have the 160 foot area on Pennsylvania Avenue today. The street width is 160 feet, the height is 160 feet.

So, let me just go through this carefully. So, some of the buildings today don't reach that 160 feet, so you see a little minor adjustment in the distance and in the foreground, if I go back again and forward, where these existing buildings reach 160 feet. It's minimal change to the street, filling out the envelope today.

Now, if we increase the height of buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue to 180 feet, you start to see some of these buildings rising above. Now, some buildings are not changing because they are historic. They are not going to be changing. So, what we are showing is the modeling on buildings that could be changed.

And then, increasing Pennsylvania Avenue to 200 feet, which gives you a ratio

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with 160 foot street width, 200 feet gives you a ratio of 1 to 1.25.

Okay. The third approach, we call it raising the height cap in selected areas, and we have a few different strategies here within L'Enfant City, outside the L'Enfant City, but along the topographic bowl, the up slope that defines L'Enfant City, and then beyond that the third alternative is the illustrative clusters.

So, as Rod mentioned earlier, within the L'Enfant City the only area we are looking at for height increase is the area in red, which is already defined as high density or medium-density areas. So, just as a blow up of the L'Enfant City area, the red areas are what we are looking at.

So, we have a few distant views.

So, in this alternative we pulled back to look at distant views, and how the building increase affects these very critical distant views to the monuments within the City.

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So, if we are at the Air Force Memorial, looking towards the Washington Monument, you see the Capitol on your far right, the Lincoln Memorial on your far left, that's the existing condition.

Now, these are going to be really subtle, but the first thing we do is, in this computer model we say, what if the whole City in the red areas increases to 130 feet? What if it increases to 160 feet? So, you can start to see some critical landmarks, like the Capitol dome starting to get absorbed. When you get to 180 feet, you start to lose the view of the Capitol. You've lost the view of the Lincoln Memorial. 200 feet, you barely see the Capitol dome.

We took another view across the Anacostia at the Frederick Douglass house looking west, so this is the view today. You can see the Washington Monument. You can see the slope of the topographic bowl. You can see the Cathedral, the Capitol is, again, off

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to your right.

Now, if the L'Enfant City height limit is increased to 130 feet, you -- let me go back on that again, because that's a big jump. What it is today, and then the increase to 130 feet, starts to challenge some of these views. 160 feet definitely challenges these views. 180 feet, 200 feet.

Now, the second part of this alternative or approach is looking at outside the L'Enfant City, but on the edge of the topographic bowl. So, let me explain what that means. So, all of the L'Enfant City, as you know, is right in here, and then if we go to this, the slopes are in red. So, these are the areas we are looking at, which are outside the City, but still very well served by transit and close in. And, we are looking at the high and medium-density areas within this topographic bowl.

So, if we take a view from Arlington Cemetery, we are looking at the

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building height outside the L'Enfant City going to 130 feet. This is really, really subtle, so let me go back again. So, this is at 130 feet, and then the next jump up, 160, is off in the distance. 180, you can start to see it climb, and it starts to affect the silhouette of the Capitol. 225 feet, so now you can really see, let me just try to outline this here in red, these areas at a distance, start to impact the horizontality of the City's skyline.

The view from Maryland Avenue towards the Capitol, looking at the buildings on the topographic bowl going to 130 feet. These get really scary, so just be ready for these. 160, and because the land is dropping away, and also this is a low height area, these are even more dramatic than just about anything else I've shown you. 180 feet. 225 feet.

And then, the view from Pennsylvania Avenue looking northeast, or

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northwest. So, existing conditions today, and then if that goes to 130 feet on the topographic bowl, 160, 180.

So, I think Rod would definitely say they start to challenge the viewshed to these important monuments in the City. 225 feet.

The last one is looking at heights of these illustrative clusters. So, let me go back to remind you what those clusters are. We are looking at the high density and medium-density areas that are based on the Comprehensive Plan. They are served -- most of them are served very well by transit. Some of them start to relate to areas outside the City that are high in height, for example, Friendship Village, which has a height limit of 120 feet. Bethesda has a height limit of 200 feet. Silver Spring has a height of 140 feet.

So, these were the selected areas that Harriet showed, and also Rod, and the

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red dots again, both in the L'Enfant City and outside, are high and medium density, they are transit based, and they definitely have development potential.

So, what we are going to do is show you these red dots raising in height. So, this is, particularly, challenging, so we have a few different ways to show this to you.

This is the view, so again, from Arlington Cemetery, but in plan we thought this was helpful, too. So, the red circle with the white dot is your viewpoint. So, if you are standing here, and you are looking northeast, what you are seeing are these selected areas, some within the L'Enfant City and some outside, that are raising in height.

So, this is a little like looking for Waldo, you have to look very carefully at this map, but we have to first shift to a computer model. So, we go from the existing City to a computer model, and we start to

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show the red areas, the selected areas, going up to 130 feet. Then 160 feet, quite subtle, but you can see then, if you want me to go back, that's 160, 130, you start to see these areas, this is 200 in the L'Enfant City, 225 outside, you start to see these areas which are the red selected areas increase in height. So, these areas are outside the L'Enfant City, and the areas in here are, obviously, within L'Enfant City.

These are challenging to follow.

So, here's another one, another view from Meridian Hill Park looking south. This is the same thing, so looking at the same selected areas, but your viewpoint is here on Meridian Hill Park looking south. So, the areas we are looking at are these three selected areas, and then in the distance these in the southwest area. And so, you see almost everything increasing in height in the L'Enfant City plan. So, this is that view.

