

# The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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## 2024 Vision Awards

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City hosted its 13<sup>th</sup> Vision Awards Ceremony on the evening of October 17<sup>th</sup> in downtown Washington, DC. Attended by 150 awardees, members, guests and local notables, the Awards ceremony celebrated high public and private achievement in urban planning, design, housing, and social and environmental responsibility throughout the Nation's capital. *The Washington Post's* Pulitzer Prize winning columnist Colbert I. King was the opening speaker.

In total, 14 awards were conferred. Projects receiving awards included the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park on the Anacostia River, restoration of Civil Rights Icon Mary Church Terrell's historic house in LeDroit Park, and the restoration and addition to The Abraham and Laura Lisner Home for Aged Woman in Ward 3. The Trust for the National Mall and the National Capital Planning Commission were recognized for the "Beyond Granite" outdoor art exhibition on the National Mall in the Summer of 2023. Also recognized were significant achievements in equitable housing and social/ environmental responsibility by the Douglass Community Land Trust, Dreaming Out Loud, the Baldwin House Community Collective, the Ward 7 Resilience Hub Community Coalition and C100 member James Dougherty. DC Council Chair Phil Mendelson was present and conferred the award to Jim.

In addition, three Committee of 100 awards were conferred. Charles J. Robertson received the Ann Hughes Hargrove Advocacy Award and John Lawrence Hargrove received the Barbara Zartman Award for Planning and Zoning Advocacy. Finally, Nancy MacWood received C100's Lifetime Achievement Award. Since Nancy was out-of-town on October 17, she will be given her award at the November membership meeting. The photos taken by the photographer are available for viewing at the Google Drive associated with the C100 Google Analytics. The event's expenses came to \$9209 and C100 received \$15,950 in sponsorship income.

Pat Tiller headed the Vision Award initiative this year. Following the Awards ceremony, those involved in selecting the awardees and planning the award event met to discuss what went well and what could be done differently next time. These comments will be preserved for those planning the next Vision Awards ceremony (scheduled for 2026).

All the best,  
Shelly Repp

# Report of the Historic Preservation Subcommittee

Chair: Kirby Vining  
Active Members: Fay Armstrong, Paul Edmondson, Sondra Mills, Loretta Neumann, Charles Robertson, Elsa Santoyo, Nick Delledonne, Shelly Repp, Andrea Rosen (and Evelyn Wrin until her death in July, 2024)

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 several 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.

## **Walter Reed Campus**

Two contributing historic buildings that had been approved by the Mayor's Agent for demolition in 2021 have been demolished to make way for expanding Aspen Street between 16th and Georgia Avenue. Purpose was for a project of special merit to provide for the widening of Aspen Street. However as of 2024, the street has not been widened.

In 2024, no other projects at Walter Reed proposed demolition of any contributing buildings. New construction approved by HPRB included 37 new townhouses at the corner of 16th Street and Aspen Street NW; a new building near the historic Building #1 main building and construction of 25 new townhouses on the west side of the 7100 block of 13th Street NW. C100 concurred with the HPRB decisions.

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

A November 2023 Section 106 Consulting Parties meeting considered the adverse impacts of proposed renovations to the Castle building and specifically to the proposed seismic retrofit of the building. Slides concerning details of this project were provided:

[https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/rohc/2023/2023.10.25\\_SI\\_RoHC\\_Meeting\\_Minutes\\_Consulting\\_Parties\\_Mtg\\_17.pdf](https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/rohc/2023/2023.10.25_SI_RoHC_Meeting_Minutes_Consulting_Parties_Mtg_17.pdf)

Consulting parties were impressed with efforts to consider and protect the lovely integrity of the existing building in all Section 106 matters, and Consulting Parties were provided a list of the assessment of the effects of the restoration of the Castle's historic resources:

[https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/rohc/2023/RoHC\\_Revitalize\\_Castle\\_AOE\\_August-2023\\_508\\_Compliant.pdf](https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/rohc/2023/RoHC_Revitalize_Castle_AOE_August-2023_508_Compliant.pdf)

Among the most discussed topics at the meeting was the exposure of the Castle underpinning to create a narrow walkway where the seismic retrofitting top edge will be visible. Many of the Consulting Parties noted that discussions of the colors and surfaces for this area should wait for a decision until an in-person visit to see the materials and proposed colors and surfaces can be shared as the visuals presented do not do justice to the need for this new space to blend into the existing architecture.

## **Smithsonian South Mall Master Plan: Hirshhorn Revitalize Building and Plaza** **Hirshhorn Revitalize Building and Plaza**

The May Section 106 Consulting Parties meeting reviewed many aspects of the proposed revitalization of the building and sculpture garden, Phase III, all aimed at improving access to the museum collection, expand exhibition space and improve circulation within the museum, bring the physical plant up to current code compliance, and increase physical security. Of all topics discussed, the most controversial was the proposal to mount 13' of HVAC equipment on the roof – the necessary location for various vents and ducts to upgrade air circulation – and the attempts to avoid damaging the exterior appearance of the building in this process. Three alternatives were proposed for housing the roof-top equipment in a design that would cover the entire circular roof. Information provided to Consulting Parties at the May 21<sup>st</sup> Consulting Parties meeting was provided as follows: [https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/HMSG/CP\\_meeting\\_3/2024-05-21\\_CP3.1Presentation\\_508\\_Compliant.pdf](https://ahhp.si.edu/sites/ahhp/files/documents/HMSG/CP_meeting_3/2024-05-21_CP3.1Presentation_508_Compliant.pdf)

The three proposed roof treatments are visible on page 63 of this presentation, with other drawings and arguments for and against these designs on preceding pages. Consulting Parties were not pleased with these three designs, none of which seemed appropriate for the roof as they are too tall and not sufficiently concealed and are of necessity quite visible. The HP Subcommittee submitted comments on the proposed roof designs and asked that more consideration should be given to lowering the height of the proposed structure that would hide necessary HVAC equipment on the roof. The Smithsonian acknowledged receipt of the C100/HP letter on this subject in August and expressed that the Smithsonian shared these concerns. No further information on consideration of this aspect of the revitalization project has been heard since then, though the Smithsonian said that consideration of the proposed roof structures will be a part of the next Consulting Parties meeting on an unspecified date.

## **Library of Congress Visitor Experience Master Plan**

We had hoped to see a response from the Library of Congress to late 2023 meetings and correspondence concerning plans for the Library, especially now-cancelled plans to remove the Center Desk in the Main Reading Room and other changes to the interior of the Jefferson Building including the floors of the building, but there has been no response but there has also been no known change or advancement of the project.

## **St. Elizabeth's West Campus**

Consulting Parties meetings during the past year considered requests for variation of the proposed exterior surfaces of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters building to make it similar to, but still uniquely different from, the adjacent Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) headquarters building. Such changes were made to the satisfaction of the Consulting Parties and the plans were presented to the CFA and approved in January.

