

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Founded 1923

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Message from the Chair

To all Committee of 100 Members:

As our Centennial year winds down, I would like to take a moment to reflect on some of our accomplishments during 2023.

Throughout the year, we sponsored seven Conversations that addressed issues of importance to the City. This was a major undertaking. The sessions were well attended and sparked debate among the panelists and the attendees. A report on the Conversations is included elsewhere in the annual report. We plan on building upon this success by holding two more Conversations next year.

Our Centennial activities culminated in the Centennial Celebration held on October 10 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. The lovely evening was enjoyed by 100 members and guests. A short program accompanied the delicious food and socializing. Laura Richards kicked off the program by reviewing a few of the highlights of our remarkable history. We were honored to have Phil Mendelson, Chair of the DC Council and a lifetime C100 member, as our featured speaker. Rebecca Miller, Executive Director of the DC Preservation League, Parisa Norouzi, Executive Director of Empower DC, and Phil Thomas, President of the Federation of Community Associations of the District of Columbia also offered brief remarks. Collaboration with these and other organizations is in our mutual interest.

A highlight of the Celebration was the granting of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Carol Aten, a longtime C100 member. This award recognizes individuals with a long and distinguished history of accomplishments to further the overall mission and goals of the Committee of 100. A surprised Carol Aten accepted the award, which read: “For her exemplary record of helping make the District of Columbia a livable city for all, and for her long history of service to the Committee of 100.” As attendees were leaving, they were provided with copies of the centennial edition of “The Committee of 100 on the Federal City – Its History and Its Service to the Nation’s Capital.”

Throughout the year our Subcommittees continued their important work, which is summarized in the Subcommittee reports included in this annual report. The real work of the Committee of 100 is achieved in our Subcommittees. I commend everyone involved.

I’m pleased that during 2023 we accepted seven new members. To be effective in advancing our mission, we need to grow and diversify. This year was a good start, but we need to continue working on growing our organization.

Finally, I want to thank everyone not only for the support you gave me, but most importantly for your work for the Committee of 100.

All the best,
Shelly Repp

Report of the Historic Preservation Subcommittee

Chair: Kirby Vining
Active Members: Fay Armstrong, Sally Berk, Paul Edmondson, Erik Hein, Sondra Mills, Loretta Neumann, Charles Robertson, Evelyn Wrin

The Historic Preservation (HP) Subcommittee's mission is to protect and preserve the significant historic properties, vistas, landscapes and archaeology of the District of Columbia as they relate to the overall goals and policies of the Committee of 100 (C100). In carrying out its mission, the Subcommittee has engaged in a number of activities affecting preservation governance, laws, and landmarked buildings with concentration on buildings, landscapes, and sites of importance to both the nation and to DC. The following summaries reflect some of the significant efforts, many of which are ongoing, that the Subcommittee has been involved in during this period.

Union Station Expansion Project

While there has been considerable recent press on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Union Station redevelopment and the HP Subcommittee jointly submitted comments on the DEIS in early July along with comments from the Transportation Subcommittee, and stakeholder comments that resulted in some of the massing of the station redevelopment being moved underground, there has been little known action or change other than the press-reported lawsuit whereby Amtrak is trying to take back control of the main station building from the tenant, Askhenazy. Only signatories to the Programmatic Agreement for the project can comment on the identified adverse impacts and mitigation process, and those signatories are the Federal Railway Administration (FRA), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Among identified adverse impacts of concern to the HP Subcommittee are the visual impact on the Railway Express Building and the Post Office Building next door to Union Station.

Walter Reed Campus

Loretta Neumann represented the HP Subcommittee interests in meetings with the Walter Reed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and described additions to the Main Building (building #1), the most historic building on the campus, describing them as bland but not incompatible in her view with the historic main building, though the HPRB will be the final arbiter of that. Neumann also reported a large brick building in the State Department section of the campus that though appearing to be a contributing historic structure was thought to be planned for demolition. She noted that the two contributing buildings along Aspen Street that the Mayor's Agent had approved for demolition in 2019 have been demolished, but the street has not begun to be widened, which was the purpose of the demolition.

Takoma Metro Proposed Development, HPA 23-288

At a June HPRB hearing no final decision on the proposed development was made but some changes were requested as was more detailed mapping and treatment of the heritage trees on the site and information on programming for the public park. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) for the area where the site is located informed the HPRB that it wants a community-led public input session on the proposed park part of the development. At its July 27th meeting, the HPRB found the revised concept to be compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District, with further study of the balconies and storefronts as outlined in the HPO report, and delegated final approval to staff. The

development plans per se have been presented to and approved by the Zoning Commission, case ZC 22-36. HP Subcommittee members have been monitoring developments in this case.

Smithsonian Revitalization of the Historic Core – Castle, A&I Bldg.

A Section 106 Consulting Parties meeting concerning proposed upgrades and improvements to physical security, appearance, and building deterioration of the Castle were discussed, but mitigation of resultant adverse impacts were to be discussed at a subsequent Consulting Parties meeting. Kirby Vining has monitored developments in this case.

Smithsonian South Mall Master Plan: Hirshhorn Revitalize Building and Plaza

Kirby Vining represented the Subcommittee in the first Section 106 Consulting Parties meeting on the many necessary repairs and upgrades needed for the Hirshhorn Museum in September, and while there were several works proposed that would without question involve an adverse impact, discussion of those impacts and mitigation was put off until a planned November, 2023 meeting.

Library of Congress Visitor Experience Master Plan

The HP Subcommittee on January 27, 2023, sent a letter to the U.S. Congress Joint Committee on the Library expressing C100 concerns about plans to replace the historic central reading room desk with an oculus cut into the floor (moving the desk elsewhere and out of service). The Librarian of Congress later dropped these plans. Others in C100 met with members of that Congressional committee to discuss this matter further. A Library of Congress newsletter dated November 18, 2022 and excerpted in the December 2022 C100 Newsletter describes the end of plans to move the reading room desk. The HP Subcommittee continues to monitor developments in this case.

St. Elizabeth's West Campus

Kirby Vining reported that Section 106 Consulting Parties, of which the HP Subcommittee is a member, reviewed a proposed “Resilience Plaza” garden containing 9/11 artifacts from the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Flight 93 that was to be located immediately behind the main building of the St. Elizabeth's complex (now serving as Department of Homeland Security HQs) was discussed, taking up topics ranging from why that location (explicit request of the DHS Secretary to remind all DHS employees of why the Department was created) to how interruption of the views and sightlines across the arboretum could be minimized (lower benches and shrubs). The plaza is designed as a location for small public events and personal reflection and is very low-key in design except for the 9/11 artifacts themselves. Consulting Parties finalized proposed changes in anticipation of fall 2023 presentation to the NCPC and CFA.

Consulting parties met in June to consider proposed long-term mitigation proposals following the February 2021 landslide just east of the cemetery. Massive reinforcement of the ground underneath the location of the landslide, none of which would be visible above ground, was proposed as necessary to prevent the recurrence of a landslide at that location. The landslide was caused by the presence of fatty clay soil that is to be replaced with more structurally sound soil and a zig-zag pattern of concrete caissons about 80' deep. There was no damage to the graves in the cemetery and only one set of bones was not located during ground radar surveys, but it was pointed out that it is not known if human remains were ever present at that one location. Only one gravestone marker was moved by the landslide but many trees were destroyed (all of which will be replaced with native species plantings).

West Heating Plant

A challenge to the demolition of the West Heating Plant failed in appeal and demolition has begun. The D.C. Preservation League was plaintiff in the appeal of the Mayor's Agent's decision before the D.C. Court of Appeals and C100 submitted an amicus brief. Sally Berk has continued to monitor developments in this case.

Battleground National Cemetery

In April 2023, Loretta Neumann contacted the National Park Service querying when the Section 106 review process for the proposed Landscape Improvement Project for the Battleground National Cemetery would begin. NPS responded that once they complete necessary design work and have fully defined the scope of this project, NPS will complete Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and interested groups would be consulted. Neumann expressed concerns that decisions were already being made that should have been part of the 106 consultation. However, as of October, 2023, the 106 consultation had not been initiated.

Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)

Evelyn Wrin and Fay Armstrong continued to monitor HPRB membership and the Subcommittee is increasingly alarmed that there are now only five members and four vacancies. The vacancies are "Historian Member," "Archaeology Member," and two "Citizen Members." The HP Subcommittee shares concerns on this matter with the DC Preservation League, but no nominations from the Mayor are known at this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Kirby Vining
November 5, 2023

Report of the Housing Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: Meg Maguire, Andrea Rosen,
Active members: Deirdre Brown, Edward Hindin, Nancy MacWood, David Marlin, Sondra Mills,
Parisa Norouzi, Laura Richards, Kirby Vining

Subcommittee actions are authorized by the Trustees' adoption of the following resolution on May 14, 2014: Moved and approved, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City supports the creation, protection, preservation, and maintenance of affordable and low-income housing. C100 subcommittees are authorized to represent the Committee on this matter, including providing written and oral comments and testimony.

Social Housing

The Housing Subcommittee kicked off the 2023 Annual Report year with conditional support for the *Green New Deal for Housing Amendment Act of 2022*. The Act would establish an Office of Social Housing Developments within the city government to foster the construction, maintenance, and growth of District-owned social housing properties. In her 11/27/22 testimony, Meg Maguire urged the Council to consider alternative ownership/management possibilities, such as a quasi-government organization with bonding authority, land ownership, and tough performance metrics. Her testimony requested clarification about whether, in amending the Rental Conversion Act of 1980, the bill makes social housing the default outcome for properties whose tenants take advantage of TOPA and DOPA. Finally, she urged the government to initiate a social housing demonstration project on city-owned land. The Act has not advanced as of October 31, 2023. [C100 Testimony Green New Deal For Housing Amendment Act B24-0802 22Nov2022](#)

Rent Stabilization

The Housing Subcommittee has welcomed to two meetings this year At-Large Councilmember Robert White, Jr., who became chair of the Housing Committee in 2023, and Senior Legislative Counsel for the Committee, Caitlin Cocilova, to learn what the Councilmember's housing priorities are for the coming year and to learn how we might provide support and also influence them.

One area in which the Subcommittee and the Councilmember do not see eye to eye is the usefulness of DC's rent stabilization program. CM White believes it should be a means-tested program. David Marlin sent Ms. Cocilova his analysis of necessary rent stabilization reforms; and Andrea Rosen has attempted (so far unsuccessfully) to connect attorney Beth Mellen, formerly with the DC Legal Aid Society and now with the OAG, with Ms. Cocilova .

In February 2022 Andrea submitted testimony for Performance Oversight Hearings on the Department of Housing and Community Development/Rental Accommodations Division (RAD), Rental Housing Commission, and DC Housing Authority asserting that many of the statutory purposes of the Rent Stabilization Program were being undermined by the District government's extensive use of above-market-rate subsidies to pay for rent-stabilized units. The testimony called upon the government to protect rent-stabilized housing to meet the needs of moderate- and low-income residents; to quickly renovate dilapidated public housing; to moderate the use of vouchers in buildings of largely rent-stabilized units by bringing the value of vouchers in line with specific stabilized rents, and by employing vouchers in market-rate buildings; and to invest in acquiring land to create purpose-built mixed-income

housing where services useful to individuals transitioning to independent living may be provided. [C100 Testimony DC Council Performance Oversight Hearings Committee On Housing](#)

DC Housing Authority

In response to a highly critical HUD review of the DC Housing Authority, released in September 2022, the Council wrote emergency legislation to restructure the DCHA board (B24-1144), an action widely regarded as a measure to stave off receivership of the troubled public housing system. The legislation reduced the size of the DCHA Board, retaining those members who had been the least vocal in advocating for reform, and concentrated mayoral control. After public outcry, Chair Mendelson postponed the Council vote until the week of 12/19; slightly modified the bill via an *Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute*; and declined to hold a hearing. Andrea Rosen and Nancy MacWood drafted a letter to the Council, signed by C100 Chair Kirby Vining, calling instead for a public hearing plus robust resident and advocacy representation on the board. [C100 Letter To Council On DCHA Bill B24-1144](#)

Among other deficiencies, per HUD, the agency failed to calculate “rent reasonableness” in accordance with HUD regulations. DCHA was overpaying rent vouchers in some parts of the city, particularly in higher-cost areas, while underpaying in others. Overpayment has incentivized some owners of rent-stabilized buildings to rent to voucher-holders over tenants who are ineligible for rent subsidies but must seek out housing that rents below market-rate, including seniors and others on fixed incomes. The Housing Subcommittee sees this as problematic given the city neither acquires available property no longer needed for its original use for the express purpose of creating additional new affordability, nor expands the number of buildings subject to rent stabilization. So rent-stabilized units are now contested by different populations. In another unwelcome exploitation of DCHA’s inflated subsidies, per *Washington Post* reporting, some property owners have purchased buildings and reconfigured the interiors to essentially warehouse in crowded and deplorable conditions tenants with vouchers. See also **Vouchers**.

Vouchers

A bill introduced by Ward 3 Councilmember Matt Frumin in March 2023, *Rent Stabilization Protection Amendment Act of 2023* (B25-0227), if passed, would level the playing field between tenants who use vouchers and tenants who do not in obtaining rent-stabilized housing. The bill would require the DC Housing Authority to abide by rent stabilization requirements when determining the amount of the rent subsidy to be paid to a housing provider for a rent-stabilized unit. Housing Subcommittee member David Marlin testified in support of the bill (6/29/23). Anticipating that DCHA could take some time to create rent-reasonableness standards, he recommended that the bill be modified to take effect immediately, with DCHA paying no higher a rent for a voucher-holding tenant than the last rent charged to a non-subsidized tenant who occupied that rent-stabilized unit. David also recommended that DCHA increase staffing to ensure effective implementation; and recommended that DCHA be required to publish its rent reasonableness formula for comment before implementation. David took the opportunity when testifying to remind the Council’s Housing Committee of the great interest demonstrated in 2020 in reforming the rent stabilization program, and to recommend that as the new Housing Committee Chair, CM White hold hearings again on reforming the statute.

https://committeeof100.net/download/housing/rent_stabilization/2023-06-29-C100-Testimony-DC-Council-Rent-Stabilization-Protection-Amendment-Act-of-2023.pdf

Housing Committee Chair Robert White was one of the four Council members who did not co-sponsor Bill 25-0227, and in an October 2023 Subcommittee meeting and subsequent exchange with Housing Committee Senior Legislative Counsel Caitlin Cocilova, we learned that the Committee has been

“reflecting on and researching around CM Frumin’s bill.” She is also monitoring implementation of the Cash 2 Covenants pilot, about which the Subcommittee has shared its concerns in the past; as of November 3, Ms. Cocilova reported that it does not seem that the pilot has commenced.

Effective July 1, 2023, the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) modified the process for determining rent reasonableness and utility allowances to conform with HUD guidelines. DCHA is using software from an industry-leading company, AffordableHousing.com, to complete rent reasonableness assessments for the agency.

Property owners attending a recent Small Residential Owner and Operator Summit convened by *Bisnow* called the *Rent Stabilization Protection* bill a “seismic disaster to the whole voucher program” and asserted that “The message to the elected officials about the Frumin Bill is that it will destroy the rental housing industry.”

See also **Rent Stabilization**.

Surplus and Disposition Reform

Councilmember Robert White told the Subcommittee that his *Common Ground Act of 2022* (B24-1092) didn’t get much attention when he and staff developed it, but its goal is to “put the community in the driver’s seat” when surplus and disposition of public land is contemplated. The bill died at the end of the session and was reintroduced in January 2023 as Bill 25-0039. The Act modifies the surplus and disposition provisions of current law to require more robust analysis prior to the surplus of publicly owned land and to mandate more effective community engagement. It also “increases affordable housing requirements in the event of property disposition for housing development,” in terms of amount and depth of affordability and number of family-sized units; and it establishes an Office of the Public Lands Ombudsperson.

Surplus resolutions are usually referred for analysis to whichever Council committee has oversight of the Department of General Services. That committee had been chaired by CM Robert White in 2022 but it is now chaired by Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George. (The committee with oversight of DMPED receives the disposition resolution for that analysis.) Bill 25-0039 was referred in February to the Committee on Facilities and Family Services, chaired by CM Lewis-George, and the Committee on Business and Economic Development. Although Councilmembers R. White, Trayon White, Lewis-George, Henderson, and Mendelson expressed discomfort in December 2022 with voting on the mayor’s rather lengthy list of city properties proposed for surplus, the reform bill has not yet been scheduled for a hearing; we’re told it may come up for a hearing this fall or in the spring.