And then, we shift to this

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computer model, and then these selected areas going to 160 feet, 180 feet, 200 feet. So, these distant views are helping us understand what these potential possibilities, how they affect the City's skyline.

We took a view from New York Avenue, so similar key map looking southwest, and you see some selected areas outside the L'Enfant Plan and some within. That view today, and then modeling the City and taking the selected areas to 130 feet, and then 160 feet, 180 feet, and then because some are outside the L'Enfant City, they will go to 225 feet. Within the L'Enfant City we kept it at 200 feet.

This is a view from Walter Reed Hospital looking south. It's a distant view, and most of what you'll see is outside the L'Enfant City. You are getting pretty far away.

So, we shift that into a computer model, and then the selected areas outside

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the L'Enfant City have been raised to 130 feet, and then 160 feet, 180 feet, 220/225 feet.

So, what you are starting to see is an idea of these selected areas starting to have their own identity, their own District identity, outside the historic City.

The last one is, we call it change the height cap City-wide, so we are looking at a uniform height increase on these red areas again. We never stray from the red areas, so that the high and medium-density areas defined by the Comprehensive Plan.

Today, there's, actually, a wide range, as I mentioned before, a wide range of height throughout the City, but what we are looking at is a uniform height increase in the high and medium-density areas in this approach.

So, if we take a view from the Jefferson Memorial today, we are looking at the White House, 16th Street it's behind. If

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we looked at all the high density and medium-density areas being allowed to go to 130 feet, there's quite a dramatic increase from the variation in height we have today to 130 feet.

Now, this is also assuming everything is built to the same height. So, you know that won't really happen. Everything built to 160 feet, what happened to the White House. You know, you are starting to see, I think, viewshed challenges. 180 feet, 200 feet. We don't go higher than 200 feet, because we are in the L'Enfant City.

So, just in summary, this range of what we tried to show you today, and maybe some of this is a little hard to follow, but these four different approaches represent these range of possibilities in addressing height from the no-change and just encouraging development to fill up the existing height today, the height envelope that you have today, or a more detailed focus

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on penthouse definitions.

Approach 2 was looking at an increased ratio of street width to building height, but keeping within the spirit and principles of the L'Enfant City Plan.

The third is looking at the development of these selected areas, and raising the height of those selected areas.

And, the fourth is looking at a City-wide increase and challenge to the Height of Buildings Act, a great re-definition of the Height of Buildings Act.

At this point, do I turn it back to you, or Harriet, or the Chairman. Okay.

DISCUSSION - COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR BRYANT: I had one question.

MR. ENQUIST: That's pretty good if it's only one.

CHAIR BRYANT: Well, perhaps, the first of many.

In some of the earlier less, more

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modest changes, if just doing the penthouse, would there still be mechanical systems yet on top of the penthouse, or how would that play out?

MR. ENQUIST: That's a good question, does a penthouse get a penthouse?

CHAIR BRYANT: Yes, right.

MR. ENQUIST: Yes. I think in this initial approach we were assuming the penthouse would not get a penthouse.

CHAIR BRYANT: Okay, great. Thank you.

Mr. May.

MR. MAY: I'd also just like to ask a simple question, which is that, with the various attempts to -- the studies where you raised the height, you know, uniformly, did you assume that included in those views 18.6 foot penthouses on top of each of those, because that's allowed, right?

MR. ENQUIST: That's a very good question.

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In these computer models, we have not put in penthouses.

MR. MAY: Yes.

MR. ENQUIST: That's sort of the next level.

MR. MAY: That's the way it looked to me, so I just wanted to be clear on that. So, we are really talking about for the long views seeing another 18-1/2 feet, almost 20 feet.

MR. ENQUIST: That's a very good point. I think, obviously, it's a lot more complicated the setback on each of those buildings across the City to do that.

But, if that approach goes to the next level of refinement, you definitely have to do that.

CHAIR BRYANT: Before we get too far down on questions, let me, initially, turn it back over to Harriet to see if you have any follow-up from DCOP's perspective after the presentation has been done.

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MS. TREGONING: Thank you.

Part of it is an answer to the question that was just asked, but one of the things that Chairman Issa has, particularly, raised, and that, you know, in this body, and in other places, we have a lot of fights about penthouses, right, where they are located, how they are set back.

I mean, one of the things that we thought we would try to do with this is fix that problem. So that, I think our assumption is that any height increase would include an incorporation of rooftop structures in the proposed height increase. So that, we look for a cleaner, more useable rooftop, and accommodate the mechanicals, you know, within whatever the allowed height is.

It wouldn't be something that you are going to have penthouses on top of these things.

I mean, that's something that we need to do, have a little bit more conversation about, but we'd like to try to

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fix some of the issues that have given us so much trouble, difficulty and time discussing and talking about.

And, one of the things that's really true now in our City is the rooftops are some of the most delightful places in the City, the most gorgeous views, the most kind of wonderful places to be. And, for years and years they were just a place where the mechanical stuff went. So, trying to figure out ways that they could be used and occupied, accommodate the necessary mechanicals, but give you a much more clean, lovely and useful rooftop, is, I think, one of the goals that we'd want to accomplish if we were to do this.

Now, it wasn't -- it didn't rise to the level of one of our three grand principles, but I think as a practical matter that's one of the things that we'd want to try to do in implementing any kind of a change.

