

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF BUS  
FACILITIES AND PARKING REDUCTION TAKOMA STATION RED

(B) LINE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HEARING NO. 75

DOCKET NO. R06-5

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Board Members

3 GLADYS W. MACK

4 CHARLES DEEGAN

5 Also Present

6 ELISA HILL

7 ED MAGINNIS

8 HOPE-LEEN'DA M. CHAMBLISS

9 Speakers

10 PHIL ALPERSON

11 KATHY PORTER

12 GEORGE LEVANTHAL

13 JOY AUSTIN-LANE

14 COLLEEN CLAY

15 BRUCE WILLIAMS

16 TERRY SEAMENS

17 MARC ELRICH

18 DOUGLAS BARRY

19 SUSAN SILBER

20 SUSAN LUDLOW

21 SARA GREEN

22 JUDI JONES

1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):  
2 ANITA M. HAIRSTON  
3 CHERYL CORT  
4 PENNY JONES-NAPIER  
5 DAVID S. FRYE  
6 LORETTA NEUMANN  
7 MEAGAN SCRIBNER  
8 GARETH ROSENAU  
9 JEFFREY P. SILVERSTONE  
10 DANIEL R. SMITH  
11 DIANA VIDUTIS  
12 SETH GRIMES  
13 DAVID B. PARIS  
14 RICHARD HOLZSAGER  
15 RUTH FOSTER  
16 KATHY CARROLL  
17 LEX ULIBARRI  
18 MARK W. SHERMAN  
19 FRANCES E. PHIPPS  
20 CHARLOTTE SCHOENEMAN  
21 PETER FEIDEN  
22 EILEEN SOBECK

1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):  
2 ELLEN M. ZAVIAN  
3 ALICE GIANCOLA  
4 CHRISTINE SIMPSON  
5 WAYNE GOLDSTEIN  
6 PRISCILLA LABOVITZ  
7 SABRINA BARON  
8 LORRAINE PEARSALL  
9 SABRINA EATON  
10 JAMES A. DiLUIGI  
11 JOHN HURLEY  
12 STEPHEN SMITH  
13 GEORGE FRENCH  
14 REUBEN SNIPPER  
15 JAMIN RASKIN  
16 PETER BANWELL  
17 RIC DOERY  
18 ALLEN GREENBERG  
19 ELLEN CASSEDY  
20 PETER KOVAR  
21 CHRISTOPHER B. TURNER  
22 NANCY CURRIER

- 1 PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):
- 2 ELEANOR ALLEN
- 3 ANNE LUDLOW
- 4 LARRY SILVERMAN
- 5 PAUL BOEHRIG
- 6 BRIAN ROBINSON
- 7 ETHAN LANDIS
- 8 FANNY MISSFELDT-BINGIUS
- 9 NELLIE MOKLEY
- 10 TOM LUEBKE
- 11 MICHAEL SINDRAM
- 12 FREDERIC BARON
- 13 CATHERINE TUNIS
- 14 NANCY ABBOTT YOUNG

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (6:09 p.m.)

3 MS. MACK: Good evening. We're  
4 going to call this hearing to order. I'm  
5 Gladys Mack, Chair of the Washington  
6 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of  
7 Directors, and a director from the District  
8 of Columbia.

9 This hearing is convened by the  
10 Board to elicit the comments of the public on  
11 the proposed Relocation of Bus Facilities and  
12 Parking Changes at the Takoma Metro Rail  
13 Station.

14 Notice of this hearing was made by  
15 publication in The Washington Post newspaper,  
16 distributed to Councilmember Fenty's office,  
17 and the ANCs, and placed in the Takoma Park  
18 Branch Library in the District, as well as  
19 Takoma Park Maryland Library.

20 In addition, notices were delivered  
21 to property owners, stores, and churches in  
22 the immediate vicinity of the Takoma Metro

1 Rail Station.

2 Briefly, I will cover the procedure  
3 that we will follow during the hearing.

4 First, we will hear a staff presentation on  
5 the proposed project. Second, we will hear  
6 from those persons who registered in advance  
7 to speak at this public hearing, and as --  
8 this reading, we have 58. Public officials  
9 would be heard first and will be allowed five  
10 minutes. Then those who registered in  
11 advance will be heard in order of  
12 registration, and allowed three minutes each.  
13 Third, we will hear from anyone present who  
14 indicates a desire to be heard and will be  
15 allowed three minutes each.

16 Please see Ms. Chambliss of the --  
17 outside of the room if you wish to speak  
18 tonight. Further testimony may be submitted  
19 in writing until 5:00 p.m., Wednesday,  
20 October 25, 2006, to Ms. Debra Johnson,  
21 Secretary, WMATA Board of Directors, 600, 5th  
22 Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C., 20001.

1           Alternatively, statements may be  
2           faxed to (202)- 962-1133, or e-mailed to  
3           public-hearing- testimony@wmata.com. That's  
4           public-hearing- testimony@wmata.com.

5           Following a review of all testimony  
6           received for the public hearing record, WMATA  
7           staff will prepare a report on the public  
8           hearing for the WMATA Board of Directors.  
9           Changes to the plan presented here tonight  
10          may be proposed in response to testimony  
11          received and subsequent staff analysis.

12          The staff report will then be  
13          circulated for public review for a period of  
14          two weeks. If you wish to receive a copy of  
15          the staff report, please leave your name and  
16          address with Ms. Chambliss.

17          At the completion of the public  
18          review period, the WMATA Board of Directors  
19          will consider the public hearing record, the  
20          staff report, and public comments, and act on  
21          the proposed relocation of bus facilities and  
22          parking changes at the Takoma Metro Rail



1 Station.

2 Please note that the use of  
3 profanity will not be tolerated during this  
4 public meeting. In addition, smoking is only  
5 permitted outside of the building. And if  
6 you have not done so already, please silence  
7 all cell phones.

8 A verbatim transcript will be made  
9 of this hearing and a copy of the transcript,  
10 when available, will be on the WMATA website  
11 at metroopendoors.com. It may also be  
12 reviewed at the metro headquarters or  
13 purchased from BETA Court Reporting, whose  
14 telephone number is (202)-464-2400. I now  
15 call on Ms. Elisa Hill from WMATA for the  
16 staff presentation.

17 MS. HILL: Thank you, Ms. Mack.  
18 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I am  
19 Elisa Hill, the Project Manager for the  
20 Takoma Joint Development Project for the  
21 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit  
22 Authority. On April 20, 2000, WMATA selected

1 Eakin/Youngentob Associates, Inc., to develop  
2 its 6.8-acre property at the Takoma Station.

3 At the request of the District of  
4 Columbia and the City of Takoma Park,  
5 Maryland, the project was put on hold until  
6 2003 to allow completion of the District's  
7 small area planning process, and for the  
8 Takoma Station area and a transportation  
9 study, sponsored by both the District of  
10 Columbia and the City of Takoma Park.

11 A sales agreement was executed with  
12 EYA on June 20, 2005. EYA proposes a  
13 residential town home project. WMATA  
14 facilities would be enhanced and  
15 reconfigured. A reduction in WMATA parking  
16 is proposed but an alternative plan  
17 preserving current parking levels is also  
18 being presented for comment. I will now call  
19 on the EYA team to make a brief presentation.

20 MR. LESTER: Thank you. Good  
21 evening. My name is Jack Lester. I'm a  
22 project manager with EYA and responsible for

1 this project at Takoma Park. I'm going to go  
2 through a very, very brief presentation of  
3 the site. I know many of you have seen this  
4 before, and much that was included in the  
5 announcement of the public hearing.

6 I'll talk a little bit about how  
7 the plan was developed. The -- we have site  
8 showing the existing conditions, two site  
9 plans we've prepared for this evening. The  
10 transit enhancements plan and just a little  
11 bit on the architecture in the village green.

12 The plan was developed using a  
13 number of documents here listed. Primarily  
14 though, it was based on the principles of the  
15 Central District Plan. That and extensive  
16 discussions and work with the operating folks  
17 at WMATA to get the bus facilities and the  
18 parking program to their liking.

19 The common planning themes were  
20 number one, enhancement of the metro  
21 facilities and utilization, enhancement of  
22 pedestrian circulation and safety,

1 revitalization of commercial areas,  
2 enhancement of neighborhood amenities and  
3 parks, preserving the existing character of  
4 the neighborhood, development in scale in  
5 character to the existing development, and  
6 development of town homes to bridge the gap  
7 between apartments and single family homes in  
8 the community.

9           This is an aerial showing the  
10 existing conditions. I'm sure many of you  
11 are very familiar with the site. This is the  
12 first conceptual site plan that I want to  
13 show. This plan shows with regard to the  
14 metro facilities, it shows a surface parking  
15 lot off to the left that has 75 surface  
16 parking spaces. The bus area is showing ten  
17 bus bays in two layover bays in the median  
18 strip that runs right through the bus  
19 circulating area.

20           This plan and the structured  
21 parking plan are nearly identical as to the  
22 configurations of the residential component

1 and to the village green component. The  
2 primary difference here is that of the  
3 structured parking. The parking again over  
4 to the left is a parking deck, two levels,  
5 ground level and one level above that. That  
6 is the primary difference between these two  
7 plans. And I've put together just a quick  
8 matrix to show -- to highlight some of those  
9 differences.

10 In the existing condition, there  
11 are nine bus bays, zero layover, a total of  
12 150 parking spaces, kiss and ride, zero;  
13 handicap spaces of six, taxi of three, and  
14 one Zipcar; bike lockers, 30, and bike racks  
15 of 38.

16 As compared to the surface plan,  
17 which in the bus area is 10 and 2, 75 surface  
18 spaces, 29 on-street public spaces for a  
19 total of a 104, 7 kiss and ride, 7 handicap  
20 spaces, 3 taxi spaces, one flex or Zipcar  
21 space and 40 lockers and 50 racks.

22 On the structured plan, similarly,

1 10 bus bays, layover bays, the parking deck  
2 contains 128 spaces.

3 The on-street space is created by  
4 the development are an additional 29 for a  
5 total of 157, and again, 7 kiss and ride, 7  
6 handicap, 3 taxi, 1 zip and the 40 and 50  
7 bike racks and lockers.

8 The enhancements to the station and  
9 to the area include safe access, increased  
10 safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists and  
11 buses.

12 This plan incorporates the  
13 Metropolitan Branch Bicycle Trail, through  
14 streets that connect through to existing  
15 streets, the inter rope parking lot or deck  
16 in the alternative.

17 On-street parking, as I mentioned,  
18 29 spaces, views and access -- view corridors  
19 to the metro facility, the new taxi stand  
20 under the overpass where folks prefer to  
21 stop, improvements under the tracks including  
22 lighting and painting. Enhanced signage, bus

1 bays and layover bays increase the number  
2 from 9 to 12. Signalization of the Metro  
3 station bus entrance, so that buses when they  
4 are pulling out, they would have a signal to  
5 stop traffic.

6 Bus access on Carroll and Eastern,  
7 kiss and ride spaces on Carroll and Cedar, an  
8 increase to bike lockers and bike racks, as I  
9 mentioned, adequate lighting adjacent to the  
10 bike racks.

11 We have proposed an information  
12 kiosk outside the Metro Station, enhanced  
13 crosswalks for pedestrian and bike safety, a  
14 new space for Flexcar, the branch trial as I  
15 mentioned and increase of handicap space.  
16 This is just a perspective of some of the  
17 quality of the architecture that we've  
18 proposed for the site. It borrows from the  
19 surrounding architecture of your community.  
20 This is the home on the corner of Eastern and  
21 Cedar as highlighted here.

22 This is the streetscape as you'd

1 see it on Eastern Avenue, as -- and again,  
2 this is just perspectives. These are the  
3 live/work units that are proposed on one of  
4 the streets created architecture more  
5 appropriate to a D.C. style. The ground  
6 floor of these would be retail, and the upper  
7 floors would be residential.

8 Here's a view, a larger view of the  
9 village green that you saw earlier in the  
10 site plan. We proposed to provide a mix of  
11 passive and active areas within the village  
12 green. And here's just a simple perspective  
13 of that if you were standing at the coffee  
14 shop looking across seeing the kiosk.

15 In summary, we believe the concept  
16 achieves the following planning and community  
17 objectives. It's substantially in accord  
18 with the neighborhood planning documents. It  
19 enhances the metro facilities. It creates a  
20 useable village green.

21 It improves pedestrian circulation  
22 and safety. It continues the revitalization



1 of the commercial areas, and it -- we propose  
2 a high quality of housing in scale and in  
3 character to the surrounding community. Also  
4 this development will have negligible impacts  
5 on traffic. Thank you.

6 MS. MACK: Is that it?

7 MR. LESTER: Yes.

8 MS. MACK: Okay, thank you. Thank  
9 you, and I'll now call our first witness,  
10 Phil Alperson, representing Congressman Chris  
11 Van Hollen. Good evening.

12 MR. ALPERSON: Good evening. Thank  
13 you very much. I'm here representing  
14 Congressman Van Hollen, this is his  
15 statement. "I wish to thank the Washington  
16 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA,  
17 for holding this hearing and for giving the  
18 residents of both Maryland and the District  
19 of Columbia the opportunity to air their  
20 views proposed development of WMATA property  
21 at the Takoma Metro Station."

22 "Transit-oriented development is in

1 everyone's best interest when it encourages  
2 public use of transit alternatives and  
3 succeeds in taking cars off the road. It  
4 reduces traffic congestion and pollution and  
5 improves the quality of life for all. It is  
6 vital that any development plan at the Takoma  
7 Metro site, or any metro property for that  
8 matter, conform to WMATA's mission to provide  
9 and maintain effective transit services."

10 "This means that while WMATA  
11 accommodates the needs of new residents and  
12 business located on the development site,  
13 WMATA must be equally mindful of the needs of  
14 the transit riding public and of the  
15 neighborhood surrounding the Metro Station."

16 "As you know, I have been concerned  
17 for some time that the existence of an  
18 imaginary line separating Maryland from the  
19 District of Columbia precluded residents of  
20 the City of Takoma Park, Maryland from having  
21 sufficient input earlier in the process of  
22 the formation of development plans."

1            "In fact, an early draft of the  
2            development plan restricted the movement of  
3            commuter buses around the station and would  
4            have resulted in a direct increase in traffic  
5            congestion and pollution in neighborhoods,  
6            mainly in Maryland surrounding the station."

7            "This issue was addressed following  
8            a meeting between WMATA officials and  
9            community leaders from Takoma Park on August  
10          26, 2005. However, this design flaw would  
11          never have been made had the City of Takoma  
12          Park been integrated into the planning  
13          process. I appreciate the flexibility  
14          demonstrated by WMATA and its development  
15          partner to modify the design plans and  
16          correct this problem."

17          "It is my fervent hope that the  
18          development plans, as they stand today, will  
19          put the needs of the commuting public first,  
20          as is WMATA's mission." This will require  
21          that sufficient entrances, exits, and layover  
22          bays are available to allow buses to move

1 freely."

2 "Safe access for pedestrians,  
3 cyclists, and individuals with disabilities  
4 must be assured. Taxi, and kiss and ride  
5 stands should not inhibit vehicular traffic.  
6 Requisite green space is an essential amenity  
7 that must continue to be a part of the area  
8 infrastructure."

9 "I am hopeful that WMATA and the  
10 developer will use information from today's  
11 hearing and other community forums to design  
12 a project that can address the concerns of  
13 the commuting public and residents of  
14 neighborhoods surrounding the Takoma Metro  
15 Station."

16 "I am well aware that WMATA intends  
17 to apply lessons learned from its experience  
18 in the development of the Takoma Metro to  
19 future transit oriented developments at other  
20 metro sites throughout the system."

21 "If WMATA has learned anything from  
22 the arduous process of planning a development

1 project at the Takoma Metro, I hope it is  
2 that WMATA will check, will seek the counsel  
3 and advise of all affected neighborhoods much  
4 earlier in the process. WMATA must  
5 understand the needs and expectations of the  
6 surrounding communities."

7 "While we can never expect  
8 everybody to be happy when a new development  
9 project is proposed for their neighborhood,  
10 all parties must work together in good faith  
11 so that transit oriented development can  
12 successfully serve the needs of the commuting  
13 public and the neighborhoods that coexist  
14 with transit centers. Again, thank you for  
15 giving me the opportunity to share my  
16 concerns with you today."

17 MS. MACK: Thank you very much. I  
18 next call Mayor Kathy Porter, City of Takoma  
19 Park. Good evening, Mayor Porter.

20 MS. PORTER: Thank you, thank you  
21 very much, Chairman Mack. My name is Kathy  
22 Porter and I'm the Mayor of the City of

1 Takoma Park, Maryland. I'm here today with  
2 my colleagues from the City Council, staff of  
3 our City government, and many of my  
4 constituents to communicate our deep concerns  
5 about the negative aspects of some of the  
6 sale of the proposed property at the Takoma  
7 Metro and the impacts it would have on  
8 transit access in our community.

9 I want to make three main points.  
10 First, the proposed design for the Takoma  
11 Metro Station violates one of the basic  
12 principles of transit oriented development.  
13 Rather than increasing access to transit, it  
14 would actually impede many transit users  
15 getting to the station.

16 Second, this poor design is the  
17 result of a flawed process that put the  
18 transit needs of the station second to the  
19 space needed for development. In fact, after  
20 the mistakes made in the process of planning  
21 this station, WMATA changed its joint  
22 development guidelines to prevent this kind

1 of outcome at another station.

2 Third, the contract for the sale of  
3 the land at the Takoma Metro Station is very  
4 unusual, in that WMATA bears the cost of  
5 replacing the transit facilities that have to  
6 be moved to permit the housing development.  
7 In fact, the way the contract is written,  
8 after paying to replace the transit  
9 facilities, WMATA could receive little or  
10 nothing from the sale of this land.

11 Let me deal with each of these  
12 issues one by one. The dedicated space for  
13 buses in the new plan is greatly reduced  
14 leaving room for only 10 bus bays, and no  
15 real layover spaces. The layover spaces that  
16 are drafted actual exist in the medians and  
17 would be very difficult for buses to access.  
18 Under the proposed design, even more  
19 seriously, there is no room for any expansion  
20 of bus bays in the future. WMATA staff has  
21 maintained that they feel 10 bus bays and 2  
22 layover spaces will be sufficient to meet the

1 needs both now and in the foreseeable future.

2           Despite the recommendations of the  
3 regional bus study and the Takoma  
4 transportation study that more bus bays will  
5 be needed, this plan limits the bus bay area  
6 in such a way that expansion in the future is  
7 impossible. Given the increasing traffic  
8 congestion in Montgomery County, I believe  
9 that funding for transit is likely to  
10 increase over the next several years on the  
11 Maryland side.

12           With new development in downtown  
13 Silver Spring and planned redevelopment in  
14 Long Branch and Takoma- Langley, there is  
15 every reason to believe that the demand for  
16 bus service at the Takoma Metro Station will  
17 increase. Failing to plan for that increase  
18 and in fact precluding additional bus service  
19 to the station is shortsighted and counter to  
20 the goal of increasing the use of transit.

21           The proposed parking lot would  
22 contain only half the parking spaces of the



1 present lot. Increasing the number of  
2 parking spaces by building a second parking  
3 deck as has been proposed as an option, would  
4 be very expensive. As you saw earlier, the  
5 proposed plan shows a 75 space surface  
6 parking lot. The developer's own estimate  
7 show that the cost of increasing the number  
8 of spaces to about 130 by building a  
9 two-level parking garage would be about \$5.7  
10 million. This is \$2.8 million more than  
11 their estimate of the cost of the surface  
12 lot.

13 We updated their figures based on  
14 data from a construction management firm and  
15 found that based on current transit  
16 construction cost and addressing some  
17 insufficiencies in the estimates, current  
18 cost for the surface parking lot are more  
19 likely to be about \$3.6 million and for the  
20 two-storied parking structure, about \$7  
21 million.

22 The circulation on this site is

1 very problematic with buses and cars sharing  
2 the only entrance on Eastern Avenue and  
3 sharing the bus turnaround circle. The  
4 proposed plans will lead to a great deal of  
5 frustration with on-site traffic congestion.  
6 Cars and buses share a single entrance; this  
7 will cause delays to the buses exiting in  
8 that direction as do most of the buses headed  
9 towards Takoma Park.

10 In addition, because the designated  
11 passenger drop-off sites are far from the  
12 entrances to the station and the bus  
13 turnaround circle is right next to the  
14 elevator entrance, it is very easy to predict  
15 that cars will stop in the bus turnaround  
16 circle to drop-off passengers blocking buses  
17 trying to turnaround.

18 In spite of the planned route for  
19 the Metropolitan Branch Trail coming right  
20 through the station, bicycle access to the  
21 station is reduced, and there's not even any  
22 land allowed for the bicycle trail.

1           The second point I made is about  
2           the flawed planning process. The design  
3           process for this site was done backwards. A  
4           transit-oriented process would begin with an  
5           assessment of transit needs and a  
6           determination of the space needed for transit  
7           facilities, then would allocate the remaining  
8           space to development. Instead, the housing  
9           development was designed first and the  
10          transit facilities were crammed in to the  
11          remaining space.

12                 These problems caused WMATA to  
13          rethink its joint development process, which  
14          we very much appreciate and issue new  
15          guidelines. Joint development projects --  
16          the new joint development projects put  
17          transit first, but this better approach has  
18          not been applied to the Takoma Metro Station.  
19          Unfortunately, the mistakes made in this  
20          process were not corrected leaving our  
21          station as the example of bad planning that  
22          led to reform in the joint development

1 process.

2           The third point I'm making is the  
3 problems with the contract. Besides the  
4 problems I mentioned, the major concern we  
5 have is that contract with the developer is  
6 structured in such a way as to leave WMATA  
7 with little or no profit from this sale.

8           Joint development projects are  
9 supposed to bring money to the metro system  
10 and promote the kind of development around  
11 metro stations that increase ridership.  
12 Because of the structure of this contract,  
13 however, this sale is likely to bring little  
14 or no money into the system, and may in fact  
15 raise WMATA's operating and capital cost in  
16 the future.

17           When this project was first  
18 proposed an application was made the Federal  
19 Transit Administration, the developer  
20 purchasing the property was to pay \$7.3  
21 million for the land and pay for the  
22 replacement of the transit facilities.

1           But due to changes in the contract,  
2           the developer is now obligated to pay between  
3           \$7.3 million and \$9 million for the property,  
4           and very surprisingly to us, will be able to  
5           deduct the cost of replacing the transit  
6           facilities from his purchase price.

7           Contrary to the guidelines of the  
8           joint development program and normal practice  
9           in land development, under this contract,  
10          WMATA will in essence pay for changes in its  
11          infrastructure that benefit the private  
12          developer.

13          When all is said and done, WMATA  
14          will make little or no money from this  
15          project and will be left with a station that  
16          doesn't work for transit. My constituents  
17          and yours will have more trouble getting to  
18          this station that is their main access point  
19          to the Metro Rail System, and all because of  
20          a planning process that failed.

21          I ask you to please take another  
22          look at this troubled design and give us a

1 station that will serve our both -- both of  
2 our communities perhaps even better than the  
3 present station. Our community, the Transit  
4 Board, and the WMATA Board have a shared  
5 interest in making this a well-designed and  
6 accessible gateway to the Metro System.

7 MS. MACK: Thank you, Mayor Porter.

8 MS. PORTER: Thank you very much.

9 MS. MACK: Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 MS. MACK: I'm going to ask the  
12 audience not to applaud when the speakers --  
13 while the speakers are speaking or when they  
14 are finished. We have a very long evening;  
15 we want to be as efficient as possible, so I  
16 beg your indulgence in that.

17 Our next speaker -- and I did want  
18 to let Mayor Porter finish her statement and  
19 so allowed her to go over the allotted time,  
20 but I will be asking other speakers to remain  
21 within the five minutes and three minutes  
22 that you are allotted. I call the next

1 speaker, Councilmember George Leventhal,  
2 At-large Councilmember for Montgomery County.

3 MR. LEVANTHAL: Good evening, Ms.  
4 Mack. Thank you for giving the opportunity  
5 to testify tonight. My name is George  
6 Leventhal, and I am an At-large member of the  
7 Montgomery County Council. Although I  
8 currently serve as president of the council,  
9 my testimony tonight is delivered on my own  
10 behalf. The Montgomery County Council has  
11 not taken any position on the proposed Takoma  
12 Metro Development.

13 In addition to serving on the  
14 County Council, I'm a neighbor of the  
15 development residing with my wife and  
16 children at 7336 Piney Branch Road in Takoma  
17 Park, Maryland. As a frequent user of the  
18 Takoma Metro Station, I do see a benefit to  
19 locating more housing in close proximity to  
20 the station. At night, the stations environs  
21 are poorly lit and there has been perennial  
22 concern about crime. Additional housing

1 could provide more lighting and night time  
2 activity that could deter crime.

3 As a general matter, I support the  
4 concept of housing near metro if wisely  
5 designed as consistent with the principles of  
6 smart growth. That said, the primary purpose  
7 of WMATA is to provide access to public  
8 transportation. I strongly urge the WMATA  
9 Board not to approve any plan that would make  
10 access to Takoma Metro less efficient for  
11 metro bus, ride-on bus, pedestrians or  
12 bicyclists. In addition, I am concerned that  
13 adequate parking should continue to be  
14 available for metro users.

15 Finally, although I recognize that  
16 this proposed development is located in the  
17 District of Columbia, it is very important  
18 that WMATA acknowledge the valid concerns of  
19 metro users who reside adjacent to the  
20 project in the State of Maryland, such as  
21 those you will hear tonight. I hope a  
22 reasonable compromise can be achieved that



1 takes into account all of these valid policy  
2 objectives. Thank you again for letting me  
3 testify.

