



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 5B, 6A, 6C, 7A and 7D

Joint Letter of Support

September 23, 2005

Dan Tangherlini, Director
District Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: Light Rail Track Installation between Minnesota Avenue and Union Station metro stations

Mr. Tangherlini,

At the duly noticed and regularly scheduled Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5B, 6A, 6C, 7A and 7D meetings, held on September 1, September 8, September 14, September 13 and September 20 respectively, the Commissions voted to request support to fund and install light rail tracks between the Minnesota Ave and Union Station metro stations as part of the H Street NE streetscape and Starburst Plaza for Maryland Avenue / Benning Road capital improvement projects. This request is made for the following reasons:

1. Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road Government Center Project. The District of Columbia is working to spur economic development in communities east of the Anacostia River by providing office space for the Department of Employment Services and the Department of Human Services to include ground floor retail and a Metro Station parking garage. As these critical agencies will be serving the broader community on both sides of the Anacostia River, providing efficient transportation will not only help the community; but significantly decreases the automotive demand on this corridor.
2. Minnesota Avenue Business District. The Minnesota Avenue and Benning Road area is considered the downtown of Ward 7. Planning for light rail access that can transport residents from Union Station to Minnesota Avenue expands the potential development of the Ward 7 downtown business district.
3. District of Columbia Great Streets Initiative. The 3.5 miles of H Street and Benning Road NE as well as the 3.5 miles Minnesota Avenue NE have been included in the Great Streets Initiative. The goals of this initiative are: (1) make major corridors and boulevards clean, safe, and attractive neighborhood destinations that represent the city's diversity and overall quality of life; (2) use public tools to leverage private investments and enhancements; and (3) provide neighborhood-preferred goods and services in well-maintained facilities while retaining, expanding, and attracting businesses. Installing the light rail tracks will accomplish these goals and create a shared synergy between these two Great



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Street Initiatives providing a common catalyst for long-term development on both corridors.

4. H Street NE Revitalization / H Street Main Street. Private investment on H Street NE is starting to arrive and flourish. The District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) streetscape initiative will completely repair the H Street NE corridor to include improved lighting, pedestrian sidewalks, bulb outs at key traffic lights, and new traffic signals. One of the key recommendations of both the Office of Planning's H Street NE Reutilization Plan and DDOT's H Street NE Corridor Transportation Study was to install a light rail system that runs the entire length of the corridor. Over 5,000 additional housing units will be added to the H Street NE Corridor over the next few years. Combined with the development of the H Street NE corridor as a shopping and entertainment destination, planning to solve the pending parking challenge before it occurs is one of the community's key concerns. Accordingly, incorporating the installation of the light rail tracks in conjunction with the streetscape improvements not only makes sense, but will limit the disruption to the emerging business on the corridor. To borrow an often used phrase, "measure twice and only cut once."
5. Commercial Corridor/Small Business Development. The Fiscal Year 2005 Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Consolidated Plan for the District of Columbia lists both H Street NE and the Minnesota/Benning locations as two of the four citywide target areas for intensive revitalization efforts in commercial corridors and neighborhoods. One of the best ways to signal long term commitment to revitalization is to install the light rail tracks in Fiscal Year 2006. It is understood that the funding for the actual streetcars and the day-to-day operations will still need to be identified. However, the message to the business community will be clear – brick and mortar, and in this case steel tracks, are the evidence of that commitment.
6. Affordable Housing. The same DHCD Consolidated Plan also identified Minnesota and Benning Road as one of the eight neighborhoods for affordable housing. Affordable housing requires safe and accessible public transportation. Using the light rail that links Minnesota Avenue and Union Station metro stations will provide the much needed direct east to west public transportation. We look forward to the day that not only residents from east of the river can travel to downtown; but when the downtown residents can travel to east of the river.
7. Existing High Demand. The existing Metro bus usage on the X2 line (Benning Road and H Street line) has one the highest average weekday usage in the city – 16,333. Accounting for the X1 line that also uses H Street NE, the daily average exceeds 20,000 riders. This clearly indicates that our combined communities will be able to maximize the city's investment.



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In closing, we are quite literally at a crossroads. Should we settle for capital improvements that do not embrace the complete vision of a unified city? Providing the additional funds to incorporate the light rail tracks into the current capital improvements planned in our respective communities for Fiscal Year 2006 not only is a good planning and financial decision; but one that will bind our communities together to continue and expand the existing efforts to reverse decades of economic decline and decay.