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I guess the other thing I thought I would address, because it's likely to come up as a question, you know. I raised the specter of our population growth, and the growth of the City, as a reason. You know, I said at the beginning that the Height Act has really served us well, and as strongly as many of you feel about this, I feel really strongly about that. And, that I love the City that it's produced, in terms of this relationship between the height of buildings and the width of streets.

But, it's also true that we are one of the fastest-growing states in the country, and even among cities, very fast growing. That may or may not, you know, continue to be the case. It might get more torrid, who knows, but if we were to continue to grow at our current pace, you know, well before 20 years from now we would exhaust the capacity of our City to accommodate the population growth that would be coming to the

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City. And, way before then we'd feel incredible pressure on prices. Some of us would argue we are feeling it right now, but that we feel a lot of that pressure.

So, you know, one option, of course, is to say, you know, well, we don't have -- we haven't reached the height limit in all of our neighborhoods in the City, so why don't we begin to raise those limits.

I think that not all of -- I think it's been a strong principle that our low-density neighborhoods are enormously worthy of protection, and that we are using our existing Comp Plan that so many people in the City participated in creating as a guide for this.

So, we designated areas that have higher density, that have the potential for higher density, that are well served by transit, and those are the only areas where we focused looking at additional height. Those are also places that currently have

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some existing capacity, as some of this analysis showed, when you saw it bump up to 130. But, we, basically, aren't looking at making our single-family and rowhouse neighborhoods suddenly much denser places.

So, those are some of the things that may not have come out in the study that we've talked about so far, but I think they are important considerations, important pieces of context for our conversation, and also for understanding what you've seen.

CHAIR BRYANT: Ms. White?

MS. WHITE: I have a question on the modeling.

So many of the views were perspectives of the skyline, and maybe this is a question for you, Phil. Did you do -- and there were some perspectives from the street level looking, say, at the Capitol. But, did you do any modeling from the perspective of the pedestrian on those streets, in terms of light, and shadows, and

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projections of more people on the street and more traffic? That may be beyond the scope of what you were looking at, but I was just sitting here thinking about what I was seeing, and it was more kind of an architectural or aesthetic perspective, and not from the pedestrian experience, or other impacts such as, you know, City services, traffic, congestion, that sort of thing.

MR. ENQUIST: Yes, I think that's a very good question.

When you are looking at areas that are already quite urban, that have sort of minor modifications to the amount of new square footage, you probably wouldn't see a dramatic increase in either parking or pedestrian -- number of pedestrians on the street.

But, a detailed shadow study, obviously, this would create more shadow in the City, which in the summer may, actually, be a positive thing to our heat island.

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But, we didn't really look at that in detail. We didn't do a detailed shadow study.

But, in the illustrative areas, the special areas, especially, outside the L'Enfant City, you saw some examples that were dramatically different density.

So, yes, that would challenge the design of your public realm, the streets, the sidewalks, the need for public open space maybe. I think that would all be a logical next step of that specific selected area.

MS. WHITE: And, are these the first time that the models are being shown publicly? That's what I thought.

MR. ENQUIST: Yes.

MS. WHITE: But, I mean, it's really helpful, and I guess that's why you prepared us. We are not talking about sandstone, windowless buildings.

MR. ENQUIST: They are not --

MS. WHITE: It's a really helpful

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tool.

MR. ENQUIST: -- meant to be architectural at all. They are really just volumes.

MS. WHITE: Yes.

MS. TREGONING: Can I also say a couple of things, that there's an enormously larger number of places that have been modeled, but for the purposes of presentation and discussion, we thought if we went through hundreds of slides that not only would everyone just kind of glaze over, but some of the points might be lost.

But, every model view is going to be available on the website, and the Commission will have full access, as will the public, by the time, I think, we get to our first public meeting on Saturday, August 3rd.

So, by then it will all be up on the website, so that people can, at their leisure, peruse all kinds of views and look at everything that's been modeled.

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So, there's that, and then the City is looking at infrastructure-related issues, and recognized both -- two things about that, that in some cases we are already at or near capacity for certain types of infrastructure in the City, without any additional growth, but that with additional growth there's both a need for more infrastructure, but there's also the potential to finance more infrastructure. So, I think those are absolutely important considerations, but they have as much to do with how this gets implemented, and this is really more about, you know, how is the Federal interest affected by changes in height, and less about those kinds of market issues.

MR. DIXON: Mr. Chair? First of all, I want to associate myself with Harriet's comments, all of them about this issue today for sure.

I also want to compliment the

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work that's done. This modeling is spectacular for me. I don't know who is paying for it, but I hope Congress sends us some extra money, because I think it's out of our budget. You are doing a great, great job. I mean, this is very -- this is serious work, I believe, thank you.

I have a couple comments. The penthouse issue interests me a lot, because I feel like there are ways we can improve upon it with this vehicle.

I'm questioning whether or not the space above it all, after we do the including the equipment stuff, whether there will now be a new level possibly. If that level would be useable, where it might be open, it couldn't be a structure, it could be a wall around it, it could be a recreational area or something that the public could use.

I'm assuming that could be done, and it wouldn't get into a height issue, it would just be useable space, not construction

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building space. So, I'm curious about whether that's true.

And also, having been over at the Coast Guard building, with all that green roof, well, if it can't be useable, maybe it be useable and green, and they could also capture some water that can be put back into the system some way.

So, those are really just open questions to be maybe thought about in the future by somebody. I will be.

I know that all this is driven by economics. I mean, whoever owns these buildings has got to be willing to see that it makes some sense, because if they are going to do any financing for this it's going to be done by the people who own the buildings. And, from what was said by Harriet earlier, the numbers are kind of challenging for them to be willing to do these things. But, at least the option may be available.

