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Washington, DC 20024
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Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
441 4th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application for Party Status in Case 02-38

Commissioners:

My name is Gene Solon. I'm resident owner of an apartment at the Harbour Square housing complex in Southwest D.C. I live less than 640 feet from the southern border of the proposed Waterside Mall (now Waterfront) redevelopment project, identified by your office as Case 02-38. I request that I be granted the opportunity to appear and participate in the hearing on that case on February 13, 2003 (and in any subsequent hearing on that case) as a witness with party status. I wish to appear before you as an opponent of the application.

At this time, I do not intend to appear through legal counsel, nor am I prepared to submit a list of witnesses. If there is any change to these circumstances (it is possible that physically handicapped and other Southwesters may accompany me), I will inform you of the change at least 14 days before the hearing date.

I'm a car owner who has been finding it increasingly difficult to find a parking space near my home on what was built to be a residential 4th Street south of the mall -- as more and more people come to live and work in or near my Southwest neighborhood. Not all Harbour Square unit owners, including those of us who have served as members of our housing complex Board of Directors, have indoor parking spaces. We who don't have indoor spaces not only have difficulty finding on-street parking places – we have trouble leaving those places to enter the traffic flow during weekday morning and evening rush hours. Unlike those who live north of the mall, we who live south of the mall experience constant rush hour gridlock, mostly caused by commuters -- many of whom drive over Potomac River bridges, along Maine Avenue, along a piece of M Street, and past my home on 4th Street, traveling to and from work at Fort McNair, and at Buzzard Point, the site of U.S. Coast Guard headquarters. I am deeply concerned that the applicants' proposed project, if allowed to come into existence, would exacerbate already debilitating traffic conditions. Although I've been doing my best at traffic planning meetings, I am deeply concerned that there is a serious lack of coordinated traffic planning aimed at pulling ever-increasing commuter and other auto traffic away from our Southwest residential streets onto streets already designed to be throughways (and able to be upgraded to better serve their purpose). A belated traffic study of the mall area, a study we "southerners" strenuously lobbied for, has been generally recognized to be a farce -- it virtually neglected to address the traffic pattern south of the mall. Even D.C. Department of Transportation director Laden has acknowledged the serious shortcomings of the study he commissioned. (He has promised to have it redone.)

District of Columbia
Case 02-38
Exhibit 21

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-38
EXHIBIT NO.21

I'm a 70-year-old citizen who may find it difficult to protect myself against the traffic that would move in patterns generated by the applicants' plans – patterns more complex than those that exist now. I do not happily look forward to the appearance of yet another roadway to cross while on shopping trips – especially when two already existing, unnamed close-in peripheral roadways can be upgraded for use by bona fide shoppers.

Unlike that of many other Southwesters, my property is not only close to the mall area, but is also adjacent to the Washington Channel, where proposed development -- including the construction of high density, high-rise, view-blocking buildings right at the waterfront -- would itself produce traffic and other density problems, compounding the very problems brought about by the applicants' own high density, high-rise, view-blocking proposed project.

I'm the composer and a circulator of a petition signed by over 500 Southwesters who oppose the applicants' plans for a new roadway that would bisect our shopping center.

I'm a Southwester who has (1) pioneered in amassing and conveying information – relevant and significant -- about the flawed process that produced the applicant's plans for mall area redevelopment, (2) raised valid questions about the adequacy of the planners' analysis of the specific site, (3) brought community and applicant focus upon key details of the proposed project, (4) successfully prompted the applicants to change a key, pivotal, project detail, and (5) refuted misleading claims made about the proposed project. I am uniquely prepared to refute repetitions of these claims – and I am prepared, as a result of uniquely thorough research, to bring to your attention soundly based thoughts and concerns about the adequacy of the care with which in-vogue planning concepts have been applied to the site in question.

I expect that my testimony will consume no more than the15 minutes allotted to those with party status. Some of the information I am prepared to bring to you will be new to you. Further, I am prepared to describe approaches to mall area redevelopment that are alternative to that proposed by the applicants, approaches that I believe would produce a more attractive project -- one that would be more beneficial for the Southwest community, for our city, for visitors to our city, and, as well, for the applicants and their retail and other tenants.

I would be grateful were you to grant me party status in Case 02-38 and the 15 minutes testimony time allotment that accompanies such status. Thank you.

Gene Solon

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