On behalf of the respective Commissions,

William Shelton, ANC 5B, Chair
1355 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Joseph Fengler, ANC 6A, Chair
P.O. Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013

Angela Murphy, ANC 7A, Chair
4310 Texas Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20019

Mark Dixon, ANC 6C, Chair
P.O. Box 77876
Washington, DC 20013-7787

Dorothy Douglas, ANC 7D, Chair
P.O. Box 64052
Washington, DC 20019

Cc: Mayor Anthony Williams
Councilmember Vincent Orange
Councilmember Sharon Ambrose
Councilmember Vincent C. Gray
Councilmember Kwame R. Brown
Councilmember David Catania
Ms. Carol Mitten, Director, Office of Property Management
Ms. Ellen M. McCarthy, Interim Director, Office of Planning

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D



District of Columbia Government

September 15, 2005

Mr. Joseph Fengler
Single Member District Representative 6A02
815 F Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Fengler:

At our regularly scheduled ANC 7D meeting held on September 13, 2005, the Commissioners voted to support the funding and installation of the light rail tracks between Minnesota Avenue, H Street, and Union Station.

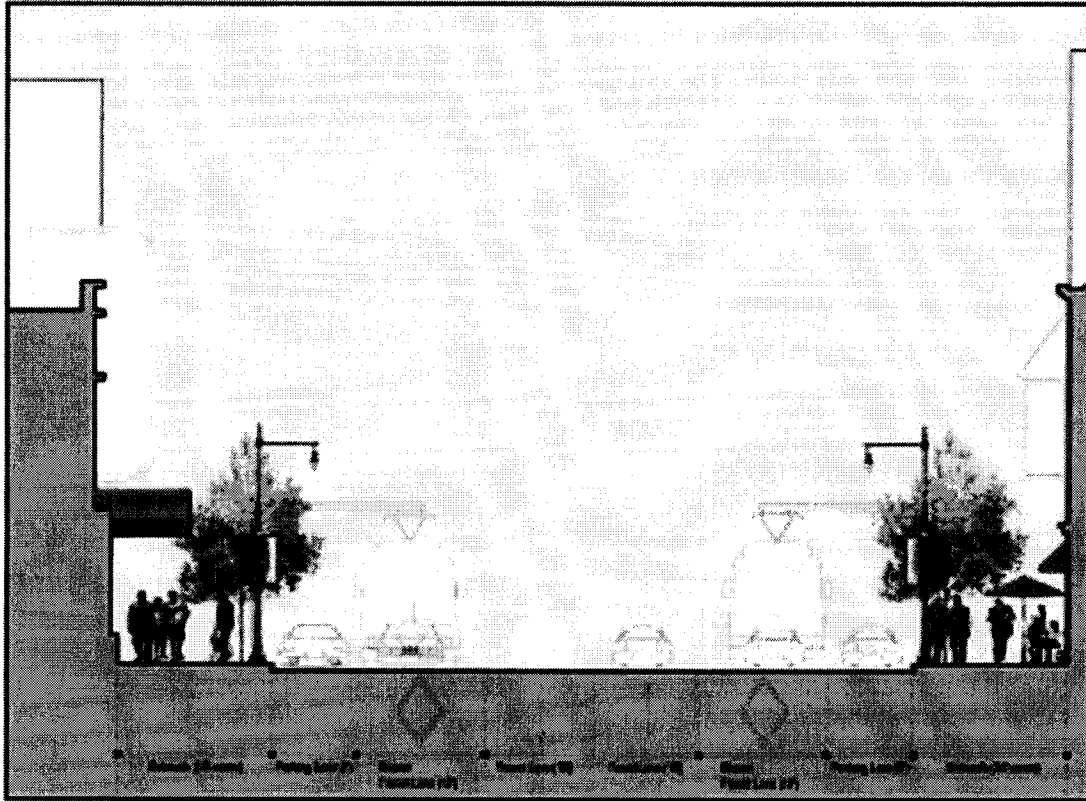
We feel it will be a great asset to our community.

If you have any questions, please contact me on 202-398-5160.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Y. Douglas ANC 7D, Chair
Dorothy Y. Douglas
Chairperson, ANC 7D

ANC7D



This is from the H Street NE Corridor Transportation and Streetscape Study, Chapter 7, page 29.

The link is: http://www.bakerprojects.com/hstreetne/rpt_final.asp?pdf=1_H_St_7PublicRealm.pdf#pdf

The light rail cars will NOT be as wide as they are presented in this diagram. They will be no bigger than the current buses that run on H Street. As the diagram shows, there will be six "lanes" on H Street. The lanes closest to the curb will be for parking. The remaining four lanes will be for traffic. The light rail system will share a lane with vehicular traffic.