



Testimony of David Tuchmann, Akridge
Bill 18-867, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2010”
September 28, 2010

My name is David Tuchmann, Development Manager for Akridge and the Project Manager for our Burnham Place at Union Station air rights project – which I am excited to say is located four blocks from my house. Now in its 36th year, Akridge is a locally-based, full-service commercial real estate firm. We have developed or managed over 12 million square feet of commercial and residential space and have seven million additional square feet in our DC pipeline. We focus strictly on the DC Metropolitan area.

Our company has a track record of tackling some of the most complex and exciting projects in the City. Our one million square foot Gallery Place complex contains office, residential, retail and entertainment space, and marked the City’s first use of tax increment financing. Last year, we received one of the first LEED Platinum designations in the City for our 700 6th Street project. And on Half Street, at the entrance to Nationals Ballpark, we will soon begin our next ambitious, transit-oriented project with 700,000 square feet of office, residential and retail space.

Perhaps our most ambitious and exciting project, however, is Burnham Place. Named after the architect of Union Station, this 14-acre project includes two to three million square feet of office, residential, hotel and retail spaces, supported by public plazas, new roadways, and the 15 modes of public transportation that converge at Union Station. It is the epitome of smart growth development, and will reconnect neighborhoods long divided by bridging the rail yards to the north of Union Station.

After an international search for an architect to lead this initiative, we chose Washington-based Shalom Baranes. Like Akridge, Baranes has played a major role in shaping the development of the National Capital region. Some of the firm’s large planning efforts include the redevelopments of the Waterside Mall, Old Convention Center site and Southeast Federal Center. His firm’s historic preservation projects include the Woodward and Lothrop Building, Postal Square adjacent to Union Station, The Main Treasury Building next to the White House, the International Spy Museum building, and even the great building in which we sit today. We believe Shalom Baranes is the single most qualified person to help guide us as we adhere to the directives included in today’s proposed amendments regarding sensitivity to historic resources and neighborhood fabric.

It cannot be understated how technically difficult this project will be to deliver because of the exceptional challenges inherent in building atop *active* intercity and commuter rail lines. Several amendments before

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you today recognize the unique attributes of this project, and they are critically important to our ability to advance the project.

We support the amendment proposals to encourage the development of air rights parcels for the opportunities they present for housing, retail and commercial buildings and for their ability to re-connect neighborhoods. Akridge also strongly supports the modification to allow Burnham Place building heights to be measured consistent with the 1910 Height Act, with special focus on the context of important adjacent areas. The change to the current language provides the opportunity for full public analysis of the design impacts of our project while also requiring important neighborhood protections.

We have enjoyed our interactions to date with ANC 6C, and appreciate their strong support on these matters. We look forward to continuing our company's tradition of robust community engagement with the multiple rounds of zoning and historic reviews that this project will entail. We are confident that we will find balance and solutions to this project's multitude of constraints and opportunities.

Once again, let me express our strong support for the amendments related to the air rights at Union Station, and I would like to thank you for this opportunity. I would be happy to answer any questions.