



NEWS

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November 2007

More Commuter Traffic Likely Headed for Hill Neighborhoods

DDOT Releases Eleventh Street Bridges EIS: Comments Due November 20

by Tom Grahame and Barbara Eck

The DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the new Eleventh Street bridges. Adoption of this report will allow work to begin on the rebuild and redesign of the bridges. Comments must be received by November 20. Anyone who wishes to look at the FEIS can do so at: www.11thstreetbridgeseis.com/whatsnew.asp. Comments can be emailed to EleventhSt@ch2m.com.

CHRS is currently reviewing this voluminous document, and will have specific comments on the FEIS before the deadline. We have been involved in community meetings dealing with Anacostia River Crossings (bridges at various locations) since 2003. CHRS has kept members apprised of DDOT plans and reported our involvement and our assessment of these plans in the newsletter and in other local newspapers. We will reserve our comments on this FEIS pending completion of our review, but will briefly describe the bridges

project that the FEIS purports to have studied.

The FEIS presents several alternatives. Each alternative would replace the eight lane bridge span and provide freeway connections on both sides of the river. Each alternative would also build a four lane "local" bridge between

Capitol Hill and Anacostia. The increased bridge capacity because of the added local lanes is more likely to facilitate commuter traffic through our neighborhoods rather than reduce traffic and congestion, which is a stated objective of the Eleventh Street Bridges project.

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October Preservation Café: Progress Report on Eastern Market Restoration

by Nancy Metzger

Restoring a landmark and bringing it up to code is always an interesting proposition, but at the October Preservation Café, Tony Esse and Tina Roach pointed out that the Eastern Market fire presented some unusual historic preservation opportunities.

Tony Esse, P.E., supervisory project manager for DC's Office of Property Management, started off the session with a look at the restoration schedule for Eastern Market:

- Work to replace the roof is now underway (see details below). What is not visible from the street is the temporary roof, a

flat plywood and rubber membrane that will protect the market interior until the main roof is finished.

- Window restoration will begin in a matter of weeks.
- Major restoration work of the interior and the installation of upgraded systems (new heat, air conditioning, electrical, toilet facilities, and sprinkler system) are scheduled to start in January or February.

Tina Roach, AIA, architect with Quinn Evans architectural firm that is in charge of the project, gave the audience a close-up look at some of the conditions uncovered by the fire, the restoration

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President's Column

by Dick Wolf

Eastern Market has been selected as one of the "Ten Great Neighborhoods in America" by the American Planning Association. The news release announcing this award noted that "Civic Activism [is] an Enduring Staple in This DC Neighborhood." That is a compli-

ment to CHRS and was so recognized when Sharon Ambrose, our retired DC Council member, called to congratulate us for our contributions to the retention and development of the Eastern Market and the entire Hill. I reminded her that she had supported good government in many ways—both as a Council member and Council staffer—including our initiatives regarding the Hill and the preservation of neighborhoods.

Sharon's efforts and the work of many others, individually and through organizations, have made Capitol Hill a monument to civic activism. Unfortunately, the term "civic activism" has been used in a derogatory sense to paint many of us as "nimby's," "no-growth advocates," "against change," etc. Much of this name-calling comes

from the organized developer community and sometimes from government officials. Maybe the award will make some of our opponents think twice and focus the city and others on one of the most critical elements in making this a better city: building good neighborhoods. CHRS will not rest in its efforts to secure for the rest of Capitol Hill the benefits of both good planning and historic preservation. In support of efforts to expand the

Capitol Hill Historic District, we have secured sufficient funding to perform surveys of much of greater Capitol Hill. This Beyond the Boundaries initiative was the subject of our lead article in the last newsletter.

Capitol Hill is much more than Eastern Market. The Market is really a symbol of what civic activism can accomplish. There are many other examples: the schools library project; Barracks Row/Main Street; Barney Circle Historic District; the H Street, NE Overlay; the Overbeck lectures; CHAW—the list could go on. The underlying benefit of this award is not just for us as residents of the Hill. The entire city benefits enormously, not only economically but socially—a "public good" that is not accounted for in most cost/benefit analyses.