4 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
5 testimony. Councilmember Joy Austin-Lane,  
6 Ward 1, City of Takoma Park.

7 SPEAKER: I think she's delayed in  
8 another meeting.

9 MS. MACK: Beg your pardon. She's  
10 delayed.

11 SPEAKER: She says she's delayed in  
12 another meeting (Off mic) --

13 MS. MACK: Fine. Councilmember  
14 Colleen Clay, Ward 2, City of Takoma Park.

15 MS. CLAY: Thank you for the  
16 opportunity to speak to you regarding the  
17 proposed sale of land at the Takoma Metro  
18 Station and its impact on transit services.  
19 I'm Colleen Clay. I'm a Councilmember of  
20 Ward 2 in Takoma Park. Residents of my ward  
21 live within a mile or so of the Takoma Metro  
22 Station. My constituents walk, bike and bus

1 to the station. Five bus routes that go  
2 through my ward terminate at the Takoma Metro  
3 Station. Right on routes 12, 13, 16, 18 and  
4 25.

5 WMATA buses travel through Ward 2  
6 to the station as well. I use Metro everyday  
7 practically, and rent a bike locker at the  
8 station. My ward depends on access to this  
9 station. I happen to be a professional city  
10 planner, and I'm very supportive of  
11 transit-oriented development and I support  
12 proposals that increase foot traffic in the  
13 Takoma Metro area.

14 I've come to speak to you today  
15 because after reviewing the proposals for the  
16 Takoma Metro site, it's clear to me that the  
17 development of this site under the current  
18 contract conditions will actually result in a  
19 reduction in transit accessibility, both now  
20 and into the near future.

21 I know you're going to hear a lot  
22 of detail tonight from concerned citizens and

1 officials about specific objections to  
2 various elements of this plan from aesthetic  
3 design details to broad concerns about  
4 traffic congestion, loss of open space and a  
5 decline in transit accessibility.

6           And as a planner, and as a public  
7 official myself, I know that when such a  
8 large project is on the table, you can get  
9 mired in those very important details in  
10 formulating acceptable responses and then  
11 lose sight of the bigger picture. And I  
12 would like to take just a step back and look  
13 at that big picture.

14           There are multiple reasons this  
15 sale was proposed. When this proposal was  
16 initially put forth, there was a need for  
17 development in the surrounding area, the land  
18 was less valuable, the construction costs  
19 were lower, there was less interest in the  
20 site, and the project was not crucial in  
21 spurring additional development in the area.  
22 It was an accomplishment on the part of Metro

1 to get a bidder on the property with a track  
2 record like EYA has.

3           However, as the development process  
4 moved forward, it became clear that the site  
5 couldn't meet all the needs envisioned by the  
6 planners and the Board, and this is evident  
7 if you review the process of the developing  
8 proposal.

9           The goals include increasing  
10 transit accessibility, spurring development,  
11 and revitalization, making enough profit from  
12 the land sale to fund the site improvements,  
13 and to maintain or improve existing site  
14 amenities, improve the area traffic flow, and  
15 increase public safety.

16           That translates into four critical  
17 sites functions, housing, bus space, parking,  
18 and open space, all while maintaining a  
19 workable foot and vehicle traffic flow. I  
20 think it rapidly became clear to EYA, the  
21 Metro and the community that there was not  
22 room for everything. And the first things to

1 go were half of the parking in western access  
2 which is a key component for the disabled,  
3 which is a big issue for me.

4 Residents complained about the loss  
5 of transit access and parking, then some  
6 parking is replaced, and the cost go up. So  
7 the project will likely cost more than the  
8 contract on the land. And finally, the  
9 transit bays are squeezed tighter, future  
10 transit estimates are downplayed, layovers  
11 are adjusted in order to meet today's bus  
12 needs, and by this point, it's obvious that  
13 no one is going to get what they want except  
14 possibly the developer, and they're probably  
15 not very happy either.

16 I think you get the picture. Every  
17 time you solve one site constraint with this  
18 project, you negatively affect another goal.  
19 It's become obvious that this site in  
20 unworkable.

21 And in the meantime, other  
22 development has come online negating the need

1 for housing on the site. The one remaining  
2 tangible benefit is the housing. I would put  
3 forth that even at a bargain price of as low  
4 as \$50,000 a unit, the housing that you would  
5 gain would not be worth the loss of the  
6 transit access, which is so critical to this  
7 community.

8 In spite of all of this, I would  
9 like to suggest that this process is not yet  
10 a failure. This is how the planning process  
11 works sometimes. In fact, this actually  
12 could be a great case study. The only  
13 question left to me, in that regard, is  
14 whether this is going to be a case study  
15 that's taught in a class like citizen  
16 participation, the planning process and it's  
17 going to be titled, "Metro Board averts  
18 development fiasco after citizen input  
19 details floods."

20 Or is it going to be a series of  
21 headlines about how the Metro development  
22 didn't work that other communities are going

1 to be able to point to as a cause to fight  
2 transit-oriented development.

3 Please remember that transit is  
4 first in transit-oriented development. And I  
5 think it would really be a shame if this  
6 project became sort of the cause celeb for  
7 fighting against transit-oriented development  
8 around metro stations.

9 Because as I said when I started,  
10 it is - it is very important, I'm very  
11 supportive of it, and if I thought that -- if  
12 I could see a way that this would work, you  
13 know, I would be standing up here and being a  
14 cheerleader for it. But really, you look at  
15 all the elements, and it just -- it just  
16 can't work. Thank you for your time.

17 MS. MACK: Thank you, Councilmember  
18 Clay. I now call Councilmember Bruce  
19 Williams, ward --

20 SPEAKER: -- is it too late to have  
21 Councilmember Austin-Lane if she's now here?

22 MS. MACK: Sure, fine.

1 MS. AUSTIN-LANE: Good evening.

2 MS. MACK: Good evening.

3 MS. AUSTIN-LANE: Chairman Mack,  
4 members of the Board, I appreciate this  
5 opportunity to speak with you concerning the  
6 proposed sale of land. My name is Joy  
7 Austin-Lane. I'm the Councilmember for Ward  
8 1 in Takoma Park, Maryland. My District is  
9 immediately adjacent to the Takoma Metro  
10 station. A number of my constituents' homes  
11 face the metro property. All of my ward is  
12 within walking distance of the station and  
13 many of my constituents do walk there. Ten  
14 bus routes through my ward terminate at the  
15 Takoma Metro.

16 In my ward, there's 187-unit  
17 apartment building for elderly and disabled  
18 persons called Victory Tower. Many of the  
19 Victory Tower residents ride the bus to the  
20 station or go to the station by car. They  
21 regularly use the elevator entrance. Ward 1  
22 also includes the Takoma Park side of the old



1 town, old Takoma Business Association and the  
2 association includes businesses in both,  
3 Takoma, D.C., and Takoma Park, Maryland.

4           The Association is concerned with  
5 the health of the businesses, the  
6 attractiveness of the streetscape, the  
7 connectivity of the business district as it  
8 goes past the Takoma Metro and the ease of  
9 walking and parking for its patrons. Also in  
10 my ward is the Takoma Park/Silver Spring  
11 campus of Montgomery College, just down the  
12 Metropolitan Branch Bike Trail from the  
13 Takoma Metro Station.

14           The campus is in the process of  
15 building new facilities and renovating its  
16 existing campus. And it is a commuter campus  
17 with no student housing. The proposal on the  
18 table does not meet the needs of my  
19 constituents. Under the plans before you  
20 today, a congested bus and car circle will  
21 block easy access to the elevator for the  
22 elderly patrons.

1           The business district will face  
2           difficult traffic and parking problems in the  
3           area. Bike storage is reduced and bicycle  
4           paths are missing from the plans. A  
5           constrained area for buses means that  
6           flexibility for expanded bus service for  
7           college students is very limited.

8           There are other ways of developing  
9           the Takoma Metro site that would bring more  
10          money to Metro while enhancing access to  
11          transit and meeting community goals. Many of  
12          these ideas were explored at the March 4th  
13          work session, which I commend you for  
14          holding.

15          The proposal before you is not the  
16          right fit for this space. And I hope that  
17          Metro can move on. Take the time to  
18          determine what transit facilities are needed,  
19          both now and in the future for the Takoma  
20          Metro site and make that aspect of the  
21          station work first.

22          If there is excess developable

1 land, and developing that land is consistent  
2 with goals that this community has laid out,  
3 then proceed. But I believe the time to  
4 start pushing for this unworkable and  
5 inappropriate plan is now. Thank you.

6 MS. MACK: Thank you,  
7 Councilmember. Councilmember Bruce Williams,  
8 Ward 3, City of Takoma Park.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Good evening, Chair  
10 Mack. Thank you for this opportunity to  
11 speak concerning the proposed sale of land at  
12 the Takoma Metro station and its impact on  
13 transit access. As you said, my name is  
14 Bruce Williams and I'm Councilmember from  
15 Ward 3. Residents of my ward live as close  
16 as a quarter --

17 SPEAKER: If you could speak up  
18 again anything you were saying.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm trying. Want to  
20 do anything with the volume? Okay.  
21 Residents of my ward live between a quarter  
22 of a mile and one mile from the Takoma Metro.

1 Many of my constituents walk or ride buses to  
2 the station. Four bus routes go through my  
3 ward and terminate at the Metro; they are  
4 ride-on routes 12, 13, 16 and 18. I use  
5 Metro myself, taking it to Metropolitan  
6 Washington Council of Governments' Board  
7 Meetings, other meetings hosted by COG, and  
8 other events in the region.

9           When I take Metro, it's usually for  
10 midday meetings, so I'm one of the people who  
11 uses the existing parking at the Metro site.  
12 I know that if I try to park onsite anytime  
13 after about 11 o'clock, I may not find a  
14 spot. Reducing this parking by any number  
15 will likely cause me to drive to meetings  
16 rather than to use the metro.

17           Multiply my situation by others who  
18 use Metro in the same way and transit use  
19 will decrease if the parking area is reduced.  
20 This would not be a responsible action by the  
21 WMATA board.

22           I'd also like to reinforce the

1 point about future need for bus bays. Making  
2 decisions about the number of bus bays needed  
3 in the future should not be limited to only  
4 considering those routes, which are currently  
5 funded in any agency's capital budget.

6 You need to regain the flexibility  
7 to address needs 10, 15, 20 years out and  
8 beyond. If you sell land necessary to do  
9 anything additional beyond this current  
10 proposal, you're constraining your own  
11 ability to address future transit needs.

12 When we passed our recent city  
13 council resolution regarding this proposal, I  
14 commented we're for transit-oriented  
15 development, we are for smart growth, and  
16 this proposal isn't smart and it isn't  
17 transit-oriented. As you'll hear over the  
18 course of this evening, this proposal is a  
19 bad idea. Please take this opportunity to do  
20 the right thing and make sure that your  
21 primary function, transit, works at this  
22 station. Thank you.

1                   MS. MACK: Thank you, Councilmember  
2 Williams. I next call Councilmember Terry  
3 Seamens.

4                   MR. SEAMENS: Excuse me. Chair  
5 Mack and Members of the Board, thank you for  
6 this opportunity to speak concerning the  
7 proposed sale of land at the Takoma Park  
8 Metro Station and its impact on transit  
9 access. I'm Terry Seamens, Councilmember of  
10 Takoma Park Ward 4. My constituents are  
11 primarily low-income riders, many of whom do  
12 not own cars and therefore depend on public  
13 transportation.

14                   People from my neighborhood get to  
15 the Takoma Park Metro Station by walking,  
16 taxicab or most often, riding a bus. They  
17 ride on one of the four bus routes that go  
18 through my ward and terminate at the Takoma  
19 Metro. That's right on routes 3, 14, 24 and  
20 25. As gasoline prices rise and force other  
21 costs up more and more of my neighbors are  
22 turning to mass transportation to save money.

1                   My constituents and I are very  
2                   concerned that if implemented, WMATA's  
3                   current plan will make access to the Metro  
4                   less convenient and unsafe for many. It  
5                   presents serious problems for seniors and  
6                   those with physical disabilities.  
7                   Furthermore, this plan does not adequately  
8                   provide for anticipated future expansion.  
9                   And if the transportation planners have  
10                  underestimated the community's future  
11                  dependency on mass transit, the plan  
12                  eliminates the possibility of correcting the  
13                  mistake, the land will be sold.

14                  The problem is centered in the  
15                  priority of the design goals. My  
16                  constituents ask that you throw out this  
17                  design and set the transportation and  
18                  community requirements before you decide what  
19                  land is available for sale. With a  
20                  transportation-based design, mobility  
21                  challenged riders will not have to cross  
22                  unregulated bus lanes and travel over 100

1 feet to the elevator as this design requires.

2 A community-sensitive  
3 transportation-based design will put bus  
4 layover bays off the streets. A design that  
5 isn't focused on developer needs will provide  
6 an off-street location for taxis, and kiss  
7 and ride drivers to drop off passengers.

8 My constituents are concerned that  
9 your design puts their needs at the bottom of  
10 the list. They're concerned that this plan  
11 is aimed to provide housing for people who  
12 can afford other transportation than public.

13 With your plan, each homeowner will  
14 have space for two cars while the people who  
15 need public transportation must compromise  
16 now and give up hope for the future. Please  
17 clear the slate and design for transportation  
18 needs before you sell any land.

19 My constituents are so concerned  
20 about this that they are circulating a  
21 petition -- we're going to be -- we have a  
22 number of signatures already. But we'll turn



1 the petition in before the deadline; I  
2 believe it is next week. Thank you for your  
3 consideration.

4 MS. MACK: Thank you,  
5 Councilmember. Next, I call Councilmember  
6 Marc Elrich, Ward 5.

7 MR. ELRICH: Someday my name will  
8 be gotten right.

9 (Laughter)

10 MR. ELRICH: Marc Elrich.

11 MS. MACK: Elrich, okay.

12 MR. ELRICH: And -- it's amazing  
13 how persistent this is. Thank you all for  
14 giving us the opportunity to testify tonight.  
15 I'm Marc Elrich, I'm a Councilmember in Ward  
16 5 in Takoma Park. Residents of my ward live  
17 between three quarters of a mile and a  
18 mile-and-a-half from the Takoma Metro. And  
19 many of my constituents ride buses to the  
20 station. There are seven bus routes that go  
21 through my ward and terminate at the Takoma  
22 Metro, right on routes 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 24

1 and 25.

2 My ward includes a large number of  
3 apartments, and because of the way these  
4 apartments were developed, there is little  
5 off-street parking for the residents. My  
6 ward depends heavily on mass transit. My  
7 ward also includes two major institutions,  
8 Washington Adventist Hospital and Columbia  
9 Union College. The College has both a  
10 resident student population and adult evening  
11 classes.

12 The hospital, which, at one point  
13 announced plans to leave Takoma Park has now  
14 put those plans on hold. I'll remind you  
15 that those plans are on hold and they'll go  
16 forward with any development on the site, or  
17 any of the other possible sites in the  
18 immediate vicinity. The hospital will be  
19 expanded, not shrunk, and the need for the  
20 hospital will be increased, not reduced.

21 The traffic impact study by EYA  
22 stated that the hospital will be moving and

1 so discounted future traffic related to the  
2 hospital. If the hospital stays, bus service  
3 will remain needed for employees, visitors,  
4 and patients. If it moves, another entity is  
5 surely going to take its place, and we're all  
6 aware that the site will be intensively  
7 developed even in the absence of a hospital.

8 So it's likely that the demand for  
9 ridership is going to remain the same; no  
10 reason to assume it's going to be less. The  
11 process for which the Takoma Metro Joint  
12 Development Project came was badly flawed.  
13 The plan was advertised for joint development  
14 before the area needed for transit and  
15 community goals for the site were determined.

16 Because of the controversy the  
17 Takoma Metro Project generated when it first  
18 became public, WMATA looked at its policies  
19 and saw that the joint development process  
20 needed to be changed. The new process is  
21 better and I have seen it work in public  
22 meetings, concerning the Silver Spring Metro

1 and the Forest Glen Metro.

2 I want to digress and talk a little  
3 bit about the Forest Glen Metro hearing that  
4 I was at. Representatives of WMATA got up at  
5 the Forest Glen Metro hearing and said that  
6 the process that was used at the Takoma Park  
7 Station was badly flawed and my reaction was,  
8 you know, I advised the citizens, first of  
9 all, of Forest Glen to be wary because of  
10 what we've experienced here.

11 But more fundamentally if you're  
12 acknowledging that -- publicly that the  
13 process that you used is badly flawed, why  
14 continue to go by the results of a badly  
15 flawed process. It seems to be me that --  
16 that having said that you would not do this  
17 process the same anywhere else, you do have  
18 the opportunity now to do the process right  
19 in Takoma Park. And we're asking you to go  
20 back and do the process right.

21 I also attended a Silver Spring  
22 presentation by WMATA on the enhancements to

1 the center there. And I was struck by two  
2 comments that were made there. One was they  
3 couldn't stop talking about the importance of  
4 the public park for that station. And that  
5 public park is just an enhancement to the  
6 station itself. It's not even a buffer to  
7 the broader residential community. This  
8 public park is both an essential component of  
9 the station and so -- serves a dual purpose  
10 as a buffer to the community. So I struck at  
11 the very different way that our park has been  
12 talked about compared to the park in Silver  
13 Spring.

14 The other thing that struck me was  
15 that there is a substantial increase in bus  
16 bays in the transit center in Silver Spring.  
17 And it's not based on anything that's in the  
18 current capital budget of the county. It's  
19 based on future projections. And there is  
20 nowhere near the same accommodation given to  
21 future expansion of the Metro at the Takoma  
22 Park site that's given to the expansion of

1 ride-on usage at the Silver Spring site. And  
2 it seems to me that the principles on both  
3 ought to be applied.

4           The other thing that your  
5 representative said at Silver Spring was that  
6 if the transit function of the station was in  
7 any way impeded, that they would sacrifice  
8 development density to ensure the functioning  
9 of the station as a transit station. In  
10 other words, there they seemed to get the  
11 message right that the primary function of  
12 the metro is to assure that that station  
13 functions to serve the metro and to provide  
14 access of riders to the metro.

15           That is clearly the reverse of  
16 what's happening in this station. Everything  
17 that's being done is being bent around the  
18 needs of the developer and you've got memos  
19 that basically talk about this in terms of  
20 the needs of the developer. And we find that  
21 very problematic. This site ought to be  
22 developed as a metro site first. You've seen

1 proposals; we're not saying nothing should be  
2 built there. And you've seen proposals that  
3 allow substantially the identical density or  
4 number of units just configured in a  
5 different way.

6           And I have to say it troubles me  
7 that if WMATA were to replace the parking,  
8 you would wind up with no net gain from this  
9 project. If you were to build a garage and  
10 pay for that garage as required in your  
11 agreement, you would realize nothing from the  
12 sale of this property. And that seems to me  
13 to defeat the whole purpose of why WMATA  
14 claims to be selling off property.

15           So we're asking you to please not  
16 go through with the sale at this point and  
17 come up with what this station needs to be  
18 and then put this thing out for developer to  
19 develop the station with a focus on the  
20 transit functions first. Thank you very much  
21 for your time tonight, and I look forward to  
22 working to you.

1 MS. MACK: Thank you, Councilmember  
2 Elrich.

3 MR. ELRICH: Thank you.

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. MACK: Next Councilmember  
6 Douglas Barry.

7 MR. BARRY: That's a relatively  
8 easy name to pronounce, Chair Mack.

9 MS. MACK: Yes.

10 MR. BARRY: Thank you very much for  
11 getting it absolutely right.

12 (Laughter)

13 MS. MACK: Particularly for a D.C.

14 --

15 (Laughter)

16 MR. BARRY: My pleasure to be here  
17 tonight and I know that the decisions before  
18 you are very complex and very difficult, and  
19 I don't envy you the time that will be  
20 required and the tough decisions that lie  
21 ahead. All the more reason that there is no  
22 room for error and it's so important to get



1 it right.

2 Residents of my ward live within a  
3 couple of miles of Takoma Metro Station. My  
4 ward includes the intersection of University  
5 Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, the  
6 future site of the Takoma-Langley stop on the  
7 purple line. This intersection has bus  
8 ridership numbers that are higher than those  
9 of dozens of metro rail stations in the  
10 Washington Metropolitan area.

11 I've been told they are higher than  
12 at any other regional location that is not a  
13 metro rail station. To help accommodate  
14 these riders safely, a new bus transit center  
15 has been designed by the State of Maryland  
16 and construction is due to begin soon. This  
17 will increase the ridership on the bus lines  
18 coming out of that, and over in this  
19 direction.

20 The new transit center will be  
21 designed to maximize pedestrian safety and  
22 will be an attractive focal point for the

1 neighborhood. Large numbers of residents in  
2 this area do not own cars and are completely  
3 dependant on public transportation. Families  
4 that do own cars will be more likely to ride  
5 the bus once the transit station is  
6 completed. For this reason, ridership is  
7 likely to increase substantially.

8 In addition, the Takoma-Langley  
9 area is to be the subject of a major planning  
10 effort, redeveloping it as a central business  
11 district and destination in its own right.  
12 Funding for the first part of this work is in  
13 the current Prince George's County budget.

14 The major connection between this  
15 busy area and the Takoma Metro Station is  
16 right on route 16. Information concerning  
17 this bus route was left out of the traffic  
18 impact analysis submitted by EYA, thus  
19 significantly, undercounting the number of  
20 bus trips at the Takoma Metro Station. Bus  
21 route 18 also connects my constituents to the  
22 station.



1 And I know that they don't run very often  
2 which is why I have to rush. But I know in  
3 the future, as ridership grows, the use of  
4 number 16 will increase and I and my  
5 neighbors on the other side of Takoma Park  
6 hope that there will be enough bus bays to  
7 accommodate us in the future. Thank you very  
8 much.

9 MS. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Barry. I  
10 next call City Attorney Susan Silber, City of  
11 Takoma Park.

12 MS. SILBER: Thank you very much,  
13 all the WMATA officials for allowing us  
14 tonight to address you and to talk with you.  
15 We're really concerned, as you can see, by  
16 the other officials from Takoma Park who have  
17 spoken and there'll be many members of the  
18 public who will speak as well.

19 I want to -- I will try not to  
20 repeat many of the fine points that had been  
21 made by the other officials but to stress  
22 some other really serious legal concerns we

1 have, in addition to these very public  
2 policy, deep concerns that we have.

3 First of all, we have great  
4 problems with the way the WMATA compact  
5 itself has been violated. There is a much  
6 longer legal memo that's been given to WMATA  
7 that addresses this with much more  
8 development. For now, let me just say that  
9 it just hasn't been the right process. I'm  
10 now talking, going way back to 2000 when the  
11 solicitation first occurred.

12 Basically, what's happened is there  
13 has been a foregone conclusion that about 76  
14 percent of the land at this station was going  
15 to be sold and transferred, and the only  
16 thing left for us to discuss tonight was what  
17 modifications to the facilities would happen.  
18 That's not the way, the compact reads, and as  
19 we discussed in our legal memo.

20 We disagree with minutes from the  
21 Board, with other decisions that have built  
22 on that assumption and we think that as many

1 people have said, maybe it's best to start  
2 over.

3 I also want to be a little shocked  
4 and surprised by the some of the presentation  
5 by Mr. Lester with the EYA, at the beginning  
6 of this program, because I guess everybody in  
7 this room knows that the transit enhancement  
8 plan that was put up on this screen has never  
9 been shared with the public before. It's not  
10 been shared with the governments. It's not  
11 been shared with the planning agencies. The  
12 first time it appeared was tonight.

13 How under due process principles  
14 and the compact principles can one respond to  
15 that supposed transit enhancement plan in any  
16 depth when you don't even get to see it  
17 before you walk in the door? I'm very  
18 surprised by that and I would like to see  
19 you, again, rethink the way this whole thing  
20 is being done.

21 The good news, and this is good  
22 news, is that, in fact, WMATA can terminate

1 the contract today. The contract is now one  
2 at will which either WMATA or EYA could  
3 terminate and we could start over without any  
4 exposure. This is not swampland in Florida  
5 that we're talking about. This is valuable  
6 land that many different entities would be  
7 interested in providing alternative options  
8 for its development, ones that might be much  
9 more, not only attractive to the community,  
10 but most -- much more importantly, that would  
11 be more compatible with the transit uses of  
12 the site.

13 Most importantly, and it was said  
14 by some of the previous speakers, the current  
15 contract is a sale; it's irreparable. If too  
16 much land is given away, and some new needs  
17 for transit occur down the line in the  
18 future, 10 years from now, 20 years, 50, 100  
19 years from now, there is nothing WMATA can  
20 do. The land would be gone.

21 Most of WMATA's current joint  
22 development projects, it's my understanding,

1 are more likely to be done now as long-term  
2 leases. We would like WMATA to consider in  
3 the new contract, if this contract is  
4 terminated, a lease instead of a sale.

5 Next, I would like to simply point  
6 out that although the EYA representatives  
7 made a point that this whole development  
8 comes under various planning documents like  
9 the Central District Plan, that those very  
10 documents are violated in many, many critical  
11 ways in this plan.

12 I don't have the time to describe  
13 them all now. Again, they're in my written  
14 comments, but everything, from the number of  
15 bus bays to the idea of sharing the bus  
16 circle between buses and cars to the change  
17 in the access for the handicapped to the  
18 elimination of the buffer between the  
19 apartment buildings and the roadway leading  
20 to Eastern Avenue, those are all things that  
21 are specifically dealt with in the Central  
22 District Plan and have been violated.



1           Also the transportation plan that  
2           was carefully paid for by both the City of  
3           Takoma Park and the District of Columbia  
4           again has not been honored in many ways in  
5           this particular plan. In sum, I would simply  
6           say that there is not adequate benefit for  
7           the public or for WMATA from all the cost and  
8           disruption that is caused by this plan, which  
9           because so much of the land is being sold,  
10          requires such an extreme reconfiguring of the  
11          transit facilities.