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The only last question I have is sort of a parochial question for me. I'm hoping that there will be some maybe narrow look at the value of the increased heights for communities that are economically challenged at the moment, because they may be housing opportunities that could be useful if the buildings are higher, or we may just need to go up to the heights we've got now to do it. But, they also can be retail and other things maybe even some of these buildings, you know, pushing for Metro stations to have daycare centers on them, with the rooftops for playgrounds, because daycare can do a lot at a Metro hub, like the Anacostia Metro Station at Congress Heights to get on for young people who are single parents opportunities to go to work and get off the need roll, and get on the make money roll.

So, anyhow, that's my concern about the economic areas where there is transit, and would be interested in the way

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it could be a big boost to them economically, to have something like that being done.

Thank you. Thank you for all the work that's done. This is very, very impressive.

CHAIR BRYANT: Other thoughts?

Mr. May.

MR. MAY: Yes, first I just have question. With the views that have been done, is there, actually, have you done perspective views of the various studies in all of the different approaches, from the Washington Monument grounds, in particular, is that one of the ones that's going to be available?

MS. SKOWLUND: There is a view from the Lincoln Memorial.

MR. MAY: Okay. One of the reasons I ask this, and it's probably too late to ask for an additional view, because we've already had some discussions about where to take views from, and this didn't

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occur to me until I had the pleasure of once again seeing the fireworks on July 4th from the Washington Monument grounds.

And, it really is a remarkable thing, to be in that space, and to be among all those people, and to look out over the City of Washington, and, you know, appreciate, not just the monuments and the museums that line the Mall, and the strong presence of all of these buildings that sort of capture the spirit of Washington, but, actually, looking out over the rest of the City.

It does give you a very good, long view toward the rest of the City, except for a couple of anomalous glowing rooftop things. Well, actually, only one that I can think of. It's very familiar to many people.

But, other than that, it really is a remarkable skyline, and it's punctuated by just a select few tall structures. And, it just is really an uplifting experience

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just to see that, and I think it would be -- it would have been useful, I think, to see that view in the modeling study.

And, I have to say that seeing that from, you know, 5:00 in the afternoon, and how it changes until, you know, 10:00 at night when the City starts to light up, and the memorials start to light up, and at one point the sky lit up, but it really is a remarkable thing, and as I said, quite uplifting.

The second thing that I wanted to mention is, and it goes to the penthouse and rooftop use, and things like that. I think that the notion of improving that realm of the City is very, very important, and it would be very, very helpful, I think, in terms of all of the other regulatory activities, like zoning, to kind of maximize the benefit and value of that space.

And, there have been some attempts to do that, certainly, the history

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of making use of rooftops in Washington goes quite a long way back. I mean, it's not a recent phenomena. I think the recent phenomena in rooftop use are exercise rooms and swimming pools. But, before that, there were rooftop terraces, and ways to enjoy the long views of the City that go back to the earliest grand apartment buildings, and then all the way through the modernism and what's happened in Southwest. I mean, I think some of that wound up being individual rooftop spaces, particularly, in southwest, but there are certainly rooftop community uses for all of those buildings that have been through the years, and more of that would be better, and efforts, not just to maximize that use, but to beautify that area would be very helpful.

And, particularly, if we could do something with some of those pesky things that wind up being attached to buildings at that level, and maybe taking some steps to make those integrate better with the roof scape.

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The last thing I want to mention is that, we talk about this in this arena as, we talk about the question of Federal interest, and there certainly is strong Federal interest in many ways. There are security concerns. There are issues having to do with individual buildings and, certainly, preservation of, you know, historic preservation concerns and so on, which tend to fall within the Federal interest.

But, I don't -- I think there's an overriding Federal interest, which Federal interest is almost a misnomer, because it seems to imply that the current concern has to do with the every-day operation of the Federal Government, and, you know, what does -- how is this going to impact the operations of the Department of Commerce, or Department of Labor, or something like that, as if it's a very local and parochial kind of Federal interest.

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But, I believe there's overriding national interest in the skyline of Washington, that has to do with the character of the City over the years, the way it's developed, the way it is appreciated by the people who come here from all over the world.

Washington is a unique place, and I believe there's an overriding national interest in preserving what we have here that was a result, maybe not as intentional as one might think, but it is the result of the Height Act and needs to be preserved in the long run. It's an issue of equality and of nobility, I think, and we want to make sure that that's preserved.

That's it.

CHAIR BRYANT: Ms. White.

MS. WHITE: I just want to echo Peter's remarks, and I, actually, prepared some remarks because of numerous conversations that I've had. I'm an At Large Member. I live in Chicago, the birthplace of

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the skyscraper, so I have great respect for height and the dynamics of a vertical city and what that can add.

But, I think Peter put it so well, what I was trying to capture in putting these notes together. And, you know, I completely agree and appreciate the direction from Chairman Issa, our own Chairman, Mayor Gray, that the national landmarks should remain preeminent in the City's skyline, and retaining the horizontal character of the skyline, and protection of the L'Enfant Plan is important as we move forward, and it's got to provide the way that we evaluate any changes to the Height Act.

But, you know, as I thought about it, we really need to be careful. This is a very profound decision, and, you know, we can't walk it back if we don't, you know, if we get this wrong.