Consulting Parties met twice concerning the proposed underground garage at the Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. Gatehouse 1 entrance to the site, working with architects to keep the facility as low-profile as possible to blend into the surrounding landscape, but noting that the elevator and lobby must be slightly higher than the other parts of the structure. Architects noted that height restrictions imposed on other parts of this project did not (because they could not) apply. The garages themselves are entirely below grade and invisible except for their entrance/exit ramps which cannot be concealed any more than proposed. Consulting Parties were provided with a slide deck concerning the garage plans presented at the February Consulting Parties meeting

[https://www.ncpc.gov/files/projects/2024/8516 St. Elizabeths West Campus Gate 1 Garage and Site Development Project Synopsis Feb2024.pdf](https://www.ncpc.gov/files/projects/2024/8516_St._Elizabeths_West_Campus_Gate_1_Garage_and_Site_Development_Project_Synopsis_Feb2024.pdf) as well a very thorough overview of the entire site and plans for it from 2020:

[https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2020October/MP211 Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation at St Elizabeths Master Plan Amendment 2 Staff Report Oct2020.pdf](https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2020October/MP211_Department_of_Homeland_Security_Headquarters_Consolidation_at_St_Elizabeths_Master_Plan_Amendment_2_Staff_Report_Oct2020.pdf)

Plans for the ICE building and the garage were presented to the CFA and NCPC and approved during the year and no further information has been provided and no Consulting Parties meetings scheduled at this time.

### **St. Elizabeth's East Campus:**

On March 22, the HP Subcommittee supported the DC Preservation League before the Mayor's Agent for Historic Preservation in opposing the demolition of two contributing buildings in the St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic District. DCPL had been granted party status in the case (HPA No. 23-379, 1110 Oak Drive SE) as sponsor of the 2005 nomination of the Hospital Historic District. In April 2023, a conceptual design of the project had been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board, which praised many of its features but did not find the project compatible with the historic district. For the Mayor's Agent to approve demolition of a contributing building to make way for a project of Special Merit, as applicants were seeking, that project must first be found not incompatible with the historic district. However, instead of revising the project to take HPRB comments into account and returning to HPRB for approval, applicant went directly to the Mayor's Agent, where the Historic Preservation Office testified that the Mayor's Agent did not have the authority to approve the project. The Mayor's Agent then found the proposed demolition to be necessary to construct a project of "Special Merit" under the historic preservation law, and the applicant returned to HPRB in September 2024 with a revised design that responded to the earlier HPRB comments. The revised concept – described in the HPO staff report as representing "tangible changes to address the Board's suggestions within the framework of the applicants' conceptual design" – was approved, delegating final approval to staff. It was unfortunate that the RFP issued by DMPED for the project had mistakenly stated that there were no historic structures involved.

### **Battleground National Cemetery**

In July 2024 the National Park Service initiated the long-awaited Section 106 Consulting Parties process to review its project to make landscape and accessibility changes to the historic one-acre cemetery. On July 30, NPS held an online meeting with representatives of the DC Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Capital Planning Commission, and concerned organizations including the Committee of 100 and the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington (CWDW). A major source of concern was the proposed introduction of a 6-foot-wide entrance to be cut into the historic stone wall on the northwest side of the cemetery to provide handicapped access. All the discussants agreed that this would be an adverse effect that would require mitigation. Comments on the project were scheduled for Oct 5. The HP Subcommittee reviewed the draft text of proposed comments from the Alliance to Preserve the CWDW to NPS. The Subcommittee supported the comments but was especially concerned about the poor way that NPS conducted the Section 106 consultation process, which did not begin at the early stages of project planning as required by the ACHP regulations. This could affect other NPS projects in the District. The Subcommittee submitted the C100 comments to NPS to meet the Oct 5 deadline. NPS hosted another Consulting Parties meeting on Oct. 30. The deadline for final comments concerning mitigation was set for November 30. No further decisions or actions on the project are known at this time.

### **Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)**

The DC Council approved four persons to the HPRB on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, returning Gretchen Pfaehler and Andrew

Aurbach and confirmed new members Bill Marzella and Patrick Williams. The subcommittee was very pleased that the HPRB could once again have a quorum.

### **Chevy Chase Historic District**

A nomination for the Chevy Chase Historic District was submitted to the HPRB on October 16, 2023, link to the submission is below:

<https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/Chevy%20Chase%20HD%20om%20COMPLETE.pdf> and an OP/HPO link [includes useful misc. info]:

<https://planning.dc.gov/publication/proposed-chevy-chase-historic-district-case-24-03>

HPRB had not calendared this case so no staff report is available. Subcommittee members noted with concern statements from the Historic Preservation Office that this case will not be taken up by the HPRB anytime soon, noting particular concern at the reasons given. The HPO is busy working on the next Comprehensive Plan and said that in spite of a general promise to consider pending historic district cases it did not have sufficient personnel to review pending historic district cases until its work on the Historic Preservation portion of the new Comprehensive Plan is completed, probably sometime in the spring of 2025. The subcommittee will continue to monitor this matter.

### **Protecting Historic Homes Amendment Act of 2023.**

Proposed legislation B 25-576, introduced by CM Charles Allen, was scheduled for a hearing on March 27<sup>th</sup>, and the subcommittee members voted unanimously to present testimony in opposition to this bill. The bill would amend the Historic Preservation Act (HPA) to increase fines for demolition of historic buildings, but the subcommittee, while sympathetic to this intent, does not believe that the legislation goes far enough and would like to make suggestions to improve it, including the possibility of delaying this legislation so that more appropriate and useful language could be included. There is a resolution authorizing HP to comment on the HPA, but is specific to B21-0697, the ANC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2016 (2016 resolution), which obviously does not cover this matter. The Historic Preservation Subcommittee did not have a resolution in place that would cover this, so the Subcommittee requested (and received approval for) a resolution on this matter.

<https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/3.27-COW-PUB-HRG-Hearing-on-B25-576-Protecting-Historic-Homes.pdf>

<https://lims.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/54297/Introduction/B25-0576-Introduction.pdf?Id=180411>

Subcommittee-approved testimony on this bill, B 25-576, was presented at the Council Committee of the Whole hearing for the bill on March 27<sup>th</sup>. DCPL also presented in person as well as other several persons and organizations. At the hearing, Chair Mendelson quizzed Office of Planning Director Cozart on existing penalties for demolition of historic structures and her office's response to the proposed elevated schedule. Cozart said that she thought the ceiling ought to be perhaps \$25,000, not \$100,000, and justified that by saying that such fines escalate due to non-compliance or non-payment. However, when Mendelson asked how much OP had taken in this past year in fines and penalties, Cozart replied \$23,000, which clearly did not impress him with the effectiveness of the current program. The bill passed and has been presented to the Mayor for signature.

### **Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment:**

On March 21<sup>st</sup> the NCPC announced that it had selected HR&A Advisors as the result of an RFP for a Public Space Master Plan and Concept Design to advise the NCPC on right-sizing, realigning, and improving right-

of-way and public spaces and infrastructure modernization for Pennsylvania Ave. Here is a link to a BisNow article on the selection of HR&A Advisors, noting that the project is not yet funded:

<https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/neighborhood/pennsylvania-avenue-transformation-team-picks-consulting-firm-to-help-make-corridor-a-destination-123440>

...and a link to the January 2024 NCPC information sheet on the project:

[https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2024January/7509\\_Pennsylvania\\_Avenue\\_Initiative\\_Update\\_Information\\_Sheet\\_Jan2024.pdf](https://www.ncpc.gov/docs/actions/2024January/7509_Pennsylvania_Avenue_Initiative_Update_Information_Sheet_Jan2024.pdf) but no further action or information has appeared on this initiative.

