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Dear Mr. Gurskis and Director Dormsjo:

I was glad to attend the open house on Monday and to see that the development of the DC State Rail Plan has begun. The Public Meeting Boards that were on display (http://static1.squarespace.com/static/55f18056e4b0e76a82e809d2/t/560aae44e4b0c7c832b2076f/1443540548107/SRP_PublicMeeting1_Boards_FINAL_reduced.pdf) offer a good start, but there are areas that need to be expanded or further explained:

The History of Rail the District (Board No. 4)

A description of the Shepherds Branch line is not included. The Shepherds Branch segment of CSX's right-of-way has been used for freight service to and through the region going back to 1874. Between 1874 and 1906 this was the main north-south line of the B&O railroad. In 1906, the rival railroads reached a compromise that granted the B&O use of the Long Bridge to reach its railroad connections in Alexandria. The Shepherds Branch tracks remained in use until about 10 years ago.

Rail Network Map (Board No. 5)

Both the Shepherds Branch tracks (between Benning Yard and Blue Plains) and the tracks that formerly served the Potomac River Generating Plant (located just north of Alexandria) are shown on this map as "inactive". The Rail Plan needs to evaluate the benefits of constructing a new Potomac River crossing between Blue Plains and Virginia that would join these now-inactive tracks (a rail bridge at this point did exist during WW-II) that could be used to separate freight from passenger and commuter rail operations, notwithstanding DC's interest in using a portion of the Shepherd's Branch tracks for a streetcar line.

Freight Rail (Board No.6)

The amount of freight that originates or is delivered to DC amounts to a less than two-tenths of one percent of the freight that is moved through DC by train (54,000 tons divided by 32.3 million tons amounts to 0.17%). We need a breakdown of the amount of freight that is moved by CSX and the amount moved by Norfolk Southern.

Relevant Planning Studies (Board No. 8)

There is no mention of the 1997 NCPC proposal for a rail tunnel under the Potomac River contained in *Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century*. In Virginia, the tunnel was proposed to begin north of the Potomac River Generating Station and in Anacostia, the alignment would follow the Shepherds Branch tracks.

Rail Projects and Initiatives (Board No. 9)

Of significant importance, but not mentioned, are current plans of MARC and VRE. MARC's plan shows that ridership will increase to 75,000 daily riders by 2040 (*MARC Growth and Investment Plan Update 2013 to 2050*, September 9, 2013). VRE projects they will be able to carry up to 50,000 weekday passenger trips by 2040 if the Long Bridge and SW track constraints can be removed (*Virginia Railway Express System Plan 2040 Brochure, March 27, 2014, page 3*). The total amounts to 125,000 riders per day, or five times the number of commuters that the new Metrorail Silver line can carry. The Silver line can move a significant number of commuters, but commuter rail has a much greater potential, and its potential capacity needs to be evaluated in developing the DC State Rail Plan. Additionally, the Rail Plan needs to evaluate economic development opportunities, including commuter rail serving Ward 7 and other eastside communities.

Shared Facility Constraints (No Board)

Except for the NE Corridor, commuter and passenger rail in DC operate on tracks owned by CSX. The Long Bridge and the SW tracks between the Long Bridge and the First Street Tunnel pose significant constraints that limits Amtrak operations south of Union Station and restricts VRE to moving about half the number of commuters moved by MARC (According to Board No. 7, VRE has an average weekday ridership of 17,900, compared to 33,696 for MARC). The Long Bridge Study (mentioned on Board No.8) is looking at a new bridge, with at least double the number of rail tracks, but no one is addressing how to deal with the existing three SW tracks between the Long Bridge and the First Street Tunnel that provide the only access to Union Station from the South. Because of the narrow width of the depression in which the tracks are located along Maryland Avenue, the three SW tracks cannot be expanded to four tracks. Dense surrounding development makes widening the depression and adding a fourth track impossible. The DC Rail Plan needs to address alternatives for separating freight from passenger and commuter rail operations.

The Committee of 100 has been advocating the need for a State Rail Plan for some time and two of our recent statements concerning a State Rail Plan are attached:

- Statement before the DC Council about the deficiencies of the MoveDC Plan (June 27, 2014).
- Statement before the Mayoral Transportation Transition Committee about the potential of commuter rail to move more commuters a day than the capacity of five Metro Silver Lines (December 9, 2014).

The Committee of 100 looks forward to working with you in developing the DC State Rail Plan.

Sincerely,

Monte Edwards

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City