FY24 Budget and BSA

C100 Chair Shelly Repp and members of the Housing and Zoning subcommittees Nancy MacWood and Laura Richards collaborated on a letter asking Council Chair Phil Mendelson to reject certain of the mayor’s FY24 BSA and overall budget asks around land purchases for affordable housing; the Housing Production Trust Fund; tax abatements for Downtown housing; Building Energy Performance Standards; and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). C100 argued that these changes would weaken existing requirements for affordable housing, labor agreements, tenant rights, and climate protection; as well as reduce funding to: aid residents facing eviction (ERAP); and enable the Housing Production Trust Fund to keep commitments to TOPA, housing rehabilitation, and new construction projects that were ready to go. C100 recommended in addition that the priorities contained in the Budget Support Act and the overall budget be submitted to the Council Office of Racial Equity for analysis.

This letter helped to inform Meg Maguire’s Committee of 100 testimony before the Committee of the Whole (See **Public Land Acquisition**, below).

The Committee of the Whole embraced three of C100’s recommendations: The COW dropped the *Local Property Acquisition Pilot Program* from the BSA on the principle that it should go through the regular legislative process. For the same reason the COW deleted the mayor’s amendment to the HPTF that would authorize use of the Fund to purchase for-sale affordable units for resale to eligible households. C100 was aligned with the Council’s Transportation and Environment Committee in opposing the mayor’s proposal to delay implementation of the Building Energy Performance Standards, and the COW agreed. [C100 Testimony DC Council FY24 COW Budget Hearing](#) and [C100 Comments On The BSA And Housing Budget](#)

Public Land Acquisition

As leader of the nonprofit NW Opportunity Partners Community Development Corporation, Meg Maguire has championed the concept of the DC government setting up a fund to acquire commercial properties for affordable housing. DMPED said it could use something like this in its toolbox. However the mayor’s *Land Purchase Program Partnership Act of 2023* (changed to *Local Property Acquisition Pilot Program*) included in the Budget Support Act of the Mayor’s FY 2024 Budget, didn’t “pencil out” for her. In testimony touching on a range of provisions before the Committee of the Whole (4/14/23), Meg criticized the subtitle for giving the mayor authority to buy private land then dispose of it in deals that would be exempt from the public and Council reviews required by the surplus and disposition law, as well as from the affordability levels and First Source and Certified Business Enterprise requirements of that law. Moreover, the subtitle made rent-stabilized units and buildings vulnerable to acquisition for other purposes. She urged the Council to strike the subtitle and requested the Council Housing Committee to introduce stand-alone legislation to reconcile new land acquisition with other acquisition programs such as TOPA, DOPA, and SAFI (Site Acquisition Funding Initiative). [C100 Testimony DC Council FY24 COW Budget Hearing](#)

2024 Subcommittee Goals

- Undertake an assessment of the effectiveness and integration of DC housing programs. Is there a coherent affordable housing policy? Start by developing a list of programs and issues that need to be examined from a planning perspective.
- Identify groups in the advocacy world that share our interests and concerns.
- Focus on using the oversight (January-February 2024) and budget process to improve existing programs – more effective than enacting more housing legislation.
- Continue to monitor progress of property acquisition proposals and voucher-related legislation
- Coordinate with C100 Planning Subcommittee’s work on Downtown revitalization proposal.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Rosen, Co-Chair
November 5, 2023

Report of the Parks and Environment Subcommittee

Chair: Beth Purcell
Active members: Charles Bien, Dennis Chestnut.

Planning for the future of the RFK Stadium Campus

The subcommittee prepared a draft white paper and a two-page summary of recommendations for the future development of the RFK Stadium Campus.

DOEE budget oversight hearing

C100 testified that the Council should restore the \$10 million funding for DOEE's FloodSmart Homes program, which provides flood-proofing assistance to homeowners in flood zones.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Purcell, Chair
October 29, 2023

Report of the Planning Subcommittee

Co-chairs: Pat Tiller and Carol Aten
Active members: Charlie Bien, Brian Blaesser, John Edwards, Monte Edwards,
John Fondersmith, Edward Hindin, and Faith Wheeler

Membership: In 2023, the Planning Subcommittee welcomed three new members: Brian W. Blaesser (Attorney), Edward M. Hindin (City and Regional Planner), and John K. Edwards (Architect). All bring excellent skills and perspectives to the subcommittee.

Library of Congress: In 2019, the 14th Librarian of Congress and the Architect of the Capitol unveiled the \$60 million Visitor Experience Master Plan (VEMP). Its goal is to “re-envision” many of the historic interior spaces of the 1897 Beaux Arts, National Historic Landmark main building making them more appealing and accessible to citizens and the public. Key to the concept is to exhibit more of the Library’s significant material culture collections and to make the Library a place of education and fun for younger visitors by installing new exhibitions and making use of AI and multi-media. While the Committee of 100 supports the goals, it has been a leading voice throughout 2022/2023 in opposing Plan elements that would irrevocably damage many historically significant elements of these interiors. Most significantly, the Committee led opposition to the removal of the large, historic Central Desk in the Reading Room and cutting an immense hole in the floor in its place for a viewing portal for visitors from the floor below. In 2022, the *Washington Post* covered this issue citing C100’s opposition. Given the negative public response that followed, these elements were dropped from the VEMP. But unresolved concerns remain as federal law exempts the Library from revealing the full project publicly. Towards that end, C100 representatives met on September 21 with the Deputy Librarian and senior staff at the Library for a more detailed briefing of plans. Subcommittee interest will continue into 2024 and remain a priority.

The National Mall: The District’s most instantly recognizable and important public space remains a continuing interest for all Committee of 100 subcommittees. Throughout 2023, the Planning Subcommittee was actively involved in review and comment on multiple issues/projects on, or adjacent to, the National Mall. These included:

- 1) **Siting two New Smithsonian Museums:** In 2023, The Smithsonian Regents selected Mall sites for *The Museum of the American Latino* and *The Museum of the American Woman*. Both sites (adjacent to or on the Washington Monument grounds), are in “The Reserve” thereby requiring Congressional concurrence which has yet to occur.
- 2) **Rehabilitation and Restoration of the Smithsonian Castle and Haupt Garden:** The subcommittee participated over several years (and will continue in 2024) in review and comment on the restoration/ rehabilitation of the Institution’s flagship building. Notable is the proposed seismic retrofit of the 1849 Landmark – for which the Committee has voiced support. Having said that, the subcommittee opposed the proposed loss of the Haupt Garden through testimony before both the Commission of Fine Arts and NCPC. The Smithsonian withdrew the Garden concept.
- 3) **Demolition of the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden and Rehabilitation of the Hirshhorn Museum:** Throughout 2021-23, the subcommittee (along with other interest groups) unsuccessfully opposed demolition of the historic, Lester Collins, Brutalist Sculpture Gardens. In 2023, the Smithsonian launched a rehabilitation of the historic Hirshhorn Museum interiors and plaza itself which will continue in 2024 and in which the subcommittee will participate.

- 4) **Proposed Addition on East Elevation to the Air and Space Museum:** Having recently completed rehabilitation of the exterior of the Air & Space Museum and demolition of the glass restaurant addition (deemed not to be historic or of concern), the Smithsonian recently launched consultation on a proposed new addition to the museum’s east elevation – The Bezos Learning Center. To be designed by the Chicago firm of Perkins and Will, the design has yet to be revealed and consultation will continue into 2024.

Anacostia & Potomac Rivers: The effects of climate change and concomitant impacts on both the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and their shores and to the city continue to be a priority for multiple subcommittees and other organizations. Throughout 2023, the Planning Subcommittee was engaged in consultation, review, and comment on several related undertakings. These included:

- 1) **Potomac Seawall Rehabilitation:** The National Park Service released for comment a proposal to reconstruct and raise the historic seawalls on the east banks of the Potomac between the Memorial and 14th Street bridges along West Potomac Park. And while several non-profits voiced serious reservations as to the project’s possible impact on the Tidal Basin and inadequacy to address future flooding, upon reflection, the subcommittee lent its support as a current needed improvement to the currently failing walls.
- 2) **Tidal Basin:** The impacts of climate-change caused river rise on the Tidal Basin has received increasing concern over the years not only from the Committee but from the National Park Service, the Coalition for the National Mall, and the FDR Memorial Association, among others. In 2023, the subcommittee was actively engaged with multiple partners in coalition building to find an acceptable solution to the challenge. This issue looks to be a priority for the subcommittee in 2024.
- 3) **National Mall Flooding:** In a related matter, the subcommittee began to advocate a holistic solution to flooding in and around the National Mall. Projections by the Army Corps of Engineers document the potential of serious impact of river rise and rainfall runoff along Constitution Avenue, around the Tidal Basin, and around Haines and Buzzard Points. Following Congresswoman Norton’s bill introduced in the last Congress, the subcommittee will, in 2024, advocate for a holistic ACE study and mitigation proposal to protect the Monumental Core.
- 4) **Anacostia Bridge and Adjacent Riparian Lands:** In November, the subcommittee wrote a C100 letter to NCPC supporting the National Park Service’s development plans for an Anacostia Riverwalk Trail Expansion and development of a new Arboretum Access Bridge across the river.
- 5) **Washington Waterfront Walk:** Within the letter (above), the subcommittee took the opportunity to advocate NCPC’s “thinking bigger” and suggested the organization lead a citywide effort to complete a continuous waterfront trail along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers from Georgetown to the Maryland line – what C100 call the Washington Waterfront Walk. The letter recognized that many segments exist already and that NCPC should consider this a signature effort for their centennial in 2024.