12                 Not only may Metro lose ridership  
13           and we would lose -- if actually there isn't  
14           the adequate parking that we all are  
15           concerned about, but it also doesn't make any  
16           financial sense for WMATA as we will provide  
17           in our written comments based on our  
18           appraisal of the land and our construction  
19           analysis of the actual costs.

20                 MS. MACK: Would you wrap up, Ms.  
21           Silber?

22                 MS. SILBER: Yes, this is my last

1 sentence. WMATA, if you go ahead with this,  
2 could end up with, yes, one additional bus  
3 bay, but with almost no money, no land, and  
4 no future for our community. Thank you.

5 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
6 testimony. I call Suzanne Ludlow, Community  
7 and Government Liaison, City of Takoma Park.

8 MS. LUDLOW: Good evening, I'm  
9 Suzanne Ludlow and if I may, I would like to  
10 point out some items on this board. Let me  
11 see if the mic works off here. I'd like to  
12 describe very briefly how the site would work  
13 in terms of transit circulation on the  
14 property. And basically, this is the Metro  
15 station along here, the main entrance at  
16 Carroll Street, the elevator entrance which  
17 is currently off the parking lot at the  
18 station, this is Carroll Street, Cedar  
19 Street.

20 For those of you who know it, the  
21 7-11 is over here. There are homes over here  
22 and apartments over here. The proposed --

1 follow the speaker -- the proposed  
2 development moves the current entrance to the  
3 bus bays closer to the main entrance which  
4 reduces the amount of area for pedestrians  
5 entering the main entrance. And this is  
6 problematic, not only because it's smaller,  
7 but there is also a great change on Carroll  
8 Street, there are several steps now, and it  
9 would make that entrance a little more  
10 constrained. The bus bays are here for a bus  
11 to enter, they will come off of Carroll  
12 Street. To leave they do a turn in this  
13 shared car-bus turnaround and come back out  
14 or they go around and they exit through a  
15 shared car-bus route to Eastern Avenue.

16 One of the biggest problems with  
17 this plan is that the location of the  
18 turnaround is very close to the elevator  
19 entrance. And there is no way to drop  
20 somebody off to the elevator entrance without  
21 going into that transit -- into that circle,  
22 unless you park a long distance away. For

1 those of us with elderly relatives, it's  
2 likely that we are going to stop in this  
3 transit circle unless there is a transit  
4 police officer standing right there, which  
5 (off mike) has told us they may require,  
6 making sure that we don't drop somebody off  
7 close to the elevator.

8           On the other hand we recognize that  
9 we do try to serve our handicapped residents.  
10 Because of the nearness of the site that  
11 would be retained by WMATA and the small  
12 amount -- there is no room for expansion of  
13 the bus bays unless WMATA were to buy back  
14 the park to take some of the homes or pay for  
15 some extension through the Metro tunnel --  
16 elevator tunnel to Spring Place, Northwest  
17 and develop that, which would be quite  
18 expensive although it's a recommendation of  
19 the -- Takoma Central District plan.

20           The parking lot, people have  
21 addressed already -- reduces the current 150  
22 space parking lot to 75 or 128. Currently

1 the parking lot is a short-term parking lot  
2 only, which means that people then stay there  
3 all day in commuter park and it has turn  
4 over, so more than 150 cars go through the  
5 lot on any one day.

6 One of the things that has struck  
7 me and -- let's see, I think I brought it  
8 along -- I grabbed a little car out of my  
9 son's car drawer and wanted to show you what  
10 it would be like to drive through the site.  
11 Enter off of Eastern Avenue, and you want to  
12 find a parking space and you come in and you  
13 can't find one, because it's very small.

14 As you exit, you're immediately  
15 opposite an alleyway that goes into the  
16 interior part of this development plan.  
17 You're likely to cross over because there are  
18 parking spaces sprinkled around throughout  
19 here, and you're going to try to look for  
20 one. Unfortunately, these alleyways are only  
21 20 feet wide and they are dead ends. And  
22 you're going to have to back out or do some

1 interesting turning rounds. You can come and  
2 try to find a parking space. The kiss and  
3 ride spaces are on the southern part of this  
4 road. So, you would need to go through and  
5 around the traffic circle and come back here.

6 If you happen to be in the  
7 unfortunate situation of somebody letting  
8 somebody off at the elevator with the bus  
9 waiting behind, you all of a sudden got  
10 traffic congestion. And it's -- frankly,  
11 it's my recommendation that there not be  
12 parking spaces throughout here. I think that  
13 adds to the congestion of the site and would  
14 cause more problems than having them. Having  
15 the parking in one location is a much better  
16 way for the site to work.

17 As I mentioned, handicapped patrons  
18 are particularly harmed in this project  
19 because right now they can be dropped off  
20 very close to this elevator. Now there is no  
21 way to get to it very closely. You can park  
22 in a handicap space. There is also a

1 handicap space here and you have to do all  
2 this walk to get over there. But it is a  
3 very long way.

4 MS. MACK: I ask you to wrap up,  
5 Ms. Ludlow.

6 MS. LUDLOW: Yes. At the -- what I  
7 would like to say is that we have problems  
8 throughout this site -- and I wont do all  
9 this but we have significant problems here  
10 and here and at several other locations in  
11 this narrow place. But there is a solution,  
12 and that solution is looking at the rest of  
13 the property. Find a way to make the transit  
14 work with the land you have available and  
15 then decide what to do with the remainder.  
16 Thank you very much.

17 MS. MACK: Thank you, and thank you  
18 for your visuals.

19 MS. LUDLOW: Thanks. I had to  
20 borrow the car that was the fun part?

21 MS. MACK: Yeah, I agree. Before I  
22 call the next witness, I'd like to

1 acknowledge the presence of Elliott Doomes.  
2 He is the Legislative Director for the  
3 Honorable Eleanor Holmes- Norton and as many  
4 of you know, who have been involved with this  
5 project, she's taken quite an interest in the  
6 project and wanted to have her representative  
7 here to listen to what the witnesses have to  
8 say tonight. So, thank you and welcome to  
9 the hearing.

10 Our next witness is ANC  
11 Commissioner Sara Green, Advisory  
12 Neighborhood Commission 4B01.

13 MS. GREEN: Good evening. I'm Sara  
14 Green. I'm the Advisory Neighborhood  
15 Commissioner, 4B01. My single- member  
16 district includes the Takoma Metro station  
17 and about 2000 people who live very close  
18 around it. I've lived in the community for  
19 about 30 years. And I also want to just note  
20 here that I'm speaking for myself and my  
21 constituents. I'm not representing the views  
22 of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B. That



1 said, I feel extremely comfortable in saying  
2 that the majority of residents of Advisory  
3 Neighborhood Commission 4B do not support  
4 this proposal. And right here, and I could  
5 put it down with a thumb, but I will not,  
6 represent the signatures of about 900  
7 residents. They are all -- majority live in  
8 this neighborhood in the District of  
9 Columbia.

10           These are from a few years ago up  
11 until yesterday. We will submit a full copy  
12 of all of these signatures to the record.  
13 They show that people do not support this  
14 plan and those who most do not believe we  
15 need this land for future transit. But the  
16 few who do want appropriate development at  
17 the station, do not believe you've got it.  
18 You have not been able to do that so far.  
19 And there are a couple reasons why. One is  
20 that, for example, WMATA has argued for years  
21 that it's a smart growth agency. That it  
22 knows what smart growth is, as you know, with

1 quotes around it, "capital S capital G," that  
2 it has adopted it, that it embraces it.

3 And they have also said that they  
4 would fulfill the terms of the Takoma Central  
5 District plan. In fact Elisa Hill who is  
6 sitting up front was at most of those  
7 planning meetings. She didn't get involved  
8 in the processes we asked. We asked our  
9 transit agency to get involved. As the  
10 largest landowner she didn't get involved.  
11 But she did stand in the back of the room and  
12 she did promise along with EYA  
13 representatives that whatever the committee  
14 decided they would do it in terms of the  
15 Takoma Central District plan.

16 And as other people have stated,  
17 this has not happened, I'm not going to  
18 repeat that. But one of the big issues in my  
19 community is the two-car garage proposal  
20 here. And it's just really ludicrous. Most  
21 of the -- I don't have a two-car garage; I  
22 have an old big home. I don't have a two-car

1 garage at my property. Most people in  
2 Takoma, longtime residents with old home --  
3 we don't have two-car garages. The new  
4 communities -- the new buildings that are  
5 right around that station, they have  
6 underground parking. They don't have  
7 dedicated private two-car garages. You want  
8 to put these things about 150 feet away from  
9 a farecard machine?

10           This means that you want to market  
11 this land that the federal government bought.  
12 You want to market it to people who have two  
13 cars. Instead of saying to the community out  
14 there looking to buy homes, looking to live  
15 near a Metro station, "Hey, you'd all want to  
16 have a car, you want to use mass transit  
17 solely, you want to be one of those smart  
18 growth people who live in our community?  
19 Come here." You could do that you could  
20 market this property to people who want to  
21 use mass transit in a very big way. But you  
22 aren't doing that. Instead you're going to

1 build two-car garages and you're going to  
2 have people feeding into them with private  
3 alleys and you'll see the congestion that's  
4 been pointed out.

5 I really don't have time for a lot  
6 more to say. But I just want to point out  
7 one other major issue that's not been raised  
8 so far, that really impacts my constituents,  
9 and that is the buffer. I don't know, I have  
10 125 families, something like that in my area.  
11 And they live on Eastern Avenue and some of  
12 them come very close to that Metro station.  
13 Right now they have a 50- foot landscaped  
14 buffer to help screen their ears, their eyes,  
15 their lungs from the pollution and the noise  
16 of that station. This was planned from the  
17 beginning and there's a reason why.

18 And they're going to lose this,  
19 based on your plan and that's not fair. And  
20 the other people who are going to lose out  
21 are the existing -- the people who come in,  
22 in these townhouses. They're going to get a

1 lot of pollution also. And that's going to  
2 cause them to oppose any more bus lines or  
3 any increase in bus service at that site. So  
4 this is another way that the site is mass-  
5 transit unfriendly.

6 MS. MACK: I'm going to ask you to  
7 wrap up Ms. Green.

8 MS. GREEN: Well, I just want to  
9 conclude by telling you that you can do a  
10 much better job. You've been asked to do a  
11 much better job over the six years that we've  
12 been talking about this. And I really hope  
13 that you'll do that. Thank you very much.

14 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
15 testimony. Our next witness is Judi Jones,  
16 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 4B07.  
17 Judi Jones is not present? The next witness  
18 is Anita M. Hairston, District of Columbia,  
19 Office of Planning.

20 MS. HAIRSTON: Good evening, my  
21 name is Anita Hairston and I'm with the  
22 District of Columbia, Office of Planning. I

1 appreciate the opportunity to provide  
2 testimony regarding the proposed relocation  
3 of bus facilities and parking changes at the  
4 Takoma Metro rail station. The District of  
5 Columbia Office of Planning supports the  
6 amendment of WMATA's mass transit plan to  
7 realize the development of approximately 6.8  
8 acres of rail property located at the Takoma  
9 Metro rail station.

10           The reconfiguration of the transit  
11 facilities will afford the opportunity to  
12 realize one of the district's key priorities  
13 -- creation of new housing opportunities  
14 within close proximity of a transit station.  
15 In order to encourage this type of  
16 development, in 2002, the district initiated  
17 a community planning process for the  
18 commercial district located adjacent to the  
19 Takoma Station. The result of this planning  
20 process was the Takoma Central District Plan  
21 which was formally adopted by the D.C.  
22 Council in June 2002.

1           Among the plan's chief objectives  
2 was to, one, promote a consistent and  
3 integrated planning and design approach to  
4 the commercial and mixed use areas of Takoma  
5 for the benefit of the entire neighborhood  
6 and also to reinforce development and  
7 revitalization initiatives that are raised on  
8 smart growth principles for transit-oriented  
9 development and improved quality of life.

10           The plan also sets forth guiding  
11 principles for the development on the Metro  
12 station site. First, meet current and future  
13 transit operational requirements,  
14 understanding that the priority function of  
15 this site is to serve transit needs first,  
16 including Metro and Ride On services.  
17 Second, provide open space for the community.  
18 The plan includes specific development  
19 guidance for the Takoma Metro site, such as  
20 the creation of a village green as Takoma's  
21 signature open space. And third, accommodate  
22 development that furthers smart growth and

1 revitalization goals such as the enhancement  
2 of the Metro station as a community gateway,  
3 development of appropriately scaled infill  
4 housing, creation of a new streetscape that  
5 encourages pedestrian activity and  
6 improvement of the existing urban fabric to  
7 link communities on both sides of the tracks.

8           The Takoma Central District Plan  
9 and the associated 2003 Takoma Transportation  
10 Study, a joint effort of the District of  
11 Columbia and the city of Takoma Park,  
12 Maryland. Both recognize that the Takoma  
13 Metro station site must first accommodate  
14 current and future transit functions with the  
15 needs of the local business community and  
16 potential new development as a secondary  
17 consideration.

18           In addition, both of these  
19 documents reinforce the importance of station  
20 connectivity functions including appropriate  
21 accommodation of sidewalks, kiss and ride  
22 spaces, taxi stands, bicycle parking, and



1 shared-use paths such as the Metropolitan  
2 Branch Trail. The Central District Plan and  
3 the transportation study recognize the  
4 important role of incorporating parking in  
5 revitalizing a commercial district. But the  
6 transportation study and recent vehicle  
7 counts indicate high levels of usage in the  
8 existing line at peak periods.

9           It is our understanding that WMATA  
10 and other transit providers which use the  
11 station have deemed this transit facility  
12 relocation, reconfiguration plan appropriate  
13 to accommodate their present and future  
14 needs. With respect to this transit facility  
15 plan, the Office of Planning supports the  
16 alternative, in which WMATA and the developer  
17 provide 128 parking spaces and a parking  
18 garage with additional spaces on planned and  
19 existing streets, in lieu of a surface  
20 parking lot.

21           In addition, the District  
22 Department of Transportation, one of our

1 sister agencies encourage these  
2 transit-oriented development opportunities  
3 and has given their support to the joint  
4 development plan. The redevelopment of the  
5 Takoma Metro site and implementation of  
6 transportation improvements as reinforced  
7 through policies and specific action steps in  
8 the revised draft District of Columbia  
9 Comprehensive Plan to be approved by the D.C.  
10 Council in the coming months.

11 Since the approval of the Takoma  
12 Central District plan in 2002, WMATA and the  
13 developer have coordinated with the Office of  
14 Planning, the District Department of  
15 Transportation and other district agencies on  
16 the implementation of this project.

17 Continued coordination will be essential to  
18 this project proceeding, given that any  
19 future development not related to the transit  
20 functions in the Metro station site must  
21 receive approvals from the District Zoning  
22 Commission which reviews planning and

1 developments, applications -- planning and  
2 development applications and the district's  
3 Historic Preservation Review Board which  
4 reviews proposed projects in the Takoma  
5 historic district.

6 Both of these approvals will be  
7 coordinated by OP and we look forward to  
8 working with WMATA and the developer to  
9 realize this project. In addition, the  
10 District Department of Transportation has  
11 expressed their commitment to working with  
12 the WMATA, the developer and the City of  
13 Takoma Park, Maryland to assist in mitigating  
14 traffic issues which may arise as a result of  
15 this development. Thank you.

16 MS. MACK: Thank you Ms. Hairston.  
17 Now that ends our elected officials and our  
18 public witnesses. And so we're going to hold  
19 the rest of us to our three-minute limits, so  
20 that we can hear from everyone --

21 SPEAKER: You have one more --

22 MS. MACK: We have one more elected

1 -- okay. All right, I understand we have two  
2 more -- one elected official and one Senator  
3 elect. We're going to hear from you, but  
4 we're also going to ask you to please stay  
5 within the time limit just to make sure that  
6 everybody gets a fair chance to speak. I'm  
7 going to call Faith WHEELER who is ANC  
8 Commissioner from 4B02.

9 MS. WHEELER: Thank you, Madame  
10 Chairman. I was just about to ask if I had  
11 more time because -- we skipped over. In any  
12 case, I am the ANC commissioner 4B02; in fact  
13 we sit in 4B02 right now. Across the street  
14 is 4B01. My single member district is about  
15 a block --a short block away from the Metro  
16 property, a very short block away from Metro  
17 property. And so my constituents are very  
18 much impacted.

19 In my SMD, we have a wide range --  
20 we've got young, olds, some disabled, many  
21 dependent on the Metro, many use it by  
22 choice. We are, as you know, an original

1 transit-oriented development community. And  
2 this is -- this is the first suburb of  
3 Washington, D.C, first railroad suburb of  
4 Washington. So we are very proud of that and  
5 very much interested in our transit station  
6 working well for this community, this broad  
7 community.

8 In the SMD we have the 4th Street  
9 Business District, which was the original  
10 business district of the broad community of  
11 Takoma. We have several churches, we have  
12 the Takoma Theater. Across the street from  
13 this District -- from this single member  
14 district, is the Takoma Community Center,  
15 which recently has expanded into a \$16  
16 million facility, with an Olympic-size pool  
17 which draws people from far and wide and  
18 close in as well. We have good High School  
19 which regularly has students coming back and  
20 forth every single day using the Metro.

21 We have Walter Reed -- we have the  
22 Takoma elementary school, which also has

1 Metro riders. We have Walter Reed to the  
2 west, which as you know, by 2011 the  
3 transformation would be started with GSA and  
4 with State Department establishing offices  
5 there, which will be an opportunity to  
6 initiate another set of folks to use public  
7 transit, which is what we hope to do and have  
8 been working very long and hard to do, for  
9 what, over a century here now, in this  
10 community. We are very much transit-oriented  
11 and want to keep it that way.

12 For that reason we're rather --  
13 find that the access to the transit under  
14 this proposal with WMATA and EYA is very  
15 troubling. As you've heard, I won't go over  
16 it, try not to repeat. But people walk to  
17 the Metro, people bus and bike to the Metro,  
18 they bus to the Metro and they get there by  
19 car.

20 Walking of course is more hazardous  
21 with all the -- the sorts of the new  
22 proposals that would be initiated if WMATA

1 indeed sells this land to EYA. Biking,  
2 reduces the number of bike lockers -- we have  
3 a number of bikers. Buses -- it does not  
4 extend the bus bays, the number of bus bays  
5 as it could. We could fit in 13 bus bays on  
6 an alternative proposal. Under the WMATA-EYA  
7 proposal we could fit in only 10.

8           And of course, under the WMATA-EYA  
9 proposal there would be no possibility of  
10 expansion in the future. We have to think of  
11 the future, we have no choice. Whether we  
12 think we have a choice right now or not, the  
13 fact of the matter is the future does come  
14 rather fast.

15           Now, what would WMATA get out of  
16 this proposed sale? They'd get at most, at  
17 best, two days operating expenses and less if  
18 you make other calculations. And it would  
19 get whatever percentage, or whatever number  
20 of riders would come from the 86 townhouses  
21 proposed. And that's very difficult to  
22 calculate. I've been e-mailing with transit

1 experts -- transportation experts to try to  
2 get a handle on this. It's very difficult to  
3 calculate, especially at the prices of  
4 probably 700,000-800,000 townhouses -- which  
5 brings another aspect of income inequality.  
6 One of the trademarks of this community is  
7 diversity, and certainly one of the  
8 trademarks that brought me to this community  
9 and a number of our people here. And this  
10 would skew income -- and economic diversity  
11 here, rather markedly with that number of  
12 townhouses at that price.

13           So for the two -- basically the two  
14 benefits that this proposed sale would bring  
15 --this little bit dubious benefits actually,  
16 uncertain benefits, it would wreak a lot of  
17 havoc in the community. So where is the  
18 balance? It seems to me there is no balance.  
19 There would be very little gain for WMATA and  
20 a great cost for the community, a tremendous  
21 cost for the community between the parking  
22 lot reduced, the handicapped access moved



1 further off, the 50-foot buffer reduced to  
2 practically nothing. The bus bay is  
3 increased by only one with really very  
4 inadequate prospects for future use. Bike,  
5 walkers -- buses, cars, bikes combined in the  
6 same turnaround, no apparent improved safety  
7 features for pedestrians. One of the kiss  
8 and ride stands under the proposal will put a  
9 kiss and ride up on Carroll Avenue, Carroll  
10 Street in D.C. -- excuse me, in Carroll  
11 Street. And at that particular point, there  
12 are just two lanes that are westbound, two  
13 lanes alone.

14           And so where would that -- where  
15 would the kiss and ride folks -- would they  
16 block one of the two lanes in an area which  
17 is already failing, according to data -- 2003  
18 calculations. Over and over again, these  
19 features make no sense. And you wonder what  
20 kind of analysis was done.

21           It's essential that WMATA insist on  
22 doing an adequate -- very professional

1 analysis, an analysis done on current data --  
2 not on old data, not on past data. For  
3 example the Wells Associates' analysis that  
4 was of traffic impact relied -- based their  
5 analysis on data's 2003 data, which said by  
6 2012 this community around the Takoma Metro  
7 would have a total of 305 new housing units.  
8 As we speak, we have a total of 330 units,  
9 six years earlier.

10 That's two built and two approved,  
11 one with the sales office open and one with  
12 the sign up saying, "Call us to find out  
13 about sales." Okay, so this -- it's  
14 extremely hard to imagine. I think -- let me  
15 just flip it, we are at such a threshold,  
16 WMATA has such an opportunity to do something  
17 wonderful in this community or to go forward  
18 with these incredibly questionable  
19 likelihoods out of which you couldn't back  
20 out of, you couldn't resurrect your mistake,  
21 you couldn't correct them.

22 MS. MACK: Ms. Wheeler, can I ask

1 you to wrap up please?

2 MS. WHEELER: Yes.

3 MS. MACK: Thank you.

4 MS. WHEELER: Thank you. Well, I  
5 would simply like to urge you to please look  
6 very carefully at these analyses. You might  
7 want a third view of some of the analyses  
8 done already, just to say that an institution  
9 whose business it is to carry out development  
10 projects, analyses are done prior to the  
11 projects ever even being presented to the  
12 board. We have two institutions in this  
13 city, the World Bank and the Inter-American  
14 Development bank, both of which require at  
15 least six analyses done, completed before a  
16 project proposal is ever even presented to  
17 the board of directors. And they are  
18 technical, economic, financial,  
19 environmental, social, and gender -- and I  
20 understand more in the World Bank. So that  
21 you have a pretty clear idea of what the  
22 impact would be before --

1 MS. MACK: Ms. Wheeler, I got to  
2 ask you to wrap up please.

3 MS. WHEELER: Thank you.

4 MS. MACK: Thank you.

5 MS. WHEELER: Thank you very much.

6 MS. MACK: I call -- is that Jamie  
7 Raskin?

8 MR. RASKIN: Thank you very much.  
9 My name is Jamie Raskin and I live on Holly  
10 Avenue in Takoma Park, just a few blocks from  
11 the Metro which my family uses every day and  
12 in some days two or three times. I've taken  
13 a strong interest in the proposed  
14 development. And I guess -- what I want to  
15 say is that the WMATA's goal here obviously  
16 has to be to enhance the station, to improve  
17 transit access and circulation, and to  
18 upgrade transit coordination among different  
19 modes of transportation. And so after  
20 studying this, I've become convinced that  
21 there's got to be a better project proposal  
22 out there, which people in the community

1 would be prepared to accept and to embrace.  
2 This plan is just beset with problems and  
3 difficulties that will come back to haunt us  
4 very quickly, not even in the distant future.  
5 The transportation facilities that we now  
6 have will be reduced to less than two acres  
7 of land after resale and development leaving  
8 all of our transportation channels and  
9 modalities on that pinched little island with  
10 little room for maneuver and no room for  
11 growth in the future, when we know that the  
12 demand for public bus transportation and  
13 Metro transportation is going to be  
14 skyrocketing over the next several decades.

15 We need at least 11 bus bays on  
16 site in addition to layover space. But the  
17 contract provides for only 10 and a space for  
18 buses to remain idle is reduced under the  
19 proposal. And there is no room for future  
20 expansion when we know that public  
21 transportation is going to be increasing --  
22 and we need to increase it and to accommodate

1 it. It's a similar story with the parking  
2 spaces as many of the witnesses have  
3 explained. And as far as I can tell, by  
4 using the Metro that parking lot is nearly  
5 always full and sometimes it's very hard to  
6 find a parking space as it is. And the idea  
7 that we would cut the number of spaces into  
8 half is extraordinary to me. The buses, the  
9 cars, and bikes would be forced to share the  
10 same traffic circle. There will be major  
11 disruption, reduced access for our disabled  
12 neighbors and reduced space available for  
13 bike parking and for storage.

14           And so I've got to wonder whether  
15 this flawed result reflects a set of inverted  
16 assumptions. It seems as if we began with  
17 the real estate development project -- the  
18 housing development project first, and then  
19 organized the transit around it. But surely,  
20 public policy demands and your mandate  
21 demands that we begin with the transit needs  
22 and imperatives first and then organize any

1 housing development around the development of  
2 the best possible transit plan that we can  
3 come up with. You know conceivably we could  
4 disregard all of these considerations, which  
5 strike me as very compelling if there were a  
6 great financial deal out there, that somehow  
7 WMATA could convert a huge windfall on this  
8 into transit development in other places.  
9 But as other witnesses have explained, once  
10 we get down with paying for all of the  
11 replacement facilities, we are talking about  
12 a couple of million dollars left at best.

13           And that seems like a very bad  
14 deal, especially considering that we are  
15 giving away the treasure of this public  
16 property forever. My grandmother used to say  
17 that the government shouldn't sell land,  
18 because they are not making any more of it.  
19 Well, what's wrong with coming up with a  
20 lease arrangement for, you know, some  
21 excellent development that conforms to all of  
22 the transit needs and the values of the

1 communities.

