COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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Carol J. Mitten, Chairperson
Zoning Commission
Suite 210
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 04-37 Eastgate Senior Residences Zoning Map Amendment and Consolidated PUD; B Street, S.E. (Square 5409, Lots 22-25)

Dear Chairperson Mitten:

As the Ward 7 City Council representative, I am writing in support of the request for a consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD) and related map amendment as proposed by the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), A&R Development and The Henson Development Company (Applicant). Zoning Commission approval of these changes will permit the Applicant to develop an independent living apartment building for low-income seniors in Ward 7.

The Eastgate Senior Residences are the first phase of housing to be completed under the Eastgate Hope VI Project. The Eastgate Hope VI Project is a federally funded renovation and revitalization project. This effort leverages federal dollars to improve both the social and physical infrastructure in neighborhoods where replacement is long overdue of aging public housing projects where many low and moderate-income residents have lived for many years. The proposed PUD, when completed, will improve a section of Ward 7 located at Anacostia Road, Ridge Road and B Streets SE.

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Affordable housing for our low-income seniors, many of whom have been long-term District residents, is a major development challenge facing the District. Ward 7 alone has approximately 12,000 seniors. The Eastgate Senior Residences is to be a new 100-unit senior housing development that will provide independent living for low-income elderly residents. In the interim, the Hope VI development process includes a Community and Supportive Services Program (CSSP), which is designed to work with the people who moved out of the neighborhood so that they can return.

The Wheeler Creek Community Development Corporation is leading the CSSP efforts at Eastgate and has worked to develop a relationship with a number of families that are affected by this redevelopment. I am supportive of this PUD and the related map amendment that will rezone the property from R-5-A to R-5-B, because of the efforts of the Applicant to work with the Wheeler Creek CDC to provide effective case management services to the many families, including the seniors that lived at the Eastgate Gardens and Stoddard Terrace. I understand that the CSSP, as of February 2005, has reached out to 146 active residents. Of that number, 136 needs assessments have been completed. Thus, I support the activities of the Applicant and the Wheeler Creek CDC since this partnership is working to ensure that our long-term residents at Eastgate Gardens and Stoddard Terrace can return as residents of the new Senior Building if they wish.

The Eastgate Steering Committee (ESC), a collaborative effort of community residents and the Applicant, has met on a monthly basis since December 2004. The Steering Committee has urged community input regarding the senior building's façade and artwork, as well as the need for the building's exterior to complement the existing structures in the neighborhood. In addition, the ESC is working to ensure that the seniors eligible for independent living will have a residence, which is welcoming and parking that is accessible.

Thus, I support approval of the Applicant's request for a PUD and a zoning map amendment.

Sincerely,

Vincent C. Gray

Vincent C. Gray
Ward 7 Councilmember