So, I just want to make a few comments about the importance of symbolism

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today, the reason why the City looks the way it does. And, unlike private buildings, you know, the Sears Tower, which is now the Willis Tower, is an example, once the world's tallest building, a great symbol for Chicago, but, you know, it's losing that title now. It's lost its name, but, you know, institutions like the Capitol and our monuments, and open spaces, the National Mall, these -- the way these remain preeminent, and our view corridors remain preeminent, is really critical.

And, you know, I greatly respect the District's home rule, and have an interest in a thriving, healthy City. I think, as you said, Peter, it's sort of a misnomer, the Federal interest, so to speak.

But L'Enfant City, in particular, is where our interests clearly intersect, it's unmistakable. And, I do think that there is great interest from the ordinary American in how that gets treated.

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The City, the way it looks, its compactness in the core, the character we cherish is not an accident. It was an intentional and deliberate plan for the City that our Founding Fathers created, and we have a huge responsibility and honor to protect it.

We all need to be as thoughtful and respectful of our steward Federal City, as the District is exercising great thoughtfulness and respect to neighborhoods and market conditions. And, Harriet, I don't mean in any way to say that you don't also agree with this, but I just, you know, felt compelled to put it on the record, given the feedback that I'm getting.

But, I do think it's really important to preserve the character that makes this City so unique. I don't mean to say that we shouldn't embrace and expect change. Cities are not museums, they will change, they need to change to remain healthy

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and grow even stronger, but doing this in, again, a deliberate and thoughtful manner, as the burden is, of course, on the District to make the case for changing the Height Act. And, ultimately, that's what we have to look to see if it's the right thing to do. But, whatever we, ultimately, decide, keeping these considerations in mind is critically important.

I brought up in previous meetings and talked with the staff about trying to engage the public even further. I think the staff's done a great job. I think that the evidence from the public workshops, particularly locally here in D.C., have been commendable, but in this next critical phase, now that we have something to look at that people can really see, and appreciate, and understand with modeling that makes it really evident what we would be seeing, how do we get this word out more broadly, and engage in more expansive public, because it's very

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important, I think, to all Americans what happens in the Capital City.

So, I just wanted to put that out there to remind all of us, you know, as we take these next steps, these have great impact.

So, thank you for your thoughtfulness.

CHAIR BRYANT: Mr. Miller.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My remarks won't be as eloquent as the previous speakers. I haven't given it that much thoughtfulness.

CHAIR BRYANT: Or even if you had.

MR. MILLER: Or even if I had, right.

But, I do want to associate myself with your remarks, and remarks by other Commissioners, and thank all the work, and thank the NCPC staff and the Office of

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Planning staff, and consultants, for all the work that they've done and the presentation that was made today, and all the public engagement that you have done, and you will be doing.

And, I do want to associate myself, particularly, with the remarks about improving the -- using this opportunity to improve the roofs from an aesthetic standpoint and from a useable, functioning standpoint. I think that's very important.

I also think that the point you had on one of the slides captured, if we do any increase in height that we make sure that we capture the incremental value of that height, whether it's rooftop improvements, infrastructure improvements, and affordable housing is very important. It just can't be just for the sake of increasing the value of the property. It needs to go to needs of the City, the Capital City, and the local city, and affordable housing and infrastructure

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improvements are critical.

And, that would fit in with your daycare comment, Commissioner Dixon.

So, thank you.

CHAIR BRYANT: Mr. Provancha.

MR. PROVANCHA: Three or four points I'd like to make, penthouses, density, Federal interest, transportation and so forth.

A suggestion on the penthouses. It appears that there's two -- while they are related, they are also distinctly different, perhaps, penthouse occupancy would be 1B1 alternative, expanded penthouse with occupancy would be 1B2, just for presentation and discussion groups.

Density, could you help us with the tiers, with the thresholds? What constitutes low versus moderate, versus high density? What are those breakpoints, just to help inform the conversation, or I could take those off line if you don't readily have

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those.

MS. KEMPF: They don't --

MR. PROVANCH: If I could see a scale of some of them.

MS. KEMPF: -- in the modeling work the criteria was based on the District's Comprehensive Plan.

MR. PROVANCH: And, those densities -- never mind, I'll get the densities off line.

MS. TREGONING: They don't -- just real quick, they don't have the Comp Plan, Future Land Use Plan, doesn't have a zoning designation associated with it. It's a description. So, you know, high density could be up to 130 feet in commercial areas, up to 90 feet in residential areas.

You know, the medium density -- we can talk about it more off line, but it's, basically, you know, also kind of 65, 80 to 90 feet, that area.

MR. PROVANCH: Okay, as opposed

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to population density.

MS. TREGONING: Yes.

MR. PROVANCHA: A fan of Mountain Men and the State of Montana has seven people per square mile, looking for something like that.

MS. TREGONING: Okay.

MR. PROVANCHA: I think this is a very well presented, very thoughtful presentation, as well as very thought provoking, which is, I think, a necessary byproduct.

It's also wonderful to see that this study is not being done in isolation. It's done in parallel with joint regional transportation planning, as we acknowledge, I think, how important key transportation is to the infrastructure, as well as joint planning of emergency management, if you would consider climate adaptation, and sea-level and river-level rise, it's good to see all these things coming together.

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Mr. May began to introduce the Federal interest. In addition to security and historic preservation, I'd like to also add infrastructure, collectable water, Its, sewage, transportation, natural gas. Some of us are concerned about sea access/rail proximity to sensitive Federal buildings, those types of things.

Clearly, those would need to be addressed and fixed long term and strategically by a variety of tax and regulatory legislative type incentives.