Downtown Comeback Plan: In January, as Mayor Bowser began her 3rd term, she announced a plan to bring back downtown from the economic havoc wreaked by the Covid Pandemic shutdowns. The announcement was in conjunction with the required 5-year Economic Development Plan. It included

encouraging office to residential conversions and significantly increasing the number of new residents in the downtown area (+15,000), as well as looking for ways to incentivize reinvestment in downtown through increases in height, relaxing of restrictions, tax incentives and other means. At the first Centennial Conversation in January, Mayor Bowser announced that they wanted to “tinker” with the Height Act to help downtown. During the same event, Council Chair Mendelson, who had also recently been re-elected, noted his continued strong opposition to Height Act changes. One element of the economic development plan (which covers the whole city and not just downtown) is entitled “Build Vibrant Neighborhoods”. Related to this, the Office of Planning (OP) was charged with developing a Neighborhood Asset Index citywide and a Downtown Public Realm Plan to support more residents and the Comeback Plan. Downtown in the context of these plans does not include all the areas zoned as downtown – it basically includes the areas north of Pennsylvania Avenue (including the Avenue) and south of Massachusetts Avenue and west of the Capital and Union Station as far as 21st Street. In May, the city announced a grant of \$200,000 to the Federal City Council, the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), and the Golden Triangle BID to work with the city to develop an action plan which is due to be released in December, 2023. “Stakeholders” and an advisory group have met twice, but no list of organizations or names has been published. Former OP Director Andrew Trueblood is one of the people under contract to work on the plan. This fall, Johns Hopkins University formally opened its new graduate campus in the former Newseum. Many of the ideas for downtown revival reportedly focus on education and culture in addition to new residential.

Rail: Monte Edwards prepared extensive C100 comments (submitted in July) on a Federal Railroad Administration (REA) issued Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Union Station modernization and revitalization. The project is estimated to cost \$8.8 billion and take 14 years to complete (estimated 2040). The SEIS was issued after a long silence from FRA pursuant to the original EIS which was woefully deficient, relying on outdated information and projections and a seriously limited in scope – on which FRA received over 140 comments. However, both the SEIS and the process are of major concern. Regarding process, addressing the original and new comments and issuing the final EIS and Record of Decision will all occur at the same time with no further opportunity to comment. Regarding content, the plan continues to use significantly out-of-date data; proposes insufficient trackage to accommodate planned/existing trains; does not adequately accommodate plans for thru-running MARC and VRE trains; continues to limit the scope (excludes Ivy City where diesel pollution in the switching yard is a major concern and the area south of the station); does not address venting of diesel exhaust from the station and under the platform; does not address the possibility of electrification south of Union Station; lacks recognition of significant environmental impacts (particularly on the surrounding communities); ignores high speed rail south of the station; and does not address loss of revenue from the parking garage (to be demolished and rebuilt substantially smaller) that currently funds most of the management and maintenance costs of the station. Until the track configurations are known, the pillars that will support the platform for the Akridge complex to be built above the tracks cannot be placed, continuing to stall that project. Meanwhile, work on the new Long Bridge, which will allow separation of passenger and freight rail and eliminate scheduling bottlenecks, is proceeding steadily.

RFK Redevelopment: H.R. 4984, a bill co-sponsored by Rep. James Comer and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, would give DC a 99-year lease on the RFK Campus, 190 acres of land on the Anacostia River. The bill would allow for any uses, as opposed to the current lease restricted to recreation purposes. The prospect has touched off a debate about whether the City should allow construction of a new NFL stadium replacing the current one (as the Mayor wants and roughly half the DC Council wants

if no public subsidy) or to repurpose the NPS parcel with much needed mixed-use development (housing, commercial, and recreational purposes as advocated by the other half of the City Council). Based on a lengthy and illuminating paper prepared by Monte Edwards (planning) and Beth Purcell (parks and environment) on the history and impacts of new stadiums and arenas in cities and an examination of other DC needs for scarce land, the trustees voted to oppose a new NFL stadium at the current RFK stadium site (current stadium is slated to be demolished soon) in favor of other higher priority city needs, including affordable housing, recreation space and athletic fields, and community serving retail. This is considered to be an either/or decision since a new NFL stadium would likely require at least 150 acres (to accommodate tailgating parking), leaving little space for other uses. The paper by Edwards and Purcell also cited an extensive economic study showing that these facilities bring limited if any economic benefit to the cities, offsetting the notion that city support is justified by public subsidies. The city has contracted for a study related to public subsidies for a new stadium, Nationals Park, and Capital One Arena.

Memorials: The addition of new memorials on or near the Mall continues to be a significant issue and Tiller has broached the idea of a 3rd Century Mall Commission to deal with the issue of new museums and memorials to Senate Natural Resources Committee staff (with NPS jurisdiction). While Congress has declared the Mall “complete”, it continues to authorize new museums and memorials on the Mall, but there does not currently seem to be Senate committee interest in “fixing” the problem. In terms of specific new activities on memorials, review continued on Peace Corps, Global War on Terrorism, Desert Shield/Desert Storm (final approval given by NCPC), Fallen Journalists, and John Adams. In addition, some modifications were approved to update the 1st Division Memorial, and a design allowing names at the Korean War Memorial was approved and executed though there was some controversy about reported names inaccuracies. Congress also approved a new memorial honoring Women’s Suffrage specifying its location on the Mall.

In an attempt to diversify commemorations (both interests and locations), NCPC and partners launched a multi-year project dubbed “Beyond Granite” that solicited diverse artists to commemorate various people/history/interests with temporary installations on or near the Mall. Artists were chosen through a competition, and their works were installed for public viewing during August/September. While well received, these are not likely to deter the ever-increasing demand for permanent memorialization. DC has also ramped up its commemoration efforts, initially focusing on Wards 4, 5, 7 and 8 to recognize subjects important to people living in those areas. DC is seeking to create 5 “local” memorials in each of the 8 wards.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Aten and Pat Tiller
November 6, 2023

Report of the Transportation Subcommittee

Chair: Jim Smailes
Active members: Monte Edwards; Meg Maguire; Nancy MacWood

The Transportation Subcommittee was active this year with Jim Smailes, Chair, Monte Edwards, Meg Maguire and Nancy MacWood. Engineering and design continued on several projects including Long Bridge, the new VRE L'Enfant Plaza Commuter Rail Station, and Union Station expansion.

The Subcommittee's focus during 2023 has been:

- I. Union Station Expansion
- II. New Long Bridge
- III. L'Enfant Plaza VRE Commuter Rail Station
- IV. Expansion of Commuter Rail
- V. Benning Road Streetcar Extension
- VI. K Street NW Transitway

I. Union Station Expansion

The Union Station Expansion Project (Project) consists of two major efforts: the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) led by FRA, and the conceptual design for the proposed expansion of intercity and commuter train traffic with improved passenger amenities, integrating Metro and intercity buses, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, parking, and better integration of the station with the surrounding neighborhood.

With the significant number of comments received on the original DEIS in 2020, a decision was made by FRA to re-evaluate all of the original planning assumptions, and this would take until the spring of 2023. A new Revised Preferred Alternative was developed, and finally released on May 12, 2023.

In brief, the six-story parking garage was eliminated, replaced by a new, single level, below grade facility built for parking with a pick up and drop off zone under the train hall. This new pick up and drop off location is expected to handle approximately half of the demand, reducing the demand on Columbus Circle. The total number of parking spaces to be provided, up to 550, is below the parking demand calculated in the analysis, but is the maximum that can be located on one level. There are a number of office buildings with parking lots on First Street NE that might provide additional parking, but no details are presented. For rental cars, about 100 spaces will be reserved in the parking area. This is significantly below the demand estimate of 230, and is lower than what is available presently. The rental companies will need to develop new management schemes for the fewer spaces that will be available. New, improved intercity bus facilities will be provided on an elevated level above the train level. Also included are improvements to the nearby intersections at North Capitol Street and on 3rd Street NE at H Street NE to improve their Level of Service.

