



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Education
Transportation and the Environment

November 27, 2019

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Executive Office of the Mayor
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser and Chairman Mendelson:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently released its preferred plan for the Union Station Expansion Project. After reviewing the concept and meeting with key stakeholders, including representatives from ANC 6C, I believe this federally-produced plan would create significant adverse effects for the District of Columbia, as well as the surrounding Capitol Hill, Near Northeast, and NoMa neighborhoods in Ward 6. The expansion of Union Station represents a once-in-a-century opportunity for one of the busiest transit hubs in the region, and the largest within the District, that will shape movement in and out of our city for generations to come. The plans released fall well short of capturing the extraordinary potential associated with this important project.

Union Station's expansion represents the single greatest economic development and transportation opportunity for the District of Columbia. By more than doubling the station's daily capacity for Amtrak and commuter rail passengers, the job growth, fiscal benefits, and mobility improvements are immeasurable. Unfortunately, the FRA's proposed plan disregards and subordinates the interests of District residents and stakeholders to objectionable or ill-advised priorities. The misguided direction of the current plan would be a costly investment in infrastructure that undermines rather than enhances the District of Columbia's efforts to increase economic vitality, livability, and urban experience.

Union Station is and should be a national gateway to the District of Columbia. The Station Expansion and related projects are an opportunity to produce a vital and nationally significant transportation center with great public spaces on par with those in any world class city. The FRA-preferred plan shrinks from

the opportunity before us, damages the District's long-term interests in Union Station's potential, and will create substantial harm that cannot be easily reversed in the future. I urge greater priority and engagement among District stakeholders in this project as we are at a serious inflection point, now entering the fifth and final year of a federal environmental review process.

I ask that we work collectively to strengthen the District's role and guide the needed course correction to shape this historic and monumental investment to ensure that the Union Station Expansion Project seizes on the opportunity before us to create a world-class transit hub that is integrated into the surrounding communities and protects the District's long-term needs.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 6
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

cc: John Falcicchio, Interim Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
Andrew Trueblood, Director – Office of Planning
Jeff Marootian, Director – Department of Transportation
Karen Wirt, Chair – Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C