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Washington Area Women's Foundation

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April 24, 2006

Sharon Schelling
Acting Secretary to the Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Comments on Inclusionary Zoning Proposed Rulemaking

Dear Ms. Schelling:

The purpose of this letter is to support the set of recommendations for changes to Proposed Rulemaking ZC Case No.04.33 submitted in writing by Manna, Inc. and its partners.

Washington Area Women's Foundation works to improve the lives of women and girls in the Washington region. Our work seeks to expand philanthropy among women and we provide financial and technical support to nonprofit organizations serving women and girls. We are the only foundation in the region with a singular focus on women and girls.

In 2004, The Women's Foundation launched *Stepping Stones* - a multi-year initiative to increase the economic security of low-income, women-headed families living in our area. Stepping Stones addresses four areas that improve the prospect of these families breaking out of a cycle of poverty: 1) financial education and wealth creation opportunities, 2) pathways to self-sufficient jobs and business ownership, 3) affordable child care and early education options and 4) health and safety. Under Stepping Stones, we provide grants and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, carry out community education, and support advocacy and leadership development.

As you might imagine, expanding homeownership and asset accumulation opportunities is an important component of the work being done by several Stepping Stones Grantee Partners (nonprofits with whom we work) in their efforts to improve the economic status of the women-headed families they serve. In fact, a sizable number of the Grantee Partners have housing expertise and are community leaders in this area.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-33
EXHIBIT NO. 213

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-33 CFC number 821
EXHIBIT NO.213

It recently came to our attention through our Grantee Partners that there are proposed rules that could adversely affect the ability of low-income, women-headed families to accumulate assets through homeownership if they participate in District of Columbia funded programs for low-income residents seeking to purchase a home. It is clear that the intent of the proposed rules – to preserve affordable housing – is a most laudable goal for the City. However, that goal must not conflict with goals to improve the long-term economic status of low-income women and their families.

I strongly urge you to take into consideration the recommended changes and analysis done by Manna, Inc. and its partners. Please feel free to contact me at 202.347 7737 ext. 210 or msims@wawf.org if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Marjorie R. Sims
Vice President of Program and Operation