

Zoning Case 131/132 of 2008

55 Eleventh Street (Lamar)

September 4, 2008

Good morning. My name is Anne-Marie Lubenau. I'm a registered architect and President & CEO of the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP). The CDCP is a non-profit organization located at 938 Penn Avenue, 6th floor, in downtown Pittsburgh. Our mission is to improve quality of life through good design of the built environment.

I have addressed concerns about the Grant Street Transportation Center billboard on several occasions.

In July 20, 2004, I participated in a review of the Grant Street Transportation Center project proposal by the Department of City Planning's Design Review Committee, a panel of volunteer design and development professionals. The comments from the Committee, summarized in a letter to the Parking Authority dated July 28, 2008 (copy attached), included the following: "The presence of an electronic messaging sign is unacceptable. No need or demand for this sign has been demonstrated....This screen has a high degree of visibility from Grant Street, Penn Avenue, and Liberty Avenue, and the presence of the sign does not contribute positively to the urban landscape."

Last February I testified at a City Council post agenda meeting that addressed concerns regarding the permitting process, where I shared the comments from the 2004 planning process. In March, I co-authored an article in the **Post-Gazette** titled *The Next Page: Shining a light on why zoning and planning matter* (copy attached). I am here today to continue that conversation.

Planning and zoning are essential to protecting the public's interest. The visual beauty of our city is critical to Pittsburgh's long term success of attracting new residents, businesses, and tourists, and making our city a destination for the entire region.

Up until this point, the Grant Street Transportation Center billboard has moved forward without the benefit of the appropriate zoning review process. We are grateful that the project is now moving through the legal process. Now, the CDCP urges the Zoning Board of Adjustment to adhere to the review process and to hear and consider the community's comments as the process moves forward.

Thank you.