



Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 6C04

December 15, 2010

Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200 South
Washington, DC 20001

2010 DEC 15 PM 12:59

RE: ZC# 09-21 Union Station North

Dear Chairman Hood and Commissioners,

My Single Member District, 6C04, abuts the north end of the proposed Union Station North (USN) zone. Over the last year or so, I have actively participated in the many conversations the ANC Planning, Zoning, and Environment Committee has had with the Office of Planning (OP) on the USN proposal. A family obligation prevents me from providing testimony in person, so please accept this letter as a formal indication of my support.

It is critical for the economic growth and vitality of our neighborhoods that the District endeavor to knit the city back together, while at the same time create developments that integrate with existing structures, particularly neighboring row houses and the federal structures that give the District its unique character. OP has done an excellent job of balancing these needs in its USN proposal.

Without taking you on a walking tour of this area, I am not sure I can adequately convey the significant impact this air rights project will have for our community, but I will try. The USN zone sets the stage for a project that can be wholly transformative for the entire neighborhood. Think of the Hopscotch Bridge as it is now, a forbidding and unwelcoming overpass that offers nothing between 3rd street and North Capitol. Now imagine that space instead as a cresting connection, linking the vibrant H Street corridor to the rest of DC, with the sidewalks brimming with pedestrians enjoying the retail and other amenities along the street and using the many modes of transit that will be available. No longer will the space covered by USN be a gaping hole in the District, separating us from Union Station and the amenities to the west; instead, it will be a thriving part of a revitalizing corridor.

The USN proposal will help our community achieve this vision, allowing development to bridge gaps created by transportation infrastructure, build with height and density commensurate with surrounding growth, while still meshing with the existing buildings

Anne Phelps, ANC 6C04, 1150 5th St NE, Washington, D.C. 20002

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that are so clearly part of our community. OP has met with the ANC Planning, Zoning and Environment Committee exhaustively, working to craft a proposal that addressed our concerns – including adding a significant residential component, requiring retail on H Street, reconnecting the interior street grid, providing step-downs on the north end, and requiring design review, among others.

I understand some individuals are concerned about the height proposal and its measuring point. I am comfortable with both. The Height Act clearly requires the height be measured from the level of the sidewalk opposite the middle of the front of the building. Any development at USN will front on H Street and, accordingly, the height should be measured from that point on the bridge. It is also important to discuss height in context: The maximum FAR is 6.5 (relatively low compared to other buildings in the immediate vicinity) and the proposed height is tempered by this low FAR. It is simply mathematically impossible for the entire building envelope to reach the proposed maximum height. The FAR and the proposed maximum height, combined with significant design review, ensure that the development will not be a monolithic block and ensure that the neighborhood sees the best possible development in this crucial area.

I urge the Zoning Commission to approve the USN proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Phelps".

Anne Phelps
Commissioner, ANC 6C04
202-607-7826