### **B25-0919, the “Housing Preservation Amendment Act of 2024”**

This is a real proposed threat to the integrity of the Historic Preservation Act, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Nadeau, Henderson, Bonds, and McDuffie, proposes to remove the term “height” from the Historic Preservation Act and thereby removing consideration of height from the itemized list of factors the HPRB can consider in historic preservation matters. Deeply concerned about this topic, HP Subcommittee participated in a meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup> organized by the D.C. Preservation League and including several members of other organizations in the preservation community in the District, agreeing that a joint letter to the Council (including all Councilmembers but primarily directed to the four co-sponsors of the bill) objecting in the strongest terms to this proposed emasculation of the ability of the HPRB to consider height factors in historic preservation. However, the letter was not drafted though efforts are continuing to stop this bill. At this time the bill has not been calendared and it appears that it might not be.

### **Evelyn Wrin**

Evelyn was a very long-term member of C100 and active in the HP Subcommittee until just a month before her passing, in addition to her work and friendships with many in our community, will be sorely missed as an engaged and enthusiastic friend of both our group and historic preservation matters in general.

### **B25-0793 Resilient and Energy Efficient Historic Properties Amendment Act of 2024**

Discussion of this proposed legislation centered on language in the bill stating that the Historic Preservation Act would be amended to state that various resiliency and energy efficiency upgrades to buildings in a historic district “...would be considered by the HPRB as within the character of the historic district...” though allowing the HPRB to propose alternatives to proposed changes. This struck HP members present as an unwanted intrusion into the HPRB’s sole mandate which is to oversee compliance with the Historic Preservation Act and would further impose on the HPRB the obligation to make decisions concerning matters beyond its expertise, specifically various energy efficiency and resiliency matters, which the bill would give precedence to over mandated HPA concerns. The Subcommittee voted to testify at the Council October 8<sup>th</sup> hearing on this bill and testified at the hearing with the following Subcommittee-approved text: [https://committeeof100.net/wpfd\\_file/c100-testimony-on-b25\\_0793-resilient-energy-efficient-historic-properties/](https://committeeof100.net/wpfd_file/c100-testimony-on-b25_0793-resilient-energy-efficient-historic-properties/)

The bill has not been called to a vote at this time, but Chairman Mendelson indicated strong resistance to this bill, noting that he hears claims that historic preservation is stopping numerous sustainability initiatives, stating that this is an exaggeration, and siding with the HPO that the existing Sustainability Guidelines have been very effective at addressing both historic preservation and sustainability goals. Text of the bill itself is available here: <https://legiscan.com/DC/text/B25-0793/2023>

Respectfully submitted,  
Kirby Vining  
November 14, 2024

# Report of the Housing Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: Meg Maguire, Sondra Mills

Active members: Andrea Rosen \* Kirby Vining \* David Marlin \* Deidre Brown \* Nick DelleDonne \*  
Laura Richards \* Parisa Norouzi \* Nancy MacWood \* Shelly Repp

2024 was a difficult year for affordable housing in DC. Among the factors contributing to the crisis:

- Homelessness remains very high. On any given night, 3,960 and 1,656 adults and children in 539 family households need a place to sleep. Despite the rhetoric about racial and economic equity, city policy and practices have not adequately provided for the need.
- Cessation of the federal American Rescue Plan payment to DC and other states during COVID reduced the capacity to fund affordable housing.
- The Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) was cut substantially and in 2025 will not fund new affordable housing projects.
- Low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) have been depleted with little hope for additional funding until 2027 at best.
- While the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) prevented evictions for failure to pay rent during the covid epidemic, continuation of this policy has been a major contributor to insufficient funding to operate affordable housing throughout the city. Both for-profit and not-for-profit housing providers report that the viability of their properties is in jeopardy with the risk of closure. (Council recently amended this provision to permit eviction, but this may exacerbate the crisis of homelessness.)
- While massive city subsidies are being poured into the redevelopment of the downtown, new development continues to be exempt it from Inclusionary Zoning (IZ). Only those projects receiving a tax abatement are required to provide any affordable housing. This only reinforces the city's longstanding patterns of segregation by class and race, making it impossible for people to afford to live near where they work. (The Housing Subcommittee testified before Council urging them to link tax abatements and other financial incentives to production of affordable housing.)
- The Office of the Attorney General (AG) and the Office of Planning (OP) recommended elimination of any parking requirements for affordable housing projects, and the Zoning Commission (ZC) adopted this position. The C100 Zoning Subcommittee submitted testimony pointing out that many poorer residents have jobs requiring them to drive. For example, landscapers and housekeepers with equipment, hospital workers who work night shifts, those with children in distant schools not served by public transportation and many residents who have little access to public transit or carpooling/ridesharing cannot function without cars.
- Visionary thinking about innovations in affordable housing has been stymied by budget constraints and lack of mayoral support. Social housing, transfer of public land for redevelopment to a land trust instead of private developers, acquisition of commercial land for affordable housing, and greater requirements on developers to provide affordable housing in exchange for public financial incentives have found little support outside the activist community.

In addition, the city continues to operate without basic data to understand who is being served by the wide array of housing subsidies.

- Basic data on rent control buildings, originally assigned to the Office of Tenant Advocate (OTA), was reassigned to DHCD with an appropriation of \$500,000, but the agency has failed to complete this assignment. This widens the gap in public understanding of how many rent stabilized buildings are in the city, demographics of who lives in these buildings, and how they are impacted by conversion of units into means-tested housing through vouchers or conversions.
- While Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is touted as a major affordable housing program, demographic data is missing on who is benefitting from this program.

**City Council Testimony:** The Housing Subcommittee was not able to testify on all aspects of this crisis; however, we addressed a variety of Council committees both in performance oversight and budget hearings. (See excerpts below.)

*Performance Oversight Hearing on the Office of Tenant Advocacy, the Committee on Housing -February 8, 2024*

*David Marlin*

“OTA’s accomplishments are impressive. One example is OTA’s completion last July of a demonstration database mandated since 2015, which was sent to the Department of Housing and Community Development so that DHCD could complete this important resource and make it available to all. Sadly, the database is not yet available from DHCD. The database will provide tenants and the rental housing community with a user-friendly, internet-searchable research tool for all documents that housing providers are required to submit to the Rent Administrator’s office.”

*Performance Oversight Hearing of the Department of Housing and Community Development - February 14, 2024*

*Nancy MacWood*

“DHCD is administering substantial federal and local funds, and its mission is among the most critical in providing and ensuring housing for the most vulnerable DC residents and families. With the substantial local and federal investment in housing programs, it is crucial that the Council and the public know basic information about who is being served. Each of the housing programs have targeted groups and individuals and we have assumptions about the age, race, gender, family status and ethnicity of who is being served but very little actual data. DHCD needs to bring us all up to date on the reach and results of their programs and include...C100 urges DHCD to provide relevant data that demonstrates that its programs are reaching the Black community and other protected classes. The DHCD report should be results-oriented and provide a deeper dive into who benefits from the cited programs.”