Thanks to the APA for this award. It's nice to be recognized, but we cannot and will not rest on our laurels. ✧

[More about the APA award on page 5.]

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CHRS Remembers Robert Reed and Barbara Held Reich

by Amanda Molson

CHRS lost two special friends in October, both of whom were committed to Capitol Hill and active in our neighborhood's preservation. They will be missed, and we are grateful for their contributions.

Robert Reed died suddenly and is survived by four boys and his wife, Karen Reed. The Reeds have been significant providers of time and support to numerous Capitol Hill organizations. Together they painstakingly restored 800 East Capitol Street, NE, to its former glory with guidance from historic photographs and also brought the house into modern times with creative spaces to accommodate a young family.

CHRS was privileged to feature their joint masterpiece on the 2007 House and Garden Tour, and this treasure of a residence was a highlight of the event. Robert was a successful businessman, a thoughtful steward of a special home, and a valued member of our community. We send our condolences to the Reed family.

Barbara Held Reich, legendary real estate broker, has passed away after an illness. She began buying, selling, and restoring Capitol Hill properties in the 1950's, serving as an important early pioneer in the revitalization of our neighborhood. Barbara won CHRS awards with her late husband, Robert Reich, for best residential restoration and best commercial restoration, developed the alley dwellings of

Archibald Walk, and ran a well-respected real estate office on Capitol Hill for many years. She received a Capitol Hill Community Foundation award for her work in 1984 and was active in numerous organizations ranging from CHRS to CHAMPS to Market Row to Congressional Cemetery.

In 2002, Barbara reflected back on her life in an interview with the Capitol Hill History Project, which can be viewed online at www.capitolhillhistory.org/interviews/2002/reich_barbara_held.html. Barbara lived in Georgetown in recent years, where she had also resided before coming to Capitol Hill. We offer our sympathy to Barbara's daughter, Catherine, who remains a resident of Capitol Hill. ✧

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To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202-543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.

www.chrs.org

Celebrating more than 50 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

* On the Web at www.CHRS.org

* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2

* Pick up a form at one of our meetings

Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

More Commuter Traffic Likely

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There has been some incorrect information given out as to whether the proposed bridges will have increased lanes. A piece in the Washington Post District Weekly incorrectly stated that "the two bridges still would have 12 lanes total." We contacted the writer to point out that there are currently only eight traffic lanes on the bridge. She checked it out and explained that she had misunderstood the FEIS lane description and will post a correction.

Community groups have suggested that one of the alternatives which should have been analyzed was the original proposal that DDOT brought before the community in 2003: a simple freeway connection via the Eleventh Street Bridge to I-295 northbound (Kenilworth Avenue), retaining the eight lanes of traffic, but allowing flows with freeway connections both northbound and southbound. CHRS and other community groups supported this concept four years ago, when DDOT presented this option as a potential way to reduce traffic on the Sousa Bridge and on Pennsylvania Avenue. Development along M Street, SE, is a reality which has created new traffic flows. It makes sense to provide a traffic connection north on I-295 at M Street rather than

forcing traffic across the already heavily congested Sousa Bridge to make the I-295 connection. DDOT presented this sensible, reasonable alternative and community groups agreed.

The Restoration Society believes that if DDOT thinks that this simple, northbound connection (which would cost an estimated \$500 million—far less than the alternatives studied) is inferior to the alternatives presented in the FEIS, it should have presented an analysis in the FEIS demonstrating this inferiority. DDOT should have studied the differences in traffic densities and flows in this simple connection alternative to convince the community that this DDOT proposal which they previously embraced was insufficient to improve traffic flow and decrease congestion and commuter traffic through residential neighborhoods. This option was not studied. Therefore, we will review and assess the FEIS as it stands.

We will also continue to press DDOT to conduct a new, comprehensive mobility study that integrates urban land use and multi-modal transportation system planning. Members who wish to file comments should do so by November 20 at the email address given above. ✧

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