



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
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News Release

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COALITION OF PRESERVATION GROUPS CALLS FOR THOUGHTFUL STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC UNION STATION

Report Highlights Importance of Historic Preservation, Comprehensive Planning and Public Involvement in Response to Expansion Plans by Amtrak and Other Entities

Washington (August 2, 2012) – Today, the Union Station Preservation Coalition, an alliance of local and national preservation leaders, released a set of recommendations intended to safely guide historic Union Station’s evolution into a world-class, multi-modal transportation hub. Primary among the Coalition’s recommendations are that all proposed development plans for Union Station must be coordinated, place a high priority on the station’s careful restoration and afford the public meaningful involvement in the planning process. Amtrak’s modernization plan for the station, as described on July 25, does not adequately address either public participation or how new construction would integrate with the preservation of the historic 1907 station.

The Coalition’s report, entitled “A Golden Opportunity to Re-invest in Historic Union Station,” (available for download at www.savingplaces.org/treasures/union-station) points to several capital improvement projects as evidence of the need for a comprehensive preservation plan to assess and mitigate potential impact on the historic structure. These projects include Amtrak’s ambitious vision to increase the number of tracks, trains and travelers that can be handled at the East Coast’s second-busiest station, and commercial developer Akridge’s intent to construct 3 million-square-feet of office, residential and commercial space by decking over the tracks behind Union Station.

“We believe strongly that Union Station can be a model for best practices in historic preservation, transit-oriented development and transportation planning,” said Stephanie K. Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “With a public landmark this iconic, however, the utmost care must be taken in advancing the historic station’s function and design. We look forward to engaging with Amtrak, Akridge and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation on how to expand Union Station while respecting the historic integrity of this beloved national treasure.”

The Coalition maintains that because of the station’s vital importance to the public, and the likelihood of substantial taxpayer investment, any plans concerning Union Station’s future must involve meaningful public engagement. The Coalition also stresses that these redevelopment plans present a golden opportunity to restore the historic station to its original grandeur and to protect from it from harmful changes in the future.

“Amtrak’s conceptual plan, as it was presented to the public, remains vague on how exactly the proposed changes would impact the physical structure or visual appeal of the historic station,”



said Rebecca Miller, executive director of the DC Preservation League. “We are optimistic that modernizing the station in line with Amtrak’s vision can be balanced with retaining what makes Union Station so special: its historic character.”

“Handled with care, Amtrak’s master plan could be a tremendous opportunity for Union Station,” said Erik M. Hein, trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. “Balancing new development, efficient transportation and the needs of a historic landmark, the Coalition is focused on helping to shape the next 100 years of this extraordinary public building.”

“We wholeheartedly support making Union Station more accessible to the surrounding community, and making it easier for travelers to find their way out of the station and into Washington’s great neighborhoods,” said Janet Quigley, president of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. “The Coalition believes this can be achieved while preserving the historic stature of one of our nation’s most important landmarks.”

Union Station Preservation Coalition member organizations are:

Capitol Hill Restoration Society - For more than 50 years, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society has championed the interests of residential Capitol Hill by working to preserve its historic character and enhance its livability through efforts in planning, zoning, traffic management, and public safety.

Committee of 100 on the Federal City - Founded in 1923, the Committee of 100 advocates responsible planning and land use in Washington, D.C. Our work is guided by the values inherited from the L’Enfant Plan and McMillan Commission, which give Washington its historic distinction and natural beauty, while responding to the special challenges of 21st century development. We pursue these goals through public education, research and civic action, and we celebrate the city’s unique role as both the home of the District’s citizens and the capital of our nation.

DC Preservation League - Founded in 1971 as “Don’t Tear It Down,” the DC Preservation League is a nonprofit membership-supported organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing Washington’s historic buildings and open spaces for future generations to enjoy. As Washington’s citywide preservation advocacy organization, DCPL identifies significant buildings and neighborhoods, monitors threats to them, and increases public awareness of historic resources.

National Trust for Historic Preservation - The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America’s historic places to enrich our future. We are committed to protecting America’s rich cultural legacy and to helping build vibrant, sustainable communities that reflect our nation’s diversity. We take direct action to save the places that matter while bringing the voices of the preservation movement to the forefront nationally.

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