WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID S. BALL
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 22, 2009

Chairwoman Norton, Ranking Member Diaz-Balart, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am very pleased to be here this morning on behalf of the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, also known as USRC, to provide testimony support of "The Congressional Vision for a 21st Century Union Station: New Intermodal Uses and a New Union Station Livable Community". It is important to note that the care and custody of Washington Union Station has been entrusted to the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, USRC. The testimony also provides important information concerning steps taken since the Congressional Testimony of July 22, 2008 and the committee's follow-up questions of August 22, 2008 with concerns about enhancing Union Station's stature as a intermodal transportation center including steps being taken to construct an intercity bus terminal at the Union Station complex in which Greyhound would be a participant; and overseeing the retail developer's re-tenanting plans for the station.

Since the committee meeting held on July 22, 2008, USRC and other Union Station stakeholders have met and held serious discussions about constructing an intercity bus terminal at Union Station, increasing the intermodal use of the station and how best to ensure that what we do today improves access and usability for the station's constituents. USRC and most of its stakeholders view this opportunity as a chance to take a holistic approach to intermodal improvements at Union Station. We are focused on today and the next 100 years. We are framing solutions to reduce patron congestion in the Amtrak passenger concourse; to bring new retail opportunities into the station; to improve pedestrian and vehicular access in and around Columbus Plaza; to install a perimeter security bollard system; to work on an immediate solution to construct an intercity bus terminal in the parking garage; to gain new pedestrian access into the garage via the WMATA pedestrian tunnel and the proposed vertical access shaft adjacent to H Street; along with the installation of 10 new escalators in the garage to enhance patron egress and ingress. Our attention to these matters will improve the services rendered to our current intermodal transportation providers – WMATA busses and Metro, tour busses, the DC Circulator, Amtrak , VRE and MARC.

To: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings
and Emergency Management
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What has happened since the July 22, 2008 Hearing

- USRC successfully worked with and obtained agency approval from the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the DC State Historic Preservation Officer for the implementation of security upgrades at the station and the rehabilitation of Columbus Plaza. The contractor documents are being prepared to be bid out competitively by District Department of Transportation (DDOT). As part of the Columbus Plaza improvements WMATA will gain 10 free bus slips in the garage to enhance bus travel in the area. The DC Circulator currently runs two routes out of the garage.

- During the fall of 2008 USRC participated in meetings with the DDOT, Akridge, WMATA, Amtrak, the Ashkenazy Acquisitions Corporation (AAC—the station retail developer) and Greyhound on how to incorporate an intercity bus terminal in the station. The draft Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) study being conducted by DDOT provided data and insight into future uses and expectations of the Union Station complex. The ITC identified the northern portion of the garage as the most feasible location for an intercity bus terminal.

  All stakeholders met to share ideas regarding the various plans for the future of Union Station and Greyhound was a welcomed participant in these meetings. After analyzing all the data, the majority of stakeholders agreed that the best location for an intercity bus terminal was on the north end of the garage. During that period architects from the various stakeholders worked on this concept.

  In February 2009, Representative Mica requested that Amtrak, Greyhound, USRC and the District meet in his office to discuss Greyhound tenancy at Union Station. His directions were clear, think outside the box; don't be limited by lease lines or contractual issues. Make it work.

  After several working group sessions we convened a meeting of all the stakeholders in April. The best solution that seemed to work for everyone was placing the intercity bus terminal on the north end of the bus deck and constructing a northern Metro access point via the WMATA pedestrian tunnel and the creation of a vertical pedestrian access route connecting with the H Street Bridge. This plan would allow intercity bus passengers to come directly off Metro and gain access to the intercity bus terminal via walking a short distance through a climate controlled well-lit walkway to reach their destination. It would improve passenger flow at the Union Station Metro Station and reduce potential traffic flow problems in the Amtrak passenger waiting areas. The intercity bus terminal would be designed to have a prominent presence on H Street.

In May Representative Norton requested that I meet with her to discuss progress to date. Even though she thought that we were moving on the right track she requested that USRC see if there was a way to move forward with the construction of an intercity bus terminal in which Greyhound and/or other carriers would be participants. Since that time we have identified approximately 42,000sf that could be used for a bus terminal – temporary or permanent. USRC and Greyhound have engaged an engineering firm to investigate the physical limitations of the existing bus deck to determine where utilities can be found to support the new use. The results of that study are due in August. Once the cost for the delivery of the utilities and the structural carrying capacity of the deck has been identified a cost can be established for building the terminal. Stakeholders will focus on this data and we should be able to make end user, design, construction, financing, and scheduling decisions by late fall. Most recently USRC provided the new Greyhound management with a site tour of the garage and we received their concurrence that the north end of the bus deck is most suited for the terminal.

- We have been working continuously with AAC and Amtrak in reviewing AAC's retail plans and expect that some of the plans will be instituted this year.

USRC looks forward to working with Greyhound and all other parties to make the intercity bus terminal a reality for Union Station. Thank you. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.