2           So I would just urge you guys to  
3 take a second look at this. You have a  
4 community that is not in any kind of NIMBY  
5 mode. It's a community that's completely  
6 committed to public transit and  
7 transportation. That's committed to the  
8 development of housing possibilities for all  
9 of our neighbors, and committed to a  
10 community where people stand together. And  
11 this proposal just is not consistent with the  
12 kind of transportation values that we have,  
13 and the kind of community that we're  
14 building. And so I urge you to take another  
15 look. Thanks so much.

16           MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
17 testimony.

18                           (Applause)

19           MS. MACK: Once again, I will ask  
20 you, please refrain from applauding. I next  
21 call Cheryl Cort, Executive Director,  
22 Washington Regional Network for Livable



1 Communities.

2 MS. CORT: Thank you, Chairman.

3 MS. MACK: Hi Cheryl, how are you?

4 MS. CORT: Good. My name is Cheryl  
5 Cort. I am the Executive Director for the  
6 Washington Regional Network for Livable  
7 Communities. We are a nonprofit working on  
8 essentially, smart growth for urban  
9 communities.

10 And we have been involved with the  
11 question of what kind of redevelopment at the  
12 Takoma Metro Station would do the most to  
13 enhance transit access, improve the station  
14 area and enlarge our community, and meet the  
15 growing need for more housing at transit.

16 We would like to reiterate our  
17 support for the 2002 Takoma Central District  
18 Plan, which we also were quite actively  
19 involved in, and the redevelopment of the  
20 metro station site into housing shops, and a  
21 village green. Also, support returning some  
22 of the land to the public tax rolls.

1                   We believe that more housing would  
2     it be propriety at this site, but the  
3     proposed plans do advance the overall goal of  
4     providing more housing opportunities, close  
5     to metro in a pedestrian oriented  
6     environment. This means more people in our  
7     growing region can choose to drive less, and  
8     walk, and bicycle and ride transit more.

9                   I have provided a much more  
10    detailed analysis in my testimony, but I  
11    would like to just touch on a couple of key  
12    points. Overall, the layout, we appreciate  
13    the overall layout and design of the  
14    redevelopment project, which creates a street  
15    grid and added street parking, and provides  
16    an appropriate configuration for the bus  
17    facilities.

18                  The proposal will be an improvement  
19    to the pedestrian environment, improving  
20    access and safety for transit riders.  
21    Regarding bus bays, we appreciate the  
22    proposal adding the bus bays for the future

1 needs for ride-on service. We understand  
2 that metro bus has more than enough room in  
3 its existing bus bays.

4 WMATA often over-designs bus bays  
5 appearing to give little consideration to how  
6 alter design could meet the needs for bus  
7 operations while creating a more  
8 pedestrian-friendly environment. We have  
9 investigated the concerns expressed by the  
10 City of Takoma Park regarding bus facilities,  
11 and spoken to all of the local service  
12 providers regarding the proposal of the  
13 additional bus bays, and layover spaces for  
14 future transit needs.

15 And all the providers believe that  
16 it adequately will serve future -- existing  
17 and future needs. Regarding metro parking,  
18 Devron has consistently advocated that  
19 WMATA's investments provide access to transit  
20 riders in the most cost effective way.  
21 Metro's own analysis shows that building a  
22 parking structure for metro riders is not the

1 most cost effective way for providing rider  
2 access in transit services, however --

3 MS. MACK: Your time is up, Cheryl.

4 MS. CORT: -- if a parking garage  
5 is built, we need to ensure that the users  
6 pay for that parking places, that are very  
7 expensive, cost or at least share the burden  
8 of the cost, or other users such as the  
9 business -- and I just want to make one more  
10 point. The affordable housing requirements  
11 proposed by in the council resolution was a  
12 20 percent set aside. We are not seeing that  
13 now, and we want at least the inclusionary  
14 (sic) zoning policy of 10 percent. Thank  
15 you.

16 MS. MACK: Thank you. Our next  
17 witness is Penny Jones Napier, President,  
18 Board of Directors, Old Takoma Business  
19 Association.

20 MS. NAPIER: Thank you. Thank you,  
21 Madam Chairman. As you have stated, my name  
22 is Penny Jones Napier. I am the President of

1 the Old Takoma Business Association. I am  
2 also a resident of Takoma -- the Takoma  
3 neighborhood in Washington, D.C. And I own  
4 two local businesses that are adjacent to the  
5 metro station.

6 The Business Association is one of  
7 a handful cross-jurisdictional associations  
8 that operate in both Washington, D.C. Takoma  
9 area, and Takoma Park, Maryland. And our  
10 purpose is to bring together businesses and  
11 community organizations dedicated to  
12 developing a vibrant market center from the  
13 Takoma Junction, Maryland to the Takoma  
14 Theater, D.C. on 4th Street, which is very  
15 close to the metro station.

16 It's actually -- the metro station  
17 is in the middle of the commercial area we  
18 represent. And we feel it's critical to the  
19 success and growth of businesses in the area.  
20 We are concerned about the current plans for  
21 the development of the Takoma Station with  
22 limited bus bays, reduced parking, and

1 restrictive access for pedestrians, bicycle  
2 riders, the handicapped, and commuters.

3 We are also concerned about the  
4 dead space in the commercial corridor which  
5 makes the area unwelcome, and there is a  
6 feeling of safety issues, which we are  
7 currently addressing, and have addressed in  
8 the past, both for the 4th Street business  
9 district, and for Takoma Park businesses, as  
10 well as the loss of green space in the area.

11 We are supportive of smart-growth,  
12 and appropriate development for the proposed  
13 area, which should include affordable housing  
14 options, green space retention which can be  
15 utilized by the community, pedestrian  
16 walkways which are safe, well-lit and  
17 accessible, alternative transportation access  
18 including more bike lockers, and Flexcars,  
19 Zipcar.

20 We would also like to see access to  
21 the Takoma D.C. 4th District and Cedar  
22 Corridor in some fashion from the metro stop,

1 if possible. And the addition of public art,  
2 which could be easily added through grants to  
3 those areas to help make it a more welcoming  
4 gateway to the community.

5           The Takoma Metro Station has the  
6 highest number of pedestrian users of any  
7 station in the entire metropolitan area.  
8 With 1.6 million metro exits per year,  
9 demographic studies of the 4th Street  
10 District within the last five years confirm  
11 this usage. Such high pedestrian usage  
12 requires that we pay attention to the  
13 pedestrian access points, and the safety and  
14 desirability of the area.

15           We also recognize the importance of  
16 western access for entrance and exit to the  
17 station. Contrary to the current WMATA  
18 plans, many, which do not meet many of these  
19 goals, given what has been presented so far,  
20 we feel that following points are essential  
21 for development in this area.

22           We need pedestrian access that is

1 safe, that minimizes mixing pedestrian  
2 traffic with car, bike, and bus traffic along  
3 with same access.

4 MS. MACK: Time is up.

5 MS. NAPIER: I will present the  
6 rest of my remarks in writing. But we work  
7 through the mainstream initiative to help  
8 build community and build access, and we feel  
9 that you have a great opportunity right now,  
10 to go back and redress the concerns of the  
11 community, and work out a solution that will  
12 meet all of the needs of the community, and  
13 provide both a great transit area and  
14 development.

15 Thank you very much, and I  
16 appreciate letting me present in front of  
17 you. Thank you.

18 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
19 testimony. I next call Davis --David --  
20 Davis S. Frye.

21 MR. FRYE: That's David with a 'D.'

22 MS. MACK: Oh, David, I got wrong.



1           MR. FRYE: Good evening. My name  
2           is David Frye. I am a resident of Takoma  
3           D.C. I have lived here for 18 years, and I  
4           am also a member of the Board of the Takoma  
5           D.C. Neighborhood Association, and currently  
6           serve as Secretary of the Board although I am  
7           about to go off the Board.

8           But I am only giving that for  
9           purpose of identification. I am not -- I am  
10          speaking here for myself, and not for the  
11          organization. I support this project in  
12          concept, and in most of the details.  
13          Contrary to what many people have said, this  
14          will reflect a dramatic improvement in the  
15          pedestrian environment over what we have now.

16          There will be an increase in bus  
17          bays from nine to twelve, from my  
18          understanding, ten plus two layover bays. If  
19          more bus routes are needed, I would submit  
20          that buses can be redirected to Fort Totten  
21          or to Silver Spring, which are far better  
22          equipped to handle an increase in buses than

1 this station.

2           There are so many good things. I  
3 am not going to list all of the good things  
4 about this project, but there are many. It  
5 gets land back on the tax rolls. It will  
6 improve safety for the neighborhood. It will  
7 bring much needed pedestrian foot traffic to  
8 support local businesses.

9           That being said, there is one --  
10 there is one issue that I believe is very  
11 important, and that is that the alternative  
12 of the garage be included. One of the most  
13 important features of the Central District  
14 Plan was one to one parking replacement.

15           A lot of people depend upon that  
16 parking, particularly elderly and retired  
17 people who go downtown during the day. One  
18 thing that I would recommend, as a  
19 possibility to expand parking would be to put  
20 a covenant in the agreement that the  
21 residents living in the new development would  
22 not be able to apply for residential parking.

1                   That that be reserved as metered  
2 space, which will increase the availability  
3 of parking spaces, and will actually result  
4 in a net increase of overall spaces on the  
5 site. Again, I support this project. I  
6 believe it's essential to the neighborhood,  
7 and essential for the future of the city and  
8 the region. Thank you very much.

9                   MS. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Frye.  
10 Our next witness is Loretta Neumann.

11                   MS. NEUMANN: Just get --

12                   MS. MACK: Okay, thank you.

13                   MS. NEUMANN: Good evening. My  
14 name is Loretta Neumann. I have lived in  
15 Takoma for -- D.C. for 32 years. My home is  
16 three blocks from the Metro. When I worked  
17 at Metro, I used it daily. I am retired now,  
18 but I still use it frequently. My  
19 background, I have been very active in the  
20 neighborhood, and I have listed the various  
21 organizations for you just to give my  
22 credentials, not to say that I am speaking

1 for them.

2 I am here, unlike many of the  
3 people who have testified before, but like  
4 David Frye who just spoke, not to oppose this  
5 development, but simply to comment on the  
6 impact of some of the transit issues that  
7 have been raised, and think of ways, present  
8 ways, recommend ways to improve it.

9 First, auto parking, and that has  
10 been talked about considerably. I did a  
11 personal little survey yesterday of the metro  
12 site. I use it daily, oh, not daily, but I  
13 use the daily parking often, because I go to  
14 meetings downtown that are late in the day,  
15 extend well into the evening, and I don't  
16 want to come home late at night, and walk  
17 those three blocks down the road to my house.

18 So I know it well, how that parking  
19 area is used. But what I perceived, and what  
20 I -- yesterday really -- even opened my eyes  
21 even more. There are three areas, there is  
22 one to the right of the entrance, which has

1 about 58 spaces, and allows parking from  
2 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. weekdays.

3 The middle lot, which has 89 spaces  
4 allows it from 8:30 a.m. in the morning till  
5 3:30 p.m., then there is a break. There is  
6 supposed to be no parking there. And then  
7 from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Then at the edge  
8 of that lot, there are six spaces assigned as  
9 available for 15-minute attended car parking,  
10 there's your kiss and ride. The purpose of  
11 all these convoluted parking is to assure  
12 that we don't have commuters parking there.

13 But what I discovered is, indeed  
14 the commuters are parking there right now and  
15 that is one of the reasons it's very  
16 difficult during the day now to find a space,  
17 especially the middle lot. But there are  
18 people parking in the middle of the  
19 afternoon. No tickets on them, even with  
20 expired meters no tickets on them. The other  
21 lot, people with expired meters, all day, no  
22 tickets.

1                   And even in that attended lot for  
2   15 minutes, the kiss and ride, I found cars  
3   parked there when I went early in the day,  
4   and then came back late at night after my  
5   meeting yesterday downtown, and discovered  
6   they were still there, and they were not  
7   ticketed.

8                   I talked to a transit official who  
9   was in a car there, and I asked her about it,  
10  "Do they ticket?" She said, "Of course, they  
11  ticket." I said, "Are you planning to  
12  ticket, there are so many here that are  
13  expired." She said, "No, there is a foot  
14  patrolman, and he will do it." And I looked  
15  around and I said, "There is none, I have  
16  never seen a foot patrolman here."

17                  And I waited, then I came back four  
18  times, and never saw one. So I am going to  
19  lead to my recommendations about parking at  
20  the Metro. Any new development, I don't care  
21  what it is, at the Metro should provide  
22  approximately the same amount of public

1 parking. And I am sorry, but I am going to  
2 finish. But there is need to enforce it.

3 If you don't enforce it, it is not  
4 going to do us any good. And I also think  
5 that we should have all the parking equally  
6 restricted to five or six hours maximum  
7 during the day so that it's useful for us,  
8 but it is not used by the commuters.

9 For the bus bays, I am shocked at  
10 people who want to have more bus bays there,  
11 they are more impervious pavement, more run  
12 of polluted water into our -- into the --  
13 down in -- ultimately in the Chesapeake Bay.  
14 We do not need to have significantly more  
15 buses lumbering through our narrow streets.  
16 I agree with David Frye, if additional  
17 transit use is needed for those areas and  
18 they are not going to be in our neighborhood,  
19 because all the new developments are within  
20 walking distance. But if they are --

21 MS. MACK: Your time is up. Would  
22 you wrap it up, please?

1                   MS. NEUMANN: -- further out, they  
2                   can go to Silver Spring, or they can go to go  
3                   Takoma. And my last -- I have several  
4                   recommendations, I want to agree with a lot  
5                   of what's said, I just think those things  
6                   need to be incorporated in the design of the  
7                   area, not simply used as an excuse to oppose  
8                   the entire development.

9                   MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
10                  testimony. Meagan Scribner.

11                  MS. SCRIBNER: Hi, my name is  
12                  Meagan Scribner. All the names are close  
13                  today. I live on Willow Avenue in Takoma  
14                  Park. I've been there for about 10 years.  
15                  In these many meetings, the committee has  
16                  made it's clear to its commitment, both to  
17                  transit and the development of its site.  
18                  That was evident at the March 4th WMATA  
19                  community planning session.

20                  I was impressed by how many voice  
21                  support for the standards of the Takoma  
22                  Central District Plan, and the Takoma's



1 transportation study. I was also struck by  
2 how many found the EYA plan incompatible with  
3 these. I was very disappointed that this  
4 wasn't captured by the report of the meeting.

5 I ask WMATA to adhere to the  
6 standards of the Takoma Central District  
7 Plan, the and Takoma Transportation Study  
8 Plans, and to its own access planning  
9 guidelines as presented by Scott Pearson,  
10 WMATA's senior transit facilities planner.

11 According to your own guidelines,  
12 stations should separate pedestrian paths  
13 from vehicles whenever possible. You have in  
14 the EYA plan, the drop off and pick up spot  
15 for the elevator, and that's for those who  
16 need the most help, is in the bus turnaround  
17 area. Not only will this cause congestion,  
18 it is an accident waiting to happen.

19 Another guideline, kiss and ride  
20 function should be located to facilitate its  
21 use, yet in the EYA plan, one of the kiss and  
22 rides is separated from the station by two

1 lanes of bus traffic. Another guideline,  
2 development should not negatively impact  
3 existing transit service, and it should  
4 accommodate future access needs including  
5 increased traffic.

6           Because of the amount of land taken  
7 up by more than 85 townhouses bus riders will  
8 have to cross two lanes of bus traffic in a  
9 much more congested area to get to the  
10 station. And there is no room for expansion  
11 for future needs. In the 2003 DDoT transit  
12 study, all the nearby intersections failed  
13 the afternoon rush hour test.

14           And that does not take into account  
15 the 330 new units -- are rebuilt or under  
16 construction since then. This area can't  
17 handle the additional drivers from the EYA  
18 development. Even if a majority take the  
19 metro, 85 plus homes with two car garages  
20 leads to many more drivers on the road.

21           It's important that WMATA make sure  
22 that the EYA pay attention to both the

1 Central District Plan and your own access  
2 guidelines.

3 As to parking, neither the 75 nor  
4 129 parking option matches our current need  
5 for at least a 149 spaces. Searching for  
6 additional spaces will add to congestion and  
7 frustration. And the parking garage greatly  
8 cuts into the promised 50-foot buffer.

9 The EYA plan does put transit  
10 first. Rather it focuses on private suburban  
11 townhouses with two car garages at the  
12 expense of public (off mike) parking. The  
13 design process should first allot space for  
14 current and future transit needs and the  
15 promised buffer, and then plan a development  
16 to fit on the remaining space.

17 Please reject this proposal, and  
18 instead let us work together for a  
19 development that is truly transit- oriented  
20 and community-friendly. Thank you.

21 MS. MACK: Thank you, Ms. Scribner.

22 (Applause)

1                   MS. MACK:  Gareth Rosenau?  Is he  
2 present?

3                   MR. ROSENAU:  My name is Gareth  
4 Rosenau.  I live at -- near Carroll and  
5 Flower Avenues in Takoma Park, Maryland.  I  
6 have a car, but I don't have a garage, and I  
7 ride the bus everyday, the ride on 12, 13 or  
8 18 to the Metro station.  My primary concern  
9 with the proposal is that even if we don't  
10 build anything right now, we have a serious  
11 traffic problem in the area with both the  
12 light timing and the bus congestion.

13                   My commute since 1990, when I moved  
14 to Takoma Park, is probably about five  
15 minutes longer than it used to be.  My  
16 projection is that with this development  
17 given the conflicts of the buses trying to  
18 get out onto Carroll Street or what a lot of  
19 buses now do is they go out on Eastern Avenue  
20 and come around, and then they get into a big  
21 jam-up on Cedar, where that intersects with  
22 Carol and of course, the light timing is

1 about the same as it was in 1952. So  
2 nothing's ever going to change.

3 We do need to do that regardless,  
4 but I am projecting that my commute is  
5 probably going to increase by somewhere  
6 between five and ten minutes because of the  
7 congestion caused by this development. I  
8 think what we have to do is we have to take  
9 the number of passengers similarly situated,  
10 multiply by the -- over the years, if we are  
11 going to be adding, really, literally  
12 millions of hours of additional commute time.

13 It's not uncommon now for me to  
14 spend 15 minutes or more, sometimes 20, to  
15 get to Carroll and Flower Avenues going  
16 through the dysfunctional Takoma Junction,  
17 and I can walk it in 25 minutes. This is not  
18 acceptable. I think there are things that we  
19 can do right now with light timing, and I  
20 also think that we could probably install  
21 light where the buses exit that might have  
22 priority where the bus activates the light so

1 that the buses can get out into the stream of  
2 traffic.

3           If we are really serious about bus  
4 transportation we ought to be looking at  
5 those kinds of options. I'm not opposed to  
6 development, I think that we can build  
7 something here, but I think we would need to  
8 take a look, as other speakers have  
9 indicated, at the transit needs first. Thank  
10 you very much.

11           MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
12 testimony. I would like to indicate that  
13 I've just been joined by Mr. Charles Deegan  
14 who is a member of the WMATA Board from  
15 Prince George's Country. Also I would like  
16 to recognize that we have Mr. Gary Erenrich,  
17 I think, is his name, in the audience. He is  
18 representing the Director of Transportation  
19 of Montgomery County and County Executive  
20 Douglas Duncan. All right, our next speaker  
21 is Jeffrey P. Silverstone.

22           MR. SILVERSTONE: Good evening. I

1 represent Seekers Church, a D.C. Church  
2 located across Carroll Street from the Takoma  
3 station. We walk, bike, and take the subway  
4 to church. We consider the station site to  
5 be a gateway between D.C. and Maryland and  
6 the center of an integrated Takoma community.

7 The Takoma Central District Plan is  
8 the product of a community-driven planning  
9 process, which was unanimously ratified by  
10 the D.C. Council. It incorporates by  
11 reference by the Takoma Transportation Study  
12 conducted by both D.C. and Takoma Park,  
13 Maryland.

14 It is imperative that redevelopment  
15 comply with these recommendations. This  
16 means that one, the site provide adequate  
17 parking to allow Takoma non-commuters who are  
18 unable to walk to the station to use the rail  
19 system for shopping and other short-term  
20 excursions. A resident permit-only street  
21 parking does not meet this demand.

22 Two, the housing invite real

1 commuters by limiting private parking to one  
2 space per unit. WMATA won't benefit if two  
3 car commuters move there as EYA promotes.  
4 Three, 50 new bike racks accommodate  
5 increased demand due to the implementation of  
6 the Metropolitan Branch Trail. We suggest  
7 that a video camera cover these racks to  
8 discourage theft and vandalism.

9           Since there is now a waiting list  
10 for all 60 existing bike lockers, which are  
11 cut to 40 by EYA, bike racks with video  
12 surveillance are important for multimodal  
13 transportation. EYA has no racks on any  
14 chart that I've seen. Four, we create an  
15 accessible entrance from the west of the  
16 station by extending the tunnel used for ADA  
17 access on the eastern side. This improves  
18 the site as a gateway instead of a barrier  
19 between D.C. and Maryland, especially for  
20 D.C. bike ride commuters and the D.C.  
21 Wheelchair-bound.

22           Since the western branch of the



1 Metropolitan trail will run down Spring  
2 Place, we must link the bike network with the  
3 bicycle entrance. Moreover, Centex is  
4 building 144 condos having only 185 parking  
5 spaces on Spring Place with more planned to  
6 turn junkyards into a subway ridership  
7 community. Five, appendix H of the  
8 transportation study which was omitted from  
9 this meeting's information package,  
10 anticipates 11 actively used bus space plus  
11 one spare. EYA only grants 10. Six, the  
12 station must protect a covenant with its  
13 neighbors made when it was first planned that  
14 a buffer would separate their homes from  
15 diesel traffic.

16 In summary, these EYA alternatives  
17 must be redrafted or rebid to imply with the  
18 Central District Plan and Transportation  
19 Study. Thank you.

20 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
21 testimony.

22 (Applause)

1 MS. MACK: Mr. Daniel R. Smith.

2 SPEAKER: I think he left a couple  
3 of minutes ago.

4 MS. MACK: Did he leave? Okay,  
5 next is Diana --

6 MS. VIDUTIS: Vidutis.

7 MS. MACK: Vidutis. Thank you.

8 MS. VIDUTIS: Excuse me. My name  
9 is Diana Vidutis. My points are, if it isn't  
10 broke, don't fix it. Leave well enough  
11 alone, and first and foremost, do no harm. I  
12 live at 7416 Piney Branch Road, about a  
13 10-minute walk from the Takoma Park Metro  
14 Station. I bought my house in 1986, exactly  
15 20 years ago, specifically, because it was  
16 near the Metro and so that my future children  
17 would be able to walk to excellent public  
18 schools in Montgomery County.

19 Well, those future children are now  
20 completing high school; 20 years goes by in  
21 the blink of an eye. Thank goodness that 20  
22 plus 20 plus 10 years ago, somebody in Takoma

1 Park had the foresight to see how our  
2 neighborhood would suffer if certain traffic  
3 solutions were implemented. You see, I live  
4 at another transportation hub, one for  
5 vehicles, Piney Branch and East-West Highway.

6 The only reason our streets are  
7 still residential is because in the 1960s  
8 wiser minds prevailed when transportation  
9 authorities were proposing innovative  
10 solutions to traffic problems, like turning  
11 Piney Branch Road into a four-lane highway  
12 going to D.C. in mornings and out of D.C. at  
13 rush hour. Another idea was to make  
14 Philadelphia Avenue in Takoma Park as wide as  
15 East-West Highway is in Bethesda.

16 Thank goodness community activists  
17 rose up and said "No." Guess what, 50 years  
18 later, voluminous traffic still moves along  
19 these streets, but so do people. We have  
20 another chance to make an equally important  
21 decision today with the property of Takoma  
22 Park Metro Station. We are talking about

1 less than seven acres of land, the size of  
2 approximately five football fields. Right  
3 now, there sits a major metro stop, parking  
4 spaces, bus space, bicycle lockers, and a bus  
5 turnaround.

6           There also sit some 200 trees on  
7 this property. They provide a park-like  
8 setting for this transportation hub and  
9 mitigate some of the bus exhaust. The rest  
10 of the pollution dissipates into the open  
11 green space; for now, that is. At present  
12 there is a beautiful sloping, apparently  
13 offensively unexploited, yet ever so valuable  
14 green space enveloping the eastside of the  
15 Metro station.

16           There is still room to breathe and  
17 to walk. If the proposed development goes  
18 through, we lose these 200 trees and almost  
19 all of the open green space. The paved  
20 walking area will be severely narrowed.  
21 Pedestrians will be funneled to a sidewalk  
22 they have to share with taxis, bicyclists,

1 commuters, and the commuters arriving by bus  
2 and by Kiss & Ride.

3           The public space will have been  
4 compressed to accommodate the very unwise  
5 positioning of a town of townhouses because  
6 in addition to the numerous apartment  
7 buildings going up in Old Town Takoma we need  
8 more, and where is the snow going to be piled  
9 come winter? Thanks but no thanks to the  
10 gazebo, the amphitheatre, and the playground.  
11 We already have a gazebo in town, we don't  
12 need another one. We already have a clock,  
13 besides who in their right mind would build a  
14 playground among bus fumes or a performance  
15 venue in proximity to honking horns, chugging  
16 buses, and train announcements.

17           People come to the Takoma Metro  
18 stop to come home or to get to someplace  
19 else. They visit the Farmers' Market, the  
20 House of Musical Traditions, and attend  
21 classes at the Takoma campus of Montgomery  
22 College or transfer to buses taking them

1 farther. They will need more space for more  
2 buses and more pickup, not less.

