Zoning Commission Hearing Case 02-38
March 31, 2003 Continuance

My name is Susie Humphreys. The problem is not with Waterside Mall dividing SW, it is with poor management of the Mall and the current fad of homogenizing development.

First, remember Sharon Ambrose's testimony. She began by saying that she represents SE. Then, realizing that she was supposed to represent SW as well, she corrected herself to say that she also represented SW. It is true that the redistricting makes her our council member, but as her faux pas revealed, she does not.

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It is said that the Mall divides the SW community. It does not. **The Mall unites the SW community**. On the map, the Mall divides the street, the street used by motor vehicles. It does not divide the community of neighbors and does not divide pedestrian pathways.

When I first came to DC, I rented at 800 Fourth Street, SW, just north of the Mall. Now I own a townhouse at 456 M Street, SW., southwest of the Mall. The place I meet my neighbors of north of the Mall is the Mall. Indeed, it is a gathering place for the community. Not only does the Mall have basic stores which we need, but it also has the enclosed area which is used for book fairs by the library, informational events such as job fairs, the current historical display, and even a propaganda event by the mayor as he announced what great things he was going to do to our neighborhood. Obviously a well-managed Mall would have the potential for many more uses.

Mr. Barondes declared that Malls were a dated concept and that the suburban pattern was no good. However, this lie is belied by urban planning data and even by his slides. In the upper right of one slide was a picture of a Mall which his company had planned … and he was proud of it. He also said that the running of the street through the Mall necessitated higher height limits. Thus, the lie that the height limits are needed is exposed. Questioning by the commission exposed the inadequacy of his street cut-through model for Safeway, a fact withheld in his presentation. The truth is that a grocery store is essential for a residential neighborhood, yet it is not essential to the planners. The truth is that a cut-through limits retail space.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-38
Exhibit 99

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-38
EXHIBIT NO.99

At a neighborhood meeting, Mr. Alcott, of the DC Planning Office, answered my question about how much a road cut-through would cost...about **10 Million dollars**! To a taxpayer who has just had her real estate taxes greatly increased and a surcharge levied to her income tax, the truth is that this is painful **misuse of taxes** and **corruption of fiduciary trust**.

As a visually handicapped person, a Mall is a much safer environment for me to navigate, especially when loaded with purchases. Likewise this was true for my mother, at the end of her life, when her gait was slow. We all are aging, even developers and politicians who do not live in SW! The truth is that we are worthy of planning for reasonable safety.

If the Mall exploits our subway system, advertises within the system, and is well managed, our distinctive neighborhood and the Mall will flourish. Leave the commuter routes to roads designed for commuters and encourage public transit. The truth is that **we need an improved Mall**.

Susie Humphreys