



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

January 21, 2014

Mr. Vincent Gray
Mayor
District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004
vincent.gray@dc.gov

RE: ANC 2A opposition to demolishing the Whitehurst Freeway

Dear Mayor Gray,

At its regular meeting on January 15, 2014, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With six of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission approved the following resolution by a vote of (6-0):

Whereas the Whitehurst Freeway was part of a 1946 master plan that included a series of “high capacity” corridors (not to be confused the idea of an “inner loop” for traffic from a mid-1950s National Capital Planning Commission master plan, “Washington—Past and Future”)¹ and was ultimately the only element of this plan to be built; and

Whereas the District awarded the Whitehurst construction contract to the firm of Archibald Alexander, a pioneering African American engineer who during the 1910's and 1920's designed the Tidal Basin Bridge and seawall—both still in use today; and

Whereas the Whitehurst was completed (along with the tunnel under Washington Circle and the widening of K Street) in late 1949 and in 1956 was added to the Interstate Highway System as a segment of US Route 29 and later designated an emergency evacuation route; and

Whereas by 1981 the structural integrity of the Whitehurst had been so exacerbated by a near-total lack of maintenance and upkeep—resulting in the corrosion of the steel structure and cracks in the concrete deck—that it was determined to be a public safety hazard;² and

Whereas after extensive technical analysis and community input, federal and local officials decided in 1989 to rehabilitate rather than remove/demolish the Whitehurst,

¹ Frederick Gutheim, “Worthy of a Nation: the history of Planning for the National Capital,” issued by NCPC and the Smithsonian Institution, 1977.

² “Shifting Urban Priorities: The Removal of Inner City Freeways in the United States,” Francesca Napolitan, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates and P. Christopher Zegras, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, November 13, 2007.



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thus making it eligible for funding from the Federal Highway Trust Fund (80 percent Federal/20 percent District); and

Whereas beginning in 1989 and ending in 1998, approximately \$59 million³ of combined Federal and District resources were spent on the Whitehurst Freeway rehabilitation, and another \$20 million upgrade of the ramps was completed in 2002, with officials concluding that the rehabilitations had extended⁴ the Whitehurst’s useful life until approximately 2027⁵; and

Whereas in 2005 the DC Department of Transportation hired consultant AMJM Harris to “study” the Whitehurst, culminating in a fundamentally flawed effort entitled “Whitehurst Freeway Deconstruction Feasibility Study–Draft Evaluation of Alternatives Report” which improperly considered only demolishing the freeway⁶; and

Whereas in concert with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions from Georgetown, Palisades, Dupont Circle and others, ANC-2A passed resolutions opposing the teardown of the Whitehurst beginning in 2005 and culminating in 2007 with ANC-2A resolution #07-03A (see attached) opposing the teardown as well as any further funding for demolition studies of the Whitehurst; and

Whereas since February of 2005, community members from Foggy Bottom, West End and Georgetown have collaborated with Catholic University Professor Iris Miller and her Urban Institute Studio landscape and architecture students to preserve and restore the Whitehurst as well as our adjoining parkland; and

Whereas demolition of the Whitehurst Freeway would have dramatic impacts on the quality of life in Foggy Bottom including: 1. destruction of parkland, 2. increased traffic congestion and noise, 3. adverse impacts on emergency and evacuation routes, 4. decreased pedestrian safety, and 5. reduced air quality.

Therefore be it resolved that ANC 2A reiterates its ongoing support for the preservation and maintenance of the Whitehurst and its related elements, as well as interest in exploring ways to enhance and upgrade the structure to increase its utility and value as a transportation and cultural asset.

³ Total final cost of the 1989-98 rehabilitation is not definitive, e.g. www.dcroads.net/roads/whitehurst: “Eight years, \$100 million, and countless traffic delays later, the project was completed in August 1998.”

⁴ “Statement of Walter S. Groszyk, Jr.,” March 2, 2007 at “Future of the Whitehurst Freeway” Roundtable.

⁵ “‘Deconstructing’ The DDOT/DMJM Harris Whitehurst Freeway Feasibility Report,” submitted on 2-15-2007 to DC Council Committee on Transportation and Public Works by Warren C. Robinson, Ph.D., Professor of Economics (Emeritus), The Pennsylvania State University.

⁶ *Ibid.*



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Be it further resolved that ANC-2A reiterates its opposition to any further expenditure of tax dollars to consider demolition of the Whitehurst Freeway.

Commissioners Patrick Kennedy (Patrick.Kennedy@anc.dc.gov) and Asher Corson (lashercorson@gmail.com) are the Commission's representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Chairperson

Cc: Mr. Terry Bellamy; Director, District Department of Transportation
Cc: Mr. Phil Mendelson; Chairperson, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Jack Evans; Ward 2 Councilmember, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Ms. Mary Cheh; Transportation Committee Chairperson, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. David Grosso; Transportation Committee Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Kenyan McDuffie; Transportation Committee Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Jim Graham; Transportation Committee Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Tommy Wells; Transportation Committee Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Ms. Anita Bonds; At-Large Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. David Catania; At-Large Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Vincent Orange; At-Large Member, Council of the District of Columbia
Cc: Mr. Will Stephens; Chairperson, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B (Dupont Circle)
Cc: Mr. Ron Lewis; Chairperson, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2E (Georgetown)
Cc: Ms. Gayle Trotter; Chairperson, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D (Palisades)