3 I understand the developers  
4 stepping off the train at Takoma Metro look  
5 out over the expansive greens -- oh, well,  
6 anyway, with the green space at Takoma Park  
7 it's as useless as Central Park in Manhattan.  
8 Let's not let it be devoured.

9 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 (Applause)

12 MS. MACK: Next is Seth Grimes.

13 MR. GRIMES: Thank you to the WMATA  
14 Board for convening this meeting, Ms. Mack  
15 for chairing it. Welcome to Takoma Park.  
16 I'd say you seeing us at our best. The joint  
17 D.C. and Maryland community, we are engaged  
18 and outspoken and I'm sure you appreciate  
19 that.

20 MS. MACK: Yes.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. GRIMES: Well, my name is Seth

1 Grimes. I'm a resident of Takoma Park,  
2 Maryland, and I'm president of the Old Town  
3 Residents Association. The Old Town area is  
4 the Maryland neighborhood immediately  
5 adjacent to the Metro station. It's bounded  
6 by Eastern Avenue. It includes about 520  
7 households with many, many residents who walk  
8 to the Metro station, some who bicycle to the  
9 station, others who are dropped at the Kiss &  
10 Ride. Many of us park in the station's lot  
11 when using metro rail and many of us use the  
12 station's bus facilities.

13 One of my sons, for instance, takes  
14 the ride on bus route number 12, which  
15 connects the Takoma and Silver Spring Metro  
16 stations twice daily to get to and from  
17 school.

18 The Old Town Residents Association  
19 passed a resolution earlier this year that  
20 development plans must prioritize the transit  
21 usability of the site by commuters and park  
22 day users of the station, by pedestrians,

1 bicyclists, bus patrons, and drivers.  
2 Development plans must preserve the current  
3 number of onsite parking spaces and any  
4 development of the site must be responsive to  
5 the transportation findings and  
6 recommendations of the Takoma Central  
7 District Plan and Takoma Transportation  
8 Study.

9           The current development plans do  
10 none of these things. The current plans  
11 dramatically reduce the number of public  
12 parking spaces; they make handicapped transit  
13 access more difficult by displacing the  
14 drop-off away from the elevator entrance.  
15 They route buses, private vehicles, and  
16 bicycles through the same access route which  
17 will create a dangerous situation for all  
18 concerned, and which is contrary to the  
19 Takoma District -- Central District Plan.

20           They counter WMATA's bus service  
21 priorities; they don't allow for growth in  
22 bus ridership expected with new development



1 in the service area. And I note that even  
2 plan supporters like Mr. Frye who spoke  
3 earlier would see a need with this plan to  
4 locate future bus services away from the  
5 Takoma Metro Station and other stations, an  
6 admission that the current plan is inadequate  
7 for transit needs. And so on, you've heard  
8 all of this before.

9 The current plans further, as you  
10 have heard, will provide WMATA with the  
11 equivalent of at best two days' operating  
12 expenses, adding insult to injury. The  
13 members of the Old Town Residents Association  
14 recognize these points in passing a second  
15 later resolution stating that OTRA poses  
16 current WMATA-EYA development plans, which  
17 lack regard for the Takoma Central District  
18 Plan and Transportation Study.

19 The resolution goes on to say that  
20 we would happily support any of three  
21 alternative design revisions presented to us  
22 or a variant created by the greater

1 community.

2           Let us be clear, we do not oppose  
3 development, we do not oppose development at  
4 the Takoma Metro Station. We support transit  
5 and community friendly development. The  
6 current plan is not that. It is not in  
7 WMATA's interest, nor is it in the  
8 community's interest. WMATA needs to go back  
9 to the drawing board. Please work with us.  
10 And I will point out about the community  
11 turnout, you see at this meeting that was at  
12 the March design meeting that has been at  
13 meetings for six years now. Please work with  
14 us to ensure that the Takoma Metro Station  
15 development prioritizes transit and community  
16 needs. Thank you.

17           MS. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Grimes.

18                           (Applause)

19           MS. MACK: David B. Paris. Richard  
20 Holzager.

21           SPEAKER: Mr. Paris is here.

22           MS. MACK: Oh, I'm sorry, is he?

1                   MR. PARIS: My name is David Paris.  
2 I live on Larch Avenue in Takoma Park. I am  
3 a lifelong resident of the area, and was  
4 involved in the -- I've been involved in the  
5 planning of the Metro stop since its --  
6 before its inception. I think the stop is --  
7 and the -- I think the planning of the stop  
8 is terribly important and that the park is  
9 terribly important. And I remember very  
10 distinctly the planning that went into its  
11 creation.

12                   I think part of the importance of  
13 the park is its relationship to the  
14 Metropolitan Branch Trail. It provides an  
15 opportunity to integrate the trail into the  
16 fabric of the stop to create a multimodal  
17 situation. And my concern with the plan that  
18 is before us is that it doesn't seem to  
19 address bicycle usage at all.

20                   I would say from the point of view  
21 of Takoma Park and Takoma D.C. retail, that  
22 there is an important opportunity for this

1 area to take advantage of the opportunity to  
2 draw ridership, draw riders from the trail  
3 into the commercial area of Takoma. It will  
4 provide a greater consumer base for Takoma  
5 businesses, a far more important retail  
6 contribution than any retail that might be  
7 built on that site.

8 I share of opinion of many that the  
9 planning emphasize has been wrong, wrongly  
10 focused on justifying this project, rather  
11 than looking to the transit needs of this  
12 community and join with many others in  
13 feeling that there is need to take another  
14 look and go back to the planning drawing  
15 board.

16 Alternative proposals have been  
17 presented, but WMATA really hasn't given  
18 adequate attention to them, and we are hoping  
19 that if this is turned down that there will  
20 be an opportunity to look in a more positive  
21 direction, more of a smart growth direction  
22 which will protect this community.

1           The present -- it seems to me that  
2           the parking garage is a bad idea, which is  
3           going to cost too much to implement and that  
4           the present parking operates -- and I'm  
5           wrapping up, as a land bank, and an area  
6           which can be looked upon for future transit  
7           growth. Thank you.

8           MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
9           testimony.

10                           (Applause)

11           MS. MACK: I call Richard Holzager.

12           MR. HOLZAGER: Very well done.  
13           Richard Holzager. I live right across the  
14           street in D.C. on Piney Branch Road about  
15           three blocks from the Metro. I've been there  
16           for over 30 years. I had some things to say  
17           about details of this project, but I think  
18           having listened to everybody speaking, what  
19           strikes me is that there seems to be an  
20           almost universal agreement that smart growth  
21           is a good idea, transit-oriented development,  
22           enhancing the facilities.

1                   Jack Lester started out using those  
2 terms and everybody here has pretty much  
3 agreed with it. What we don't agree on is  
4 whether this particular project succeeds in  
5 those goals. I'm enough of an optimist to  
6 think that there ought to be a way that you  
7 could come up with a plan that would convince  
8 all of us, or virtually all of us this is  
9 smart growth.

10                   Now, I don't know, I'm not a  
11 planner, I don't know what the answer is. I  
12 don't know whether EYA is the one to do it,  
13 whether somebody else should do it. Someway  
14 or another, I think there ought to be enough  
15 of a change in these plans that we can all  
16 get here and say, "Wow, you did it. That is  
17 smart growth." Thank you.

18                   (Applause)

19                   MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
20 testimony. Ruth Foster.

21                   MS. FOSTER: Good evening.

22                   MS. MACK: Good evening.

1                   MS. FOSTER: I thank you for this  
2 opportunity. I'm not going to say very much,  
3 I'll write what I -- mostly of what I have to  
4 say, but one of things that I want to  
5 disagree with is that we are not "no build,"  
6 okay, because we have supported a lot of the  
7 building that has gone on around the Metro.  
8 What we are really concerned about is to make  
9 sure that the transit needs are taken of  
10 first and the EYA project does not do that.

11                   You know, I've been living in this  
12 community for years, almost 35, you know, and  
13 my thing is this, why would you build  
14 something that would restrict what your  
15 mandate tells you you were supposed to do?  
16 Now, EYA's project cannot possibly do what  
17 your mandate says. You -- they project the  
18 bus transportation for 10 years. To me, I do  
19 not understand that. That is stupid, because  
20 the only thing -- only way you would only use  
21 a 10-year projection for something is that  
22 you don't expect to be in business 10 years

1 later.

2 (Laughter)

3 MS. FOSTER: You know, I was in on  
4 the planning of this station and the Maryland  
5 and D.C. people worked together to plan this  
6 station. And I think we did a very good job  
7 because we thought that Metro was an asset to  
8 our community. Well, for some reason the  
9 D.C. people thought that the Maryland people  
10 didn't have anything to do with what we did  
11 with the land in D.C. Well, the station was  
12 built for both jurisdictions. Monies was  
13 used from both jurisdictions, so that doesn't  
14 even make sense.

15 When we planned the Metro, we  
16 thought a lot about how this was going to  
17 work and the buffer and the green space, all  
18 of that was done with the idea of protecting  
19 the environment, the air pollution, the noise  
20 pollution, and for the Metro not to be so  
21 intrusive into the neighborhood. So we  
22 thought we did that, but the Metro reneged



1 because in the final plans it didn't say  
2 "park." So because it didn't say "park,"  
3 they said, "Let's sell it." That's all I'm  
4 going to say right now.

5 (Applause)

6 MS. MACK: Thank you, Ms. Foster.  
7 Kathy Carroll.

8 MS. CARROLL: My name is Kathy  
9 Carroll. You got my name right, thank you.

10 MS. MACK: Good, it's easy.

11 MS. CARROLL: Yeah. And I live at  
12 6th and Aspen Streets, that's a few blocks  
13 from here. My family, my husband's family  
14 and my children -- my children are the fourth  
15 generation in our house. We have been there  
16 since 1913. And I -- because of that and  
17 having seen the changes in this neighborhood  
18 over the years, I think it's -- I'm agreeing  
19 with Ruth that we need to look a little bit  
20 beyond 10 years into the future. And you  
21 know, some people say, "Oh, those is people  
22 who want to keep that green space, they are a

1 bunch of tree huggers." And I would like to  
2 speak in defense of tree huggers.

3 (Laughter)

4 (Applause)

5 MS. CARROLL: There are three  
6 government initiatives going on right now  
7 that impact tree huggers and also impact this  
8 green space. One of them is that there is a  
9 new comprehensive plan in front of the  
10 council right now that is -- the D.C.  
11 Council, that is about increasing, rather  
12 than reducing our urban forest. We -- it  
13 recognizes that over the last 25 years we've  
14 lost 64 percent of our tree cover in D.C. and  
15 that it seeks to restore D.C. as a city of  
16 trees.

17 The second is a study of that is  
18 done with the mayor of D.C. and also with PG  
19 County and Montgomery County for forest  
20 management of the Anacostia watershed. This  
21 interstate group seeks to increase the trees  
22 in the Anacostia watershed. Takoma Metro is

1 in that -- is in this -- the green space is  
2 in this watershed. And then there is the  
3 Chesapeake Bay Forest Protection Initiative,  
4 which is taking place with the mayor of D.C.  
5 and the governors of several states nearby,  
6 again, to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

7           And so I'm asking -- I'd like to  
8 ask WMATA, have you looked into ways at your  
9 stations to contribute to these initiatives  
10 to save our trees rather than to cut them  
11 down? And so some people might say, "Oh,  
12 well, EYA is going to be planting some  
13 trees," but here is a piece of information  
14 from the forest service research. It's found  
15 out that trees greater than 30 inches in  
16 diameter remove 70 times more pollution per  
17 year than small trees that are just 3 inches  
18 or less in diameter.

19           So the plan right now for EYA is to  
20 cut down every one of the mature trees, there  
21 are 26 of them at least, and so this is  
22 serious. There -- if we add the -- there is

1 about 550-odd residences, not including the  
2 Metro spaces that are planned for this area,  
3 and if we feel that we still need something  
4 else what we could do is put -- you know, as  
5 Jim Graham said, we could build on top of the  
6 degraded parking lot. And in its place we  
7 could -- then we could keep this beautiful  
8 green space for the next 50, 100 or more  
9 years and then we can go -- we can all hug  
10 some trees and our kids too and our  
11 grandchildren. Thank you.

12 (Applause)

13 MS. MACK: Thank you, Kathy. Next  
14 witness is Lex, and you are going to help --  
15 have to help me with that last name.

16 MR. ULIBARRI: Thank you, Ms. Mack.  
17 I'm Lex Ulibarri.

18 MS. MACK: Okay.

19 MR. ULIBARRI: I am here -- well,  
20 first of all, I feel like I've stepped into a  
21 Hans Christian Andersen story, "The Emperor  
22 Has No Clothes." I have a lot of experience

1 around this city helping communities develop  
2 alternative designs for areas of potentially  
3 inappropriate development. And I've been  
4 struck not only from personal experience  
5 because Takoma Park is a metro station I use  
6 very frequently, but by working with this  
7 community, their passion and dedication to  
8 smart growth and transit. It's a cross  
9 jurisdictional community, who has great  
10 concerns about this site.

11 As you are all aware, the history  
12 of this was that it was to be a flagship  
13 joint development opportunity for WMATA. The  
14 Central District Plan resulted in a message  
15 to the community that we had to accept this  
16 proposal because nobody else would want to  
17 develop here, because we all know there is  
18 about 500 other units coming online within a  
19 four-block radius of this metro station  
20 within the next couple of years.

21 What WMATA has learned about how to  
22 develop on other sites with their new

1 criteria is not being used retroactively on  
2 this site.

3 EYA builds one type of residential  
4 product. The entire process thus far has  
5 been an irrational and dishonest  
6 justification for an inappropriate proposal.  
7 Alternatives do exist, which I'm about to  
8 share with you, but multiple attempts to  
9 inform the WMATA Board and our elected  
10 leaders have fallen on death ears.

11 The workshop sponsored by WMATA was  
12 dishonest to the community. It was conceived  
13 as a planning process and it was instead spun  
14 as a new rationalization for EYA's same  
15 proposal. The report that resulted from that  
16 workshop was skewed. An inaccurate  
17 perception has been moved around about the  
18 community's support of this project with a  
19 few vocal supporters who are inclined to  
20 support development over the needs of the  
21 community.

22 EYA's proposal does not put transit

1 first. It does not provide access to the  
2 Metro facilities, which should be the most  
3 important criteria for this development.  
4 There is a maze of driveways which limit  
5 pedestrian access, you have to completely  
6 re-grade the existing site; staging for  
7 construction and access during construction  
8 are not outlined with the current proposal.  
9 Reconstruction of the Metro facilities has to  
10 come out of your revenue, which has been  
11 clarified by other testimony.

12           There is less parking, the  
13 cross-circulation of buses, cares,  
14 handicapped access and pedestrians and  
15 residents, it's a nightmare just building on  
16 itself. Two car garages are smart growth?  
17 Sorry, Cheryl. Bus bays, we need to have as  
18 many potential bus bays as we can. Gas is  
19 going to be \$5 a gallon by the end of the  
20 winter and we all know this. We have green  
21 buffers with mature trees and a park; let's  
22 keep them.

1                   And there is a lack of transparency  
2 of the financial viability of this proposal.  
3 We need to preserve all of the transit  
4 facilities. And lastly, we do have a  
5 proposal out there that's been widely  
6 publicized for this site. It preserves all  
7 of the existing berms, it preserves the  
8 existing park, it proposes another level of  
9 parking on top of the existing parking  
10 garage, and units on top of that with a green  
11 roof access to the park, which makes it an  
12 amenity for the development. That metro is  
13 not painted into a corner and the potential  
14 future of growth is still open readily.  
15 There is win-win proposal out there if the  
16 Metro would open their eyes.

17                   MS. MACK: Thank you, your time is  
18 up.

19                                   (Applause)

20                   MR. ULIBARRI: Please do not  
21 propose to sell this property.

22                                   (Applause)



1                   MS. MACK: Our next witness is Mark  
2 Sherman, Mark W. Sherman. Mark W. Sherman.  
3 Next is Frances Phipps.

4                   MR. PHIPPS: I'm Frances Phipps of  
5 Holly Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland. I am  
6 so pleased that our Maryland representative  
7 is here. I was here before Metro came. I  
8 worked with General Jackson Graham, with him,  
9 against him. You know how it is.

10                   Somebody mentioned the mandate of  
11 the WMATA Board, and I would just like to  
12 read what you as Board members unanimously  
13 endorsed this February as your mission  
14 statement.

15                   You're probably very familiar with  
16 it, but I suspect the audience isn't. And  
17 the essence of the mission statement says  
18 that you are to provide oversight for funding  
19 operations and the expansion of transit  
20 facilities. That's it, the expansion of  
21 transit facilities, not the operations of  
22 transit facilities, not the improvement of

1 transit facilities, the expansion of transit  
2 facilities.

3           One assumes that a unanimously  
4 endorsed mission statement of an agency is  
5 carefully scrutinized, debated, wordsmithed.  
6 So I am assuming the words "expansion of  
7 transit facilities" are what you are all  
8 about. Now, quite frankly, you also are held  
9 to the federal criteria of any joint  
10 development must enhance transit facilities,  
11 it must enhance coordination among different  
12 modes of transportation facilities, and it  
13 must have a fair share of revenue.

14           I just want to talk about two  
15 things. One is parking. Oddly enough, in  
16 this community where we don't agree on  
17 anything, almost everybody, even the Office  
18 of Planning, agrees that parking is essential  
19 on this site. For those of you who haven't  
20 heard the numbers a million time and have  
21 gotten confused, we've got 150 parking spaces  
22 there right now.

1           Best-case scenario was a costly  
2 garage, and EYA, they are proposing 129  
3 parking spaces. This is not enhancement.  
4 All right, even the Office of Planning says  
5 they want to get as close to replacement  
6 facilities as possible.

7           Finally, I just -- I am a planner;  
8 for all my sins, I am a planner. I am  
9 appalled. Transit-oriented development in  
10 every jurisdiction is generally encouraged by  
11 the waiver or reduction of parking  
12 requirements for new development. I'm just  
13 about there.

14           Parking reduction for new  
15 development; we know in Montgomery County,  
16 they encourage the elimination of parking.  
17 We are talking about providing 172 private  
18 non- transit oriented parking spaces on this  
19 site while you're reducing the public  
20 parking.

21           MS. MACK: Your time is up, Ms.  
22 Phipps.

1           MR. PHIPPS: Is it ever? It's been  
2 for a long time, but I want -- this is weird.

3                           (Laughter)

4           MS. MACK: But this time you have  
5 to stop talking.

6           MR. PHIPPS: Yes, ma'am.

7           MS. MACK: Thank you.

8           MR. PHIPPS: This time I will  
9 submit.

10          MS. MACK: Okay, thank you.

11                           (Applause)

12          MS. MACK: Charlotte Schoeneman.

13          MS. SCHOENEMAN: Schoeneman.

14          MS. MACK: Schoeneman, okay.

15          MS. SCHOENEMAN: Hi. My name is --

16          MS. MACK: I'm working with these  
17 names.

18          MS. SCHOENEMAN: Sounds pretty  
19 good. My name is Charlotte Schoeneman. I'm  
20 a resident of Takoma Park, Maryland. I live  
21 on Tulip Avenue between Cedar and Holly, so  
22 I'm very close to the Metro. I'm also an Old

1 Town Residents Association member. I'd like  
2 to say that I think --

3 SPEAKER: Can you use the mic?  
4 It's hard to hear here.

5 MS. SCHOENEMAN: Closer?

6 SPEAKER: Hold on for just one  
7 minute ma'am. We have to change the  
8 microphone.

9 MS. SCHOENEMAN: Yeah, it seems  
10 like it's getting fuzzy or something.

11 (Interruption)

12 MS. SCHOENEMAN: Hello. Okay, I'm  
13 a little bit daunted now, but --

14 MS. MACK: We are going to give you  
15 your time back.

16 MS. SCHOENEMAN: Thank you. I want  
17 to say first that I think developing the site  
18 is a really good idea. However, I think it  
19 should be tabled, unless we can have it  
20 adhere to the Central District Plan and the  
21 transportation studies that have been done.  
22 You know, I think that's really basic.

1           I think the most important things  
2     for the site are transit and transportation  
3     and I'm not convinced that EYA has really  
4     prioritized those things. I think that bus  
5     bays are important, bicycle -- safe bicycle  
6     parking is important, personal storage and  
7     bike storage are important. I can't say for  
8     sure how many bus bays we need, but I think  
9     however many we are going to have should be  
10    based on a really clear study that exceeds 10  
11    years.

12           I think we have a great opportunity  
13    to strengthen the urban core along Cedar  
14    Street. It's our -- it's the commercial  
15    center of our town and so it doesn't seem  
16    like EYA's plan really does that.

17           I think if we are going to have  
18    housing on this site, and I'm not saying that  
19    we necessarily should, it seems like we have  
20    a plethora of housing -- existing housing,  
21    new housing, proposed housing, planned  
22    housing around this -- around the Metro are.

1 But I think if we do have housing, it should  
2 be transit-friendly and it should be  
3 metro-friendly.

4           It shouldn't be -- it shouldn't  
5 have a lot of parking for each unit and it  
6 shouldn't have a lot of interior roads. It  
7 would be ideal, I think, if it were something  
8 maybe like the apartment building that's  
9 right across the street, the MOMI (?)  
10 building, where there is sort of shared  
11 parking that you can rent a space, you know,  
12 if you really need one. But to try to  
13 emphasize smart growth, try to emphasize  
14 people living in such a way that they are  
15 primarily using the Metro as their means of  
16 transportation.

17           I think it's a great opportunity to  
18 have a project that's like that. In  
19 achieving all those goals, I would actually  
20 opt for higher density development, which I  
21 know everybody is going to be like, "Aah,  
22 higher density development," but what I'm

1 thinking is like actually put all the  
2 development closer to the street and maintain  
3 most of the green area.

4 And so you save trees, you save the  
5 green space, you provide a buffer to the  
6 community, you strengthen the commercial  
7 core, you can have commercial, you can have  
8 residential, you can have whatever you want,  
9 you know, closer to the main street. And  
10 yeah, I'm kind of a tree hugger too, so the  
11 more trees that we can have the better.  
12 Thanks very much.

13 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
14 testimony. You timed just right. Peter  
15 Feiden. Is he in the room? He is not here.  
16 Eileen Sobeck.

17 (Interruption)

18 MS. SOBECK: I'm an attorney by  
19 trade and I'm usually not afraid to talk, but  
20 you guys have succeeded in intimidating me.  
21 My name is Eileen Sobeck. I have lived in  
22 Takoma Park, Maryland, for 15 years. I live



1 near the corner of Carroll and Flower, so I  
2 live about a mile from the Metro station.  
3 But within half a block of my bedroom window  
4 are four Metro bus stops and Ride On bus  
5 stops. I have heard a lot of bus breaks and  
6 idling buses.

7           There are about half a dozen Ride  
8 On and Metro bus route that terminate -- that  
9 stop outside my -- near my house and that  
10 terminate at the Metro station. When I step  
11 outside my door, at 7:30 in the morning, you  
12 can just see -- I don't want to use the  
13 lemming thing, but you can just see the  
14 neighborhood, people streaming to the bus  
15 stops to catch the buses to go to Metro. So  
16 our neighborhood has a huge stake in what  
17 happens at Metro and I think I'm just trying  
18 to reinforce that we are a transit --  
19 friendly transit-dependent community.

20           I would thank the Takoma Park City  
21 Council. I support the resolution. I think  
22 it reflects the vast majority of public

1 sentiment in Takoma Park -- the residents.  
2 I'm not going to go through the list but that  
3 the Takoma Park resolution and many of those  
4 who testified before me in terms of what we  
5 think the shortcomings, what I think the  
6 shortcomings of this proposal on the table  
7 are. I would just underscore that transit  
8 needs have to come first that to the extent  
9 development is compatible with dealing with  
10 transit needs, it needs to be truly smart  
11 growth.

12           And thirdly, please don't  
13 underestimate the value of green space. In  
14 Washington, D.C., our nation's capital with  
15 the mall at the center, we have to know that  
16 green space is precious commodity. It is  
17 essentially priceless. As a taxpayer, I'm  
18 willing to pay almost any price to preserve  
19 it. I am the co-president of my local  
20 neighborhood association, the Long Branch  
21 Sligo Neighborhood Association.

22           I'm not testifying here in that

1 capacity, but I will tell you that with  
2 respect to our neighborhood, the two issues  
3 that come up over and over and no matter  
4 what's on the table are traffic congestion  
5 and what that does to our -- the quality of  
6 our neighborhoods and pedestrian safety. And  
7 those issues come up, whatever issue is being  
8 evaluated and is on the table.

9           We've had some proposed development  
10 near the Carroll and Flower intersection and  
11 over and over people in our community say  
12 what is going to be the impact of traffic,  
13 the number of cars? Our intersections are  
14 already failing. And they say we need to do  
15 whatever we can to get more people on buses.  
16 I am willing to put up with all kinds of  
17 metro bus noise on the bus routes outside of  
18 my house. There is no doubt in my mind that  
19 they're going to be increased numbers of bus  
20 routes needed, and that you really can't  
21 underestimate the future of transit needs  
22 that we already see coming, and that should

1 be accommodated at the current metro site.

2 My daughter goes to school at a --  
3 in a school in D.C. that's located on a  
4 residential street. They are strongly  
5 encouraged to take Metro to reduce the burden  
6 on D.C. neighborhoods. Given the pedestrian  
7 issues raised by the proposed development, I  
8 would not allow my middle- school daughter to  
9 take the Metro. I would not put her safety  
10 at issue given the shortcomings that have  
11 been laid out here. Thank you for the  
12 opportunity.

