

STATEMENT OF JOHN W. BARNUM, DEPUTY SECRETARY,  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, BEFORE THE HOUSE  
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, REGARDING  
THE FUTURE OF WASHINGTON UNION STATION, TUESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 28, 1976.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I welcome this opportunity to present the views of the Department of Transportation on the future of Washington Union Station. Our active and vital interest in this station complex stems from several sources. The Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 directs us to implement a major intercity passenger rail improvement program in the Northeast Corridor from Boston to Washington, an investment of almost \$2 billion over a five-year time frame. As the southern terminus of the high-speed rail line, rail passenger handling facilities at Union Station, we expect, will have to accommodate a 300 percent increase in rail passenger volume--a projected 6 million intercity train travelers per year (25,000 people on an average Friday) as opposed to the present 2 million. Also, as a matter of policy, this Department advocates the balanced, productive use of scarce public resources for transportation purposes at a minimum cost to

the taxpayers. Union Station with its strategic location in downtown Washington, its historic architectural character and its unique multi-modal transportation capabilities, lends itself perfectly to such judicious public use.

To identify a logical development plan for achieving all of these goals, and in conjunction with implementing the Amtrak Improvement Act, the Department in late 1975 commissioned the architectural and planning firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) to prepare an independent evaluation of the entire Union Station complex from functional, aesthetic, and financial/economic perspectives. Their study addressed all existing and potential modes of transportation at Union Station; among these modes were intercity rail, commuter rail, intercity bus, local bus, subway, taxicab, rental car, and private car. In addition, the analysis dealt extensively with the future role of the National Visitor Center, which today occupies the main building of the Union Station complex. Three fundamental alternatives were explored using the Visitor Center's degree of prominence as the primary planning influence. Having explored all prudent

transportation alternatives from a physical development point of view, as well as capital investment requirements, the SOM team concluded that transportation should once again become the primary function of the existing Union Station building, in concert with an ongoing National Visitor Center.

We have thoroughly reviewed the study results and considered the financial, legal and managerial consequences from both the Department's and Amtrak's point of view. We have also discussed these views at length with the Department of the Interior and, as of last week, have come to an understanding on the shared use of the complex for both transportation and Visitor Center interests. Such a course of action would accommodate public transportation needs for long-term Northeast Corridor rail passenger handling capacity and for tourist orientation. The joint-use plan calls for reconversion of the western third of the main building into rail passenger processing facilities with the remaining two-thirds in its present configuration for the National Visitor Center. The Hall of States would be relocated to an appropriate location in the eastern part of the building. A layout of the recommended alternative is attached as Exhibit 1.

Under the restructuring proposal, the shared use of the Union Station/National Visitor Center complex to achieve the Department's legislative mandates on behalf of transportation will be as follows:

