

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City



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Founded 1923

May 26, 2017

Chair

Stephen A. Hansen

Mr. Lee Webb

Historic Preservation Specialist

Vice-Chair

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National Capital Planning Commission, Suite 500

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SUBJECT: NEPA Scoping Meeting: Carnegie Library – File No. 7532

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Dear Mr. Webb:

As a follow-up to the National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Meeting on the Carnegie Library held by your commission on May 9, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City (C100) has the following preliminary comments. Several of these points were raised briefly at that meeting with Ms. Elizabeth Edelsen Estes, a representative of your consultant Stantec:

- The C100 is especially concerned with the protection of the historic Carnegie Library, which is listed on both the *DC Inventory of Historic Sites* (1964) and the *National Register of Historic Places* (1969). We were pleased to learn of the historic preservation and restoration work planned for the building at the Section 106 meeting for Consulting Parties on May 17. We recommend that your Environmental Impact Statement on this project enumerate all the historic preservation work proposed;
- As you know, Mt. Vernon Square is an integral part of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan for the City of Washington. Today, the reservation's landscape is replete with about two dozen mature trees. Everything possible should take place to protect them and the overall landscape especially during the planned demolition of the double stair added to the north façade of the library in the early 2000s and its subsequently rebuilding. The same applies to the work proposed to level the plaza area on the building's south side;
- Exterior signage placement at this site will be a special challenge because signs and their locations must be large enough to easily identify the building's tenants, yet small enough so that they do not detract from the historic resource; and

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- The C100 believes that public access to this “island site” from the surrounding neighborhood and beyond must be improved because of the likelihood that a nationally and internationally known tenant will draw significant numbers of visitors to the location. We recommend a study focused on projected pedestrian traffic to and from the site with scenarios illustrating how it may be managed in the safest and smoothest manner. The DC Department of Transportation should be involved.

We thank you for this opportunity to comment and look forward to the forthcoming Environmental Impact Statement and commenting on it during the June/July 2017 time frame.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. A. Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Stephen A. Hansen

Chair