13 MS. MACK: Thank you.

14 MS. SOBECK: I will submit  
15 additional written comments and please don't  
16 be a rubberstamp. Please exercise your  
17 discretion to take the thoughtful  
18 constructive non-Nimby alternatives that have  
19 been presented to you, and do not be a  
20 rubberstamp. Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 MS. MACK: Thank you for your

1 testimony. Ellen Savian. Is she in the  
2 room, Ellen Savian? Alice Giancola, is she  
3 in the room? Alice Giancola. Christine  
4 Simpson.

5 MS. SIMPSON: Good evening. My  
6 name is Christine Simpson. I'm a Metro user.  
7 I live at 7300 Cedar Avenue in Takoma Park,  
8 Maryland, about two blocks from the Takoma  
9 Metro Station. I've lived in Takoma Park  
10 most of my life. However, I have strong  
11 connections with the District of Columbia. I  
12 was actually baptized in this very church.  
13 My grandfather owned a grocery store located  
14 in Takoma, D.C. As a child we walked over  
15 from the Metro side to the Carnegie Library  
16 at 5th and Cedar Streets. And when my  
17 children were young we repeated that pattern.

18 I appreciate the opportunity to be  
19 heard. I'm concerned that the proposed sale  
20 of property and reconfiguration of transit  
21 facilities does not adequately serve the  
22 public needs of our community. I believe the

1 proposal by Eakin/Youngentob Associates, the  
2 sole bidder on the project, does not comport  
3 with many of the recommendations of the  
4 Takoma Central District Plan, and the Takoma  
5 Transportation Study to well-respected  
6 studies of the site. And I'm also concerned  
7 that WMATA may not be receiving adequate  
8 payment for the property.

9 In view of the time limits I'm only  
10 going to make a few points, but I will submit  
11 written comments later.

12 MS. MACK: Thank you.

13 MS. SIMPSON: The EYA plan calls  
14 for 85 townhouses, each with a two-car  
15 garage. Having two cars at each townhouse  
16 does not encourage pedestrian activity and  
17 reduce vehicle trips as recommended by the  
18 Takoma Central District Plan. Moreover,  
19 these 170 new cars will add to already  
20 congested roads near the Metro stop as well  
21 documented by the Takoma Transportation  
22 Study.

1           This congestion will delay buses  
2           making their way to the Takoma station, a  
3           development which does not serve the goals of  
4           an efficient transit system. A one-car  
5           garage and a small overall number of  
6           townhouses would address this concern. I  
7           won't talk about bus bays or parking spaces  
8           or the buffer or the traffic circle and its  
9           hazards.

10           I did want to mention the community  
11           planning session of March 4, 2006. I commend  
12           WMATA for holding that community planning  
13           session. I attended the all-day meeting, and  
14           so I was puzzled and disappointed to see no  
15           mention of it in the public notice of the  
16           compact hearing.

17           I have seen the write-up of that  
18           session. I think it was written up by the  
19           facilitator, you can't really tell, I  
20           couldn't, by reading it. But in my opinion  
21           the write-up did not accurately reflect the  
22           prevailing view as I perceived it there,

1 which was that the community strongly favored  
2 an alternative with fewer townhouses and with  
3 separate access for buses and automobiles  
4 among other things. As far as I know there  
5 has been no opportunity to submit comments  
6 about the accuracy of that write-up.

7           So tonight I urge WMATA to follow  
8 one of the guiding principles of the Takoma  
9 Transportation Study, which is listen to  
10 residents through an open community  
11 participation process. I do want to mention  
12 that I regret that WMATA is put in the  
13 position here of trying to support its  
14 operations by selling off its real estate.  
15 It's public land acquired with public money.

16           I support a dedicated funding  
17 stream to finance public transit including  
18 WMATA. And I urge the elected officials who  
19 are in the room tonight, or their  
20 representatives, to begin serious efforts to  
21 accomplish that.

22           In sum, the Takoma Metro Station



1 represents a significant investment of  
2 taxpayer dollars. I urge you to take the  
3 long view and to base your decision for this  
4 development on the long-term best interest of  
5 public transportation, with sensitivity to  
6 the needs and desires of our community. I  
7 believe the EYA proposal does not meet these  
8 criteria. Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 MS. MACK: Thank you, Ms. Simpson.  
11 Wayne Goldstein.

12 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I'm Wayne  
13 Goldstein, speaking just as president of  
14 Montgomery Preservation, Inc., MPI,  
15 Montgomery County's historic preservation  
16 advocacy organization. However, I'm also  
17 president of the Montgomery County Civic  
18 Federation, the county's oldest and largest  
19 civic umbrella organization, and a member of  
20 its Planning and Land Use and Transportation  
21 Committees.

22 Montgomery Preservation is

1 concerned with the impact of this proposal on  
2 the Takoma Park Historic District. As the  
3 green space of the station has been  
4 identified and treated as park land for  
5 decades, and was originally purchased with  
6 federal dollars, we believe that a Section  
7 4(f) analysis is required. We would like to  
8 be a party to the Section 4(f) process, just  
9 as we were involved in the 4(f) process for  
10 the ICC.

11 I have also participated in  
12 planning our projects to a greater or lesser  
13 extent at eight other metro stations in  
14 Montgomery County. And I do not recall any  
15 plans to reduce parking at any of them. In  
16 fact, the need for additional parking  
17 requirements have been used as the reason to  
18 reduce green space at several of these  
19 stations. Here there will be a loss of both  
20 parking and green space.

21 I attended the day-long charade  
22 held in this room earlier this year, where I

1 observed that 80 to 90 percent of the  
2 participants supported alternative plans.  
3 Similar percentages of both government and  
4 residence indicate such a preference tonight.  
5 I have had the great pleasure of working with  
6 EYA on the National Park Seminary project  
7 where their proposal for very compatible  
8 infill townhouses were strongly supported by  
9 the community and was an essential element in  
10 making the restoration of the historic  
11 buildings an economic reality.

12           However, this is a different  
13 project in a different place. And this time  
14 the community does not support this  
15 particular kind of building.

16           So I ask, as have most other people  
17 who have spoken so far, that you reconsider  
18 what your plans have been. It's all right to  
19 admit error and to start again and do it  
20 right. You're not committed to a process  
21 that hasn't been working. You don't have to  
22 continue to do that. Thank you.

1 MS. MACK: Thank you.

2 (Applause)

3 MR. DEEGAN: Next we have Priscilla  
4 Labovitz. Is that anywhere near close?

5 MS. LABOVITZ: I'm Priscilla  
6 Labovitz, and I practice law at 6856 Eastern  
7 Avenue, Northwest in Takoma, D.C., and I've  
8 done that for 18 years, 2-1/2 blocks from the  
9 Metro. And I've lived in Takoma Park for 25  
10 years. Smart growth is high density  
11 development near public transportation, in  
12 other words to get people to live near the  
13 Metro and use it instead of their cars. The  
14 current plan allowing two parking spaces per  
15 unit isn't smart, it's dumb.

16 Who's smart? EYA. They're buying  
17 Metro property for as long as they want to  
18 hold it, for what I am told is the price of  
19 two days' Metro operations. EYA will enjoy  
20 the increase in the land's value, Metro  
21 won't, and the community won't.

22 As for smart growth, if a couple

1 buys one unit with two spaces they'll be able  
2 to park two Humvees at a convenient location  
3 inside the beltway and drive, if they choose  
4 to McLean or Annapolis separately. Or the  
5 new owners can rent their parking spaces to  
6 real Metro users and then the townhouse  
7 owners will make the money, not Metro.

8 Sure, the townhouse owners will  
9 have two parking spaces each, but what about  
10 the people in D.C. and Maryland who don't  
11 live near the Metro and have to drive or take  
12 the bus to the Metro. Isn't their time and  
13 money worth anything? This is a bad  
14 financial deal for Metro and for us who pay  
15 for it. The higher EYA's construction costs,  
16 the less they pay Metro for the land, and we  
17 know construction costs will go up.

18 What will Metro, that is, what will  
19 we actually pocket? Even if the townhouses  
20 sell for \$500,000 each Metro still only gets  
21 a \$105,000 per unit minus EYA's construction  
22 costs. When the units later sell for a

1 million dollars each, Metro, that is, we,  
2 will get nothing. And after the  
3 construction, Metro will have to spend more  
4 of its money, that is, ours, building a  
5 parking garage rerouting the streets, finding  
6 space for buses, hiring consultants and  
7 fending off community complaints.

8 All just to restore the parking and  
9 bus space we already have. In front of my  
10 office building, D.C., has just added a lot  
11 of maximum two- and four-hour parking meters.  
12 This move has dramatically reduced parking  
13 for Metro users who used to park on Eastern  
14 Avenue all day for free. D.C. government  
15 realizes there isn't enough parking for Metro  
16 users, why doesn't Metro?

17 Let's dump this plan, and as was  
18 done in Silver Spring, hold out for a better  
19 one. The gigantic Mall of America was a bad  
20 idea, and the new Silver Spring is a gigantic  
21 success. If Metro really needs money, this  
22 is not a smart way to make it. If developers

1 -- if development is necessary it would be a  
2 lot smarter for Metro to develop the land  
3 itself. We could hire EYA as a consultant.  
4 Or is this a done deal, and we just don't  
5 know it?

6 (Applause)

7 MR. DEEGAN: Sabrina Baron.  
8 Sabrina is president of Historic Takoma, Inc.

9 MS. BARON: That's correct. My  
10 name is Sabrina Baron, I'm president of  
11 Historic Takoma, Inc., which is a nonprofit  
12 preservation organization incorporated in the  
13 District of Columbia and the State of  
14 Maryland. And I thank you for the  
15 opportunity to speak this evening.

16 HTI's primary goal is the  
17 preservation of existing historic context and  
18 the successful and appropriate integration of  
19 development in the historic districts of both  
20 Takoma Park, D.C., established by the D.C.  
21 Historic Preservation Review Board in 1980,  
22 added to the National Register of Historic

1 Places in 1983, and the historic district of  
2 Takoma Park, Maryland, directly across the  
3 street from the Metro station, established in  
4 1976, one of the largest contiguous historic  
5 districts in the State of Maryland, the  
6 largest historic district in the Montgomery  
7 County.

8           And I might add this is a very  
9 unusual situation to have two historic  
10 districts budding up against one another.  
11 But of course that's part of our heritage of  
12 this community originally being founded  
13 across jurisdictional lines, and of this  
14 community historically and currently  
15 operating across jurisdictional lines.

16           Our goal also is to maintain  
17 adequate transit facilities and access to  
18 those facilities to support the vitality and  
19 livability of our historic neighborhoods.  
20 Historic Takoma has members who are property  
21 owners in the general vicinity in both the  
22 D.C. and Maryland neighborhoods, and members



1 whose property abuts and faces the Metro  
2 station transit facility's park and buffers.

3 I'm here tonight on behalf of the  
4 members of Historic Takoma to voice our  
5 opposition to the approval by the Washington  
6 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority of the  
7 current proposal to reconfigure the transit  
8 facilities at the Takoma Metro Station in  
9 order to accommodate private residential  
10 development on the site.

11 I'll outline briefly the points  
12 which we believe the current plan is  
13 deficient in. And I'm sorry this is ground  
14 that has been well trodden this evening.  
15 First the project is inconsistent with the  
16 requirements of the Takoma Central District  
17 Plan in numerous areas. And it's absolutely  
18 shocking to hear numbers of individuals  
19 testifying that this is not the case. The  
20 Department of Transportation guidelines call  
21 for a joint development project to either  
22 "enhance the effectiveness of a mass transit

1 project and be physically or functionally  
2 related to the mass transit project," or "to  
3 establish new or enhanced coordination  
4 between mass transportation and other  
5 transportation."

6 Contrary to these requirements, the  
7 proposed development would detract from the  
8 current station's effectiveness as a mass  
9 transit facility by impeding pedestrian, bus,  
10 handicapped, and bicycle access, and by  
11 dramatically reducing parking available to  
12 Metro riders by 50 percent to 75 spaces if  
13 the surface-wide option is chosen or 228  
14 spaces if the two-level parking structure is  
15 chosen.

16 The Central District Plan -- and by  
17 the way the Central District Plan and the  
18 Takoma Transportation Study were only  
19 performed after a developer and a project had  
20 been selected for this site. The Central  
21 District Plan adopted by the D.C. City  
22 Council concluded that any land use changes

1 on the site must put the needs of transit  
2 users first. And I quote, "Redevelopment  
3 planning must recognize that the primary  
4 function of the Metro station site is to  
5 provide transit services." Secondary  
6 functions, accommodating the needs of the  
7 local business community or potential new  
8 development, must be designed in a manner to  
9 support current and future transit needs at  
10 the station.

11 And I have more here that I'll  
12 submit in written testimony, but WMATA can  
13 and WMATA must do better by this community.  
14 Thank you.

15 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you, Sabrina.

16 (Applause)

17 MR. DEEGAN: Ms. Baron, are you  
18 going to stay around for a while? You know,  
19 it's unusual that members from other  
20 jurisdictions attend these meetings. So --  
21 but since it's in such close proximity to the  
22 State of Maryland, and the fact that over 50

1 years ago I used to spend quite a bit of my  
2 time, and particularly my summers around the  
3 corner here on Butternut Street, I thought it  
4 was important to be here tonight.

5 But I need to talk to you about a  
6 little caged tree over around the Adventist  
7 Hospital.

8 MS. BARON: Happy to do it.

9 MR. DEEGAN: Do you know (off  
10 mike).

11 MS. BARON: I do.

12 MR. DEEGAN: Good, that was my  
13 great, great, great-uncle Sam. So I want to  
14 find out about what's going on then. Sorry  
15 for the interruption. Lorraine Pearsall.

16 MS. PEARSALL: My name is Lorraine  
17 Pearsall. I'm vice president of Historic  
18 Takoma, and I just wanted to focus on the  
19 uniqueness of the site within the WMATA  
20 system. And I believe that uniqueness merits  
21 special consideration with respect to  
22 planning.

1                   What I mean by that is that the  
2 site is very small. And it's small now even  
3 without contemplating the sale. And it's  
4 also very constrained. As Sabrina mentioned,  
5 it's located within our D.C. Historic  
6 District. And it's also adjacent to and  
7 impacts on Maryland Historic District. It is  
8 totally unique of all the sites that you  
9 have; all your WMATA sites.

10                   One could say this particular site  
11 in fact is swimming in its constraints, and  
12 so it seems to me when you are looking at  
13 transit needs for such a special unique  
14 location you really need to look far beyond  
15 the typical planning of 10 and 20 years,  
16 because once that land is gone, once you give  
17 it away, it is gone for good. And then what  
18 would you do?

19                   Well, 35 years from now, when all  
20 the pressures are upon us at all our Metro  
21 stations, what will you do? Will you take  
22 those townhouses by eminent domain and tear

1     them down?  What will you do?  Will you try  
2     to take our historic homes?  Well, they are  
3     protected and will remain protected.  So it  
4     seems to me that you have a responsibility  
5     and an obligation to consider extremely long  
6     planning intervals at the site.

7             And it also seems to me that smart  
8     growth does not mean that you give away all  
9     the land you have available for transit and  
10    then stand around 30 years later and try to  
11    figure out what on earth you're going to do.  
12    That is not transit-oriented development or  
13    smart growth.  I urge you to please reject  
14    this plan.  Thank you.

15            MR. DEEGAN:  Thank you.

16                    (Applause)

17            MR. DEEGAN:  Sabrina Eaton.

18            MS. EATON:  Hi, I'm going to try to  
19    keep this relatively short because I think  
20    we've all been here a very long time.  My  
21    name is Sabrina Eaton.  I live directly  
22    across from the Metro station at 7019 Eastern

1 Avenue. I use it everyday. I look out at it  
2 every morning when I wake up.

3 I think that initially when I heard  
4 about this plan I was kind of psyched,  
5 because looking out at a bus station and a  
6 parking lot, I mean, it's not the most  
7 aesthetic thing in the world. But as this  
8 plan evolved, it just seemed like it became  
9 public transit second, an excuse to jam  
10 shoehorn as much townhouses on to that  
11 property first. And, you know, I think the  
12 design of the houses is actually kind of  
13 aesthetic, and I wouldn't mind on looking out  
14 on it.

15 But I also think that diminishing  
16 the parking to the extent that they're  
17 talking about is folly. I see how crowded  
18 that lot is everyday. This just seems like a  
19 great transfer of resources from the public  
20 to the private sector with meager  
21 compensation. It's going to diminish the  
22 access to parking. There is not going to be

1 enough bike parking. There won't be enough  
2 Kiss & Ride access. I mean people are --  
3 people idle their cars outside my house, you  
4 know, waiting for rides. And, you know,  
5 you're talking about reducing the amount of  
6 Kiss & Ride stuff inside the station. It's  
7 -- the people who live in the apartments  
8 across the street from me are very worked up  
9 about that buffer. That is going to be taken  
10 away.

11 I just think that you guys could do  
12 a lot better with this. And I think that --  
13 you know, I'm not opposed to development on  
14 this site. I think most of the people who  
15 live across the street, you know, would kind  
16 of like to see something more aesthetic  
17 there. But this just isn't it, and I would  
18 urge you to disapprove it, and come out with  
19 something better. Thanks.

20 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. DEEGAN: James DiLuigi.



1                   MR. DILUIGI: And you thought  
2 Elrich was hard.

3                   MR. DEEGAN: Yeah.

4                   MR. DILUIGI: DiLuigi. I've lived  
5 here for 25 -- or 35 years. I'm an  
6 architect. My background includes  
7 transportation planning and transportation  
8 design as well as architecture. Alicia, God  
9 bless you, you've listened to a lot tonight.  
10 I'd like to zoom you back 35 years ago.  
11 Thirty-five years ago a highway wanted to --  
12 called 95 wanted to come through Takoma Park.  
13 People organized, I was part of it. We  
14 stopped it.

15                   A couple of years after that a  
16 public agency by the name of Montgomery  
17 Community College was tearing down old houses  
18 in Takoma Park. We managed to stop that,  
19 although we lost a few; they weren't  
20 protected at the time. Zooming back 25 years  
21 ago, another public agency called WSSC,  
22 similar to your agency, wanted to come

1 through Sligo Creek Park, tear down a  
2 hundred-foot width of trees and put in a  
3 gigantic sewer line.

4 Well, you are about where they were  
5 five years into the process. We were able to  
6 convince our authorities and them, after  
7 they'd already designed the entire system,  
8 that what they desired -- designed on the  
9 basis of what they thought was correct for  
10 WSSC, just as what you think at the time is  
11 correct for WMATA, was not the correct thing  
12 to do for the community.

13 As a result, the design was  
14 changed. A lot of trees were protected. A  
15 hiker/biker pass was built by WSSC, who had  
16 never heard of building a hiker/biker trail  
17 or building any bridges. That was done.  
18 Working together it can be done.

19 Now, let me take you to today, our  
20 firm are accessibility consultants and  
21 experts. We service the nation's most  
22 prominent companies and cities, cities like

1 Houston, Vail, Colorado, on accessibility  
2 issues. What you are doing with the design  
3 of this station is in violation of federal  
4 rules. You cannot move that drop-off  
5 position for people with disabilities to the  
6 street further away without being in risk of  
7 a court injunction. I can tell you that  
8 honestly today.

9 Another thing that you're doing,  
10 the design that was presented tonight with  
11 stores along the street as public housing, if  
12 you create multifamily housing in that  
13 location you will need to provide elevator  
14 access to those units above it under the Fair  
15 Housing Act. I'm not sure the designers  
16 understand what's going on here. Our  
17 business is to help companies avoid mistakes  
18 that designers consistently make in not  
19 understanding federal regulations for  
20 accessibility. So the best thing I can tell  
21 you in addition to what's been told already  
22 is that you better look carefully at what

1 you're doing.

2 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you.

3 (Applause)

4 MR. DEEGAN: John Hurley. Is John  
5 Hurley here? John Hurley going once.  
6 Stephen Smith. Did he just leave for --  
7 okay, George French.

8 MR. FRENCH: George French from  
9 North Takoma, speaking for myself and Marcy  
10 Stickle (?). Once again for the tenth time  
11 or so we express our continued opposition to  
12 the WMATA-EYA development proposal for the  
13 complete destruction of the current Takoma  
14 Metro Station configuration, including the  
15 green space park.

16 WMATA wants to force this proposal  
17 on the Takoma station users like ourselves  
18 when it is clear to us from all meetings that  
19 the vast majority of citizens oppose this  
20 plan for myriad reasons. We have attended  
21 every meeting, workshop, hearing, and  
22 presentation on this near conspiracy since we

1 first heard about the secret EYA-WMATA  
2 compact years ago. It is clear to us  
3 throughout the continual and ineffective  
4 tweaking of this plan that it is, to put it  
5 mildly, not a good fit for our station.

6 Their basic concept is still to  
7 reconfigure the whole site and flood it with  
8 mostly two-car townhouses, jamming the site  
9 with densely packed residential development  
10 and impermeable streets, roofs, and  
11 hardscape.

12 As many other have already stated,  
13 this is what we also find troubling about the  
14 proposal. It is development oriented with  
15 transit needs secondary. It limits future  
16 bus bay expansion. There is the new mixing  
17 bowl circle which is an unnecessary departure  
18 from the current safe bus and auto traffic  
19 and pedestrian separation. Parking is  
20 reduced to half the current spaces unless  
21 WMATA constructs at its own expense a parking  
22 garage and allows some

1 search-and-find-if-you're-lucky on- street  
2 parking.

3           The site becomes less secure.  
4 Townhouses and alleys bring the city to the  
5 site with possible unintended consequences.  
6 Currently the site is transparent. When you  
7 arrive at or depart from a site you can see  
8 clearly through the entire area for safe  
9 access.

10           Handicapped access and Kiss & Ride  
11 drop-off and pickup near the elevator  
12 entrance becomes much more difficult.  
13 Traffic and failing grade intersections  
14 throughout the area will increase. Two new  
15 public roads will enter on to Eastern Avenue  
16 and Cedar Street with attendant intersection  
17 problems and gridlock.

18           Intense residential development is  
19 continuing to be constructed throughout this  
20 area. There is less need for another  
21 development but an increased need for park  
22 open space. Indeed, Metro Park is the only

1 significant green space in this area for  
2 current, new, and future residents to enjoy.  
3 In the relentless heat of the summer nearly  
4 everyone waiting for buses gravitates  
5 underneath the cooling canopy of the park  
6 trees. All but 13 and no one can say with  
7 certainty they will survive. All of -- all  
8 but 13 of the 200 plus mature trees on this  
9 site will be destroyed. The site will have  
10 to start from scratch with new and tiny tree  
11 plantings that give very little shade.

12           These trees in the park and  
13 throughout the side are sequestering carbon  
14 from CO2 in the air, a greenhouse gas,  
15 respiring oxygen, filtering air pollution,  
16 filtering and soaking up storm water that  
17 would otherwise add to the disastrous erosion  
18 events in Takoma Park Sligo Creek. Also the  
19 tree buffer to the apartment and community  
20 would be lost. This site will be  
21 unnecessarily torn up for two years or more  
22 with the attendant dust, noise, debris,

1 construction equipment and materials,  
2 contractor vehicles, and of course, barriers  
3 and detours to access. This will discourage  
4 us from using the station.

5 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you, Mr. French,  
6 your time is up.

7 MR. FRENCH: Thank you.

8 (Applause)

9 MR. DEEGAN: Ruben Snipper.

10 MR. SNIPPER: My name is Ruben  
11 Snipper.

12 MR. DEEGAN: Snipper, I'm sorry.

13 MR. SNIPPER: And I appreciate the  
14 Board holding this public hearing. You've  
15 certainly had an earful tonight. I have a  
16 handful of points I'd like to make, I'll try  
17 not to repeat what others have said, although  
18 I do want to emphasize some things. First, I  
19 believe the primary responsibility of WMATA  
20 is the needs of commuters, whether they are  
21 pedestrians, bike riders, bus riders, or  
22 people who drive to the Metro in their cars.



1           And I believe that the developer  
2 needs must come after the needs of commuters.  
3 Finally, I believe WMATA must comply with the  
4 Central District Plan, and follow the needs  
5 outlined in the transit plan. These were  
6 agreed to by the community. Next, I believe  
7 that the plan as we've been seeing it  
8 tonight, and of course it's been modified yet  
9 again, is that bus and car traffic will be  
10 impeded. They are required to share the same  
11 roads. Rather, these must be separated.

12           Handicapped access is now -- will  
13 be more difficult under this plan, not less  
14 difficult. We need more parking, not the  
15 same or less. This is a terrible use of  
16 public resources. This is a wonderful  
17 resource and if WMATA feels it must be  
18 developed -- and I have questions about that.  
19 But if WMATA feels it must be developed then  
20 it makes no sense to sell it to a developer  
21 for very little or zero net money. The value  
22 of this property is much greater than what

1 has been discussed tonight. Converting what  
2 is already a small space into three quarters  
3 of it going to developer and one quarter to  
4 transit seems unconscionable.

5           And finally, related to this is the  
6 use of two- car garages. It's -- I can  
7 barely say this without laughing. You are  
8 building properties across the street from a  
9 metro. And yet they're going to have two-car  
10 garages. There are many townhouses in D.C.  
11 that have single-car garages and they are  
12 fully occupied. They don't have trouble  
13 selling them. I can't imagine a developer  
14 who built properties next to a metro station  
15 who had trouble selling single-car garages.

16           And the last thing I want to say is  
17 that the design limits the future expansion  
18 of the station. And this is extremely  
19 important. I have been riding the bus in  
20 Takoma Park for over 20 years. And we need  
21 more bus -- buses, more bus bays than we have  
22 now. The buses are full. Every morning I

1 get on, it's standing room only. The  
2 ridership on Metro, as you well know, has  
3 been going up dramatically. Takoma Park is  
4 one of the most heavily used stations in the  
5 whole system. It makes no sense not to plan  
6 for expansion. Thank you.

