



**UNION STATION**  
REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## **2021 Annual Report**



## Letter from the President

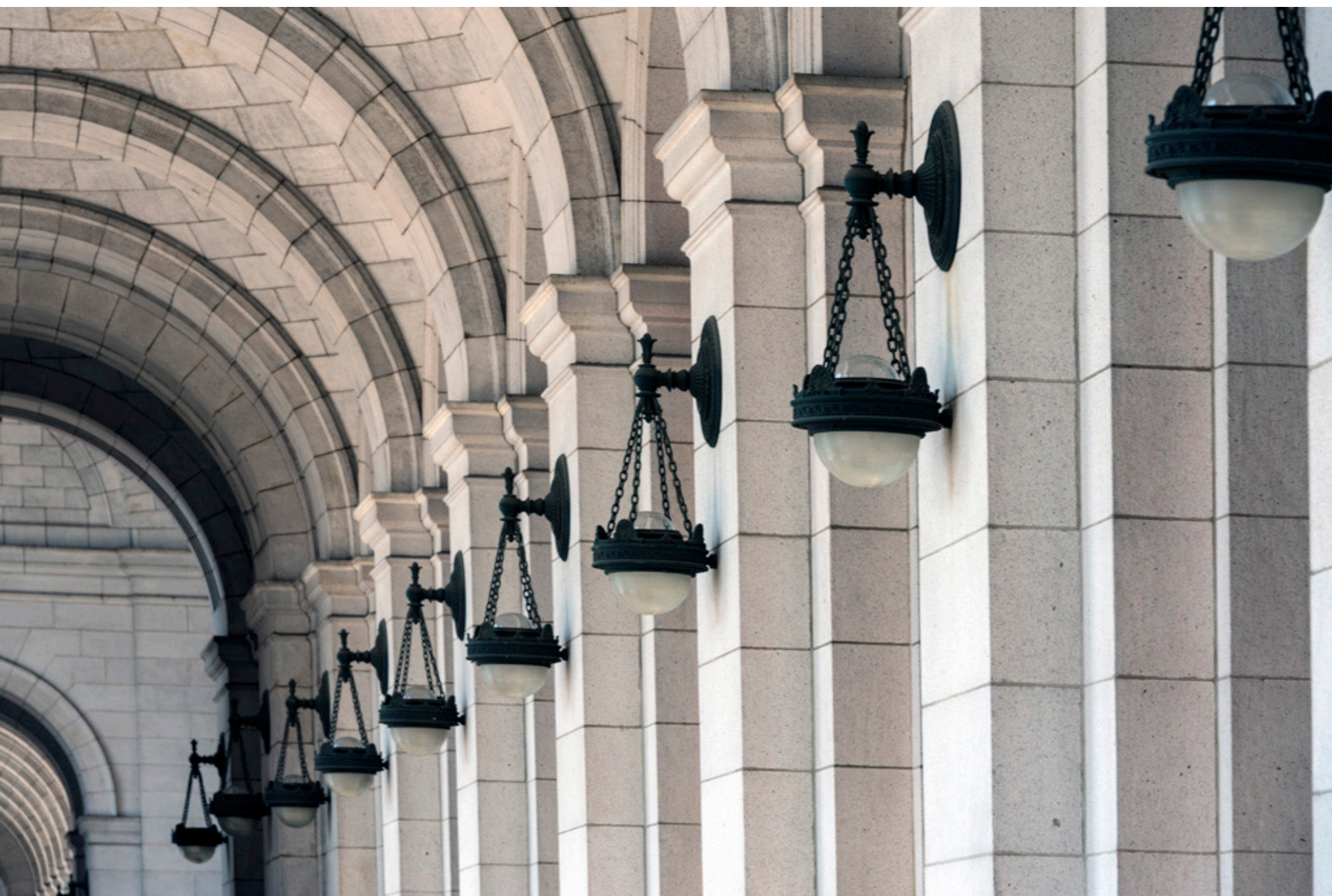
Once again 2021 proved to be challenging as we entered the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Union Station was significantly impacted by two years of low ridership on metro, commuter trains, and buses. Without commuters and tourists coming daily to Washington, DC, the retail stores and restaurants suffered financially with many closing, some temporarily and others permanently. Amtrak also had low ridership on the Northeast Corridor.

Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC) used this time to continue with our primary mission of stewardship of the historic building. Additionally, USRC continued to receive and administer federal grants for preservation of significant historic elements of the station for the completion of the Main Hall restoration. USRC completed planning and is in the design phase for the next rehabilitation of the station, which is much needed after 40 years. The pleasure of stewarding a building that is over 100 years old and protecting it for the next 100 years continues to be a rewarding endeavor. With technical oversight from the Federal Railroad Administration and their focus on appropriate treatment of this historic asset, USRC can continue to preserve and protect Union Station through these difficult times.

As my tenure as President and CEO comes to a close in 2022, I especially want to thank the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the DC State Historic Preservation Office for all their support in the past decade. We could not have accomplished the restoration of the Mail Hall and other significant historic features without your guidance and initiative.



Beverley K. Swaim-Staley  
USRC President and CEO





# Public Relations

## Events and Celebrations

### HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Although COVID-19 was still having a significant impact on events at Union Station, there was a holiday tree lighting ceremony on December 8, 2021. A consortium of partners, including the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce Mid-Atlantic Chapter, and Washington Performing Arts, presented the 32-foot holiday tree to the people of Washington, DC. The emcee for the event was Get Up DC Anchor Allison Seymour. In attendance were some very special guests: His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Haakon of Norway and the Ambassador of Norway to the U.S., Anniken Ramberg Krutnes. Both gave wonderful introductory remarks, with the Crown Prince relating how his family had ties to Washington, DC as his father, King Harald V of Norway, lived in the District during WWII.

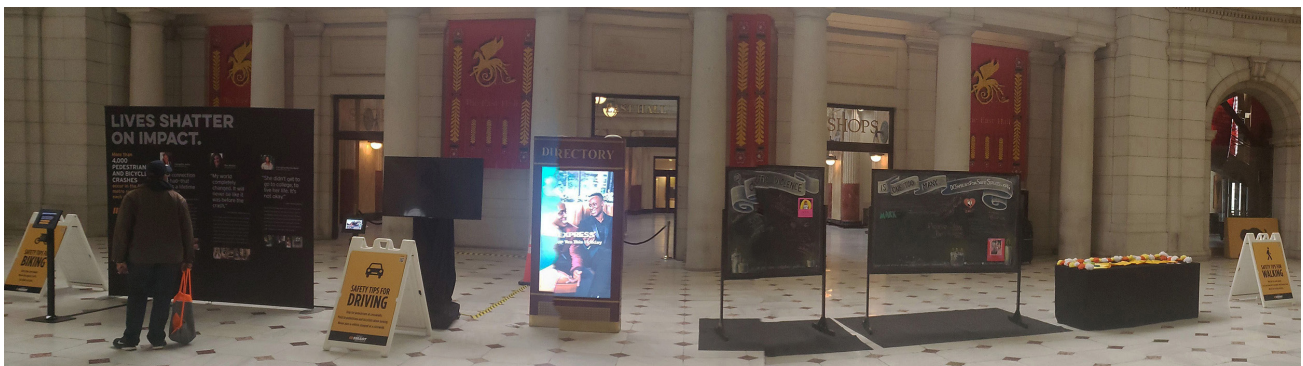


In addition, there were fantastic musical performances by cross-genre vocalist and past contestant on The Voice Rayshun LaMarr, DC-based string ensemble The C Street Collective, and Norwegian-Brazilian jazz singer Charlotte Dos Santos, as well as an amazing dance performance by local teenage dance virtuoso Matthew Crittenden.

### LIVES SHATTER ON IMPACT EXHIBIT

From April 18 to 24 and November 15 to 21, 2021, there was a “Lives Shatter on Impact” exhibit in the Main Hall of Union Station. Part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ Street Smart Safety Campaign, the objective of “Lives Shatter on Impact” was to educate passersby and remind drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists about the importance of watching out for each other. The display shared heartfelt testimonials from area residents whose lives have been upended when they or their loved ones have been struck by drivers. In addition, the exhibit featured an educational wall with written stories and photographs, as well as a TV showing short films and photos from across the region.

