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May 14, 2007

The Honorable Carol Mitten  
Chair, District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 210S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Ref: Case 07-08

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I write with considerable urgency to request the Commission to quickly support the Fenty administration's application to allow temporary surface parking in lots in the Near SE/SW area to allow time to acquire permits and prepare new surface parking facilities that will be needed almost immediately in time for opening day for the new baseball park, less than a year away. Additional vehicles without additional parking promise much more than untold and unprecedented traffic congestion at the most congested gateway to the city. Because the area is adjacent to a number of vital federal installations, including the Navy Yard, Fort McNair, the U.S. Capitol, the Southeast Federal Center, and related buildings, there are real and substantial security risks to allowing cars to try to find their own way to non-existent parking, blocking primary evacuation and emergency routes.

Combined with the presence of thousands of federal employees and private sector workers to the area, the opening game next April presents unprecedented challenges to the existing weak transportation network affecting mostly residents of Maryland, Virginia and out-lying areas. To meet these challenges the city is undertaking a number of road and infrastructure improvements, the federal government is funding an addition to the Navy Yard Metro station, and the Washington Nationals baseball team is undertaking an aggressive effort to convince fans to use mass transit. Nevertheless, the demand for parking will greatly exceed the 1,225 on-site parking spaces at the ballpark.

**ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia**

CASE NO.

07-08

EXHIBIT NO.

7

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**ZONING COMMISSION**  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 07-08  
EXHIBIT NO. 7

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In a mature urban neighborhood, this excess demand for parking would be largely absorbed by empty parking garages in nearby office buildings. However, much of the property surrounding the ballpark is presently vacant or devoted to industrial and low-density residential and commercial land uses. While a number of large office buildings are now in the development pipeline for the area, very few of these projects will be completed before the ballpark opens next year. Unless additional parking is provided off-site on an interim basis, much of the demand for parking will go unmet, resulting in unprecedented traffic jams, or will spill into nearby communities, leading to a significant increase in illegal parking on streets and private property and endless controversies in the surrounding area. In addition, the District would secure added revenue from the use of the parking lots.

The proposed zoning text amendment, for a period of no more than five years, would allow parking lots to be located on sites where the present Zoning Regulations prohibit surface parking lots. We expect these surface lots to be replaced with new mixed-use office and residential development, which is likely to include parking in below-grade garages, as has been the case with development around the Verizon Center.

The proposed amendment is a matter of considerable urgency to assure that one of the city's most congested entry points, where many federal properties are located, does not become dangerously congested, and to protect adjacent residential communities that would be greatly and unfairly impacted by the absence of designated parking areas.

As soon as possible, I urge the Commission to approve this *temporary* zoning relief that will help ensure that the opening of the new ballpark and near-term development in Near SE/SW best provide essential parking for federal employees, Maryland and Virginia commuters, other visitors, and District residents.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Holmes Norton

Cc: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer  
Benny Thompson, Chair, Committee on Homeland Security  
Peter King, Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security  
Henry Waxman, Chair, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Tom Davis, Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Representative Frank Wolf  
Representative Albert Wynn  
Mayor Adrian Fenty