7 (Applause)

8 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you. Peter  
9 Banwell. Peter. Rick Doery -- oh, Peter,  
10 I'm sorry.

11 MR. BANWELL: Good evening. My  
12 name is Peter Banwell. I live on Cedar  
13 Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland. Appreciate  
14 the time that you're giving us all to address  
15 you this evening. My central point is that  
16 I'm not opposed to development of the Metro  
17 site. But I am opposed to this proposal that  
18 you've put forward tonight. There are two  
19 reasons. One is that the priorities seem to  
20 be backwards; it seems to be town homes  
21 first, and then transit second.

22 The examples that other people have

1 given in great detail, the future bays are  
2 limited, and the parking is cut. I  
3 personally use the parking from time to time.  
4 Parking is not available, I'm going to drive  
5 to D.C., which seems contrary to the WMATA  
6 mission.

7           Secondly, the process itself seems  
8 to be steeped in mystery. Where are the  
9 alternatives to this proposal by EYA? It  
10 seems to be EYA or nothing. Every once in a  
11 while there does seem to be some  
12 accommodation given back to Metro as some  
13 sort of concession when in fact Metro should  
14 have its priorities laid out first. And EYA  
15 or another developer should get what's left  
16 over.

17           So in conclusion I think the plan  
18 itself is sunk. It's bad for WMATA  
19 economically; it's bad for transit. And you  
20 can do better. Set priorities and then  
21 invite competition on the site. Thank you.

22           MR. DEEGAN: Thank you. Rick

1 Doery.

2 (Applause)

3 MR. DEEGAN: Is Rick here? Alan  
4 Greenberg.

5 MR. GREENBERG: Good evening. My  
6 name is Alan Greenberg, and I'm testifying  
7 tonight on behalf of MetroRiders.org in  
8 support of the Takoma Metro rail station  
9 proposed, bus facility relocation, and  
10 parking changes. MetroRiders.org supports  
11 transit-oriented development. TOD makes  
12 neighborhoods around transits safer, allowing  
13 Metro rail users to walk or bicycle to and  
14 from stations. And they wait for connecting  
15 bus services -- service at stations in  
16 safety.

17 It provides important services in  
18 many ways to the neighborhood, and  
19 critically-needed housing and tax revenues to  
20 the region. TOD facilitates the regional  
21 accommodation of growth in an affordable,  
22 efficient, environmentally sustainable manner

1 and enables existing transit infrastructure  
2 to better serve the region. With TOD  
3 development, fewer expensive and unattractive  
4 parking spaces are required, whether build  
5 new or to replace parking lots as part of a  
6 stationary redevelopment project. And Metro  
7 rail boardings are spread through the day,  
8 thereby alleviating peak -- the peak crunch  
9 on the Metro rail system.

10 Transit accessibility is key to  
11 providing residents of this area -- of this  
12 region rather, services and mobility they  
13 need. MetroRiders.org supports the broadest  
14 array of strategies, (off mike)  
15 accessibility, including purchasing of  
16 railcars and buses where there is  
17 overcrowding, extending transit services to  
18 new and underserved markets, focusing more  
19 utility to existing transit modes providing  
20 new and improved feeder bus service and  
21 improving station pedestrian and bicycle  
22 access. And not -- least of which, also

1 accommodating park and ride users.

2 Now, all the above strategies are  
3 critical, but resources are limited. And so  
4 the common conflict is what do you do about  
5 promoting TOD and also providing parking  
6 access?

7 And Metro's approach to looking at  
8 this, I think, is eminently sensible. And  
9 that using that approach here and at Rhode  
10 Island Avenue. Specifically what Metro is  
11 analyzing is a redevelopments proposal for  
12 its financial impact on the system accounting  
13 for, among other things, lost ridership and  
14 parking revenues due to parking reductions  
15 and increased revenues in ridership from  
16 joint development.

17 Then Metro only considers  
18 stationary redevelopment proposals and  
19 parking reductions related to such proposals.  
20 If such a -- if -- both a net ridership  
21 increase and financial gain result, enabling  
22 Metro to better provide service to more

1 customers at lower cost.

2 Now, regarding reducing the parking  
3 from 149 surface spaces to either 75, large  
4 space 125 -- 128 garage spaces,  
5 MetroRiders.org would favor the latter  
6 option, that is, the garage, if parking  
7 revenues fully cover the cost to construct,  
8 maintain, and operate the garage. If not,  
9 and a parking subsidy is required, a  
10 per-rider station access subsidy for park and  
11 ride should be comparable -- compared to the  
12 required subsidy for other access  
13 improvements. And then a decision should be  
14 made based on that comparison.

15 Certainly, one would think that the  
16 replacement of all the bike parking, which is  
17 not called for in the plan, I understand,  
18 would meet a test like that pretty well.  
19 Looks like my time has expired. I do discuss  
20 in the written testimony -- I'll provide you  
21 a copy, the ways to better manage parking  
22 through pricing. And I encourage you to



1 enter the whole thing in there. And  
2 appreciate it, and thank you for your time.

3 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you, Alan. Next  
4 is Ellen Cassedy.

5 MS. CASSEDY: I'm Ellen Cassedy. I  
6 live at 7310 Cedar Avenue in Takoma Park,  
7 Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to  
8 speak. I think we can do better. I have  
9 three points.

10 One, Metro use. I'm concerned that  
11 the plan will depress Metro use by taking  
12 away parking spaces. I live three blocks  
13 away from the Takoma station and often find  
14 myself not using Metro because I can't get a  
15 parking space at the station, and don't feel  
16 comfortable walking home down my dark street  
17 at night. So I drive downtown. We need more  
18 parking at Metro, not less.

19 Two, fair return. I'm concerned  
20 that the plan will eliminate most of the  
21 green space without making much money for  
22 WMATA. Three, congestion. Already the bus

1 lane at the station is ridiculously dangerous  
2 for pedestrians. I am concerned that the  
3 proposed plan will create an even more  
4 dangerous mix of bus, car, and pedestrian  
5 traffic. I'm also concerned about increased  
6 traffic on my residential street.

7 In conclusion, once again, I think  
8 we can do better. Thank you.

9 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
10 testimony.

11 (Applause)

12 MS. MACK: Our next witness is  
13 Peter Kovar.

14 MR. KOVAR: Thank you. I'm Peter  
15 Kovar. I live at 7112 Holly Avenue. The  
16 temptation is to say everything has been  
17 said. Well, not everybody has said it yet.  
18 I'll try not to repeat what everybody has  
19 already said. I'm five houses from Eastern,  
20 right over by where the entrance off of  
21 Eastern to the Metro site is. And so  
22 although less than some, I think my family is

1 pretty well affected by it. And we have this  
2 odd situation where because of the border,  
3 people who live in Maryland have relatively  
4 little say on this. It's mostly D.C. people  
5 from WMATA, elsewhere.

6           And as you can see we have the  
7 whole city council from Takoma Park over here  
8 in D.C. because of this. And it's really  
9 kind of an anomalous situation that an  
10 affected area wouldn't really have much say  
11 in something like this. And a governmental  
12 body would be able to affect our area, and we  
13 don't have much to say. But we do have a  
14 representative on the Board, but it's  
15 relatively limited. I think it's partly a  
16 function of the border.

17           So I'm not against development at  
18 the site, but I think the way this one has  
19 been done really is a problem. I drive to  
20 work past the Metro everyday. My wife takes  
21 the Metro when she goes to work. And I think  
22 that the idea of not kind of bringing

1 together D.C. and Maryland goes against  
2 what's been happening around here and what's  
3 reflected in this room.

4 I helped out on this panel a few  
5 years ago that Adrian Fenty put together to  
6 try to deal with some cross- border crime  
7 issues. And we all met together, all the  
8 different jurisdictions, and tried to come up  
9 with some cooperative ways of doing it. But  
10 this to me doesn't really get us there.

11 And I think -- there is a number of  
12 points you can make. I don't want to repeat  
13 them, as I said, about the transportation.  
14 But even now I don't think the site does  
15 everything it's supposed to do. I get stuck  
16 behind buses everyday on the way to work that  
17 are parked by the 7-Eleven. I don't know if  
18 they're parked there because the guys are  
19 getting coffee or because they are, you know,  
20 waiting because there is no room over at the  
21 other spot.

22 And I heard several people say that

1 commuters can't even use the parking lot.  
2 Now, I understand why, but that's kind of a  
3 odd thing to say, "We don't want to set up  
4 the parking lot so that commuters can use  
5 it." And so I think when you add to that  
6 current situation where it's not ideal.

7           Some of the things have been talked  
8 about. The interior parking spaces strike me  
9 as just not a good way of doing it. I think  
10 I was delighted when the city attorney said  
11 that this can be voided. And there is really  
12 nothing wrong, I think someone else mentioned  
13 it, with a governmental body said, "Okay,  
14 fine, you know, we're not going to do it." I  
15 think people around here, they look at  
16 something that the national government has  
17 done, they would really like to get them to  
18 admit they were wrong about that. Let's just  
19 admit we're wrong locally and move on from  
20 there. Thanks.

21                           (Applause)

22           MS. MACK: Thank you for your

1 testimony. Christopher B.

2 MR. TURNER: Turner is my name.

3 MS. MACK: Turner.

4 (Laughter)

5 MS. MACK: I thought that was  
6 strange, you didn't want to give your last  
7 name or something.

8 MR. TURNER: Good evening. My name  
9 is Chris Turner. I grew up in Takoma, D.C.,  
10 just half a block away at Cedar and 6th  
11 Street. And I'm a homeowner now here near  
12 Piney Branch and Blair Roads. So I live  
13 within one- fourth of a mile of the Metro  
14 station. And I attended the Takoma  
15 Elementary School across the street. I went  
16 to the Youth Orchestra Program at Coolidge.  
17 I went to Gonzaga for high school, AU for  
18 undergrad and Howard for law school.

19 I'm president of Neighbors  
20 Incorporated, a neighborhood association that  
21 was founded in 1958, which has members in  
22 Upper Ward 4 of Washington, D.C. And I'm

1 also an attorney. Neighbors, Inc., through  
2 its Plan Takoma Committee was one of the  
3 plaintiffs in the North Takoma Citizen  
4 Association, the V-UMTA and WMATA case, which  
5 resulted in the 1973 order between the  
6 parties. UMTA stands for the Urban Mass  
7 Transit Administration, which is now the  
8 Federal Transit Administration, which  
9 oversees WMATA.

10           Originally, I thought I wouldn't  
11 testify tonight, but listening to everyone,  
12 no one touched on the points that I'd like to  
13 make. And neighbors of mine and members of  
14 Neighbors, Inc.. have asked me to testify and  
15 try to present our version of what we think  
16 has happened, or a piece of it. And I'm not  
17 here to be accusatorial towards WMATA or any  
18 of the staff or to be prosecutorial. I'm --  
19 I want to be helpful. And I have a few  
20 points that I want to direct to the WMATA  
21 Legal Department.

22           Those points are, this court order

1 that I mentioned is not on the website, on  
2 the WMATA website. Number two, the 1975  
3 Environmental Impact Statement prepared by  
4 UMTA, which is now the FTA, in cooperation  
5 with WMATA, which specifically addresses  
6 concerns at the Takoma Metro station and in  
7 the Takoma neighborhood, is neither listed in  
8 the notice of public hearing that we got --  
9 this document. It's not listed there; it's  
10 not one of the 13 items listed as information  
11 available to the public, nor is it one of the  
12 14 items posted on the website, under the  
13 section on the Takoma station.

14           It is posted in another section,  
15 but it makes no mention of its connection to  
16 Takoma. And it's important to understand  
17 that in this document that's three volumes, I  
18 think, and maybe four inches thick, there is  
19 a specific comment by the Save the Takoma  
20 Park Committee and our answers to that. And  
21 one of the issues was the parking. So that  
22 document is relevant to the discussion that's



1 going on tonight. And I'll just try to  
2 quickly wrap up.

3 The WMATA legal department is aware  
4 of the court order and the 1975 Environmental  
5 Impact Statement. But as far as I know, it  
6 has not asked the Federal Transit  
7 Administration for a formal opinion on  
8 whether they should do a supplemental or a  
9 new environmental impact statement. If it is  
10 ruled that the Federal Transit Administration  
11 thinks this document should be prepared, that  
12 might clarify a whole lot of the concerns  
13 that people have had.

14 MS. MACK: Okay, I'm going to ask  
15 you to wrap up, Mr. Turner, your time is up.

16 MR. TURNER: Yeah, I have one more  
17 point. We have over 300 members. The  
18 failure to post these two documents under the  
19 information on the hearing tonight, the  
20 failure to ask the Federal Transit  
21 Administration for an opinion, okay, in my  
22 opinion make this whole compact hearing

1 tonight flawed. You need to be able --

2 MS. MACK: Mr. Turner, I'm going to  
3 ask you to --

4 MR. TURNER: No. You need to give  
5 the members of the public access to the  
6 information that impacts this hearing that's  
7 being held tonight. And I don't think --

8 MS. MACK: Your time is up.

9 MR. TURNER: -- information.

10 MS. MACK: Those issues can be  
11 brought to our staff and we'll be happy to  
12 respond to that.

13 MR. TURNER: And again, I want to  
14 be helpful to WMATA. But since the  
15 beginning, WMATA, in my opinion, their legal  
16 department is nice, they reach out to us,  
17 they talk to us. But --

18 MS. MACK: Mr. Turner, your time is  
19 up. Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MS. MACK: Nancy Currier.

22 MS. CURRIER: All right, thank you

1 for having this hearing. My name is Nancy  
2 Currier, I live on Holly Avenue. I've lived  
3 there for 34 years now. My husband and I  
4 left two blocks from the Takoma Metro. From  
5 the beginning we disliked the idea of  
6 converting parking lot and green space into  
7 townhouses because we value relatively  
8 uncongested streets and clean air.

9 Now that we see how destructive of  
10 the commuting function EYA's proposal really  
11 is, we are even more dismayed to be asked to  
12 accept both greater traffic congestion and  
13 greater air pollution in return for  
14 development that only recoups the cost of one  
15 or two days' operation of the Metro system  
16 and actually hurts the commuting function  
17 that WMATA was created to serve. It's  
18 unacceptable. Thank you.

19 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
20 testimony. Eleanor Allen. Eleanor Allen, is  
21 she in the room? Anne Ludlow?

22 MS. LUDLOW: Good evening. My name

1 is Anne Ludlow; I live in Victory Tower at  
2 751 Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park. I am vice  
3 president of the Tower Senior Association,  
4 Incorporated, which is the resident  
5 association. Victory Tower is an apartment  
6 building with 187 units for low-income  
7 seniors and those with disabilities. If you  
8 ask people what they like about Victory  
9 Tower, you'll probably hear "Location,  
10 location, location."

11 The first location refers to easy  
12 access to the business district of Old Town,  
13 second is the bus stop in front of the  
14 building, and third is the Takoma Metro  
15 Station, which is only five blocks away. Of  
16 the 187 residents, only 32 have cars, so  
17 public transportation is very important to  
18 us. It is the method of travel to medical  
19 appointments, prescription refills, grocery  
20 shopping, visiting family and friends, and  
21 fun.

22 Unfortunately, quite a few of our

1 residents have difficulty walking. Some  
2 require canes, walkers, wheelchairs in order  
3 to take care of these appointments and their  
4 business. Some move very slowly and cannot  
5 stand up for very long. So to enter a bus or  
6 to access the Metro station, this changing  
7 buses, moving around is very difficult. To  
8 walk a short distance for us is a long and  
9 hard procedure for many.

10           On one occasion I drove three other  
11 women to the Metro station on our way to  
12 visit the National Museum of Women in the  
13 Arts in D.C. One had a walker, one used a  
14 cane. So I let them out of the entrance to  
15 the elevator. And they could go up to the  
16 train where there was some place for them to  
17 sit down and wait. I drove around and around  
18 and around and could not find a parking  
19 place. So I took my car back to Victory  
20 Tower and walked down to meet them.

21           But tonight I urge you to provide  
22 more automobile parking, not less, more

1 planning and consideration for the movement  
2 of the traffic. And I also strongly  
3 recommend better access to the Takoma station  
4 for those with disabilities. This should  
5 include a drop-off area from cars and buses  
6 with easy access to the elevator, as well as  
7 handicapped parking places close to the  
8 elevator. And we urge careful planning of  
9 the bus bays so that people do not have to  
10 walk through traffic when they change buses  
11 and get to the station. So I recommend that  
12 you study and correct these two problem,  
13 inadequate parking and inaccessibility.  
14 Thank you.

15 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
16 testimony. Our next witness is Larry  
17 Silverman.

18 MR. SILVERMAN: Good evening,  
19 Chairman Mack, Mr. Deegan.

20 MS. MACK: Good evening.

21 MR. SILVERMAN: My name is Larry  
22 Silverman; I live on Birch Avenue, just a few

1 blocks from the Metro. That's one of the  
2 reasons we bought our house there more than  
3 20 years ago. I'm also an environmental  
4 attorney. I serve on the Montgomery County  
5 Water Quality Advisory Group, which is  
6 appointed by the County Executive and  
7 approved by the Council. I'm a founding  
8 member of the Anacostia Watershed Society  
9 Board of Directors and served with them for  
10 many years.

11 So it won't surprise you that I  
12 want to talk about the environment, I want  
13 more specifically to talk about the water  
14 issues, water management, water pollution  
15 issues that relate to the site. I don't  
16 think it's been talked about although it's  
17 been touched on tonight. A large -- I also  
18 incidentally teach Environmental Law and  
19 Policy at Johns Hopkins University, a  
20 graduate program. For a large urban  
21 transportation system, you face a tremendous  
22 number of environmental challenges.

1           But in the water area, probably the  
2 biggest problem is storm water management  
3 because you have large impervious services,  
4 you're dealing with oils and greases and  
5 emissions from diesel and other engines. And  
6 so you had a very difficult time with land  
7 management, and it's something that an agency  
8 has to focus on. And not only is it a good  
9 idea to focus on it, but it's really becoming  
10 increasingly a legal obligation, particularly  
11 a storm water management permits ratchet up  
12 and get more difficult. So it's something  
13 you're going to have to face. You've always  
14 had to face it.

15           When I first started working with  
16 WMATA and these water pollution issues were  
17 working opposite than usually, there was a  
18 reluctance to look at this problem. I think  
19 it's getting better. But this is an issue  
20 here too. So what I want to do is just  
21 suggest two standards by which you should  
22 judge the developments that occur or that you



1 plan out. And think about those standards as  
2 you work on modifying this plan.

3           Number one is you should diminish  
4 the water pollution impact of storm water as  
5 a result of any development that happens.  
6 You should make it less, not more. And in  
7 fact I would suggest to you that it would be  
8 prudent, and a good thing, but also legally  
9 prudent to think about a 25-percent reduction  
10 in the impacts from storm water. And you  
11 reduce impact from storm water by having --  
12 by slowing the volume of it. Now, that's  
13 number one.

14           Number two, there's a set of  
15 standards for architecture called the LEED,  
16 Leadership in Environmental and -- I don't  
17 remember what it stands for, but it means --

18           SPEAKER: And energy.

19           MR. SILVERMAN: Energy. Energy  
20 design. Thank you. And they have silver,  
21 gold, platinum. I would suggest follow a  
22 gold standard for any new development at this

1 site. I think it's consistent with what's  
2 happening around this site by private  
3 developers and I think you should follow it  
4 too. So reduce the storm water impacts by a  
5 fixed percentage, follow at least a gold lead  
6 standard. I think if you do that, many of  
7 the other problems we've been talking will  
8 solve themselves and will solve themselves on  
9 an objective basis that's to be measured and  
10 proven. Thank you very much.

11 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
12 testimony. Paul Roehrig. Okay, he's not  
13 present. Brian Robinson.

14 MR. ROBINSON: Hi, my name is Brian  
15 Robinson and I live on Maple Avenue in Takoma  
16 Park, Maryland. I'm also representing -- I  
17 grew up here, so I remember the tree with the  
18 cage around it too. I'm also representing  
19 Friends of Old Takoma, Inc., which is  
20 headquartered across the street from the  
21 Metro on Carroll Street. We are a planning  
22 and community development organization which

1 covers the Old Takoma area conjointly with  
2 the Business Association, centered on the  
3 Metro site.

4 Friends of Old Takoma, Inc., is  
5 deeply concerned with the loss of two transit  
6 serviceability requirements which are  
7 considered best practices and  
8 transit-oriented developments nationwide.  
9 These two requirements haven't really been  
10 discussed much in this hearing. We've heard  
11 extensive testimony on parking disability and  
12 bus impacts, and I share those concerns. The  
13 following two issues have been little  
14 discussed. They are crucial to any transit  
15 serviceability analysis.

16 Number one is mixed use and number  
17 two is storm water catchment area or storm  
18 water management. Mixed use. The project  
19 turns its back on the center of our  
20 community, generally considered to be the  
21 intersection of Cedar and Carroll Streets,  
22 two blocks from the surviving commercial

1 areas in Maryland and D.C.

2 When Metro came in, they tore down  
3 numerous commercial buildings at the heart of  
4 the commercial district, immediately in front  
5 of the train station and facing what is now  
6 the village green which used to a sort of  
7 truck stop.

8 Rather than create a usable village  
9 green by restoring the original configuration  
10 of buildings and open space while providing  
11 increased density as appropriate, the current  
12 plan concentrates all development at the  
13 bottom of the valley. That leads to the  
14 second point, which is storm water  
15 management. By placing all development at  
16 the furthest end of the valley, farthest from  
17 the urban core and the Metro entrance, the  
18 current plan creates impacts that are  
19 substantially similar to an exurban  
20 development.

21 The train station was originally  
22 situated here for a reason before Takoma Park

1 was built. And that is the presence of Big  
2 Spring which sits under what is now a grassy  
3 plot on Spring Place, Northwest. And it  
4 drains into Maryland under the Metro site.  
5 The storm water catchment area includes the  
6 entire Metro site; it's a bowl-shaped site  
7 and it drains into large underground stream  
8 which runs under Cedar and Maple Avenues.  
9 And Takoma Park has partially day-lighted  
10 that stream.

11 The current plan permanently paving  
12 over this storm water area at the bottom of  
13 the valley on Eastern Avenue instead of  
14 day-lighting it and creating a usable open  
15 space would make a positive environmental  
16 benefit negligible -- it would have a  
17 negligible environmental benefit compared to  
18 a development in Germantown, you know, taking  
19 the same number of units and just plonking  
20 them on a wetland in Germantown.

21 MS. MACK: Mr. Robinson, we forgot  
22 to turn on the timer, but I think your time

1 is up.

2 MR. ROBINSON: Oh, no, no, it's  
3 finished. Another speaker who also  
4 criticized this development noted that at  
5 present people come to the Takoma Park Metro  
6 stop to come home or to get someplace else.  
7 If you want a successful green space, if you  
8 want a prosperous business district that  
9 transit-oriented, not strictly oriented to  
10 car commuters, if you want a series of Metro  
11 stations that are set up to accommodate as  
12 much as 50 to 100 percent future growth from  
13 existing residents, and if you want to create  
14 a community that's served around the Metro  
15 instead of a single-use pod complex with  
16 two-car garages, then you must change the  
17 perception of it being just a place to get  
18 someplace else.

19 We can get back to the drawing  
20 board and explore community proposals for  
21 marketable mixed use development on the site  
22 that includes structured parking, partially

1 paid for by the developer, enhanced bus  
2 facilities, and increased amount of green  
3 space restoring the storm water catchment  
4 area of Big Spring and create a hub for the  
5 community so people get off the Metro and  
6 have a continuous Metro-oriented shopping  
7 district instead of an environmentally  
8 unfriendly commuter gateway that is poorly  
9 configured, turns its back on Carroll Street  
10 and permanently paves over a storm water area  
11 and is dead at night. Thank you very much.

12 MS. MACK: Thank you, Mr. Robinson.

13 (Applause)

14 MS. MACK: Ethan Landis.

15 MR. LANDIS: Thank you. My name is  
16 Ethan Landis and I am a principal and owner  
17 of Landis Construction Corporation and the  
18 Landis Building across the street on Blair  
19 Road. We are very excited to be new members  
20 of this vibrant neighborhood. We've  
21 incorporated green building technology and  
22 techniques and finishes into our building.

1 So has the co-housing project and Elevation  
2 314. Ecopark and the Centex project are  
3 planning and committed to green construction.

4 Our area is a leader in valuing  
5 green design and sustainable growth. Please  
6 encourage that sustainable design and  
7 architecture and green finish that's being  
8 incorporated into the WMATA site. This  
9 should embrace public transportation, biking,  
10 electric scooters, and vehicles, flex cars,  
11 gray water and storm water management, high  
12 efficiency heating and cooling systems et  
13 cetera. We are very excited about the  
14 opportunity for well-designed and built  
15 housing and sustainable development. Thank  
16 you.

17 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
18 testimony. Fanny Missfeldt-Ringius. How did  
19 I do?

20 MS. MISSFELDT-RINGIUS: Perfect.

21 MS. MACK: Okay.

22 MS. MISSFELDT-RINGIUS: Are you



1 German?

2 MS. MACK: Oh, no.

3 MS. MISSFELDT-RINGIUS: Well, thank  
4 you very much for providing all of us  
5 residents and also myself the opportunity to  
6 be here and to give our voice. I am a  
7 relatively new resident and I also speak in  
8 my only -- my personal capacity. I live in  
9 D.C. Takoma. I moved here from Europe and  
10 parts. D.C. Takoma is the place to be. And  
11 I really haven't been disappointed. I think  
12 this is a very unique neighborhood. I've  
13 lived in France, I've lived in Germany, I've  
14 lived in Denmark and then the UK before  
15 moving to the U.S.