In November, accompanying the “Lives Shatter on Impact” exhibit, were two chalkboards for people to pay tribute to crash victims throughout the week leading up to the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on November 21st. For this collaborative effort with DC Families for Safe Streets, materials were provided to individuals to write a message or a name and/or post a photo to honor a lost loved one’s memory.



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXHIBIT

From May 3 to 31, 2021, Union Station hosted a human trafficking exhibit entitled “What You See Is Not Who I Am”. The display featured a striking series of three murals, each with a different theme (sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and agricultural labor trafficking), created in partnership with Groundswell’s Teen Empowerment Mural Apprenticeship (TEMA) program. TEMA is an after-school program for young people to learn how to paint murals and use art for social change.

Under the leadership of ArtWorks for Freedom Founder and Director Kay Chernush, and guided by Groundswell artists Nicole Schulman and Edwin Vazquez, 20 young artists learned about the global epidemic of human trafficking and worked together to research, design, and create the impressive installation. The murals were made possible with support from the Embrey Family Foundation.

An interview with Kay Chernush, conducted at the installation in Union Station, can be seen [here](#) and a [short video](#) of the panels is also available.





## THE H3 PROJECT EVENTS

USRC, NoMa BID, and Amtrak contract with The h3 Project to work with homeless persons who congregate and live in the Union Station and NoMa areas. The h3 Project aims to create a future in which all individuals experiencing homelessness and/or human trafficking are given opportunities to live meaningful and self-directed lives, in homes of their choice, with the support and services they need for success.

On September 29, 2021, in Columbus Plaza outside Union Station, The h3 Project had a free, public event to raise awareness about opioid addiction and homelessness. At the event, participants could create their own artwork, contribute to a community mural, get their faces painted, listen and dance to music provided by Dazzling DJ Johnny, win raffle prizes, have a free meal, and get trained to use NARCAN.

In addition, The h3 Project co-hosted an opioid awareness speaker series at the Father McKenna Center in August and September 2021.

As well, in July and August 2021, The h3 Project held community outreach snow cone events near the NoMa-Gallaudet U metro station. At these events, people could learn about the important work of The h3 Project with regard to support for homeless persons, opioid addiction, and NARCAN distribution sites, while cooling off with a snow cone and listening to a DJ.



## Union Station Virtual Experiences

Union Station has an interesting and exciting history, which USRC staff are proud to promote. Prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in Washington, DC, USRC organized and led in-person tours of Union Station, some of which were in collaboration with Atlas Obscura. After it became apparent that tours would not be possible for quite some time, USRC launched a History of Union Station virtual experience series. USRC organized and presented two of these online experiences in 2021.

In addition, USRC collaborated with Atlas Obscura on two hybrid virtual experiences in 2021. For these, there were two presenters from USRC: one who showcased the station's history through photographs and another who was on-site, giving a live, close-up tour of the featured spaces. Also, USRC hosted a History of Union Station virtual experience for the Bradley University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. USRC continues to offer ad hoc History of Union Station virtual experiences (at \$15 per person) for interested groups. To arrange an online experience for ten or more people, please send an email to [usrc@usrcdc.com](mailto:usrc@usrcdc.com).

# Historic Preservation

As part of the effort to promote the historic preservation and development of Union Station, USRC maintains, organizes, and archives all historical and project records. This work to properly archive all types of documents has proved valuable as we:

- address maintenance issues in the station;
- maintain strong relationships with national and local historic preservation agencies;
- modernize mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems;
- rehabilitate historic sections of the station;
- implement recommendations of the Historic Preservation Plan; and
- plan for long-term redevelopment of the station area.

In 2021, USRC completed work on the review and reorganization of off-site records.

USRC would like to thank Fred Lindstrom and Tom Luebke (U.S. Commission of Fine Arts), David Maloney and Andrew Lewis (DC State Historic Preservation Office), Rob Nieweg (National Trust for Historic Preservation), and others for participating regularly in historic preservation meetings.



This Library of Congress photo shows a large crowd in the train concourse of Union Station in November 1942 as a result of WWII and travel related to the first official federal holiday for Thanksgiving.



