

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ROUNDTABLE ON DC PRIORITIES
FOR FEDERAL RECOVERY STIMULUS PACKAGE
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

TESTIMONY OF VINCENT SPAULDING

My name is Vincent Spaulding. I reside at 3180 Westover Drive, SE, Washington DC in Ward 7. I speak today at the request of the Hillcrest Community Civic Association (HCCA), Karen Williams, President and Carrie Thornhill, chair of the Streets, Traffic and Transportation Committee. The mission of HCCA is to enhance the quality of life and prosperity of residents, families, community organizations and institutions located within our geographic boundaries. HCCA fulfills its mission by engaging members in a variety of educational, social, beautification, public safety and economic activities, advancing the interests of our members before the government and private sector and leveraging their collective influence to achieve community improvements.

For the record, the boundaries for HCCA are: Pennsylvania Avenue SE from 31st Street to Southern Avenue; Southern Avenue to Naylor Road; Naylor Road to 27th Street; 27th Street & Naylor Road to Pennsylvania Avenue & 31st Street, SE.

I have been authorized to speak in support of two HCCA priorities which we trust will be incorporated into DC priorities for Federal Recovery and Stimulus funds if needed. The two priorities are: the 11th Street Bridge Improvement and the Skyland Town Center Development.

First, please be advised that our Association approved a resolution on April 5, 2008 and again on February 7, 2009 supporting the reconstruction of the 11th Street Bridge Project Preferred Alternative, which retains the ramp/connection from east Washington neighborhoods to the freeway bridge, primarily because it is estimated to make it easier for those living on the east side of the river to cross the Anacostia river.

The project has three major parts which are designed to:

- Provide new ramps east of the Anacostia River to re-route traffic from the SE freeway across the 11th Street bridge to connect Anacostia in both directions;
- Separate freeway traffic from other traffic including separating pedestrian, bicycle traffic onto a separate bridge, along with a possible future trolley line and local lanes so that local traffic to and from Anacostia, including Anacostia Park, don't have to get on the freeway in order to get across the river; and
- Create a new interchange at 11th & M Street that will facilitate traffic to move to and from Virginia and reduce traffic congestion on East Capital Street and Benning Road bridges and increase cars crossing the Anacostia.

I have attached a copy of our approved resolution.

DC Department of Transportation officials are the best determinants on readiness of this project but it is our understanding that this project is shovel ready for construction. We highly recommend it as a DC priority for federal stimulus package funds.

Second, as you know our Association has been involved in chasing the dream of a revitalized shopping center for 11 years and since 2000 a new Skyland Shopping Center for a total of twenty years. Skyland is located in SE Washington at the southernmost part of Ward 7 on a 16-acre site with an existing shopping center. The Skyland Development Team is proposing to transform the existing shopping center into a modern town center development with 325,000 square feet of retail, 468 units of mixed-income condominiums, apartments over ground-floor retail and single-family town homes. Above-ground parking garages, as well as two levels of structured parking above a large-format retail store, are planned. Though we remain disappointed as a community at the pace at this project has moved forward over the years, we know steady progress has been made by the city and the Skyland Development Team while the land entanglements associated with eminent domain played out in the courts. At our HCCA meeting on Saturday and City Council roundtable, we learned from Councilman Brown, an official of the Deputy Mayor and an Office of Attorney General attorney that though the city has authorized the filing of the Planned Unit Development application on February 17, 2009 with the Zoning Commission, legal entanglements still remain. With our support and encouragement, Councilman Brown and Alexander have asked these officials to explore ways to accelerate this development project as was done with the city's stadium project.

As the HCCA liaison on Skyland, my purpose here today is to encourage the Council to ensure this project remains a high DC priority and that the prior commitment of federal and TIF funds are sustained and increased if that will help accelerate the resolution of the land control issues in the context of the Federal Recovery and Stimulus Package discussion.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.
