

May 5, 2017

The Honorable Joseph Aresimowicz,
Legislative Office Building, Room 4105
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: In Support of H.B. 7278: An act to transfer ownership of Union Station from the state DOT to New Haven

Dear Speaker Aresimowicz,

The Hill South Management Team knows Union Station has been an integral part of our neighborhood long-supported by the City of New Haven. Our Community Management Team is one of 10 in the city and consists of residents and businesses within Hill South to serve as a forum for problem solving and information exchange centering around our neighborhood's most pressing concerns. Our Community Management Team helps residents have a voice in neighborhood improvement and revitalization efforts and are an important link to the police and to other city and social service agencies. To our Management Team, as Mayor Harp has said, transportation is a civil rights issue, and responsible development of our network between the station and the city is key to our neighborhood's accessibility. Currently, the free downtown shuttle system with GPS, our existing garage, plans for a bike share system, and the Hill-to-Downtown Community Plan which redevelops five blocks near the station, have all been either created or supported by the New Haven Parking Authority and the City's Transportation Department.

These initiatives are necessary to sustain equitable and fair economic opportunity for our neighborhood. Putting the lease out to bid and having the state and private company steer the direction of Union Station puts all these local initiatives at risk, and at best disrupts and delays these plans. At the end of the day, the people who *ought to* control what happens in the Hill South neighborhood are those who live here. Local voices have the highest stake in this station's future, and local perspectives create the best decisions for our neighborhood and our city.

This has been shown in multiple instances beyond the many aforementioned projects. Around the state, other cities run their own stations and keep the parking revenues for their own funds. Instead of limiting services to only City residents, as other places have done, New Haven merely wants to run a good station for both our community and those traveling from the rest of the state. In the past, the Department of Transportation's Rail Division has caused uncertainty and delays on a plan for transit-oriented development. Meanwhile, the Parking Authority already has a plan to upgrade the station with more cafés, better seating, and providing strong employment through the operating revenues of the station. All our city needs is the chance to enact that plan by having full responsibility for the station.

Union Station is part of our neighborhood. It is a place our residents are proud of and a part of a transportation network that our residents, our schools, our businesses, our hospitals, *our citizens* depend upon. Current DOT plans for building a second garage have failed to accurately gauge the impact on local traffic, environment, and public health—all real concerns that our people would have to live with. The voices of this neighborhood should always come first in determining the future of this station. The City provides a way for our input to make a difference in the decisions regarding our lives, while the state has not. The City's stewardship over the past thirty years has revitalized both the train station and the New Haven community into a vibrant greeting to those traveling into Connecticut.

We strongly support keeping it that way. Union Station should be owned by the City of New Haven, for a plan that makes sure to serve all those the station impacts—including the residents of our Hill South Community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah McIver". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sarah McIver
Chair, Hill South Management Team
City of New Haven
