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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ZONING COMMISSION of the District of Columbia
In support of the Development of Skyland Town Center
Thursday, February 4, 2010
441 4th Street NW,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for the development at Skyland. I am a DC native whose family moved out of DC in the eighties to escape the increasing drug problem. I attended Simon Elementary on Mississippi Ave. Four and a half years ago, I decided to move back into the city and particularly Anacostia because the city was placing priority on improving the East of the River communities. In those four and a half years, I have seen some progress, but not as much as had been promised. I still have to go over the bridge into Capitol Hill to get type of retail and services I desire, such as a cozy café, a sit-down restaurant, office services or a bagel with cream cheese. I really want these things in my neighborhood.

I seldom shop at the Skyland shopping center, except to buy groceries or to buy a quick meal from the Caribbean takeout restaurant. Other than that, the plentiful options of fried chicken restaurants do not satisfy my dietary needs, since I prefer to eat healthy and wholesome foods. A coffee shop just recently opened in Anacostia, which is very well received by the community. More of these basic community amenities are necessary, particularly if East of the River neighborhoods are to continue to grow.

A mixed-use shopping center with convenient parking would be a welcome improvement over what is available now and would complement the improvements accruing in the community. In addition, a mixed-use shopping center would bring more jobs to SE and the surrounding DC area via the building and operations of the businesses. It would increase homeownership for many residents and new residents to DC. It would offer residents an opportunity to feel economically empowered by the positive changes and growth for our community. A mixed-use shopping center would offer residents an opportunity to live, work, and play in their community via homes, jobs, and retail that includes at least one sit-down restaurant. Let's keep Anacostia's and Hillcrest's dollars in these neighborhoods, hire the people that live in these neighborhoods and give more people a shot a great future while improving the living environment for all current and future residents.

This project has been stalled long enough. You are encouraged to grant your approval expeditiously. Any objections can be minimized with your conditions. The benefits far outweigh the objections.

Thank you.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 09-47
EXHIBIT NO. 91