However, in terms of rail operations, the proposal falls significantly short because of the SDEIS' adoption of the outdated 2020 DEIS. Even when this project began, those data and projections were outdated and flawed, and now, three years later, are even more so. Consequently, the SDEIS falls short of meeting the projected needs of rail passengers and the project stakeholders.

The focus of C100 comments focused largely on the proposal's transportation and environmental failings and not necessarily on restoration or rehabilitation of the historic station itself, nor the economic development aspects. The C100's position is that the current proposal/plan has significant flaws: its scope too limited (it does not include the Ivy City switching yard and rail travel south of Union Station), environmental shortcomings, use of faulty and outdated projections of rail traffic (both thru-running Amtrak and commuter) to meet current and future needs, and lack of preparation for high-speed rail.

Despite more than two years to evaluate the comments, the analysis does not recognize the separation of passenger and freight rail that will occur due to the construction of the new Long Bridge. MARC, VRE and Amtrak have all projected they will operate more trains and serve more customers. But the SDEIS does not account for these projections. In order to accommodate 30 to 35-foot-wide platforms to meet ADA requirements, the SDEIS calls for 19 tracks. The need for more tracks must be evaluated, as well as whether such wide platforms are required. Also needed is an evaluation of the potential diesel exhaust emissions under the deck over Union Station tracks and the air rights development. MARC thru-running to Virginia and VRE thru-running to Maryland is inadequately addressed. No VRE trains to Maryland are proposed and only 8 MARC trains thru-running to Virginia are addressed. Track constraints on two MARC lines (Brunswick and Camden) that largely prevent thru-running to or from those parts of Maryland are ignored. Track and signal modifications and alternative options that would allow more thru-running should be considered.

The comments submitted on July 6, 2023 can be found on the C100 website.

High Speed Rail South of Union Station

Siemens Mobility is supplying new, dual-power train sets, part of a \$7.3 billion plan to upgrade Amtrak's rolling stock over the next decade. This will enable Amtrak to replace nearly 40 percent of its rail car fleet by 2031, finally retiring 50-year old cars, with an additional \$2 billion to be invested in facilities upgrades system-wide. The train sets, built with bidirectional capacities, will reduce turnaround times while the ALC-42E dual-power engines — electric and diesel — will reduce the time it takes for trains to transition from electrified into non-electrified territory. These are the trainsets that Amtrak will use to provide high-speed rail service south of Union Station. In June 2022, an additional 50 units were ordered by Amtrak, raising the total order to 125 ALC-42s.

The new Amtrak ALC-42 locomotives first entered regular service in New York's Empire Corridor in February 2022. Currently, ALC-42 units are in operation on long distance routes in New York, California and between Chicago and New Orleans, and Chicago and Seattle.

II. New Long Bridge

This project will construct a new, two-track bridge upstream of the existing Long Bridge, expanding the Long Bridge corridor to four tracks crossing the Potomac River to L'Enfant (LE) Interlocking near 10th Street SW in Washington, DC. Three shorter rail bridges are part of this project and will carry the new tracks over Ohio Drive SW, Maine Avenue SW and the George Washington Parkway. As project sponsor, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) will be responsible for constructing the new rail bridge as well as additional tracks from the Potomac south to Richmond. Two of the tracks in northern Virginia, as well as the two tracks on the new Long Bridge and two of the four tracks in the SW corridor, will be controlled for passenger operations by DRPT rather than under the control of CSX. The Long Bridge FEIS/ROD was released on September 3, 2020.

The existing Long Bridge is a two-track bridge constructed in 1904 that serves as a critical link of the CSX main line. This bridge will be used exclusively for freight traffic. The construction of the new second bridge will double the capacity of the corridor and be used for passenger service.

This past March, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) provided updates on the preliminary engineering for the Long Bridge Project, showing artist's concepts of the finished bridge, its alignment, and the construction of a separate, nearby Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge between Crystal City and the DC Southwest Waterfront. When completed, the 16-foot-wide shared-use Bike/pedestrian path will connect Long Bridge Park and East and West Potomac parks via the Mount Vernon Trail.

This new railroad bridge will enable the separation of passenger and freight rail operations south of Union Station, something the C100 has advocated for years. This momentous change in rail operations will transform our rail system into a more modern, efficient and inclusive rail network that will better serve the DC region and the East Coast rail network.

In April, an article in the Washington Post explained how inflation has driven up the cost for the new Long Bridge, raising its projected cost to nearly \$2.3 billion. This is up nearly \$240 million from 2022 and is contributing to a \$389 million budget shortfall for the Virginia Rail Passenger Authority (VRPA). Final design will begin in late 2023/ early 2024 with decisions on Design/Build and delivery options, with land acquisition to follow. Although the funding gap could put the project at risk for delays, the bridge is still scheduled for a 2030 opening.

III. L'Enfant Plaza VRE Commuter Rail Station

Planning and engineering design to expand the existing L'Enfant Commuter Rail Station continued this year. A public meeting was held on March 21 to present design progress and get public feedback. The meeting provided an update on the new preferred alternative, 2a, which provides for a 22-foot-wide platform (24 feet was preferred) of tangent track to reduce the gap between the train and platform. A new fourth mainline track north of the station will create an island platform, making the station much more passenger friendly and efficient, and allowing passengers to board/exit two full-length trains at the same time. The location of the platform was shifted eastward to avoid the curved track just past 7th Street NW, which would create a safety hazard for passengers boarding/exiting the train. Two elevators are proposed, and engineers are evaluating the feasibility of connecting directly from the VRE platform to Metro, but much structure of the arched Metro station walls and the railroad bridge is in the way. Preliminary engineering is underway now and should be completed in mid-2024. Final design is scheduled to begin in May 2024 and be completed by April 2026. Construction is estimated to be completed by October 2028. The project cost is \$80 million. This project must be coordinated with the L'Enfant Train Storage Track -South (MS-5) and Long Bridge Capacity Improvements projects.

IV. Expansion of Commuter Rail

In 2020, MARC and VRE announced they were planning a true regional rail partnership to thru-run MARC into Virginia and to extend VRE from Union Station into Maryland. The new Long Bridge will provide two dedicated tracks for passenger service which will extend into the District along the Maryland Avenue SW corridor and then proceed to the First Street Tunnel to Union Station. All passenger trains south of Union Station, Amtrak, MARC and VRE, will be dispatched by DRPT and delays caused by freight trains should be avoided.

None of the expansion plans for VRE, MARC and Amtrak were addressed in the previous Union Station DEIS, and our hopes that these concerns would be answered by the new Revised Preferred Alternative were not realized. The Union Station SDEIS still uses the outdated information from the DEIS.

Shortly after the C100 submitted its comments on the Union Station SDEIS, an article in Greater Washington explained how MARC is proposing to extend weekday service to Newark, DE, that will give commuters and others a chance to transfer between SEPTA and MARC for the first time, providing through-travel in a way that has never been possible before. In mid-April, the Maryland Transit Administration signed framework agreements with the Delaware Transit Corp. (DART) and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority for potential future expansion of MARC Train Service to Newark, DE, and Alexandria, VA. The agreements outline the steps needed to develop a pilot program.

moveDC Plan has not been updated

moveDC is the District's long-range transportation plan, built on a framework of goals: safety, equity, mobility, project delivery, management and operations, sustainability, and enjoyable spaces. Although commuter rail is covered in the DC State Rail Plan and in the Union Station expansion, commuter rail is not even mentioned in the moveDC plan. The latest update establishing a 25-year vision for the District's multimodal system was announced on January 14, 2022 and still addresses only transportation within the District. Their goal to have 75% of commuter travel by non-automotive means by 2032 is for District residents, and does not address commuters from outside the District, which accounts for a significant percentage of automobiles on District streets. One of the 41 strategies in the plan is to establish a working group with Virginia and Maryland to consider a regional approach to congestion. This would partner with employers, multifamily properties, schools, and hotels to promote alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel. The plan does not mention the words commuter rail, VRE or MARC. Not surprisingly, the State Transportation Improvement Plan does not include funding for the expansion of commuter rail.

V. Benning Road Streetcar Extension

Extension of the Streetcar to the Benning Road Metro Station is included in the Benning Road Bridges and Transportation Improvements Project. Preliminary project cost estimates total \$178.1 million, which includes the rehabilitation of two bridges over Kingman Lake, the Anacostia River, the CSX railroad and DC-295, and modifications to the interchange between Benning Road and DC-295. Construction start was anticipated for Spring/Summer 2023 with project completion anticipated in 2025-2026.