Emergency management, I think, is also a key Federal interest. It might include elements such as evacuation planning for the City. I know that there's tremendous capabilities in this region. The one that I'm familiar with is Old Dominion University that has done evacuation modeling for the entire Norfolk basin, how to get folks, not only out of the area safely and systematically, but also return them to those

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populated areas.

Sustainability, I think is another Federal interest, whether it's pervious versus impervious surfaces, the amount of green canopy that's available, both indoor as well as outdoor air quality and air pollution.

And then, there's a variety of health, wellness and productivity measures that I think are also of interest, not only to the Federal workforce, but also the entire workforce in the region, for their welfare. And, some of those include the viewsheds that we've talked about.

So, I'd like to add those also to the discussion for Federal interest.

Thank you.

MR. DIXON: Mr. Chairman, I think that it's clear to me we are being pressed pretty hard for a September report, and I just think we can clearly meet that goal, as we usually meet our goals, but I think the

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subject is really something that needs more time to be done properly. We are being pushed into all these meetings to try get things to the public, and that we know real well, because all these good people are around.

So, I think I would like to try to build up some momentum with the Congress that we do what we can do and do something, produce something, in a timely manner, but we need to buy into more time and maybe resources, but to look at this really and make sure that neighborhoods who saw the beginning will also get a chance to see some of the steps forward, because I think there may be some resentment to say, well, you came and told us what it was about, but we never had the chance to be in the cycle where we saw the models, and this and that.

So, I just want to point out, maybe we can find a way to request an extension, as well as we can meet, but an

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extension, more time to do this in a more thoughtful manner, if possible.

CHAIR BRYANT: Which is not to say we are not doing this in a thoughtful manner.

MR. DIXON: Nothing's changed, right?

We are definitely -- this is very thoughtful, so thoughtful that we need to think some more.

CHAIR BRYANT: Just to note that we are only about 50 percent way through right now. So, we've still got a fair amount to do. This, roughly, kicks off Phase 2 of our work, and then the next phase is an incredible amount of public outreach, the first kind of public hearing being Saturday, August the 3rd?

MS. KEMPF: Yes. We have five public meetings planned in the month of August, and we really want to focus on the modeling.

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When we come to the Commission in September, we are going to have preliminary recommendations, and after that we will, again, go and hear public comment on those directions.

And so, there will be sort of a process that we need to follow. So, there's a public process, but there's also sort of a governmental one, where we will be working with other agencies in the District.

MR. DIXON: I want to make sure -
- maybe I'm not as clear as I need to be --
I've got a full list of all of the hearings.
They are on my schedule, because I want to try to make them.

But, some of the neighborhoods that have been visited already don't know where we went with the visit they first had.

And, I'm trying to think of a way that in time we might be able to go back and say, now, you know, these people say, well, you told us you were going to do it, but you

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never came back and told us what you were doing, and what's happening. And, they are not going to be on line, they are not going to be on the internet. So, I'm just suggesting if we have more time after we at some point in the future, to look and go back and recycle, recircle, that's my point.

MS. KEMPF: Okay.

MR. PROVANCHA: It may be of interest, too, to the general public and how much time the Commission has devoted to this.

There was some discussions even prior to the July testimony before Congress and Issa, and Holmes-Norton, subsequent discussions last fall, the formal kick-off meetings of the working group initiated in January. We met almost a dozen times since January, so there's been a lot of work, I think, by the Commission Members.

CHAIR BRYANT: It's been about a year-long effort.

MS. WHITE: I just wanted to add

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one thing to what Arrington was saying.

I think the issue is more of the month of August is a bad time to have public meetings. I think that's our concern, and it was brought up last month.

It's not that it isn't a good process, with lots of meetings, we just are concerned about the attendance.

MS. KEMPF: No, August is a tough time, and we have heard that.

One of the things that we are trying to think through is whether we can have another meeting in September, after the holiday, maybe bring folks back to one of the central locations and say sort of, here's where we are. We want to find every opportunity to do that. So, it hasn't been scheduled yet.

Also, I wanted to address a point you raised earlier about engaging a national audience. I think you are right, now that we have some of the modeling work, it will be

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easier for people to sort of respond.

We will be sort of focusing more of an online presence, but we are going to engage some of the national professional organizations, like the APA, the planning associations, and, hopefully, get their guidance on how to best engage those constituencies. But, our ears are open if you have other ideas for how we can better, you know, reach folks who might be interested in having this conversation with us.

But, we'll follow that up on an early September Commission discussion. I know that doesn't address all of your concerns, but we'll keep working on it.

MS. TREGONING: I guess I would just also say that, you know, the schedule in Congress isn't just that we made a commitment, but it also has to do with, you know, the leadership of the relevant committees, and when that is due to change. And so, it's not just a matter of whether we

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meet a schedule or not, it's whether or not the people that are interested in exploring this issue are even there. So, that's a major issue.

I guess I would also just say that, you know, we are very cognizant that August is a month that a lot of people take vacation. I'm going myself, you know, in a week. But, every meeting that we are going to have, the next five meetings, are all the same meeting. So, unless people are gone the entire month of August, there will be a meeting in the City that they can attend to get this information, be able to talk in person with people, and see what's going on. And, that is all pre-decisional.

So, before there's any thought about what's a draft recommendation, people will get a chance to kind of kick the tires and look at the views of different parts of the City. And then, when we have a tentative decision from the Commission, or a

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tentative set of recommendations, then we are going back out again. So, people will get a chance to hear what and why we have a set of recommendations, and give us their feedback on those recommendations.