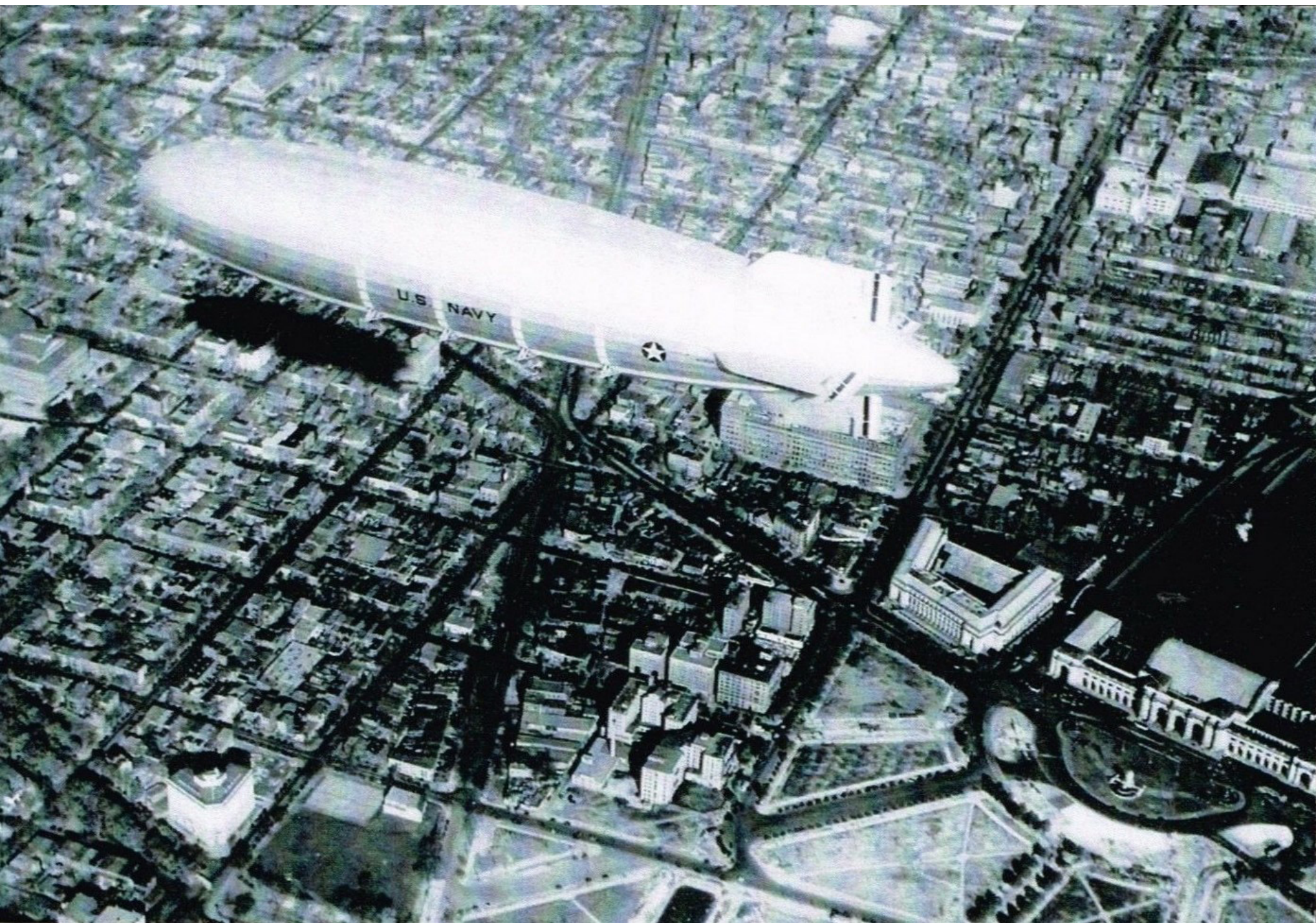
UK Prime Minister James Ramsay MacDonald is arriving at Union Station in this Library of Congress photo taken on October 4, 1929.



Streetcars in front of Union Station are featured in this c. 1913 Library of Congress photo.

On the following page is a Library of Congress photo of the USS Akron flying over Union Station. On November 2, 1931, the Akron departed on her first cruise down the eastern seaboard to Washington, DC. On November 3rd, she had 207 persons on board. This proved that in an emergency, airships could provide limited, but high-speed, airlift of troops to outlying areas.











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