C100 testimony in opposition to the proposed Streetcar extension on Benning Road was submitted on June 4, 2020. DDOT is planning to use overhead-wire propulsion technology. No discussion of the required study for non-wire propulsion can be found on the website.

Seven years after it began carrying passengers, the Streetcar is still not charging fares, and spare parts for the cars are difficult to find. It is still not clear how the Streetcar system will be integrated with Metrorail, Metrobus, and how this small system will be managed and financed.

The planned project was dealt a setback in June when the D.C. Council gave final approval to the 2024 budget that pushes the funding to start construction back by at least two years, if not longer. That could delay the streetcar's eastward extension until later this decade, or might kill it altogether. Lawmakers have debated the wisdom of spending upwards of \$100 million on the project over the last three years.

Earlier this year, Councilmember Charles Allen (D-Ward 6), who chairs the council’s transportation committee, opted to delay funding for the streetcar’s extension to the Benning Road Metro station. Criticisms include low ridership, limited flexibility and poor connection to other modes of transit. At its peak a few years ago, the streetcar — which is free of charge — carried some 1.8 million passengers a year, comparable to some D.C. Circulator bus routes. Councilmember Allen wants to use the extra time from the delay to have the city rethink the role the streetcar plays in the city’s broader transit network. Just what are the overall goals of the streetcar system? Although he and other council members want to see the Streetcar extended eastward, the council finally realizes it needs to determine just what are the overall goals for a streetcar system that has been significantly reduced in size and how will it be integrated with Metrobus and Metrorail. It makes little sense to have the streetcar end at Oklahoma Avenue. There needs to be a more practical and useful terminus, such as Benning Road, or perhaps Minnesota Avenue?

VI. K Street NW Transitway

The design of the mile-long K Street Transitway between 12th and 21st streets NW has been revised by relocating the proposed bicycle lanes to L Street, expanding the protected L Street bikeway to two lanes and providing for two-way bike traffic.

Under the latest design, protected bus lanes, one in each direction, will be built in the center of K Street, providing dedicated space for more than a dozen bus routes to move through downtown while separated from other vehicle traffic. Two general travel lanes in each direction for vehicles will be provided. Improved crosswalks and new landscaping will be added.

When completed, the transitway would serve as the backbone of the District’s bus network, carrying up to 55 buses per hour through Downtown in the peak period. The buses would operate with improved reliability, reduced travel time, and ridership is expected to increase significantly. WMATA’s new Better Bus Network regional redesign is structured around the build-out of the K Street Transitway. The \$123 million project would eliminate K Street’s decades-old service roads, which have confused motorists and pedestrians while slowing traffic. The remaining \$57 million needed for the project was in Mayor Bowser’s proposed fiscal 2023 budget. The rest of the funding was secured in previous years. Construction was slated to begin in the spring 2023 and was expected to take three years to complete.

However, the City Council proposed that the funding for the Transitway be used instead to provide free bus service in the District. In May, Metro Board members opposed that plan, supporting instead the proposed K Street Transitway. The Metro Board explained that a fare-free bus program focused on a single jurisdiction, the District, would create significant issues in how the transit system, which also serves Maryland and Virginia, would operate. The fare policy for a regional system should be made for the region, which will require input from Metro’s regional partners. This has led to disagreements between the Mayor and the Council on funding priorities for transit. Metro is calling for a one-year delay in the free-bus program.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Smailes
November 6, 2023

Report of the Zoning Subcommittee

Chair: Laura Richards and Shelly Repp
Active members: Nancy MacWood, Alma Gates, Larry Hargrove, Aidan Jones, Carol Aten, Naima Jefferson, Meg Maguire, Caroline Petti, Marilyn Simon, Bill Rice, Anne Sellin, Kirby Vining

The Zoning Subcommittee's work this year was dominated by matters arising from the 2021 amendments to the DC Comprehensive Plan. The Office of Planning (OP) moved to upzone major swaths of the District while the private sector acted aggressively to exploit the Plan's increased flexibility as they proposed new projects. The Zoning Commission ("ZC" or "Commission") acted in a supportive role, displaying an expansive view of its authority to interpret the zoning code on a case-by-case basis to meet the needs of applicants.

Wesley Seminary – Inclusionary Zoning, ZC 23-08 and 23-08(1)

The pending Wesley Seminary case exemplifies the Commission's broad view of its authority. Wesley Seminary, adjacent to American University ("AU") in Northwest Washington, is in financial difficulty because of declining enrollment, sought to raise revenue by partnering with a developer to build a 659-unit apartment building on its grounds, which would be occupied mostly by AU undergraduates. The seminary conceded that it would have to comply with the District's Inclusionary Zoning ("IZ") law, but requested flexibility to implement what it calls a "modified IZ program" that would be restricted to students.

C100, in testimony opposing the application, stated it is hard to see how Wesley's proposal can be justified, inasmuch as applicable rules provide that, to be eligible for IZ, "[y]ou cannot be enrolled in a full-time college or university program." C100 contended that if Wesley wants to design a new affordable housing program for AU students, it should do so through a rulemaking process. A ZC member said in the course of the hearing that granting the specialized relief would not set a precedent. While it is true that similar circumstances involving two universities is unlikely to arise, the comment ignores the fact that it would be setting a precedent that rules may be dispensed with if an applicant finds them inconvenient. This case raised further red flags when a ZC member suggested that the public benefits requirement the applicant must meet might be satisfied simply by the Seminary's being able to survive.

ZC 22-25. Amendments to procedural rules

The Commission is proposing to change its rules to give itself more flexibility in deciding cases and to impose restrictions on public participation. Some of the proposed amendments are benign, but a few stand out as stellar examples of the trend toward ad hoc zoning. Under the current rules, an applicant in a Planned Unit Development ("PUD") case can ask for additional height and density, or other changes related to a building's physical form and siting but must adhere to the use requirements for the site in question. For instance, a PUD applicant cannot establish an industrial use in a zone approved for mixed-use residential and commercial. The proposed rules allow an applicant to seek such a change in use. Theoretically, anything could go anywhere.

Another proposed change would let an applicant whose PUD has been approved make changes at any time during construction without necessarily holding a hearing. No hearing would be held if the

Commission decided that the change can be understood without testimony. This highly subjective standard means design, open space and other features can be changed without giving the community a chance to weigh in. Communities that hammer out PUD provisions with applicants in a multi-year process can find their work undone overnight. Other rule amendments affect the ability of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (“ANCs”) to participate in zoning cases. The proposed rules also curtail the ZC’s own authority, barring members from moving for reconsideration of their own rulemakings.

Note: This case was addressed in our 2022 Annual Report, when we noted the deficiencies in the original version.

Centennial Conversations

Subcommittee members participated actively in C100’s series of Centennial Conversations as panelists, moderators and enthusiastic audience members. We were pleasantly surprised at the public response to the final conversation, dedicated to how the city’s planning and zoning functions should be overhauled. In a notable contribution, Larry Hargrove drafted a white paper on the legal and practical feasibility of various reforms.

New heights for Connecticut Avenue Historic Districts

In a matter that crossed zoning and historic preservation boundaries, the Subcommittee addressed OP’s proposed Development Guidelines for Cleveland Park and Woodley Park. The guidelines implement some Comprehensive Plan provisions increasing heights and densities along major corridors, including Connecticut Avenue. The Guidelines controversially proposed increasing heights to 75 and 90 feet in low-rise historic districts on Connecticut Avenue. The Development Guidelines were presented to the Historic Preservation Review Board (“HPRB”) for approval, despite protests that the Guidelines addressed zoning parameters outside the purview of the HPRB. OP, on behalf of the mayor, was perceived to have pressured the HPRB to endorse the guidelines, which would make it easier to raise heights in historic districts in future cases in historic districts. OP urged that the increased heights would allow more affordable housing. A visibly reluctant board voted to approve the guidelines, but added language that the guidelines would be a tool in applying preservation law.

The Development Guidelines’ impact may be blunted to some extent if the Cleveland Park Historical Society’s Design Guidelines for the Cleveland Park commercial strip are given full force and effect. In testimony before HPRB, C100 stated that the Society’s Design Guidelines offer the HPRB balancing standards that are contextually true to the Cleveland Park Historic District. The DC Council made it clear in its deliberation on the Comp Plan that its intention was not to support maximum changes in density in the commercial district, but to authorize a category of density that is defined by a range of densities. Instead, OP’s Design Guidelines call for the most extreme density permitted.

