

Testimony of Emeka Moneme, Director District of Columbia Department of Transportation

Before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings
and Emergency Management

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Good morning Chairwoman Norton and members of the Subcommittee. I am Emeka Moneme, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation or DDOT. I thank you for the opportunity to join this discussion on the current uses and future improvements of Union Station. DDOT has been tasked with the responsibility of analyzing the feasibility of future development in and around Union Station, specifically as it relates to the ability of the adjacent transportation system to accommodate it. As so, my remarks will focus on the Union Station Intermodal Transportation Center Feasibility Study DDOT is currently managing.

Transportation Needs in the Nation's Capital

Before expounding on the Feasibility Study, let me offer a few thoughts on congestion and transportation options in the region. Over the past 20 years, the District has witnessed a tremendous explosion of vehicle trips within and through the city. In a recent Texas Transportation Institute study, Washington, DC was rated the second most congested city in the nation. Unfortunately, this trend is expected to continue. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments forecasts that vehicle trips within and into the District will increase by approximately 32% by 2030. We have seen a similar trend in transit ridership with Metrorail recently breaking daily and monthly ridership records. At the current rate of ridership growth, Metrorail crowding will be unmanageable by 2013, unless capacity expanding investments are

made. Finally, the Maryland Transit Administration also reports that most MARC commuter train lines are running near capacity with some lines already at capacity.

In order to combat these alarming trends, while allowing the city to continue to grow and provide for the millions of visitors to the Nation's Capital; the capacity to move people into and around the District must be expanded. The District is implementing a number of initiatives, including bicycle sharing, enhanced transit service and a Performance Parking program to encourage the use of multiple non-vehicular transportation options which will reduce the number of vehicle trips into the city. WMATA is moving toward full utilization of 8-car trains in the coming years and the Maryland Transit Administration plans to infuse over \$570 million into the MARC system over the next 25 years to procure rail cars and expand and modernize service.

More than ever before, we are in need of a state-of-the art, multi-modal transportation hub in our region to accommodate the billions of dollars in transit investments previously mentioned. The historic Union Station has served the region and the country well but its present infrastructure limitations restrict its ability to accommodate current and future transit demand. As such, a new Union Station Intermodal Transportation Center is needed for the District and the region to continue thrive.

Feasibility Study

The feasibility study began in February 2008. Its overarching purpose is to investigate the feasibility of the development, design and construction of a new Intermodal Transportation Center at Union Station including the proposed Burham Place commercial and residential development. The study area of the project encompasses an approximately 20- square block site bounded by M Street to the north; 3rd Street to the east; Massachusetts Avenue to the south; and North Capitol Street to the west.

Components of Study

In particular, the study is analyzing the impacts of creating enhanced access to multiple modes of transportation at and around Union Station. The study's analysis is considering the following areas:

1. Baseline Transportation Improvement Studies
2. New Rail Passenger Concourse
3. Upgraded Amtrak passenger concourse
4. Improved Emergency Access and Egress
5. Improvements to the Existing Rail Concourse
6. Tour Bus and Commuter Parking Accommodations
7. DC Streetcar Integration
8. Pedestrian Tunnel from Union Station to 1st Street, NE
9. New Metrorail Entrance from the H Street Bridge
10. Baseline Environmental Requirements Study
11. Integration of the Metropolitan Branch Trail to the facility and the possibility of an additional bicycle storage facility

The findings of this comprehensive study of the Union Station transportation network will prompt us to conduct further detailed analysis and develop a framework for implementing the study's short, mid and long-term recommendations.

Stakeholder Input

DDOT developed two advisory committees to educate the public and key stakeholders on the parameters of the study. A Community Leaders Committee was created consisting of representatives from Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, Resident Councils, Neighborhood Associations and other community-based organizations. A Technical Advisory Committee was

also formed comprised of over 20 business, government and quasi-governmental groups. Both groups were briefed on the study this spring. Collectively, the committees will comment on the study's technical analysis and offer timely feedback. Since the early spring, the study team has provided briefings on the project to civic and citizen organizations upon request. Additional community meetings and a tour of the facility are planned for later this summer following their review of the draft report on the baseline technical studies.

Timeline

The data collection phase of the study began in mid-February and lasted through mid-June of this year. The data analysis phase immediately followed and lasted from mid-May through mid-July. Currently, we are preparing to begin formulating preliminary architectural concepts derived from the baseline studies and anticipate that the study will be completed in the late fall of this year where final recommendations will be unveiled.

Conclusion

In conclusion, DDOT welcomes the opportunity to lead this feasibility study. Its findings will inform and incent billions of dollars of future development at Union Station but, most importantly, it will create a path for major capital enhancements that significantly improve and expand transportation options for millions of individuals traveling through and within our Nation's capital. DDOT will continue to work with the community and other partners to complete the study and we look forward to implementing its recommendations to ultimately create a world-class transportation hub at Union Station. I thank you for your time; I would be happy to answer any questions.