



CAPITOL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY

July 7, 2010

Councilmember Tommy Wells
13150 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 408
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmember Wells:

We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you last week to focus on establishing a sound foundation for the streetcar system.

As noted in George Clark's and Monte Edwards' testimonies of June 22, we have doubts about the District's ability to overturn the federal statute of 1889, but we leave the final determination of this matter to others. We affirm the intention and planning legacy of the 1889 law. Its application to our streets during the past 121 years has created a remarkably wire-free city that is unlike most other nations' capitals. That H St. is clearly within the boundaries of the L'Enfant Plan and, therefore, is covered by this federal law seems beyond dispute.

At the same time, we recognize that H St. must move to completion of the streetcar segment if the city is to fulfill its promises to the residents and merchants. Therefore, we suggest that Council limit the city's law by removing those provisions that would overturn the federal statute so that it applies only to H St. as a temporary measure. This limitation might have the additional advantage of resolving some of NCPC's objections and potentially, those of other federal agencies and preservation organizations.

The Transportation Infrastructure Emergency Amendment Act of 2010 and the Budget Support Act of 2010 and 2011 are directed to completion of H Street; however, we regard these Council enactments as piecemeal approaches to establishing a sound foundation for the streetcar system. In fact, these bills may thwart much-needed comprehensive system planning by failing to specify planning expectations or providing sufficient time to meet those expectations. In turn, this may cause confusion in interpretation and execution of these laws in future years.

Prior to approving additional funds for implementation of the system, we urge Council to enact a *DC Streetcar Enabling Act* to include the following:

- Rationale for streetcar system with references to data from studies and reports including useful analysis contained in DDOT's April, 2010 *DC Transit Futures Plan* (that needs to be made available to the public) on the need for expansion of public transit options;
- Requirements as outlined in the Committee of 100's document, *Streetcar Planning Requirements*, submitted with our June 22 testimony, including preparation of the following system-wide documents that detail elements for:
 - Business, financial and governance plans along with reporting requirements regarding changes in costs and financing options;
 - A streetcar equipment and facilities plan; and
 - A detailed streetcar route and scaled street plan for each phase, developed in collaboration with affected communities, including assessment of viewshed impacts in all parts of the city.
- Requirements for tracking and assessing streetcar technology, removing overhead wires on H St. as soon as alternative overhead wire technology is available;
- Requirement for detailed area impact plans;
- Requirement for full compliance with all federal, state and local environmental and historic preservation laws;
- Requirement for public participation and collaboration in development of the system including consideration and documentation of various alternatives and full accounting for all decisions;
- Establishment of a collaborative planning process by creating an independent advisory group to report to Council on progress and to flag issues affecting development of these system plans;
- Council approval of all streetcar area plans, including applicable technology; and
- An appropriation to carry out the planning and administrative purposes outlined in the Act.

We look forward to working with you on this approach in the next session of Council.

Sincerely,

Meg Maguire (202-546-7077)
 Committee of 100 on the Federal City
 631 Maryland Ave., NE
 Washington, DC 20002

Monte Edwards (202-543-3504)
 Capitol Hill Restoration Society
 330 E St., NE
 Washington, DC 20002