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NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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June 16, 2004

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2004 JUN 17 AM 7:35

Ms. Carol J. Mitten
Chairwoman
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Z.C. Case No. 04-07

Dear Chairwoman Mitten:

Thank you for providing NCPC with the opportunity to provide comments to the Zoning Commission on this matter. Since the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) has requested that the Zoning Commission take an action based on the proposed Capitol Gateway overlay district regulations, we would have hoped that the matter would have been referred to NCPC in advance of the Zoning Commission's hearing (regardless of whether the final rule has been published). That would have been consistent with the spirit of the Zoning Commission's December 18, 2002, decision to add NCPC as a referral agency under the CG overlay special exception process. However, we do understand that this is a new and unusual process and nevertheless appreciate this opportunity to express our views.

As a District of Columbia project on District land, this project must be submitted to NCPC for formal review under Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)). WASA was made aware of this requirement on more than one occasion, including at an August 2003 meeting of area stakeholders and at NCPC's May 2004 Commission meeting. While WASA has consulted informally with NCPC staff in the past, it does not substitute for formal submission under Section 5. Since a submission to NCPC has not yet been made, and the matter was not referred by the Zoning Commission for comments from our full Commission, the federal interest design and planning comments contained in this letter are intended as staff comments to inform the Zoning Commission and to give WASA an indication of the likely direction that I will take, once the project is submitted to NCPC, and if it is submitted in the form currently before the Zoning Commission.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-07
EXHIBIT NO. 34

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EXHIBIT NO.34

Generally, we believe that WASA should consider amending its proposal to more thoughtfully accommodate the urban design requirements of the surrounding area. We believe this could be done without unduly interfering with WASA's operations. However, if this project proceeds as designed, it is likely to have a significant adverse affect on the federal and District urban design and development vision for this area.

The AWI Framework Plan calls for building upon "the current wave of public and private development to create a comprehensive vision for the Near Southeast, integrating diverse projects." In our view, however, the proposal before you does not reflect any serious attempt by WASA to adapt its plan to that vision. Since AWI identifies the Main Pumping Station as a key landmark for the Near Southeast, and since WASA is an AWI signatory, WASA's failure to take into account AWI's planning and urban design principles is disappointing.

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative builds on the vision established by the *Extending the Legacy* plan adopted by NCPC in 1997. A core feature of both AWI and *Legacy* is the creation of a continuous band of open space providing public access to the waterfront from Georgetown to the National Arboretum. Other key urban design principles for this area, as shown in both AWI and the master plan for the Southeast Federal Center recently approved by NCPC, include the establishment of a view corridor from M Street to the waterfront along the axis of New Jersey Avenue, and the creation of a network of water-oriented open spaces that include a waterfront park within the Southeast Federal Center and the area around the Main Pumping Station. The WASA plan fails to reflect these goals and principles, and while it does reflect the AWI goal of re-opening Canal Street north of N Place and maintaining a view corridor to the river south of N Place, the quantity of parking proposed will not contribute to the character for that street envisioned by AWI. We also have significant concerns with the impact of the proposed "load-out facility" on the historic character of the Main Building, but prefer to reserve any further design comments until a more detailed design submission is made to NCPC in accordance with Section 5.

My staff will be in contact with WASA to coordinate the project's submission. If the Zoning Commission has any questions or needs any additional information from NCPC, please contact Christine Saum, Director of the Division of Urban Design and Plan Review, at 202-482-7200.

Sincerely,

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director

cc: District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority
District of Columbia Office of Planning
General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service
National Capital Region

FAX TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

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