16 And, of course, you know, always a  
17 little apprehensive where do you end up next.  
18 And I really haven't found out a friendlier  
19 and most -- more wonderful neighborhood.

20 Let me say that I opposed this  
21 development. I think that I'm struck and  
22 confused by WMATA's proposal that does not

1 incorporate any of these unique features that  
2 the neighborhood has. And this lack of  
3 imagination of this proposal has simply  
4 puzzled me, you know, as a normal resident  
5 here.

6 D.C. is development. The City of  
7 D.C. is beautiful. It has an amazing, you  
8 know, base of urban planning. And I think  
9 that all the conditions are there for this  
10 also to be, you know, retrofitted in this  
11 proposal that you have -- that WMATA has put,  
12 you know, forward to the community. And this  
13 includes the question of the green heart that  
14 architects in Europe very much have endorsed.  
15 As you know Holland as well as Bangladesh are  
16 the most densely populated countries in the  
17 world. And yet if you look at Holland -- and  
18 you think of Holland, you think of vast  
19 fields of tulips, vast spaces. And it's the  
20 heaviest and most densely populated country  
21 in the world.

22 Can there not be some smart

1 thinking, you know, of all of us putting it  
2 together? And I think that the Friends of  
3 Takoma Transport, they have already got sort  
4 of smart thinking point. Can we not put a  
5 more smarter way, you know, together that  
6 makes all the residents happy and ends up in  
7 a compromise? Where we have a park, where we  
8 have the parking, and where we have some  
9 housing. But which, sort of, has a green  
10 heart at its center.

11 I would like say I have worked for  
12 the World Bank. Someone pointed out that  
13 World Bank, you know, rules have applied or  
14 not. I just wanted to point out that as far  
15 as the contracting goes along I would venture  
16 to say that this wouldn't have passed  
17 procurement rules from the World Bank. Any  
18 country, be it Bangladesh, Nigeria, Brazil,  
19 they would have not procured this contract in  
20 the same way. I would, you know, advise you  
21 maybe to use better rules in the future as a  
22 personal -- in my personal capacity. Thank

1 you.

2 (Applause)

3 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
4 testimony. Nellie Moxley.

5 MS. MOXLEY: Hi, I represent Takoma  
6 Park; I'm actually part of Takoma Park  
7 actually. I am Pinecrest area which most  
8 people forget about, we're over on the other  
9 end, Eastern Avenue. I see, Ms. Hill, you're  
10 still here after six years and I see you're  
11 still hanging in there. I really don't think  
12 any of you should hang in at all. I think  
13 you should just take a walk and leave us be.  
14 And that's how I feel about it, and most of  
15 us do.

16 You could find another site up  
17 there where that liquor store is that, it's  
18 -- accommodates you real well, and it's large  
19 enough and it's over on the other side where  
20 it is D.C. totally and it's not part of  
21 Silver Spring that's been divided by the  
22 railroad.

1           Anyway getting along with this,  
2           there isn't much else to say except there's  
3           nine people in my household. This here is  
4           really an intrusion. It's going to be a  
5           really bad intrusion when you start digging  
6           up something that really doesn't belong to  
7           you I'd like to know how you think you're  
8           going to get two-car garages built  
9           underground in streams. That's cute, I don't  
10          think so.

11                 I think all codes -- I think all  
12          violations are there. I think that you  
13          better go back to the board; I think you  
14          better go back to D.C. and Maryland and look  
15          at this timeframe on how this stream runs and  
16          how the buffer is set up. The first time you  
17          make a hole, you're going to be sitting in  
18          water. We have to really be careful now  
19          where the bus bays are sitting. So go back  
20          to the board; you've got nothing. We don't  
21          want it.

22                 The neighborhoods have already told

1 you for six years, "Please, leave us be.  
2 Don't try to make a new one. Go somewhere  
3 else. There's plenty of areas. We need this  
4 one spot. We're already sprawled all way  
5 around. Thank you.

6 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
7 testimony. Tom -- let's see. Let me try it.  
8 Luebke.

9 MR. LUEBKE: Very close.

10 MS. MACK: Okay.

11 MR. LUEBKE: Thank you for your  
12 opportunity to testify. My name is Tom  
13 Luebke, and I've worked for the past 20 years  
14 in this area as an architect planner and  
15 urban designer. I worked for several years  
16 as a city architect in Alexandria, Virginia,  
17 where we considered very carefully a lot of  
18 similar design proposals in the areas  
19 adjacent to transit. I even worked closely  
20 with the firm of EYA over there. And there  
21 were some projects that the community felt  
22 was successful. I will get to that in a

1 minute.

2 I currently serve as the secretary  
3 of the United States Commission of Fine Arts,  
4 which is a federal agency with designer view  
5 authority over all public projects within the  
6 District of Columbia. But I'm testifying  
7 here today as a resident of Takoma Park and  
8 as a Metro system user. And I'd like to  
9 share just a few comments. I'll try to keep  
10 this very brief.

11 And really this is really bad urban  
12 design as much anything. The Metro site  
13 which is situated, it's kind of a link  
14 between the two downtowns in the District and  
15 in Takoma Park, Maryland. It's really such  
16 an unused, I shouldn't really say, "Unused,"  
17 but it's really a significant resources for  
18 both the communities. And what we would have  
19 here is just an incredible and unusual  
20 opportunity to do the right thing for both  
21 communities. Right for the District, right  
22 for the City of Takoma Park, Maryland, and

1 actually something that would improve the  
2 Metro.

3           What is currently proposed, I don't  
4 believe hits the work. The project has a lot  
5 of shortcomings, particularly regarding the  
6 treatment of open space, disposition of  
7 parking, the definition of the Takoma retail  
8 quarter on Cedar and Carroll Avenues. I  
9 mean, there is a lot of reason I think you've  
10 heard them. I'm not going to go through  
11 anything more. But I -- tonight I'm just  
12 really going to address just -- just note  
13 specifically the problems with the impacts on  
14 transportation.

15           Looking at what the proposal is and  
16 our objectives standing tonight, what does it  
17 do to improve transit here at this station, I  
18 don't think any objective observer would  
19 reach the conclusion that this proposal by  
20 EYA does actually does anything to enhance  
21 transit. It probably brings it down a little  
22 bit. And that's really a pretty poor acid



1 test for this community. So in conclusion  
2 I'd just like to say that there are many  
3 reasons why the redevelopment or reworking of  
4 the Metro site, which is so critical to this  
5 community may be desirable.

6 But I don't think this plan does  
7 very much to address it in a way that  
8 resonates with the community. I think you've  
9 heard this very loud and clear. This is a  
10 real non -- people are not excited about  
11 this. I urge you really reconsider the plan.  
12 And there's a time -- there's a lot of time  
13 to think of something better to do with this  
14 very precious site. As somebody mentioned  
15 before, "Once we get rid off it, we develop  
16 it, you don't have a second chance." This is  
17 too important of a site just to blow it on  
18 what has just kind of limped along for years  
19 and is probably an out-of-date plan that  
20 really in to be reconsidered. So I can -- I  
21 really hope you'll take time to rethink this  
22 and do what's right for the community. Thank

1 you very much.

2 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
3 testimony. Michael Sindram. Sindram?

4 MR. SINDRAM: Good evening, Madam  
5 Chair, Board members.

6 MS. MACK: Good evening.

7 MR. SINDRAM: Michael Sindram,  
8 disabled veteran and I've served our country  
9 more than most. I live in the neighborhood  
10 and over the past few decades our traffic,  
11 commuters, people who live here has increased  
12 tremendously. And to echo the concern that  
13 once you give this land away, it can't be  
14 taken back, we already have special  
15 constraints. And when you squeeze more,  
16 unless -- you get more problems. I don't  
17 know if any of you live in or around the  
18 area, but we have very limited open space,  
19 trees.

20 The land that we have currently is  
21 very, very precious. I think already the  
22 concerns are weighty. You're unjustly

1 enriching a very few to the detriment of us  
2 all. And that's not equitable, it's not  
3 fair, it's unconstitutional and it's  
4 incomprehensible. And I would ask all of  
5 you, Madam Chair and Board members, seriously  
6 consider what's being done here. Help me,  
7 help you, help us.

8 I do have a question for you, Madam  
9 Chair. I have a letter in hand that I have  
10 written to Dan Tangherlini. It's dated  
11 September 29th; I want to give it to you. It  
12 also cites an August 10th letter; it has to  
13 do with fair adjustment. A number of issues  
14 that remain pending and not acted upon. And  
15 I would indicate that certainly if in a small  
16 matter, it can't be resolved, you know, this  
17 matter definitely needs some more time and  
18 attention. So again, I want to give this to  
19 you. And if you would --

20 MS. MACK: Sure. I'll be happy to  
21 take it and have it reviewed and get back to  
22 you?

1 MR. SINDRAM: Appreciate it.

2 MS. MACK: Okay.

3 MR. SINDRAM: Thank you.

4 MS. MACK: Thank you very much.

5 (Applause)

6 MS. MACK: Peter Feiden.

7 MR. FEIDEN: It's Peter Feiden.

8 MS. MACK: Feiden.

9 MR. FEIDEN: I have some comments  
10 which I'm going to submit and I'll just read  
11 through sections of them. My name is Peter  
12 Feiden; I'm at 7025 Eastern Avenue. Some  
13 people live close to this project. There's  
14 nobody here except my neighbor Sabrina who  
15 lives as close as me. So I'm right across  
16 the street from it. I've lived here for 17  
17 years and I've always favored development on  
18 the site for a variety of reasons. But  
19 unfortunately, I have come to a position  
20 where I can't support this development at  
21 all.

22 I want to preface my remarks with a

1 very specific complaint, the developer, EYA  
2 commissioned a very important study on  
3 transportation impacts by a firm called  
4 Wilson Associates, despite my repeated calls  
5 to Metro. And EYA, the full report was never  
6 made available to the public. Specifically  
7 the report on the Metro website continues to  
8 lack a number of key pages and appendices.  
9 Among these are existing traffic counts,  
10 existing levels of service, background future  
11 levels of service, and total future levels of  
12 service.

13           These are fundamental data elements  
14 upon which EYA appears to be making its  
15 analysis in support of the development. Yet  
16 the community lacks the core data to analyze  
17 and interpret the methodology and the  
18 conclusions of the developer's consultant.

19           And as to my specific concerns  
20 about the scheme as proposed, these fall into  
21 a number of categories. First of all is  
22 access to the site for those who drive to

1 Metro who need to park their cars. It's  
2 noted the proposal reduces the amount of  
3 parking from 159 to either 75 or 128  
4 dedicated spaces. Data on the use of parking  
5 clearly shows that during several hours of  
6 the day virtually all parking is in use. The  
7 net result then would be to deny access to  
8 the Metro as a result of the project. There  
9 is no way of getting around this fact.  
10 Further exacerbating the parking situation,  
11 it is worthwhile to consider, maybe somebody  
12 has already brought this up, the contribution  
13 of private parking lots to be in the needs of  
14 drivers to the Metro.

15           Currently there are two that I'm  
16 aware of. One on Carroll, just beyond the  
17 7-Eleven and one behind the CBS. Development  
18 plans are currently in the works for the  
19 latter. The former site is considered a  
20 prime development site as well. In essence,  
21 the proposed EYA development would reduce  
22 dedicated parking at the same time that

1 contributing private parking is under threat.

2           Second concern is the effect on  
3 area traffic. The EYA and earlier studies  
4 clearly show that key intersections in the  
5 area are failing. Proposed development will  
6 add 86 housing units. The EYA study predicts  
7 the addition of only 16 additional morning  
8 trips and 23 evening rush hour trips. No  
9 reference is made in the study to back up  
10 these projections. And it's noted the raw  
11 data has not been made available for further  
12 analysis. On its face, the projections seem  
13 downright absurd.

14           Many of these houses would be  
15 occupied by professional couples. In fact  
16 this is anticipated by both the cost of the  
17 housing and the construction of two-car  
18 garages -- a two-car garage for each house.  
19 A reasonable assumption is that three  
20 quarters of the houses will be occupied by  
21 two working adults or approximately 150  
22 individuals. The consultant's projection is

1 -- therefore meets that a merest 11 percent  
2 of these individuals will drive to work.  
3 This is just not believable on its face.

4           A realistic projection might have  
5 been used on the community behavior for  
6 surrounding Takoma Park residents. Most of  
7 us moved here in part because of the access  
8 to mass transit, yet jobs change, jobs move  
9 and often only one part of a two-worker  
10 household is ever in a position to take the  
11 Metro. Most of my neighbors include at least  
12 one resident who regularly drives to work.  
13 There's no reason to presume anything  
14 different at this project.

15           Effect on the pedestrian system.  
16 One effect of squeezing in 86 houses has been  
17 to sacrifice a sound pedestrian access route  
18 from Eastern Avenue. Proposed access appears  
19 to be along a busy road that serves as a new  
20 through street. It serves as access to the  
21 parking and serves as egress for buses. The  
22 pedestrians would need to cross the parking



1 access in a congested area and navigate  
2 around a tightly configured bus turnaround  
3 area.

4 Detrimental effects on Eastern  
5 Avenue. Eastern Avenue continues to be a  
6 dangerous road in the segment opposite the  
7 project site. The street carries over 6,000  
8 vehicles a day, including many buses and  
9 emergency vehicles. Can I get (off mike)?  
10 Can I finish this paragraph?

11 MS. MACK: Well, you're going to  
12 have 30 seconds because you already had more  
13 time because we forgot to set the clock.

14 MR. FEIDEN: Okay. All right,  
15 that's not my fault.

16 MS. MACK: I know. That's why --

17 MR. FEIDEN: Yeah, incredibly the  
18 right of way would be narrowed --

19 MS. MACK: Right, it is now though.

20 MR. FEIDEN: Okay. The right of  
21 way affords only a narrow sidewalk and locks  
22 any separating grass buffer or parking lanes

1 to separate pedestrians from high- speed  
2 traffic. This was recognized in the Takoma  
3 Central District Plan which called for  
4 widening the street by five feet and adding a  
5 parking lane. Yet, incredibly, the right of  
6 way would be narrowed in the EYA proposal in  
7 order to make the effective project site  
8 larger and enable more houses while making  
9 those of us already living on Easter Avenue  
10 less safe.

11 MS. MACK: I've got to ask you to  
12 stop.

13 MR. FEIDEN: Okay. Thank you.

14 MS. MACK: Okay, thank you very  
15 much.

16 (Applause)

17 MS. MACK: Our last witness that I  
18 have before me is -- whose name I have before  
19 me is Frederic Baron.

20 MR. BARON: Good evening. My name  
21 is Frederic Baron. I don't claim to speak  
22 for anybody other than myself.

1           WMATA is failing this community.  
2       This is one community even though we straddle  
3       jurisdictional borders; it's always been that  
4       way. And I think you're learning about this  
5       community this evening. You're learning that  
6       we're proud to be a progressive community;  
7       that we care about people and their quality  
8       of life. We care about things like energy,  
9       efficiency. We care about the environment  
10      and that's one reason that green space is  
11      important to us.

12           We're the kind of people that take  
13      a slogan like "Think globally and act  
14      locally" and actually try to live it. That  
15      means that there are quite a few people here  
16      who support that if there is going to be  
17      growth, it should be smart growth. That  
18      means that there is support for  
19      transit-oriented development, and we have  
20      plenty of it on the way. Just about every  
21      scrap of privately-owned land near the Metro  
22      station is being developed, and all of those

1 people in those new developments are going to  
2 need a place to go. And going to be more  
3 Metro users, but they also will need park  
4 land.

5 Most of the people that live in  
6 Takoma Park and Takoma, D.C., now, live in  
7 single-family homes. The denser development  
8 will greatly increase the demand for that  
9 park land and the use of that park land.

10 In this -- the proposal that has  
11 been put forward now that was worked out with  
12 one developer and what seems to be a  
13 sweetheart deal is not transit-oriented  
14 development; it's profit-oriented  
15 development. It puts the profit of that  
16 developer ahead of transit. What that means  
17 is that in failing this community WMATA is  
18 failing in its mission.

19 The factors that the compact  
20 requires you to consider reading from the  
21 literature handed out this evening say, land  
22 use, population, economic factors affecting

1 development plans, existing and proposed  
2 transportation and transit facilities, any  
3 dislocation of families or businesses,  
4 preservation of the beauty and dignity of the  
5 nation's capital, factors affecting  
6 environmental amenities and aesthetics, and  
7 financial resources.

8           In accepting the proposal and going  
9 as far as you have, the WMATA Board appears  
10 to be putting that very last point on  
11 financial resources first, and perhaps not  
12 even proceeding very smartly on that point  
13 because it's not clear that you're getting  
14 even in the short run what you should be  
15 getting for that property, and certainly not  
16 serving the long-term interests of the  
17 community, both the immediate community in  
18 the Takoma area and the broader community of  
19 Metro users.

20           Thank you very much for your  
21 consideration. Thank you for finally coming  
22 to hear what this community has to say.

1 MS. MACK: Thank you for your  
2 testimony. We do have one more person who  
3 has signed up. We did advertise that the  
4 hearing was going to be from 6:00 to 10:00.  
5 It is now 10:00, but we will hear Catherine  
6 Tunis and I am assuming that she is the last  
7 person who wishes to speak.

8 MS. TUNIS: I apologize. I signed  
9 up on the wrong sheet.

10 MS. MACK: Okay.

11 MS. TUNIS: I want to tell you that  
12 I live in Takoma Park and I use the Metro  
13 everyday to and from work, sometimes on the  
14 weekend, sometimes shopping. So this is  
15 something that feels like home. And I think  
16 a lot of people have touched on that, but the  
17 Metro feels like it's ours, it's not just,  
18 you know, somebody else's. It's part of us.  
19 I mean, so we feel very -- that it's very  
20 important how we -- how this is managed.

21 I noticed that at the station it's  
22 already very tight both for pedestrians and

1 for buses. Often there is no place for the  
2 buses to idle in between their runs. They  
3 sometimes go out on the street. That's an  
4 issue.

5 I did want to say that I came to  
6 the workshop in March -- the all-day workshop  
7 in March and I was very open at that time,  
8 listening to the different options that were  
9 being presented. I was very struck though  
10 that the facilitators there seemed to have an  
11 agenda. They wanted to keep people focused  
12 only on EYA and if you didn't like it, they  
13 made you focus on "Well, what little thing --  
14 what can we tweak about that to make it  
15 better?"

16 They didn't listen to wholesale,  
17 like, we don't like it at all, we don't like  
18 it there. We want -- we like this  
19 alternative. They didn't want to hear that  
20 and they didn't want to write it down. We  
21 felt that was extremely biased and I think  
22 that was a widespread view of many of my

1 neighbors. So I wanted -- I'm glad that many  
2 people came tonight and you do get a much  
3 better sense, I think, from listening to the  
4 people here how people are opposed and how  
5 many people are opposed.

6 I think as time goes on, we will  
7 need more bus service, more pedestrian  
8 access. I don't typically use the parking,  
9 but I do use it occasionally. And you know,  
10 I'm middle aged. I'm in kind of denial about  
11 it, but I know as I get older I'm going to  
12 probably need to use the parking a little bit  
13 more frequently, going to doctor's  
14 appointments and things like that.

15 I do know of other EYA developments  
16 around. I think they are not environmentally  
17 friendly. They use a cookie-cutter approach.  
18 They're not smart growth. They use very  
19 large high-price townhouses and paving over  
20 nearly every square foot. This is not a good  
21 development. Any development that is on the  
22 site ought to be smaller units, much more



1 transit-oriented, at least a LEED Gold --  
2 L-E-E-D Gold, and concentrated on the current  
3 parking lot area. No more impervious  
4 service.

5           There was some other designs and  
6 other suggestions that were made at the -- I  
7 know, I see the light flashing, so I don't  
8 want to go into detail. Other suggestions  
9 for improving the transit system as it is  
10 now, the station as it is now. I do want to  
11 add though that the green space that's there  
12 really has a civilizing influence to the  
13 commuters.

14           I grew up in New Jersey. There is  
15 very little green space there. The commute  
16 is much more tense. One of the things that  
17 people love about Metro is it is -- it's very  
18 comfortable, people can sit there and read,  
19 but trees, that's my specialty, has a  
20 civilizing influence on people. And even  
21 that tiny little green spot that we have  
22 there has a civilizing influence. It's

1 mitigating the urban greenhouse effect and it  
2 does add watershed values, which is critical  
3 in the area. Thank you.

4 MS. MACK: Thank you. Thank you  
5 for your testimony.

6 (Applause)

7 MS. MACK: Is there anyone else in  
8 the room who wishes to speak? Okay. All  
9 right, we'll allow you to speak.

10 MS. YOUNG: My name is Nancy Abbott  
11 Young, and I was on a committee 35 years ago  
12 regarding this issue. It amazes me that it's  
13 come back as it has. It's like a Rip Van  
14 Winkle-type experience. We had a Citizens  
15 Advisory Committee when eminent domain was  
16 first used to take homes and create a public  
17 transportation system. It was the sense of  
18 that committee that there shouldn't be  
19 development at that site.

20 And it was the sense of the  
21 community -- there was a public hearing  
22 process, extensive, that took place. The

1 Montgomery County Planning Board staff  
2 concurred with us and recommended minimal or  
3 no growth at that site. That was a promise  
4 made to this community 35 years ago. As far  
5 as I'm concerned, it still stands.

6           So I know you have heard a lot  
7 tonight about -- argumentation in terms of  
8 public transportation, keeping the green  
9 space, improving the transportation services,  
10 which need improvement, but what about the  
11 public trust in the promise 35 years ago? I  
12 felt that way then that development shouldn't  
13 occur, and I feel that way now. We had a  
14 green space there as a buffer between the  
15 hubbub of the system and the residential  
16 community. There is really no need for this  
17 development. It's not broken.

18           The only thing that's broken, it  
19 seems to me, is WMATA's finances. My feeling  
20 is if you want to raise revenue, provide  
21 better public transportation services for the  
22 commuters of the Washington, D.C., area;

1 don't sacrifice our community.

2 I feel strongly about this because  
3 in fact, the freeway fight that took place in  
4 this community as you know, and all across  
5 the Washington area, resulted in the freed up  
6 highway fund monies, creation of WMATA, the  
7 belief that a public transportation system  
8 could be founded in the Washington area that  
9 would serve as a model for the nation.

10 Not every transit stop at the time  
11 that the system was created was determined to  
12 be a candidate for development. Our  
13 community stood firmly in that position then,  
14 and obviously we're still standing there now.

15 Again, I'm one of the only people  
16 still living that was on that committee, but  
17 you know, time passes. Developers come and  
18 go, the community will stay. The community  
19 will have to look at the eye -- architectural  
20 eyesores that were being put up around that  
21 stop. So I hope you hear us tonight.

22 I have plenty of posters and

1 testimony from that era that I would like to  
2 present to you, and I hope you consider it.  
3 I'm sure that -- you know, we won the freeway  
4 fight in the 60s. We won the argument  
5 against high impact in the early 70s. We had  
6 a respite because the forces that are  
7 destructive, institutional expansion,  
8 including WMATA, its designs on that site,  
9 were sleeping until they saw an opportunity.  
10 So this battle never ends and we're prepared,  
11 another generation, to fight it again. Thank  
12 you.

13 (Applause)

14 MS. MACK: Thank you. Thank you  
15 for your testimony, and I want to thank all  
16 of you who have come out this evening to give  
17 us your comments. I think Ms. Tunis  
18 captured the sense that we hear all the time  
19 when we talk to the community that people do  
20 believe the Metro belongs to them. And we  
21 think that's a good thing because it does  
22 belong to us. We pay for it through our tax

1 dollars and through our transit fares and we  
2 want to know what the community thinks. We  
3 do care about communities.

4 I think this -- this community is  
5 unique in that part of the community is in  
6 the District and part of it is in Maryland.  
7 And I think the final speaker just talked  
8 about what happened, I think, 35 years ago  
9 when plans were being made and promises were  
10 being made for this community. But I have to  
11 remind all of us, at that time, the District,  
12 where the station is actually located -- I  
13 understand that it is one community, but  
14 there is a line and it's invisible most of  
15 the time.

16 But I suspected at the time those  
17 decisions and promises were being made, the  
18 citizens of the District of Columbia didn't  
19 even have a vote and could not decide what to  
20 do. And we do have representative government  
21 both in the District and in here. And so I  
22 just think that as we contemplate all the

1 factors that are involved in this decision  
2 that will be made, the D.C. City Council does  
3 have the final decision in terms of what  
4 happens in the land use in the District of  
5 Columbia.

6           So there are many factors here.  
7 There are many controversies. There are  
8 decisions that -- there are many authorities  
9 who get an opportunity to participate in the  
10 decision-making. So we have heard you. We  
11 think that you have made some excellent  
12 points here.

13           We certainly will take away from  
14 this hearing the need for us to take a look  
15 at what's being planned to see if we can be  
16 accommodating to some of the things that we  
17 have heard.

18           We'll issue a report growing out of  
19 this hearing and you will have an opportunity  
20 to comment on it and we will have time to  
21 study it before there is a final vote. So --

22           MS. FOSTER: I disagree with you

1 that the District didn't have any part in the  
2 decision-making. There were many people that  
3 lived on the District side of Takoma that  
4 were involved in planning that metro. So we  
5 had a lot to say about what was being done at  
6 that metro station. So I don't want it to be  
7 minimized that --

8 (Applause)

9 MS. FOSTER: -- the contribution  
10 that we made to the design of that metro  
11 station.

12 MS. MACK: Thank you for that  
13 statement.

14 (Applause)

15 MS. MACK: Again, I thank all of  
16 you for coming, and as I said, you will hear  
17 from us as we assemble the report from  
18 tonight's hearing.

19 (Whereupon, at 10:13 p.m., the  
20 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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