

Heightened Conversations: Impacts of Building Heights in Capital Cities

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National Archives – William McGowan Theater

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I want to thank you very much for doing such a great job moderating, Gary, you've been fantastic, really appreciate that.

And let me just thank each of our speakers, who I think have done a wonderful job.

Jurgen Bruns-Berentelg, Robert Tavernor, John Worthington, let's all give them a hand, they've done a wonderful job.

I want to thank the National Archives for hosting us at tonight's event, I think it's a beautiful facility and I think that it kind of showed off our panelists to their best advantage. And I want to thank all of you for attending.

Let me call out a couple of people who are in the audience. We're very honored to have many members of the National Capital Planning Commission, the actual commissioners here tonight, if you could wave, thank you very much.

We also have members of the City's Zoning Commission here tonight, if we could see those hands, some of them are the same hands, alright, excellent. We have the Commission on Fine Arts tonight, there we go, thank you.

So you can sort of see that it's not, this is not, this has been a conversation and a dialogue, I think a great kickoff to this discussion about height in the District of Columbia. But I think we're all kind of in it together, we are all very interested in what people have to say, and at some level we're really kind of excited at the idea to even ask ourselves this question.

A question that we've never thought to ask ourselves. You might have been here for decades, but it's not ever been a topic of conversation that we've had, so even the chance to reconsider why we have limits on height, what we want in terms of outcomes for our city, and I really like how our panelists shifted the conversation.

It's not just about height, it's about what is it that we aspire for our city? What are the things we cherish? I think one of our panelists called them "character areas" in Dublin. What are the things that we want to protect and preserve, that we really value?

And what are the ways in which we think our city is going to grow in the future, and how do we accommodate that? So I think our panelists really gave us kind of a 360-degree view of the kinds of issues we should be looking at, and for that I'm very grateful.

I also appreciate the fact that, as you can see, we are doing this together. The local city and the federal city, and I think that's as it should be.

As Chairman Bryant noted, OP and NCPC are working together on, not like a single study, but kind of a series of examinations, that will give us the opportunity for the first time in over a hundred years to take a very strategic look at how height impacts us across the city.

We're going to be, over the next several months, engaging in more discussion, in analysis, and we know that we have interests that we need to balance. Evaluating whether reconsidered height limits might affect federal and district interests. Exploring opportunities for economic development and fiscal stability for the city. Preserving the iconic skyline - although I think Chairman Issa didn't like every part of our skyline - that gives prominence to some very cherished national landmarks and monuments.

I think Chairman Issa has gone, but I also really appreciate him being here tonight, I know all of us do, and giving us a chance to hear his perspective on this issue.

We've been challenged to think, tonight, about the ways in which the city can grow and modernize. Not just growing up, but as John has suggested, growing down, perhaps. And with an eye to really creating the future landmarks that we'll want to cherish here in our city.

So we look forward to further conversations over the next few months about the future of height in the city, and we invite all of you here tonight to learn more about the study, the studies that we're doing, on a new website, that's www.ncpc.gov/heightstudy.

If you didn't get enough of this presentation, like I think I did not, I'd like to invite you to also look at a video of tonight's event, that'll be available on the site, so you can spend some more time on some of the excellent remarks that our panelists have made.

So let me just thank all of you for being here tonight, and wish you a good evening.

Thank You.