*Performance Oversight Hearing on the Office of Attorney General, The Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, February 28, 2024*

*Sondra L. Mills*

While commending OAG for litigation brought to halt abusive practices by private landlords, the testimony questioned whether cases brought by OAG against the public landlord, DHCA, had made any difference in addressing the conditions identified in HUD’s scathing 2022 report on public housing in the District. “We therefore urge greater transparency by OAG regarding its efforts to secure DCHA’s compliance with the law. The public needs to know whether OAG’s cases have achieved *any* real change in DCHA’s practices. If they have not, then we urge OAG to take further steps to hold DCHA accountable. If that requires seeking appointment of a receiver, then OAG may need to consider that option. Too much is at stake for DC

residents in need of affordable public housing that is safe and fair to allow DCHA’s mismanagement to continue.”

*Committee on Housing, Budget Oversight Hearing*

*Regarding DC Housing Authority - April 11, 2024*

*Sondra L. Mills*

“While the Mayor says that shared sacrifice is needed, her proposed budget is skewed toward Downtown with great sacrifice taking place across the city. The Council should closely examine the priorities in the budget and make substantial adjustments. This is particularly true for the mayor’s proposed budget for the public housing operated by DCHA. As the Council is aware, the September 2022 report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that DCHA had failed to provide “decent, safe, and sanitary” housing for its residents in violation of federal requirements, and that many units are uninhabitable and vacant. While DCHA has promised to remedy the horrible conditions identified in the HUD report, the Council must evaluate whether the mayor’s budget provides adequate funding to do so.”

*Committee on Housing, Budget Oversight Hearing*

*Regarding the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Housing Production Trust Fund, April 22, 2024*

*Deirdre P. Brown, J.D.*

“The trust fund stands as DC's primary affordable housing production program, embodying the city's commitment to housing as a fundamental right. However, the Mayor's proposal includes a staggering 41% reduction in funding, surpassing the loss of federal ARPA funds. If approved, this would slash nearly \$35 million in funding for multi-family housing through the RFP process. These figures aren't mere numbers shuffled between balance sheets; they represent the stark reality that crucial affordable housing projects may not materialize. It signifies that aspirations of constructing more affordable housing in high-opportunity areas may remain unfulfilled rhetoric.”

*Committee on Housing, Budget Oversight Hearing on*

*Regarding the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, April 29, 2024*

*Deirdre P. Brown, J.D.*

“The mayor is pushing for the largest budget in DC's history, yet it puts critical programs, especially in housing, education, and social services, at risk of cuts while directing new funds primarily to Downtown... We believe that any sacrifices should not unfairly burden the most vulnerable, particularly our Black and Brown communities. The Committee of 100 argues that the budget fails to strike a proper balance between revitalizing the central core and meeting the needs of our most vulnerable residents.”

*The Committee on Housing - Roundtable on Housing Downtown, September 24, 2024*

*Meg Maguire*

“Downtown residential development has long been exempted from Inclusionary Zoning. Luxury buildings at City Center, NOMA, and the West End exclude those whose services are essential to neighborhood life: workers in groceries, cafes and sports clubs; maintenance and landscaping staff; nursing and hospital aides to name only a few. We are, in fact, living a lie that our city is committed to racial equity and economic fairness.

We call on the Council and the Bowser Administration to address these fundamental questions:

- Who currently lives in the downtown?
- How much affordable housing already exists downtown?

- Housing for whom?
- Cost of new housing?
- Size of new housing?
- Will there be grocery stores, schools, and healthcare for families?
- How will the city avoid repeating mistakes of the past that make residential life downtown unpleasant? “

### **C100 Website revisions**

We participated actively in discussions about the housing section of the new C100 website. Work needs to continue to ensure that the user can locate all documents through the search function and that the public can easily discern the work we are doing on general subject areas rather than just selected “initiatives.”

### **Vision Awards**

We submitted three successful nominations for 2024 Vision Awards: The Abraham and Laura Lisner Home for Aged Women, Douglass Community Land Trust, and Baldwin House Community Collective. The awards recognized the achievements of these three entities in strengthening and creating genuinely affordable housing for DC residents.

### **Field Trips**

To better acquaint ourselves with affordable housing practice, we visited The Laureate, a social housing project in Montgomery County. We hope to visit Baldwin House, The Townhomes on Capitol Hill, and other projects in 2025 to celebrate what is possible.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meg Maguire, Co-chair of the C100 Housing Subcommittee  
November 17, 2024

# Report of the Parks and Environment Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: Dennis Chestnut, Beth Purcell  
Active members: Dennis Chestnut, Beth Purcell, Charlie Bien, Jim Dougherty, Claudia Russell, Susan Volman, Nick Delledonne

## Testimony to NCPC opposing the proposed renovation of the Rock Creek Golf Course

The renovation of the Rock Creek Golf Course calls for the installation of a massive, new driving range with an associated hi-intensity lighting system, as well as the installation of a new lighting system for the golf course itself, to enable golfing at night.

“Night golf” is a frivolous concept that should have no place within highly fragile national park land that is currently unused and unilluminated at night.

- (A) Approval of the proposed golf course renovation will violate the Comprehensive Plan which recognizes the environmental harms caused by light pollution (Federal Element Section J) and prohibits the introduction of new light sources except where “...needed for safety...” Parks and Open Space Element B.14.
- (B) Although the Finding of No Significant Impact (“FONSI”) states that the proposed artificial lighting system will receive “Dark Sky certification” by DarkSky International, this is false. In fact, the proposed lighting system is categorically ineligible for “Dark-Sky Approval” because it is located within a highly sensitive ecological zone providing habitat to light-sensitive species of bats. The FONSI asserts that the installation of lights along the golf course itself “will allow for extended evening play and may improve visitor comfort and safety when using the course facilities.” (p.7). page 2 listed on the federal “endangered species list”) that is currently pitch dark at night – as it has been since time immemorial.
- (C) The National Park Service’s Environmental Assessment/FONSI (“EA/FONSI”) is defective because it fails to consider alternatives to the “Proposed Action” that do not call for new artificial lighting systems. NEPA requires that – in the case of every proposed agency action - Environmental Assessments and FONSI’s must contain a thorough evaluation of alternatives to an agency’s preferred configuration. In this case, however, NPS gave short (no) shrift to any alternative project configuration that did not include an illuminated golf course and a brilliantly illuminated driving range.

## P&E submitted comments on the Mayor’s proposed budget for DOEE

Testimony to the DC Council Performance Oversight Hearing Committee on Transportation & Environment. Oral and testimony was provided to support the critical work of DC Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE): Some examples are -

- A. DC to meet carbon neutrality by 2045
- B. Reduce GHG emissions by 60% by 2030
- C. In 2018, the Building Energy Performance Standard program was created within DOEE to increase energy efficiency of existing buildings
- D. In DC, two major kinds of climate change damage that are caused by emissions are: Flooding & Extreme heat.
- E. DOEE's Building Energy Performance Standard program leads to Long-term protection.