Wisconsin Avenue development

Guidelines for Wisconsin Avenue development are at an earlier stage but present similar issues. OP has suggested that its plan may contemplate as many as 5,000 new housing units, which may not be realistic in the near term, given the city’s apartment vacancy rate. The Subcommittee also is monitoring current and planned infrastructure, and its ability to support that much development. For instance, the schools in the area already are overcrowded.

Takoma Metro Station, ZC 22-36.

An example of the tension between historic preservation and other goals was presented in the Takoma Metrorail Station case. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”) partnered

with a developer to build a 440-unit multi-family building with retail and related uses next to the Metro station. The project included 15 percent affordable units, including three percent for very low income households. The project thus served transit-oriented development and housing goals, while running afoul of the provisions of the Takoma Small Area Plan and the Takoma Historic District. The building as proposed is 76 feet high and, because of a sloping terrain, appears up to 20 feet higher from some views. The site's height and density were increased in the 2021 Comp Plan amendments. The community, which mounted a massive and sophisticated opposition, suggested a building that would provide almost as many units with different massing that would be compatible with the historic district.

C100 was asked to provide testimony. We pushed back against giving the project's affordable housing component outside importance in the racial equity assessment, noting that Takoma, unlike other neighborhoods, actively embraced diversity 50 years and has always been a multiracial, multicultural community. While it has grown more expensive in recent years, it historically included a range of incomes, welcomes affordable housing, and has an all-affordable building in development.

New York Avenue Development

The Subcommittee also is monitoring the New York Avenue Vision Framework. OP, in sync with its usual playbook, is prioritizing high-density development on the avenue over other planning in the surrounding neighborhood. Residents of the nearby Ivy City neighborhood have been promised a small area plan to address pressing needs there but work on it has barely begun. Likewise, work has yet to begin on a required study of adjacent industrially zoned land which includes heavy industrial polluters, heat islands, and a multitude of sources degrading air quality. The area also needs more public spaces.

Upzoning 17th and U Streets NW, ZC 23-02

The Subcommittee challenged an OP proposal to rezone several lots at 17th and U Streets, NW, and to build a multi-family building exceeding 100 feet. The case originally was scheduled as a rulemaking case, but the ZC withdrew the matter and rescheduled it as a contested case, which will enable neighbors to seek party status. Observers surmise that the change was made after a sustained public outcry. The proposed building will be surrounded by two-story and three-story residences, which OP concedes at the outside will be shadowed much of the time.

The upzoning in this case was prompted by a land use change in the 2021 Comp Plan amendments. When it was being considered Council Chair Phil Mendelson implored his colleagues to authorize a lower height. After spirited debate, the Council voted for the higher limit. The project will incorporate a new fire station and police station, replacing the 60-year-old facilities now on the site.

The U Street corridor, a premier African-American business and cultural hub during the segregation era, has undergone several waves of gentrification since the civil unrest of 1968. There has been significant but not total displacement of long-standing residents and businesses. This time, the affected community includes the kind of affluent, urbanized residents the city has been encouraging to come here and showering with amenities. The U Street case should provide a key test of how far the District intends to push its hyper-dense, one-size-fits all approach to planning.

Racial Equity Analysis.

In last year's annual report, we noted the Commission's roundtable on its draft Racial Equity standards and reported that the standards were expected to be incorporated into the Zoning Code after further consultation with stakeholders. That did not happen. Instead, with no further public input, the

Commission published a final set of non-binding standards on its website. Chairman Hood later said it was premature to codify the standards because the Commission needs to see how they operate and adjust them as needed.

The Subcommittee has been monitoring the racial equity analyses submitted by applicants. Thus far, they resemble applicants' and OP's assessments of a project's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, i.e., every possible Plan policy statement that in any way affects any part of the African-American community is listed as a step toward equity.

We continue to look for in-depth assessments of immediate and probable future displacement arising from new projects. When the new requirement has been in place longer, Subcommittee will issue a further report.

Maggiano's site: from 3 Stories to 13 stories. We noted in last year's annual report that the Subcommittee is participating in ZC 96-13A, a proposed amendment to a longstanding PUD development that would replace a three-story structure on upper Wisconsin Avenue housing Maggiano's restaurant and other retail uses with a 13-story predominantly residential building. The Subcommittee's concerns centered on the disconnect between the project's dominant residential use and the Comp Plan's Generalized Policy Map; development projects in designated regional centers are intended to provide generous retail uses and employment opportunities. Another objection was the developer Federal Realty's refusal to comply voluntarily with the city's First Source law (it is not compelled to do so because no public funding is involved).

The project also lowballed its affordable housing component. A Subcommittee member testified that the Project's affordable housing proffer was less than what would have been required under IZ Plus; and stated that the project's height and density are out of scale with the existing development in the area. Neighbors in immediately adjacent townhouses had no objection to the height. In addition, the required area planning analysis was not completed when the zoning map amendment was filed. This is a common failure of compliance. The Commission approved the project in July 2023. Construction has not started and the restaurant remains open for the time being.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Richards and Shelly Repp, Co-chairs
November 13, 2022

Report on 2023 Centennial Conversations and Recommendations

Chair: Carol Aten
Active members: Charles Bien, John Fondersmith, Alma Gates, Larry Hargrove, Aidan Jones, Nancy MacWood, Meg Maguire, Caroline Petti, Beth Purcell, Shelly Repp, Laura Richards, Andrea Rosen, Pat Tiller, Kirby Vining, Faith Wheeler

BACKGROUND

In October 2021, we formed an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to create a Centennial Campaign to Reform Planning and Zoning in DC. This was driven by frustration with the existing processes and outrage over the recently concluded Comprehensive Plan amendment process and the proposed amendments.

The reform campaign concept was rather quickly derailed by an important and insightful analysis by Larry Hargrove of the legal and regulatory structure concluding that many of the changes we might want to make would require amending the Home Rule Act. We quickly decided that amending the Home Rule Act was a non-starter given that the push for statehood would diminish any support for changing the current law and that opening it up to changes could also be very risky in the new Republican-controlled House.

The Centennial Conversations became Plan B. See listing of the seven Centennial Conversations below.

DEVELOPMENT

Following a discussion of topics that were of interest to C100 and could benefit from community discussion, we settled on 5 concepts (climate change, who are we planning for, stuff you've got to have/ugly places, public spaces, best practices in citizen involvement and planning (including technology)); these morphed into 6 events on Equity (racial, social, economic), Climate Change (greenhouse gases, flooding, etc.), how to deal with "undesirable" land uses (industrial, trash transfer, etc.), public space, use of planning technology, and planning and zoning. It was decided that we would do the events in lieu of monthly membership meetings and hold them at the church. This would minimize logistical issues of finding venues, minimize costs (since we could offset sanctuary rent with membership meeting rent), and allow those members not available mid-day during the week to attend these evening and weekend events. Dates and times were mostly Wednesday evenings (with 1 on Thursday), though 2 winter dates were set for Saturday afternoons considering weather, daylight and work schedules.

Having decided on the six events, it was suggested that we should invite the newly re-elected Mayor and Council Chair to participate and share their aspirations for the city. Rather fortuitously and thanks to members with good personal relationships with each of them, we were able to schedule them for the kickoff conversation in January.

For several of the conversations, we designated a lead and a team to work on finding speakers and refining the topic. For others, we worked as a "committee of the whole". And one was

arranged by a single person in consultation with the group. The ad hoc subcommittee met virtually every two weeks for almost 2 years.

FORMAT AND LOGISTICS AND MODIFICATIONS

In order to ensure an audience for speakers and for the audience to be able to join in the “conversation”, it was decided to make the events in-person (rather than hybrid with zoom) but recorded for posting online and later viewing. Also, it was decided that we would serve light refreshments after each event in order to continue discussion, mingle, and help recruit new C100 members.

These events provide a “template” that we continued to refine with a debrief after each event, and which can be fairly easily replicated. For example, to keep questions short and more focused, we initially had people write questions on a card and submit them to a couple of people who reviewed them and provided them to the moderator. This was determined to be a somewhat “clunky” process and not very audience friendly, so live questions and comments were allowed to help increase the energy around the topic. This was more or less successful depending on the topic and how “ruthless” the moderator could be in cutting off rambling speeches. However, it seems that allowing some form of audience engagement is important and preferred.

The recommended template is short presentations followed by a panel discussion among presenters that is facilitated by a moderator with audience questions. It was possible to include speakers on zoom who were not local or otherwise unable to participate in person. While viable, this should only be done with people who are critical to the topic. A short program was prepared for each event with a description of C100, a full listing of the events, and short bios of the speakers. C100 members had tags that said “member”, and audience members were encouraged to talk to them and consider joining C100.