So, in many ways all of this is preliminary to the decision, and we are looking forward to getting lots of comment. We had a very gratifying amount of comment in the initial phase, and we are just talking about why we are doing this, and what we are doing. So, we expect that pace to pick up now that there's something to really react to.

CHAIR BRYANT: In the 12 minutes we have left, let me see if Ms. Wright, Mr. Denis, or Mr. Luebke have any comments.

Ms. Wright.

MS. WRIGHT: I do.

I think -- I want to make several points. The first one is, I agree with you completely, and I've been saying as part of

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the working group that we were -- that the time -- that the schedule was unrealistic, necessary, but unrealistic for the enormous import of what we are talking about.

And so, possibly, the report that goes to Congress in September, here's what we've done so far, because this is -- once you eliminate some of the options, which I think we can do with some swiftness, we could spend another year looking at just the cluster approach, for example. It's a nuanced conversation, and we are not good at nuance under pressure. So, that's my first thought.

Returning to this issue of Federal versus national, which I've never really bought into, because I think they are the same things. I think the point is that as citizens of the United States, beyond the borders of the District of Columbia, everybody has an interest, everyone. Everyone, everyone as a citizen, has a

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Federal interest in the character of Washington and its role as the physical symbol writ large of everything we are interested in, and proud of.

So, I think -- and I think the point that we are trying to make is that Federal interest is not just operational. Okay.

So, having said that, I think that Beth has very eloquently weighed in on the subject, and I don't need to opine further. I was, like so many of us, horrified by some of the images I saw. My stomach lurched.

However, and here for those of you who know me, here comes my remarkably consistent position, which is that cities are not museums. I've never said it that way, but I would agree with that completely. And, I think we have a tendency in this City, because of our awareness of the symbolic importance, to forget about the fact that it

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is a vibrant, growing, changing, dynamic City, like all great cities. And, we cannot let history put a choke hold on growth and dynamism.

And, we must have this conversation. That's not to say that it's a foregone conclusion that we are going to pick an option and recommend change that will result in the images that horrify us. But again, back to nuance, it's not an all or nothing proposition, and we should be open to the conversation, and we should, as the Commission, be leading the public to an understanding that it's not bad just to ask the question.

I've been disappointed in some of the response to just asking the question, and I think that NCPC and DCOP have been put on the defensive, and Harriet, particularly, has been skewered in public for being, you know, Whiplly Snidelash in a dress. And, I don't think that's quite fair, because it's in the

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best interest of the City to ask the question.

And so --

MR. MILLER: Every hundred years or so.

MS. WRIGHT: Yes, and have a conversation. And so, as the conversation unfolds, I hope that people will keep calm and carry on, and approach it with intellectual curiosity, and openness, and receptivity to all kinds of options, without getting hysterical.

Thank you.

MR. PROVANCHA: One minor correction. I think for those of us that might be old enough I think the correct name is Snidely Whiplash.

MS. WRIGHT: Oh, what did I say?

MR. PROVANCHA: Or the dastardly villain.

MS. WRIGHT: What did I say?

MR. PROVANCHA: Whiplash Snidelash.

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MS. WRIGHT: Well, I missed that, sorry. You got what I meant, that guy, in a dress.

MR. PROVANCHA: I wasn't old enough, Mr. May shared that with me.

MS. WRIGHT: Thank you for that correction.

MR. PROVANCHA: One final historic comment that I think is appropriate today. One of my favorites is Winston Churchill. In the 1940s he visited and made a presentation at Occidental College during the war years. And, one of the profound comments that day was, first we shape our building, thereafter our buildings shape us.

CHAIR BRYANT: Mr. Luebke, CFA?

MR. LUEBKE: Thank you very much for including me in this conversation, and I've been happy to be a participant in the Federal Working Task Force on this subject.

I want to point out to everybody how lucky we are, that this is a topic that

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has some traction. We've seen -- this City has undergone incredible transformation in the last 20 years, and we should be so lucky as to have these problems. It's been a particularly attractive market for development internationally because of its ability to market it. Perhaps, it has some relationship to the Height Act, I don't know, but I think that this is a really great conversation, and it's timely.

First, let me say, I really appreciate the thoroughness, the rigorousness, the professional quality of the study that you all undertake, and I think it's really tried to analyze the issues in a number of ways that are very useful, really taking it down and apart, and doing it in a reasonable way.

I have a couple of just quick comments, as people to improve the understanding of it, one thing -- there's a couple of items here. One is that I think it

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would be useful to understand, as you convert the views into the modeling, computer modeling, there's a little bit of a rupture where you are trying to understand what exists. I think it would be useful to add an interim step in that graphically, so that you go from what is, to what exists graphically, and then to what would be allowed under current zoning, to just sort of establish where we are, because all of a sudden you are leaping from a photograph to what might it be at 160 feet, a little bit of a conceptual leap. So, I think that would be very useful for everyone to really understand it.

I know that you may not be able to accommodate that, but it's a thought.

Another thing about the views that you show. I think that everyone has to understand that there should be some caution in understanding that the views, you know, some are shown, some may not be seen as having that big of an impact. I think that

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we have to understand that it's the cumulative effect of all of the height changes seen from an infinite number of viewpoints that, actually, create the impact.

It's not just one view.

I, particularly, looked at some of these at Pennsylvania Avenue, and was wondering why some of these buildings that are, actually, new, or, you know, relatively new, don't show development.

The market square, for example, didn't have any of the things -- you know, I don't want to quibble about it, but that might be something to work on.

