DMPED Zoning Testimony
St. Elizabeths East

Good evening Commissioners, my name is Ethan Warsh, Project Manager with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, thank you for allowing me a moment to support St. Elizabeths East. I appreciate this opportunity to provide you with additional information on behalf of the Deputy Mayor's office that is important context for what you have already heard, and will continue to hear this evening.

The redevelopment of St. Elizabeths East represents a unique and important economic development project, meant to provide opportunities for education and training, career pathways, amenities, and the types of urban form that support these outcomes in a part of the District – Ward 8 – that has expressed an urgent need for them. Both the physical and economic aspects of the future plans for St. Elizabeths East were developed and articulated through an extensive planning processes that my colleagues at the Office of Planning have presented to you. Bellying these plans is the District's conviction that St. Elizabeths East possesses inherent characteristics that uniquely position it to provide these economic and community development outcomes; including:

- Its situation in the center of the Washington region, a region that boasts one of the strongest economies in the country;
- Its large size – approximately 180 acres;
- Its adjacency to a Metro station, specifically on the Green Line;
- Its distinct architecture, and;
- Its campus like environment.

But with this opportunity, there come challenges and complexities, challenges that include:

- The very large size of this site – 180 acres, 94 of which are slated to be developed;

- The lack of ANY usable infrastructure, including both roadways and utilities, next;

- The number of historic buildings featuring varying degrees of structural and architectural soundness – 900,000 SF of adaptive reuse is planned, and finally, the challenges presented by;

- The economics of developing a site situated in an area that has seen little other development of this type.

In its efforts to capitalize on the opportunities and address the challenges presented by the St. Elizabeths East campus, the District has pursued significant investments in recent years. These investments have been strategically designed to both advance achievement of desired community outcomes and add value such that St. Elizabeths East is positioned as a compelling opportunity to potential partners that will help the District realize its vision for the site. These investments – which will ultimately total $122 million in local funds – include:

- Master Planning the site in order to articulate a vision – both physical and programmatic – that is clear and compelling;

- Assessing current infrastructure conditions and creating plans for future infrastructure –roadways as well as all utilities – to support all future development;

- Building infrastructure at a total cost of approximately $100 million;

- Undertaking at a minimum $4.5 million in historic building stabilization, and lastly;

- Activating and pre-marketing the site to tenants aligned with the programming that defines the District's economic vision for the site, in order to communicate to all stakeholders that this vision is more than words on paper.

A critical component of these efforts is to take what is currently a single, unzoned lot and produce a zoning regime that expresses and applies the objectives and directives of the Master Plan on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

The District is seeking zoning that will provide certainty to all project stakeholders that the final product will be driven by the contents of the Master Plan while also responding to market realities and fears of over-saturation by breaking the site into distinct parcels, which will allow the District to implement development of St. Elizabeths East in phases. Implementing the Master Plan via the proposed zoning regulations is critical in achieving these goals by allowing the District to:

- First, provide certainty to *community members and other stakeholders* that individual development partners will be required to build what is contained in the Master Plan document, and;

- Second, to provide certainty to *development partners investing in a single parcel* that (1) they will be able to develop in accordance with the Master Plan parameters and (2) developers of later phases will be required to build according to those same parameters. Certainty allows the District's development partners to value their investment in a single parcel with the expectation of benefiting from a comprehensively master planned development.

Throughout the Master Planning process and in other forums, interested stakeholders have had extensive opportunity to learn and provide input and feedback to project staff – the planning principles, design guidelines, and proposed zoning reflect that input. Because St. Elizabeths East is a District-owned and District sponsored project, the District will continue to provide interested stakeholders with additional opportunities to participate throughout the planning and development process; specifically:

- All solicitations (to be issued by the Deputy Mayor's office) will be drafted and evaluated by the criteria adopted and required by the Master Plan – a document that, as has been said before, was developed with substantial stakeholder input and speaks to both building form as well as specific uses.

- Respondents who are determined by the Deputy Mayor's office to be responsive to the District's solicitation will be required to make a presentation to the affected ANC which will than have an opportunity to recommend their preferences as well as additional elements they would like to see removed, added or altered in the respondent's proposals.

- Using, among other criteria, the ANC and community's input and recommendations, the Deputy Mayor's office will select a respondent or respondents to negotiate a contract for the disposition and development of the subject parcel or parcels.

- As is required by District law, once the specific terms have been negotiated, the Deputy Mayor and Mayor will seek Council authority to execute the transaction upon the terms and conditions previously negotiated. Prior to Council action, Council will hold at least one public hearing, which will include opportunities for interested stakeholders to provide their input and testimony on the proposed disposition.

- Once Council approves, the development partner will be required to submit their plans to the Historic Preservation Review Board, which has jurisdiction over the entire site. This process will provide a forum for individuals and groups to express their perspectives.

- In addition to the HPRB review, plans will also be required to be submitted and approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) as well as the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) who will use the Master Plan and other historic preservation principles to conduct their evaluation.

I hope that I've helped to convey the opportunity that the District believes St. Elizabeths East presents to the residents of Ward 8, the City, and the Region. Thank you again and I am now available to answer any questions you may have.