No proposed actions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dennis Chestnut, Beth Purcell  
November 15, 2024

# Report of the Planning Subcommittee

Co-chairs: Pat Tiller and Carol Aten

Active members: Kathy Adams, Carol Aten, Charlie Bien, Brian Blaesser, Nick DelleDonne, John Edwards, Monte Edwards, John Fondersmith, Mary Alice Levine, Nancy MacWood, Claudia Russell, Pat Tiller, Faith Wheeler

## **Downtown**

The plight of the traditional downtown DC was much on everyone's mind this year. Post pandemic vacancy rates were high and increasing. In January 2023, the Mayor issued a Comeback Plan (the city's 5-year Economic Development Plan), encouraging the conversion of commercial buildings to residential to increase the number of people living in the downtown area by 15,000 new residents. The plan also looked at ways to incentivize reinvestment in downtown through increases in height, relaxing of restrictions, tax incentives, and other means. Shortly after the plan's release, Ted Leonsis announced a deal with Virginia to move the Wizards and Capitals to Alexandria. A Chinatown Task Force was assembled to address that area. Fortunately, the move fell through (with DC pledging significant incentives for them to stay and Virginia rejecting the costs, traffic, and general upheaval). A Public Realm Plan was also developed by the Office of Planning (OP) to help connect downtown parks and to encourage visitors to come up from the Mall and into the downtown.

C100 objected to plans not including any affordable housing, advocating increases in heights beyond those allowed under the Height Act, and relaxing environmental and hiring requirements. The Federal City Council and Downtown and Golden Triangle Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) also have been actively involved in developing programs and policies to "activate" downtown.

Because of C100's concerns and the massive attention being paid to downtown, C100 held two "Conversations" titled "Creating a Vibrant Downtown". The first held in April featured four speaker/panelists: John Rennie Short, Professor Emeritus of Geography and Public Policy, University of Maryland; Gerren Price, President and CEO, Downtown DC BID; Vicki Davis, Managing Partner, Urban Atlantic; and Nancy MacWood, Vice Chair, C100. The second in May featured: Paul R. Levy, Executive Director, Center City Foundation; Tracy Hadden Loh, Fellow, Brookings Institution; and Leona Agouridis, President and CEO, Golden Triangle BID.

## **Library of Congress**

The subcommittee continued to engage on the Library's plans for major interior changes envisioned in the Visitor Experience Master Plan. While supporting the goals 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 with multi-media and new exhibitions, C100 strongly objected to elements affecting adversely the historic rooms throughout the National Historic Landmark. Chief objections were plans to cut an immense viewing hole ("Oculus") in the floor of the Main Reading Room and removal of the prominent, historic Central Desk. Also of concern were oftentimes adverse changes proposed to other significant historic rooms throughout the building.

In the end, the Oculus proposal was abandoned, and the Central Desk will remain, but will no longer be the location for ordering and receiving materials. Proposed changes to other historic interiors continue to be of concern and will be monitored.

### **Smithsonian and Other Museums**

**Smithsonian Castle and Haupt Garden:** After multiple years of consultation, C100 engagement on this came to a close with work proceeding on the seismic retrofit (that C100 supported) and a commitment to restore the Haupt Garden after strong opposition expressed by C100 and others to its loss was initially proposed.

**Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden and Museum:** Having unsuccessfully opposed the adverse changes to the sculpture garden, the planning subcommittee turned its attention to the proposed rehabilitation of the museum building and plaza. While generally supporting the changes proposed to improve egress and circulation and increase gallery space throughout, C100 expressed concern with planned changes to the HVAC system and increases in interior space that would require creating a “penthouse” on the roof of the building that would change the perception and design of the building. Ideas for setback and lowering heights are being explored.

**Air and Space Museum:** C100 has been participating in consultation processes that began in late 2023 and continued in 2024 on a proposed addition to the museum’s east elevation. Named the Bezos Learning Center after the donor, the final design is a result of a national competition which was awarded to the Chicago architecture firm Perkins and Will. The design has encountered little opposition.

**Museum of the American Latino and Museum of the American Woman:** The Smithsonian Regents have agreed on sites for the two new museums but have not received Congressional approval. Final design competitions are expected to be announced soon.

### **Memorials:**

Design concept and siting plans for a new Fallen Journalists Memorial near are largely completed. C100 argued unsuccessfully for an alternative site to the one chosen. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) has approved preliminary site development plans for the Peace Corps Commemorative Park near the Capitol. C100 has made extensive comments over the past few years on the proposed Peace Corps design, particularly objecting to the “creepy” hands which have continued to remain in the design concept.

### **Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative:**

Having made extensive comments in 2022 on three proposed approaches to redesigning Pennsylvania Avenue a couple years ago, the Planning Subcommittee has been monitoring this project throughout 2024. At this point, work is internal to NCPC with two contractors selected this year to work with staff—DAVID RUBIN Land Collective will lead design of the new plan working with HR&A Advisors which is leading the Implementation Program.

### **RFK Site:**

Competing visions for the RFK site (e.g., a new football stadium or affordable housing) continued to swirl while Congress considered legislation that would transfer the property to the city. The Planning Subcommittee has continued to monitor the potential transfer of the site from NPS to DC and the proposals for how it can/should be used, including the recreation-oriented development proposal by Events DC. C100 has produced a white paper showing that public investment in stadiums and arenas do not generate a commensurate return.

### **Navy Yard East:**

C100 has objected to multiple aspects of a proposed private development on the eastern portion of the Navy Yard, a National Historic Landmark District. Testifying before NCPC, C100 raised objections to the proposed 130-foot height of buildings, building in the floodplain (even if bermed up), the dearth of affordable housing (only 8%), adverse treatment of a contributing historic building (worst case of facadism ever), and the inadequate setback from Anacostia River and the trail that runs along it. The same concerns were raised by C100 in written comments to the Commission on Fine Arts (CFA). Notwithstanding, both bodies approved the project, and the plans were incorporated in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Navy, NCPC and the Office of Planning. In December 2024, the Zoning Commission will have a hearing on the map and text amendments proposed by OP to create a new zone—Navy Yard East—that will ratify the provisions in the MOU. While the MOU and the new zone allow the maximum heights under the Height Act, there remains a question of whether the 130-foot heights using the 11<sup>th</sup> Street freeway ramp as the measuring point is appropriate and in compliance with the Height Act. The Zoning Administrator has not issued a determination. C100 made two FOIA requests of Navy—copy of agreement between Navy and developer (heavily redacted) and correspondence on height of buildings (non-responsive because of exceptions and heavily redacted).

### **Anacostia Riverfront Walk/Bridge:**

Continuing its long-standing engagement on the Anacostia River and waterfront, in February C100 testified at NCPC in support of the NPS Riverwalk Trail Extension and National Arboretum Bridge Project but urged NCPC to look at community issues including better river access/use for adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Kennedy Center/Foggy Bottom:**

In April, the Urban Land Institute (with co-sponsors NCPC, DC OP, CFA, NPS and others) issued its Technical Assistance Panel Report—the Kennedy Center/Foggy Bottom TAP. It proposes an innovative design concept to repair the “damage done” in the 1960s by Route 66, the Roosevelt Bridge, and the Kennedy Center by decking over the tangle of freeways between Virginia Avenue and the Kennedy Center to create extensive parkland and a tree-lined boulevard from the Kennedy Center to Virginia Avenue. This would be an expensive undertaking and nothing more has been heard of it in 2024.