One other thing about the penthouses, I think this is an enormous area of potential work. An add on to that is, of course, the idea about architectural embellishment, which is a non-occupiable element which is allowed under the Act, and it may be something that can be pushed into conversation a little bit more. But, I think

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it's very tricky with the idea of occupiable space.

And, I want to say that the 1 -- I think 1B option under No Change, where you would, actually, push the penthouses out to the edge, is, actually, tantamount to a height increase. And, I think that it's a little disingenuous to call it No Change. It, actually, becomes an 18-1/2 foot height increase. So, I think that that's -- I think that would be -- I think it's very questionable to include that as a No Change option.

Let me just say that the fundamental argument that seems to be made, though, is about the fact that we are reaching a full maximum on the envelope which, and correct me if I'm wrong, I believe this is based on projections of economic growth, based on the height limit, and with no change to zoning. Is that correct?

MS. TREGONING: That is not

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correct. That would be changes to zoning that are consistent with the Comp Plan. So, it would involve significant changes to current zoning, but within the Comp Plan Future Land Use Map.

MR. LUEBKE: Okay. That would be where I'd like to understand. In the end, I think that has to be understood what that means, and I'd like to see more detail about, you know, really specific numbers.

People say, well, we are going to run out in up to 20 years. It would really be great to know what those numbers precisely are, where the zoning changes could be applied, what the projections are, because this is really what seems to be the driving argument, and I think we have to really understand that this is what the facts really are, because -- forgive me, because I've heard the argument numerous times about we are running out of space, running out of space.

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At the same time in the last ten years, we've seen enormous tens of millions of square feet be developed in NoMa and the Southwest Waterfront, and those areas which, you know, they were saying this is an argument that would surface ten years ago, we are running out of space.

So, it would be really great to nail that down.

Finally, I just wanted to associate my comments with Mr. May and Ms. White, that I think fundamentally there is a symbolic issue here that is really important as all Americans, that the character of the National Capital City is really a symbolic issue, it's an expression of our collective Government.

The way that that expresses itself, you know, this is a question of the L'Enfant Plan, the plan of the City, the placement of the national monuments, and important buildings, the diagonal grid of

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streets, which themselves are commemorative of the States of the Union. The entire framework is, actually, entirely symbolic, and what it really indicates is a place -- Washington is unlike any other city, where the public values are intended to predominate over private interests. And, this is a fundamental principle which I think we have to keep in the backs of our minds.

I think it sort of came out of the presentation, when we were looking North/South Capitol, even 16th Street, why are they at 90 feet? I think that the argument was, to preserve those axial views to these most significant seats of the different branches of the Government.

And, by the way, I'm not saying that that can't be talked about or discussed.

That's, actually, well under, there's probably 30 feet there or something, or maybe more.

Anyway, these are the principles

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that underline decisions so far.

The other thing I'd like to just say is that, again, I think that the height limit has, actually, been, it's provided stability in the market, and it's been a motor for redevelopment of the City, which we has been really an incredible thing to see over the last ten or 20 years, again, in these neighborhoods, NoMa, Southwest Waterfront, South Capitol, moving into places like Anacostia, the New York or Rhode Island Corridor.

So, I think that it would be good to relate that to the actual numbers.

So, I would just leave you with those comments. I think this has been a great study. I think that it's important to be very cautious, because once you change it it's hard. But, I would agree that, you know, change is possible, to keep the most important idea in mind, because this is fundamentally a City with a public symbolic

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value that is not like anywhere else. And, I don't think we should try to be like anywhere else.

CHAIR BRYANT: Thank you, Tom.

And, to Mr. Denis, who is Congressman Issa's representative.

MR. DENIS: Thank you. I just want to thank NCPC and the City for its deliberate and expert review of this highly significant matter. We look forward to receiving the recommendations, as per the exchange of letters between Chairman Issa and NCPC and the City on October 3rd, followed by a response on November 1st of last year.

And, they will be reviewed.

Thank you.

CLOSING REMARKS

CHAIR BRYANT: Thank you, Mr. Denis, very much, and we have concluded our two hours. Let me just finish up by saying that which has been underscored, this is a

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very worthy effort. This is about a year-long initiative.

In terms of our tasks and our process, we are about halfway through now. Today's Commission meeting kicks off the second half, which will be dominated by public outreach and comment, before any preliminary recommendations are set forth, after which there will be more public comment on this set of recommendations.

Much has been said about the NCPC and the DCOP roles. Let me underscore that we are very collaborative in working together. We are mindful of each other's interests.

From NCPC's perspective, we are a planning organization, and so from the Federal interests it's everything from infrastructure impacts to historic resource impacts, and the need to preserve them in our iconic public spaces. It's the residential experience. It's the visitor's experience.

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It's security. So, it's all -- it's many mechanical things we do from a planning perspective.

Not speaking for D.C., but their interests include, as Ms. Tregoning has noted, economics and aesthetics, smart planning, and housing and real estate, and they are responsible for the actual mechanical running of the City. And so, we are very mindful of each other's -- appreciative of each other's driving interests.

There's still more work to do. I encourage everyone to go to our website, at ncpc.gov, where you will find as much information on this study as we have ourselves. You will find the schedule for a our process and our tasks that are ahead of us. You will find all the public meetings that are upcoming, the next of which is August, Saturday, August 3rd, at the Tenleytown/Friendship Library, at 10:30 in

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the morning, which is on Wisconsin Avenue. So, that's the next or the first to kick off many public listening sessions.

So, with that, thank you very much. This has been very informative. I think I can speak for all in saying that.

We are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was concluded at 12:05 p.m.)

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