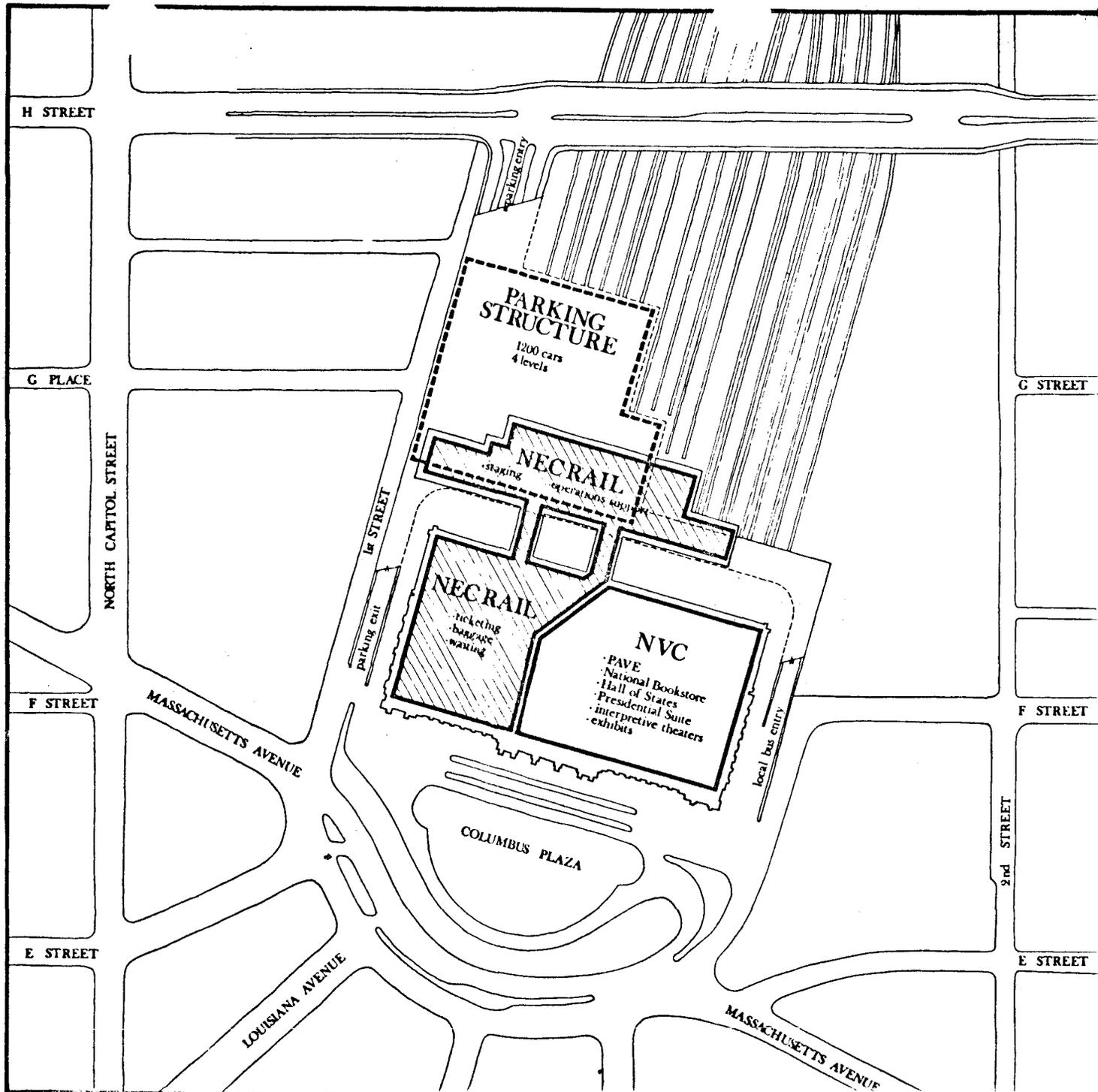
1. The Visitor Center would be retained in its present configuration through 1977.
2. Through an amendment to the National Visitor Center Act of 1968, DOT would assume the long-term DOI lease of Union Station and the parking structure as soon as a full agreement is consummated between the Departments so as to permit control to pass to Transportation as the dominant user.
3. With available reprogrammed Park Service funds of \$3.2 million, the Department of the Interior would complete all ongoing Visitor Center projects with the exception of the parking garage, and would complete the southeast access ramp and bus staging areas as part of the urban mass transportation facility, for which an UMTA grant of \$8.14 million has been committed.

4. The railroad company (Chessie System) would complete the replacement station north of Union Station.
5. DOT would be committed to resolving the parking problem in a reasonable and economical manner.
6. Rail passenger handling facilities would occupy the western third of the old building as the southern terminus of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project. At that point in the development, the National Visitor Center would still occupy more than two-thirds of the old building, including the PAVE, National Book Store and Hall of States, both interpretive theatres, concessions, and exhibit space, as well as the Presidential Suite.

With the cooperation of the Congress, I believe that this proposed restructuring of Union Station will greatly benefit users of diversified public transport, tourists, and taxpayers alike. Union Station would be restored to its proper function as the "grand gateway"

to the Nation's Capital, and the National Visitor Center would continue to provide its unique blend of services to thousands of tourists. For all of these reasons, I recommend this proposal to your attention, and encourage your support of legislative action at the earliest possible date.

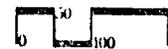
This concludes my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. I shall be glad to answer any questions which you and the Committee may have.



ALTERNATIVE B-1  
 PHASE I  
 NEC RAIL STATION  
 NVC

UNION STATION  
 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
 MODEL INTERMODAL TERMINAL  
 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill  
 for the Federal Railroad Administration  
 Office of Northeast Corridor Development



SEPTEMBER 28, 1976  
 EXHIBIT 1