

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

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29 November 2010

Dear Ms. Santos:

The Commission of Fine Arts thanks the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and the Hoffman-Struever Waterfront development team for the opportunity to hear the information presentation at its meeting of 18 November on the proposed master plan for the multi-block development between Maine Avenue, SW, and the Washington Channel.

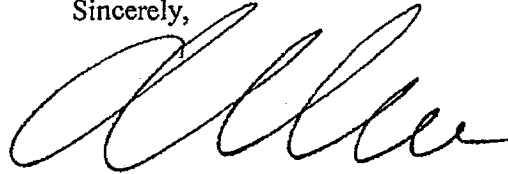
The Commission members expressed support for creating a new urban edge along Washington's historic working waterfront, which they said has great potential to become a vital part of the city with an important opportunity to connect to the National Mall through the 10th Street corridor and its overlook terminus. Consistent with the recommendations of the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, they encouraged the development team to consider carefully the physical and visual linkages between this corridor and the proposed waterfront development, and advocated maximizing the breadth of views from the overlook toward the open water of the Channel. With the understanding that a nationally significant memorial or cultural institution at the southern terminus of 10th Street may eventually present an iconic element overlooking the proposed development, they suggested studying alternatives of how best to link the capital's commemorative core with the vibrancy of mixed-use private development along the waterfront.

In their discussion of the master plan as illustrated by the model, the Commission members made several suggestions for refinement of the plan. They commended the articulation of the development into smaller blocks and plazas to create porosity through the site from the adjacent city and cautioned against aggregating excessive massing that would create the perception of a wall along the water's edge. They also suggested widening the public esplanade between the face of the buildings and the Channel bulkhead to create an area that could be used for more than movement through the site; the impact of this modification on the overall development footprint could be offset by adjusting the width of the open-space areas between the parcels. They acknowledged the intention to create an informal and lively character along the waterfront to contrast with the prevalent monumentality of Washington's urban form; they nonetheless encouraged more discipline in the massing, the adjacencies of varying uses, and the design of the buildings that will comprise this development area. They also suggested further study of vehicular circulation throughout the development, observing that the proposed one-way pattern and left-turn restrictions may pose difficulties in connectivity with the adjoining city street system and access to parking areas.

The Commission encourages the development team to return with a revised presentation of the master plan for formal review. This submission should include the careful consideration of the impacts of some of the most highly visible physical elements of the

plan, such as the tower and the large billboard-type sign, as they may conflict with existing sign, zoning, and airspace regulations. The Commission also looks forward to the eventual review of the individual private development projects under the Shipstead-Luce Act. The Commission staff is available to consult with the development team and other concerned institutions and agencies to ensure the best design for this important addition to the city of Washington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Luebke', written in a cursive style.

Thomas E. Luebke, AIA
Secretary

Valerie Santos
Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 317
Washington, DC 20004

cc: Shawn Seaman, Hoffman-Struever Waterfront
Stanton Eckstut, Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects
Peter May, National Park Service