### **Federal Elements of DC Comprehensive Plan:**

NCPC released for public comment an amended Introduction Chapter that addressed equity and resilience/sustainability. C100 made extensive comments, most of which were adopted in the final which was approved by the Commission in June and issued for effect in August. Notably, the element dropped the use of “themes” which C100 argued had no meaning in planning and was more confusing than helpful. Also, we were told that NCPC will simply continue to amend elements as needed rather than undertake a wholesale rewrite like the DC elements.

### **DC Elements of the DC Comprehensive Plan:**

Thinking ahead re OP rewrite of DC elements of the comprehensive plan, the subcommittee had extensive discussions about the importance of public engagement; what shape a new shorter plan might take; how to plan for more affordable housing; how to get more people and ANCs informed and engaged; what future vision will inform planning policies; how C100 can prepare to be involved; etc. The OP “Roadmap to 2050” includes the following timeline:

- September to December 2024—identify conditions, trends, and issues to inform community conversations and develop racial equity framework.

- January to September 2025—engage residents citywide to identify goals and priority for 2050.
- October 2025 to September 2026—engage residents on future land use scenarios.
- October 2026 to June 2027—collect public input, refine DC 2050, prepare plan for Mayor to transmit to Council.
- July to December 2027—Council considers approval.
- 2020 to 2050—implement plan.

**Washington Waterfront Walk:**

C100 has continued to advocate for filling the gaps to make a continuous trail connecting the various existing and proposed trail segments along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers urging NCPC to take a leadership role in accomplishing it as a centennial project marking NCPC’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Aten and Pat Tiller  
November 15, 2024

# Report of the Transportation Subcommittee

Chair: Jim Smailes  
Active members: Jim Smailes, Monte Edwards; Meg Maguire; Nancy MacWood; Nick Delledonne; and Karl (Fritz) Edler

The Transportation Subcommittee was active this year with Jim Smailes, Chair, Monte Edwards, Meg Maguire, Nancy MacWood, and our two new members, Nicholas Delledonne and Karl (Fritz) Edler. Subcommittee members continued to monitor the progress and provide comments and testimony on several projects including Billboards, Long Bridge, the new VRE L'Enfant Plaza Commuter Rail Station, and Union Station expansion.

The Subcommittee's focus during 2024 has been:

- I. Union Station Expansion
- II. New Long Bridge
- III. L'Enfant Plaza VRE Commuter Rail Station
- IV. Expansion of Commuter Rail
- V. Billboards and Digital Signs
- VI. K Street Transitway
- VII. Streetcar System Expansion
- VIII. Bicycle Lane/Pedestrian Safety Improvements
- IX. moveDC Program and the DC Freight Plan

## **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.

FRA re-evaluated all the original planning assumptions, following the extensive comments received in 2020, and developed a new Revised Preferred Alternative that was 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 pickup and drop off zone under the train hall. This new pickup and drop off location is expected to handle approximately half of the demand, reducing the demand on Columbus Circle. Up to 550 parking spaces will be provided although that is below the parking demand calculated in the analysis but is the maximum that can be located on one level. Several nearby office buildings with parking lots on First Street NE 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE at H Street NE to improve their Level of Service.

However, in terms of rail operations, the proposal continues to fall significantly short because of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement's (SDEIS) use of the outdated 2020 DEIS data. Even when this project began, those data and projections were outdated and flawed, and now, four years later, are even more so. Consequently, the SDEIS falls short of meeting the projected needs of rail passengers and the project stakeholders.

The C100 comments focused largely on the proposal's transportation and environmental failings, not necessarily on restoration or rehabilitation of the historic station itself, and not on the economic development aspects. The C100's position is that the current proposal/plan has significant flaws: its scope is too limited (it does not include the Ivy City switching yard and improvements needed to support increases in rail travel south of Union Station); doesn't address environmental shortcomings; the 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 with 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. To accommodate 30 to 35-foot-wide platforms to meet ADA requirements, the DEIS calls for 19 tracks. There is a need for more tracks, and the design criteria for such wide platforms must be re-evaluated. Also needed is an evaluation of the potential diesel exhaust emissions under decked 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 C100 comments submitted on July 6, 2023, can be found on the C100 website.

In May, the Federal City Council released a study for Union Station that provides a strategic plan and the key next steps necessary to advance the project and describes how the redevelopment of the Station will be financed. This presents an opportunity for the C100 to nominate ourselves as public stakeholders and to act in an advisory role on the continuing design of the station. Issues that should be stressed are the track and electrification work needed now even as design proceeds. Building in redundancy to the track layout is needed to avoid failures which would result in delays to commuter operations. Several feasibility studies proposed in the DC State Rail Plan could be included in the rehabilitation planning, as well as ideas for value engineering to reduce the \$8 billion cost as design proceeds.

### **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, enabling Amtrak to replace nearly 40 percent of its rail car fleet by 2031. An additional \$2 billion will 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 trainsets will be used to provide high-speed rail service south of Union Station. The total ordered is 125 ALC-42s. Amtrak has received 52 ALC-42 locomotives that are operating on, or have been

approved for service on, the *Empire Builder*, *City of New Orleans*, *Coast Starlight*, *Capital Limited*, *Palmetto*, *Cardinal*, *Crescent*, *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor*.

## **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. Seven shorter rail bridges are part of this project, carrying 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 River south to Richmond. Two of the tracks in northern Virginia, 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 by 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, will be used for passenger service, and will relieve one of the largest rail traffic bottlenecks on the East Coast and improve the on-time performance for both.

In March 2024, the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRRA) 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 be supported by the construction of two new stations in Crystal City and at L'Enfant Plaza. These projects will transform the rail system into a more modern, efficient and inclusive rail network that will better serve the DC region and the East Coast rail network.

Inflation has increased the cost for the new Long Bridge to nearly \$2.3 billion. Final design began in early 2024 with decisions on Design/Build and delivery options, with land acquisition to follow. On October 15, an official Groundbreaking ceremony was held. Despite the increase in cost the bridge is still scheduled for a 2030 opening.

## **III. L'Enfant Plaza VRE Commuter Rail Station**

Preliminary engineering for the expanded L'Enfant Commuter Rail Station was completed in mid-2024 and final engineering design is underway. The location of the platform was shifted eastward to avoid the curved track just past 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, which would create a safety hazard for passengers boarding/exiting the train. The design provides 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. Two elevators are proposed, but due to the structural constraints of the arched Metro station walls, they cannot be connected directly from the VRE platform to the Metrorail Station below.

Final design is scheduled to 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 through 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. 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.

The importance of commuter rail is discussed in the DC State Rail Plan. But it is not even mentioned in the latest update to the moveDC plan, which still 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.

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 2023, 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.

#### **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 technical study for non-wire propulsion can be found on the website.

Eight 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 project was dealt a setback in June when the D.C. Council gave final approval to the 2024 budget that pushed the construction funding 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? How will it be integrated with Metrobus and Metrorail, and how will it be managed? 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. Billboards and Digital Signs**

The C100 has been an active advocate for laws and regulations to limit the intrusion of commercial signage on city streetscapes, as well as strict enforcement of existing sign laws. In 2010, the C100 successfully opposed a proposal for expansion of the allowable number of Special Sign Permits and the special signage that was proposed for Gallery Place.

