July 23, 2018

Re: H Street Bridge Project and Union Station Expansion Project

Dear Director Marootian,

On Wednesday, July 11, 2018, at a regularly scheduled and duly noticed public monthly meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C, with a quorum of six out of six commissioners and the public present, the above-mentioned item came before us. The Commission voted unanimously (6 – 0) to relay the following concerns.

Multiple ANC 6C commissioners and committee members were present at the June 21, 2018, public meeting to discuss the status of the H Street Bridge Replacement project. At the meeting, it became apparent that DDOT and the District are proceeding with the planning and design for this project without appropriate coordination with the various interested and affected parties, particularly with respect to the Union Station Expansion Project and the proposed Burnham Place development. While we appreciate the need to replace aging infrastructure, the H St. Bridge will be a keystone for both developments, and the design of the new bridge will not only dictate which features of these developments will and will not be possible, but will also dramatically impact transportation options and roadway conditions throughout the broader NoMa, H Street NE, and North Capitol Hill neighborhoods. From the presentation at the June meeting and lack of representation by the Federal Railroad Administration and Akridge, we are very concerned that DDOT is not coordinating with these agencies to inform an appropriate design given the needs of future developments and the concerns of neighborhood residents.

Furthermore, DDOT is not taking an active enough role in the planning of the Union Station Expansion Project. This development will not only have a tremendous impact on those commuting through or visiting Union Station, but will affect the surrounding neighborhoods as well. The most recent plans released for the Union Station expansion place a substantial burden on surrounding city streets to accommodate loading for sightseeing buses, entrances for below-grade parking on busy and already dangerous streets, and excessively large pick-up / drop-off zones for ride-hailing on narrow streets to the west and east of Union Station, among other features. DDOT does not appear to have been involved in those decisions. One example of the obvious lack of coordination between agencies is the project’s proposal to route all parking garage traffic through an entrance on K St. NE; meanwhile, DDOT is currently performing a corridor safety study to reduce traffic through this residential street, a goal which is in direct conflict with the proposal. DDOT, as the sole agency of the three that is accountable to District residents, should be taking a leadership role in coordinating all projects in the H St./Union Station area and ensuring effective use of our public space.

Going forward, ANC 6C recommends that DDOT better coordinate their activities with the planned Union Station Expansion and Burnham Place development and provide sufficient public outreach
to demonstrate this coordination and ensure benefits to District residents. We ask that DDOT conduct regular, duly noticed public meetings about the state of this coordination, to allow public stakeholders to evaluate progress and provide feedback. We also ask that DDOT present to the ANC 6C Transportation and Public Space Committee on the state of coordination between DDOT, Akridge, FRA, and the various other federal agencies involved in the Union Station expansion project. Please contact me to arrange a visit to one of our meetings this Fall.

Thank you for considering these recommendations from ANC 6C.

On behalf of ANC 6C,

Karen J. Wirt
ANC 6C Chair