



Councilmember Charles Allen



Chairman Phil Mendelson

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council Regarding the Union Station Expansion Project Resolution of 2020”.

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

(1) Union Station is the largest transit hub in the District—and the second busiest Amtrak station in the country—sees as many as 100,000 passengers each day, and is a national landmark situated in a growing neighborhood. It serves District residents, commuters, business travelers, and tourists traveling on Metrorail, Metrobus, Circulator, intercity busses, regional and national train lines, bicycles, and foot.

(2) In June 2020, the Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) issued a draft environmental impact statement (“DEIS”) for the proposed Union Station Expansion Project that intends to expand and modernize Union Station’s multimodal transportation facilities to meet current and future transportation needs in the District and Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor.

(3) The project includes a major realignment and renovation of the existing train tracks, renovations to the existing building, a new rail terminal, a new parking garage, and a new

32 bus facility. The project is proposed by the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation  
33 (“USRC”) which manages and operates Union Station under a long-term lease from FRA and  
34 Amtrak. FRA is the lead agency preparing the Environmental Impact Statement detailing design  
35 alternatives for the Federal government.

36 (4) Mixed-use development adjacent to Union Station has the potential to  
37 transform the surrounding neighborhood providing office, residential, and retail uses, in addition  
38 to new public spaces. In order for any such development to be compatible with the surrounding  
39 neighborhood, it is essential that all aspects the Union Station redevelopment be done in concert  
40 with local planning efforts and best practices.

41 (5) The DEIS released by FRA falls short of the needs of District residents,  
42 workers, visitors, and project stakeholders and does not take into account comments by the  
43 National Capital Planning Commission, the District Office of Planning, members of the Council,  
44 and the impacted Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC”). Major changes are needed to  
45 the DEIS. Any preferred alternative identified in a final environmental impact statement must  
46 reflect both the needs of FRA and sound urban design principles.

47 (6) The preferred design alternative that the FRA identified in the DEIS proposes  
48 1,600 parking spaces in a new Union Station garage, even though extensive analysis by the  
49 District Office of Planning concluded that less than 300 spaces are actually needed. This  
50 conclusion has been supported by Federal planners at the National Capital Planning Commission  
51 (“NCPC”) as well as District residents, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, adjacent  
52 landowners, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. NCPC has reported that nearly two-  
53 thirds of the current parking spots are monthly parking contracts—that is, not needed for  
54 commuters, travelers, and shoppers coming to Union Station. Overparking this project ignores

55 changing trends in this multimodal core, will have a negative effect on adjacent development, is  
56 counter to the trend to reduce parking at many other large urban stations in the Amtrak system,  
57 and will induce additional traffic in the neighborhood.

58 (7) ANC 6C, which include Union Station, has repeatedly emphasized that “[a]s  
59 currently envisioned, the expanded Union Station would be surrounded by a snarl of cars and  
60 buses, creating a barrier to access for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.” In  
61 addition to creating a pedestrian-unfriendly environment at a dense transit hub, FRA’s preferred  
62 design ignores the place-making potential at this gateway to the District. The preferred design  
63 also frustrates the Council’s intent which budgeted more than \$200 million to remake the  
64 adjoining pedestrian bridge at H Street, N.E., as a safe pedestrian crossing to the private  
65 development adjoining the federal site.

66 (8) The DEIS also does not adequately consider the placement and scale of the  
67 proposed parking garage, the impact of the proposed garage access points on multimodal  
68 circulation around the facility, and northern viewsheds impacted by the proposed garage. The  
69 expanded garage is predicated, in part, on preserving a legacy revenue stream for USRC that  
70 relies on parking fees as it has since 1981. This does not reflect the changing transportation  
71 dynamics of the past 40 years and assumes that USRC is incapable of reimagining its business  
72 model.

73 Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that:

74 (1) Multimodal transit options, including bus, rail, transit, rideshare, bicycle,  
75 and pedestrian access, must be prioritized over parking in the Federal Railroad Administrations  
76 environment impact statement for the proposed Union Station Expansion Project;

77                   (2) The Union Station Expansion Project and neighboring development must  
78 enhance the quality of life for those who live around Union Station and for those who come to  
79 work in or visit the city by considering input from neighbors about how to integrate the design  
80 into the neighborhood; and

81                   (3) The FRA must reduce the size and scale of the proposed parking garage  
82 consistent with the District Office of Planning's projections.

83                Sec. 4. The Council shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Federal Railroad  
84 Administration (for inclusion in the record), the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, the  
85 National Capital Planning Commission, and the Office of Planning.

86                Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect upon the first date of publication in the DC  
87 Register.