On October 7, 2024, Meg Maguire testified in support of Bill 25--468, Sign Regulations Amendment Act of 2023. This testimony supported our previous efforts to preserve the integrity of the District’s procedures for amending its sign regulations by correcting problems generated by the 2022 Court of Appeals decision in *Lumen Eight Media v. District of Columbia*.

That lawsuit was only one of many instances required to thwart efforts by the outdoor advertising industry to erect off-premise advertising signs throughout the city. The complete testimony can be found on the C100 website.

## **VII. K Street NW Transitway**

The design of the mile-long K Street Transitway between 12th and 21st streets NW would provide protected bus lanes, one in each direction 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, and the existing service roads would be eliminated. Final design was completed in 2022. The proposed bicycle lanes from earlier designs were moved to L Street, expanding the protected L Street bikeway to two lanes, and providing for two-way bike traffic.

The transitway could 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 was expected to be structured around the K Street Transitway. The \$123 million provided in previous years would be supplemented by an additional \$57 million as proposed in Mayor Bowser’s fiscal 2023 budget. Construction was slated to begin in the spring 2023 and was expected to take three years to complete.

However, in 2023 the City Council proposed that the funding for the Transitway be used instead to provide free bus service in the District. The Metro Board opposed that plan, explaining 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. The project is on hold indefinitely.

### **VIII. Bicycle Lane/Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

In the past few years, the DDOT has been installing bicycle lanes, some protected with flexposts and stripping. The District now has more than 100 miles of bicycle lanes. Other measures to improve pedestrian safety include curb extensions, either paved or using flexposts to give pedestrians more protected space at street corners. Stripping and flexposts are used to reduce turning radii, forcing drivers to slow down. These improvements were always considered a local neighborhood issue, and the responsibility of the ANCs.

However, in November 2022, the proposed \$4.6 million bicycle lane project for Connecticut Avenue NW through Cleveland Park, made several C100 members rethink our involvement. A great deal of local opposition, especially from the businesses affected, caused this project to be re-evaluated. The latest design for Connecticut Avenue now involves just improvements to intersections to protect pedestrians and allow for the smooth flow of traffic.

The questions being raised are just what the overall goals are for the Bicycle Lane Program and how are the improvements being evaluated? Are the bicycle improvements reasonable and cost effective?

Some of the “improvements” have instead made some intersections obstacle courses, forcing drivers to not just slow down, but negotiate much tighter turns. Some of the posts have been hit or knocked over. Many protected bicycle lanes have created obstacles at bus stops by sending the bicycle route through the passenger waiting area. These bike lanes have also removed parking from busy commercial streets, and moved parking into the Bus Only lanes, which have become Bus Only during rush hour. The resulting increase in congestion has caused drivers to divert through the neighborhoods, increasing traffic on local streets. This raises questions of just how much money has been spent on these improvements, what coordination with local businesses is being done, if any, and have any before/after studies been done? Although the C100 does not have the expertise to study these issues, the subcommittee has contacted Howard University and University of Maryland to enlist their help in studying these issues.

### **IX. moveDC Plan and the DC Freight Plan**

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. The latest update establishing a 25-year vision for the District’s multimodal system was announced on January 14, 2022, but still addresses only transportation within the District. The 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 more than 60% of automobiles on District Streets. One of the 41 strategies in the plan proposes 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. It is not clear in the update whether any action has taken place to establish this working group.

#### **Move DC and the DC Freight Plan**

At the performance oversight hearing for the DDOT on February 9, 2024, Monte Edwards testified that the C100 was concerned that DDOT had yet again ignored the 2017 DC State Rail Plan (SRP), this time in formulating its 2022 Freight Plan Update as part of the moveDC plan. The 2017 DC Rail Plan was approved

by Council and assigned to DDOT to provide an actionable and pragmatic roadmap for future rail investment and policies in the District. Having an approved rail plan is a condition for receiving future rail funding for either passenger or freight improvements.

Several of the feasibility studies proposed in the SRP could significantly contribute to reduced truck traffic on city streets. One such proposal is for an intermodal terminal to move goods from large semitrailers or railcars onto smaller delivery trucks for easier delivery of goods to stores. Using railcars in place of semitrailers would reduce truck traffic even more. But the DC Freight Plan ignores the fact that moving freight by rail, rather than by truck, addresses all of the concerns mentioned in the moveDC goals: reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, being more fuel efficient, reducing congestion, and improving safety. These benefits are described and quantified in the 2017 Rail Plan, but are ignored in the DC Freight Plan. Potential solutions in the 2022 Freight Plan address only the final delivery (the “last mile”) thru the use of micro-hubs and e-bikes or small electric vehicles as a solution. The complete testimony can be found on the C100 website.

With so many changes having occurred in the last ten years, the subcommittee feels it is time to re-examine the evaluation of the moveDC plan done in 2014 by C100. However, the C100 does not have the resources to do this analysis on our own. We have discussed contacting the University of Maryland and Howard University Transportation Engineering Departments regarding any analyses that may have been done on these issues.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Smailes  
November 15, 2024

# 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

Two prominent matters on the Zoning Subcommittee's platter last year, **Wesley Seminary** and **1620 U Street, NW**, continued keeping us busy in 2024. In both instances, applicants requested zoning relief outside the scope of the Zoning Commission's (ZC) authority. While the 2016 Zoning Code is extremely flexible and the 2021 Comp Plan amendments gave the ZC board discretion in applying the rules, the applicants in these cases want relief even beyond even those flexible limits.



*Wesley Seminary, Wikimedia Commons*



**Wesley Seminary**, ZC 23-08 and 23-08(1); and ZC 24-09. The Seminary, in Northwest Washington adjacent to American University, claims it is in financial difficulty because of declining enrollment. It wants to raise revenue by partnering with a developer to build a 659-unit apartment building on its grounds, to be occupied mostly by AU undergraduates. Wesley and its development partner, Landmark Properties, after acknowledging that the project had to comply with Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) rules, initially tried and failed

to argue that financial aid recipients could be treated as IZ tenants. The ZC discussed various workarounds before concluding that the relief was not possible under the zoning rules or Wesley's campus plan. It agreed to entertain an amendment to the rule and held a hearing in November.

C100 argued that the proposed text amendments would exempt the proposed apartment building from rules that lie at the heart of zoning requirements for campus plans and affordable housing:

- (i) the prohibition on other than incidental use of campus property for commercial purposes, and
- (ii) the requirement that the proposed apartment project comply with inclusionary zoning.

The proposed amendments also contradict Comp Plan policies calling for compatibility between campus plans and their surrounding communities. The Office of Planning (OP) acknowledges the deficiencies in Wesley's proposed rule changes, and put forth another last-minute alternative, also objectionable. The ZC and OP appear determined to give Wesley what it wants, despite the fact that allowing a nine-story apartment building that will comprise three-fourths of Wesley's total floor area will destroy the Wesley they are trying to save. The community continues to mount vigorous opposition.

**1617 U Street – 1620 V Street, 23-02.** In this long-running case, the city is disposing of a police station and firehouse and replacing them a luxury highrise apartment building with ground floor retail and a smattering of affordable units. This project, intended to occupy an entire block, proposed a 125-foot building in a neighborhood surrounded on three-sides by low-rise rowhouses, many of them home to African-American families who had managed to avoid displacement. The case is remarkable for the aggressiveness of the Office of Planning's (OP) proposal, and the breadth and tenacity of opposition the case aroused.