Shortly after each event, the conversation was posted on YouTube. The listing of events in the program also included the YouTube link. The website prominently featured the Centennial Conversations with a “slider” for each one and a site for the whole. It was kept up to date by our administrator with the YouTube link for each conversation added once it was available.

Future programs open to the public should be at the church (which is centrally located in DC and Metro accessible). It would be desirable to record them and continue to post them on the C100 YouTube channel. Some people expressed concerns about not being able to understand what people were saying (especially those with hearing aids). Belatedly, it was discovered that the church has assisted listening devices which should definitely be made available in the future. Also, we should make sure that we have church-experienced audio-visual support — only pick dates when we are sure they are available. We had to use a contractor several times with the experience ranging from mostly successful to a very bad experience that bordered on disaster.

Derrick McGhee, Peace Plates by Durk, catered all of the events and did a very good job at a very reasonable price. We have seen him grow in his relatively new endeavor, and we should continue to use him if possible. He is also the person catering membership meetings.

We budgeted \$18,080 for the series and were within the budget (not counting significant amounts of time spent by Byron Adams, our administrator).

BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

Attendance at the various events ranged between 40 and 90 people depending on the topic. The first and last conversation drew the largest audiences.

Through these “conversations,” we have met some very interesting people as we talked to potential speakers, some of whom have become members. We have also attracted potential C100 members from the audience. In compiling an invitation list for these events and expanding it with the names of people who registered but weren’t on the original list, we now have a mailing list of potentially interested people. The list also includes numerous DC government officials – Council Members and staff, relevant Council Committee staff, DC agency heads and staff, Zoning Commission, HPRB, NCPC members and staff, University planning and architecture departments, and ANCs – all of which will need to be checked and updated for future events. We encouraged people to post invitations on their community list serves and tried to get other organizations to share invites with their members. These two efforts were good and should be continued, but they were probably not very effective. We also announced each month’s program in the newsletter and summarized the previous one when appropriate. All of this outreach has undoubtedly increased the visibility and awareness of the Committee of 100.

Speakers were invited to be our guests at the Centennial Celebration and a number of them were there. They are also being sent C100 mugs with a short note as a token of our appreciation. We also intend to work with one of the church’s audio-visual experts to see if we can improve the presentations on YouTube, e.g., put titles and dates on the recordings and see if we can create links to the speaker bios and to one of the Powerpoint presentations that could not be seen while the speaker was talking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hold two “conversations” a year (or possibly only one in Vision Awards years). Budget for two in 2024 and decide on topics in late 2023 or early 2024. Budget \$5,000 for the events in 2024.
2. Hold them in the evening in lieu of the monthly membership meeting, both to minimize expenses and to make it possible for members who can’t get to mid-day meetings to come to an evening event.
3. Charge subcommittees to consider content of the various conversations and determine what next steps C100 should take to address issues and concerns.
4. Trustees and ad hoc committee members review registration lists for events to see if there are people whom we would like to recruit to join C100. And continue to use such events to expand mailing lists and identify potential new members.

5. Ask subcommittees to particularly consider climate and equity impacts in making comments, including pressing agencies to further consider them if needed.
6. Based on the white paper, the discussion, audience comments, etc., charge the planning and zoning subcommittees (and any other C100 members who would like to participate) to develop a strategy for making needed changes in planning and zoning in DC. Build a coalition of people and organizations to help bring about changes keeping in mind the upcoming new Comprehensive Plan.

LIST OF CENTENNIAL CONVERSATIONS

Civic Aspirations for the Next Decade

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 6:30 to 8 pm

Mayor Muriel Bowser

Council Chair Mendelson

Moderator, Shelly Repp

An Equitable City – Realities, Opportunities and Choices

Saturday, February 11, 2023 1 to 2:30 pm

Peter Tatian, Senior Fellow Urban Institute

Rev. William H. Lamar IV, Pastor, Metropolitan AME Church

Moderator, Laura Richards

Rising Water, Extreme Weather – Is DC Prepared?

Saturday, March 11, 2023 1 to 2:30 pm

Andrew Pershing, Director of Climate Science, Climate Central

Chris Williams, President and CEO, Anacostia Watershed Society

Dennis Chestnut, Community Resilience Hubs (Ward 7 pilot)

Erin Garnaas-Holmes, DC Department of Energy and Environment

Moderator, Shelly Repp

Planning for Industrial Neighbors

Trash Transfer Stations, Utilities and Bus Garages

Thursday, April 13, 2023 6:30 to 8 pm

Uwe Brandes, Georgetown University Urban and Regional Planning Program

Taalib-Din Uqdah, Northern Bus Barn Neighbors

Apera Nwora, DC Water

Moderator, Caroline Petti

Reclaiming the Commons – The Value of Public Space

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 6:30 to 8 pm

Susan Piedmont-Palladino, Director, Washington Alexandria Architecture Center, VA Tech

Scott Kratz, Senior Vice President, Building Bridges Across the River

Coy McKinney, Teacher, community gardener, advocate for public space

Moderator, Aidan Jones

Before Development is a Done Deal . . .

Empowering Residents with ArcGIS Visualization

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 6:30 to 8 pm

Keith Cooke, ESRI Industry Manager, Planning and Community Development

Anita Cozart, Director, DC Office of Planning

Meg Maguire, Moderator

Does DC's Planning and Zoning Need an Overhaul?

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 6:30 to 8 pm

White paper by Larry Hargrove provided to all registrants

Introduction, Moderator, Panel Participant - Nancy MacWood, Vice Chair, Committee of 100

Parisa Norouzi, Executive Director, Empower DC

Laura Richards, Co-Chair, C100 Zoning Subcommittee

Max Tondro, Chief, Equitable Land Use Section, Office of the Attorney General for DC

Report of the Nominating Subcommittee

The November 1 Nominating Subcommittee Report is corrected to eliminates Marilyn Simon as a nominee because she has already served three consecutive terms as a Trustee and is thus ineligible to serve under bylaws Section 2-3.1. We thank Marilyn for her service and apologize for our mistake.

OFFICERS (one-year terms)

Chair: Sheldon Repp
Vice Chair: Nancy MacWood
Treasurer: Beth Purcell
Secretary: Pat Tiller

TRUSTEES (two-year terms)

Steven Hansen
George Clark
Kirby Vining
Carol Aten
Alma Gates
Larry Hargrove
Faith Wheeler
Aiden Jones
David Marlin
Andrea Rosen
Paul Edmondson

No nominees were received pursuant to Article III Sec. 3-8, of the Committee of 100's bylaws. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are not permitted.

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Subcommittee,
Monte Edwards, Chair,
Charles Robertson,
Meg Maguire

October 31, 2023 (corrected November 6, 2023)

Brief Bio of New Trustee Nominee

PAUL W. EDMONDSON

6129 33rd St. NW, Washington, DC 20015

email: paul@preservationlaw.com tel./text (202) 270-3276



With a career spanning more than 35 years as a nonprofit executive and attorney, Paul Edmondson has deep experience in historic preservation law and in nonprofit management and governance.

From 2019 to 2023, Paul served as President & CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the nonprofit leader of America's historic preservation movement. As CEO, Paul was responsible for overseeing the full range of programs and operations of a complex nonprofit organization with consolidated annual operating expenses of more than \$70 million, including several for-profit and nonprofit subsidiaries. Paul bore ultimate responsibility for the programmatic direction, fiscal management, and fundraising operations of the National Trust, made more challenging during his tenure as CEO due to the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before being named as president, Paul led the National Trust's legal team for more than two decades as the organization's general counsel. In that role, he was responsible for managing the National Trust's corporate legal requirements and board governance responsibilities. Overseeing the National Trust's legal services and advocacy work, he also helped to ensure the enforcement and effective interpretation of preservation laws at the federal, state, and local levels. At the same time, Paul has worked with developers, property owners, and local preservationists to find effective solutions to preservation challenges, and advance creative strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of historic properties and cultural landscapes across the country.

Before joining the National Trust, Paul served as a senior attorney with the federal government, and prior to that worked as a contract archaeologist in upstate New York.

Paul received his B.A. from Cornell University in 1976 in Anthropology/Archaeology and his J.D. from American University in 1981. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Paul remains active in providing advice and assistance on preservation and nonprofit governance matters, and currently serves on the board of Partners for Sacred Places, a nonprofit organization focused on advancing the preservation of historic religious properties nationwide.