

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information Contact:

John Lisle, DDOT

John.Lisle@dc.gov

Dwight Kirk

dkirk@hntb.com (202) 257-3966



**Anacostia Waterfront Forum Draws Standing Room Only Crowd:
*District leaders agree waterfront infrastructure and
transportation improvements will help DC become a
'World- Class Capital City.'***

Washington, DC – Gabe Klein, acting Director of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), welcomed a standing-room-only crowd to the first Anacostia Waterfront Forum, which was held on February 17, 2009, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Klein told the 200 participants, “I’m learning with you tonight.” He expressed his excitement about the transformation of the Anacostia Waterfront, which calls for major infrastructure investments that will benefit residents across the city and commuters. The topic of the inaugural forum was “Sustainable Development, Infrastructure and the Future of the District of Columbia.”

Klein introduced Kathleen Linehan Penney, the Chief Engineer of the District Department of Transportation and the main presenter at the forum. Penney noted the forum’s timing during Black History Month and the forum’s venue epitomized the goal of social, economic and geographic inclusion for a revitalized Anacostia Waterfront.

“The Anacostia Waterfront, its neighborhoods, and the river itself, have often been out of sight and out of mind – seen mainly from the commuter highways that cross it and isolate its banks,” she said. “In short, the Anacostia has been ‘off the map’ far too long.”

Penney focused her remarks on the limitations of the current waterfront transportation infrastructure and the impact that these limitations are placing on the future of the District. “I contend that more than any other place, it is the infrastructure problems and lack of investment on the Anacostia Waterfront that most severely decrease the likelihood that the District will become a more inclusive and sustainable city in the 21st century. It is time to invest our resources and time in the waterfront and the surrounding neighborhoods.”

The invited respondents to Penney’s presentation were Uwe Brandes, Vice President for Innovation, Urban Land Institute; Charles Wilson, President, Historic Anacostia Block Association; and Walter Smith, Executive Director, DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice.

Brandes challenged everyone in the audience to become more active and knowledgeable about the benefits that a revitalized Anacostia Waterfront will bring to the

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District. “The time to get ready for the next wave of development is now,” said Brandes, who also encouraged participants to learn more about the ecological needs of the Anacostia River.

As a resident of the Historic Anacostia neighborhood, Wilson expressed what he described as an ‘east of the river’ perspective. “I am a resident of the best neighborhood in the city,” he said. “Many stereotypes of east of the river residents abound; none are too positive. The [Anacostia Waterfront] revitalization could be a morale booster. We want all DC residents to come east of the river to visit, to buy property, to shop, and to play.” Wilson also urged participants to share information and become engaged in the neighborhood networks that exist in Wards 7 and 8.

Smith offered a hopeful perspective on the transformation of the Anacostia Waterfront. He discussed a recent report by DC Appleseed and Our Nation’s Capital (ONC) entitled “Building the Best Capital City in the World.” That report, and a commentary he co-authored with Dr. Alice Rivlin of the Brookings Institution, expressed his hope that the Obama Administration will target some of its stimulus money to infrastructure projects along the Anacostia Waterfront. “[Alice and I] are hopeful that the new administration will prove itself more open and responsive to the partnerships that need be strengthened to advance the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan,” he said.

Smith also stressed the need for better planning and coordination between agencies, developers, community groups and residents, so that the vision of environmental justice and economic prosperity becomes a reality for residents east of the river and for all District residents.

The Anacostia Waterfront Forum is a series of monthly public presentations that will be held every third Tuesday through June 2009. The forums are designed to bring voices from different neighborhoods together to receive accurate and timely information about developing the Anacostia Waterfront.

Tentative Forum Topics	
March 17:	“The Economics of Developing the Anacostia Waterfront “
April 14:	“Green Waterfront, Green Jobs, Green Living in a Green DC”
May 19:	“Waterfronts and the World’s Great Capital Cities
June 16:	“Today’s Youth and the Future of the Anacostia Waterfront”

The Anacostia Waterfront Forum Series is an activity of the Anacostia Waterfront Civic Engagement Program, a multi-agency program responsible for building a constituency to achieve the goals of the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan.

For more information, visit www.theanacostiawaterfront.com or call (202) 715-6641.

Please visit the Anacostia Waterfront Facebook Page.

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