The project was permissible under the 2021 Future Land Use Map, which allowed but did not require the site to be designated high-density residential. The proposal was inconsistent with both the Plan's Mid-City Area Element, which calls for reinforcing the historic character of Mid-City neighborhoods; and with the Plan's

General Policy Map, which designates the site as a Neighborhood Conservation Area. Existing law calls for housing built on formerly owned public land to include 30 percent affordable units, in exchange for bonus density.<sup>1</sup> However on other city-owned sites, the city has granted the bonus density and reduced the affordable unit requirement. OP has not guaranteed a number of affordable units or levels of affordability for this site.



C100 opposed the rezoning and worked with the neighbors and their attorney. C100’s testimony identified OP’s abuse of discretion in failing to balance all elements of the Plan. We testified, “[t]he Office of Planning abdicates its responsibility to assure compatible scale by even proposing a structure so completely out of harmony with its

surroundings.” Three grueling five-hour hearings were held.

Late in the process, in response to concerns raised by some members of the Commission, the Office of Planning proposed an alternate scheme with stepdowns on the V Street side opposite two-story rowhouses. No similar relief was offered to the low-rise buildings on other sides of the property. After the record closed,



OP submitted a third proposal that reduced the size of the area to be rezoned, leaving V Street untouched and pulling back 80 feet on 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The Commission refused to hold a hearing on the new proposals. Nevertheless, opponents turned in written comments saying in essence, no, still not good enough.

Surprisingly, no order has been issued, although the Commission said it intended to take final action on the case immediately after the National Capital Planning



*OP's final proposal on far right, reducing the area to be rezoned.*

private developer. That land is being rezoned to allow another high-rise luxury waterfront development. The developer proposes 1.7 million square feet of new development with 5 buildings reaching 130 feet and two more at 110 ten feet (plus 20-foot penthouses). The NCPC approved the case last spring and the zoning case is moving forward.

**Navy Yard East, 23-27.** In an apparent move to heighten security, the Navy Yard is revising the boundaries around its active operations and leasing land outside its secure perimeter to a

<sup>1</sup> The relevant law states:

If a proposed disposition of real property will result in the development of multifamily residential property consisting of 10 or more units ("multifamily units"), the following affordable-housing requirements shall apply:

- (A) If the multifamily units are located in the following [transit-rich] areas, at least 30% of the units shall be dedicated as affordable housing ....

DC Code 10-801(b-3)(1)(A).

# Zoning for Navy Yard East



*Area proposed to be rezoned; OP flyer*

C100 testified before NCPC, opposing the project on four bases:

**Height:** The buildings overall create a wall along the river, out of scale with both the Navy Yard National Historic Landmark District and the rest of the area; the project also and fails to comply with the Height of Buildings Act.

**Historic Preservation:** The scale of the buildings is inappropriate; moreover, the proposal to save part of façade of a 3-story historic building, then building an additional nine stories on top with no setback, constitutes facadism at its worst.

**Treatment of the riverfront:** The project proposes to build in the floodplain; the developer will create a 15-foot berm along the river and provide a setback from the river of only 75 feet with buildings overhanging the setback on upper stories. The impact will create a wall of tall buildings along the river, restricting visual and physical access.

**Affordable Housing:** The proposed zoning text calls for 8 percent affordable housing, although DC zoning rules call for 20 percent affordable units when unzoned land moves to zoned status.

C100 will renew its objections before the Zoning Commission, with emphasis on affordable housing and the Height Act arguments. The measuring point is the on-ramp to I-395, which is adjacent to the project but unrelated to it.

**Case No. 23-17.** OP is proposing to reduce eliminate parking requirements for publicly-assisted affordable developments. Parking would be eliminated altogether for developments with less than 40 units, and sharply reduced for larger ones. The reduction is intended to reduce barriers to affordable units on smaller, infill lots. C100 opposed the reduction, arguing that the proposal loads climate change and developer profit on the backs of those on the low end of the income spectrum, especially those who need a car to get to work. It also raises racial equity concerns, since parking requirements continue to apply to market rate developments (including those subject to inclusionary zoning). In proposing the reduction, OP itself recognized that “it raises issues of equity based on the nature and location of jobs held by low-income households.” OP Setdown Report. C100 stated: “we fail to see how this proposal is equitable and can pass the Zoning Commission’s (the “Commission’s”) racial equity criteria. The proposal will reduce project costs for developers (by \$50,000 for each below grade parking space eliminated) while restraining employment opportunities for those living in the development, who by definition qualify to live in publicly assisted housing.”

**Upcoming Comp Plan revisions.** In light of Mayor’s Bowser’s gearing up for a new round of changes to the Comp Plan, the Zoning Subcommittee intends to meet with attorneys who have challenged zoning actions to learn more about what Comp Plan amendments would be helpful in zoning challenges. Several subcommittee members are drafting a consistent framework for these sessions.

The 2021 amendments amounted to a wholesale rewrite of significant portions. The 2021 amendments beneficially included racial equity in the Plan, requiring it to be considered prominently in all major government initiatives. Negatively, the Plan revised the text of the Land Use Element to blur virtually all distinctions among residential and commercial land use categories. In addition, while the 2021 amendments were supposed to result in a shorter, easier to use document, the Plan got longer - 1328 pages - including citywide elements, area elements and implementation. Apart from its sheer length, the plan grew more unwieldy, including long rambling passages of background and inconsistency among the organization of elements. As the next Plan rolls out, we will be addressing all these flaws.

**Chevy Chase Rezoning, 23-25.** The Zoning Subcommittee followed this case and decided against participating, finding that Office of Planning’s proposal was not facially unreasonable and thus did not present a citywide issue meriting our involvement. The proposed rezoning of four commercial blocks of upper Connecticut Avenue was unusually restrained. Existing heights were largely maintained, with the exception of a small bonus should any residential with inclusionary units be built. OP acknowledges, however, that small businesses may face displacement through increased rents. The second element of the rezoning call for a new 80-foot mixed-use building on the site of the neighborhood library and recreation center. These public facilities will be rebuilt and incorporated into the new mixed-use building. OP’s proposal nullified a longstanding neighborhood covenant against apartments.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Richards and Shelly Repp, Co-chairs  
November 17, 2024

## Report of the Nominating Subcommittee

The Nominating Subcommittee proposes the following slate of candidates for election to the Board of the Committee of 100 at its annual meeting on November 20, 2024, with terms to commence January 1, 2025. Two Trustee Nominees, Brian Blaesser and Dennis Chestnut, will be new to the Board and their background information is attached for your information.

### OFFICERS (one-year terms)

Chair: Sheldon Repp  
Vice Chair: Nancy MacWood  
Treasurer: Beth Purcell  
Secretary: Aiden Jones

### TRUSTEES (two-year terms)

James Smailes  
Dennis Chestnut  
Brian Blaesser  
Lance Salonia

One nominee was received pursuant to Article III Sec. 3-8, of the Committee of 100's bylaws: Nick DellaDonna.

His background information is attached.

Nominations from the floor are not permitted.

Respectfully submitted by the Nominating Subcommittee,  
Monte Edwards, Chair,  
Nancy MacWood  
Caroline Petti  
Marilyn Simon

November 6, 2024