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DC Zoning Commission

Z.C. Case No. 04-33A

Mandatory Inclusion Zoning

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**ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia**
CASE NO. 04-33A
EXHIBIT NO. 52
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Good evening, I am Carol Casperson, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC and a resident of Ward 8. I will be speaking both in my capacity as the head of a non-profit residential builder and as a concerned District resident.

DC Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness in the nation's capital by building affordable, energy- and resource-efficient homes. We recognize that we are unable to accomplish this lofty goal alone and therefore seek to support legislation which promotes and maintains the realization of our goals. I believe that the proposed Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning Map has the potential to help us accomplish our goals and thus should be approved by the Zoning Commission. Furthermore, I believe that the Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning map should include historic areas if it is to be as effective as it could and should be.

I would like to first commend the Office of Planning and its many contributors for producing an incredibly equitable inclusionary zoning map that tries to plan for the future while keeping the needs of the District's most vulnerable residents in mind. While there are many elements of the proposed map that are impressive, it is important to remember that the inclusion of historic areas is imperative if we are to utilize the city's resources to its highest potential. By now, the extent of the District's affordable housing crisis is well known, and therefore many understand that if the 52,000 families on the Housing Choice Voucher wait list are going to receive some relief, then measures like inclusionary zoning should not be under-utilized. It is also important to note that the MIZ legislation will be most effective if it is applied to the greatest area possible in the city and that historic areas make up a large portion of the District. The proposed map comes nearly close to

creating MIZ zones in the majority of the city and a large resource would be lost to the MIZ policy if historic areas were excluded.

In the previous Zoning Commission's IZ Hearings, many people made the point that the MIZ policy should apply to the whole of the nation's capital and that policymakers should resist the urge to overtax some areas with the responsibility of providing affordable housing. The proposed map takes those views into consideration as all wards are zoned for IZ. This is a great example of the city's commitment to creating the inclusive city that Mayor Williams envisioned. Thanks to the proposed MIZ map, each of the wards of the city would support diverse, mixed-income communities, ensuring that residents of the various wards benefit as well as take responsibility for the economic boom the District is currently experiencing. Historic Areas should not be excluded from this responsibility.

While it is important to maintain the character of historic areas, we should be aware that the ideas of preservation and affordable housing do not have to be exclusive. Although it may be assumed that higher density would threaten the character of historic areas, increased density has not always proven to be detrimental. For example, development in the 14th Street historic area has been able to sustain more density while maintaining its historic integrity. So, if we know that a marriage between preservation and increased density is possible, then the inclusion of historic districts in the MIZ map is necessary.

Additionally, all residents, regardless of their income levels should be able to reside in historic areas and experience the character of those neighborhoods. DC Habitat for Humanity was able to provide this opportunity to one of our homeowners. Her name

is Annie Whren and is disabled great-grandmother was determined to own a home and through our program, logged more than 500 hours of sweat equity. She lives on I Street in the Capitol Hill Historic District. She is hard-working, determined, and since 2003, has owned an affordable home in the Capitol Hill Historic District. Other District residents like Ms. Whren also deserve the opportunity to purchase a home they can afford. Therefore, it is imperative that compromises be made to ensure that historic areas be included in the MIZ map.

As I stated before, I am a resident of Ward 8 and I look forward to the opportunity that MIZ will provide for people who reside in the District. DC residents should have the ability to buy housing they can afford in the city in which they work. MIZ is one of many tools that city leaders have at their disposal to ensure that all of DC's residents, including the least powerful and least affluent are able to remain in the city and afford their housing. The commission should maximize the opportunity MIZ brings to increase the affordable housing stock and provide more affordable housing. The inclusion of historic areas in the MIZ map is essential if the policy is to be effective in dealing with the affordable housing crisis. Therefore, I ask the Zoning Commission to include historic areas and help the District grow a diverse and equitable city. Thank you for your time and attention