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**Committee of 100 encourages Zoning Commission to establish
lower measuring point for Union Station North Zone**

NCPC shares C100's concerns

Graphics attached and available at www.CommitteeOf100.net

Washington DC -- In testimony on Thursday, January 6, 2011, the Committee of 100 urged the Zoning Commission to lower the proposed measuring point for determining the height of the Union Station North Zone.

While the Committee of 100 supports the purpose of the new zone to reknit land over an active rail yard and connect the area, the group opposes the height that is being proposed for the development and the point from which that height will be measured. Using the top of the H Street overpass as the measuring point is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and past Zoning Commission actions, and violates the Height Act.

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“While the project’s goal is to eliminate the horizontal scars created by the rail yards, the proposed height of the Union Station North development may well create prominent vertical scars, as heights of up to 160 feet — plus a penthouse of 18.5 feet — would be permitted and would require no side setbacks from the edge of the platform,” said Committee of 100 member Alma Gates in her testimony on Jan. 6, 2011. The proposed development would become the tallest private building in Washington, exceeding the Height Act limit by at least 60 feet.

In a letter dated Oct. 19, 2010 to the Committee of 100, The National Capital Planning Commission shared similar concerns, “A development out of scale with these areas could have significant impacts to this area. While staff supports a public planning process for the project, there are concerns with the proposal to eliminate policy CH-2.1.7. This policy currently states that the allowable height of any building constructed in the air rights should be measured from the existing grade of 1st St. or 2nd St. NE, rather than from the overpass...In NCPC’s view, the existing policy is inconsistent with the interpretation of the 1910 Height of Buildings Act and it also provides a clear guideline that will produce a project design that is sensitive to the existing surroundings. NCPC recommends that Council not eliminate or change Policy CH-2.1.7.

Graphics prepared for the Committee of 100 of the area are attached and are available at www.CommitteeOf100.net.

The Zoning Commission will address the Union Station North Zone at its meeting on February 28.

About the Committee of 100 on the Federal City

The Committee of 100 advocates responsible planning and land use in Washington, D.C. Our work is guided by the values inherited from the L’Enfant Plan and McMillan Commission, which give Washington its historic distinction and natural beauty, while responding to the special challenges of 21st century development. We pursue these goals through public education, research and civic action, and we celebrate the city’s unique role as both the home of the District’s citizens and the capital of our nation.