

Dear Honorable Chairperson, Committee Members and concerned individuals:

My name is Angela Bowen and I am the President and CEO of Community Services Foundation (also known as CSF). It brings me great pleasure to submit this written testimony to discuss my support of the Brookland Manor Redevelopment, in general, and, more specifically, the community services programs offered within the Brookland Manor Community Center. I have three and a half decades of experience working in property management and community services programs that serve property management companies. Before taking on the helm of Community Services Foundation, I served in various positions at Edgewood Management Corporation which included Accounting, Property Management and Edgewood Community Services.

As many of you may be aware, Mid City Development is the Owner of Brookland Manor Apartments and the founder of this company, the late Eugene F. Ford, Sr., had a deeply rooted vision and commitment to serve low and moderate income families, as his mission since the early 70's. Edgewood Management Corporation, of whom he formed with Mid City Development, as the parent company, has managed Brookland Manor, formerly Brentwood Village from this same time period and two generations of Ford Family members, Eugene Ford, Jr. and Madelaine Ford have now continued his mission. In the early '80's, Mr. Ford, Sr. expanded property management services to residents to include the implementation of community service programs under a division of Edgewood, known as Edgewood Community Services, also known as ECS. As part of ECS, residents began to participate in programs which initially included access to on site after school and summer programs to youth ages 5 – 12, at no cost to their families. As these youth programs became more structured, they were aligned with the public schools by offering homework assistance, reading and math enrichment tutoring, computer instruction, public speaking and journaling. Due to the quality of services that could be offered and options for outside funding that could be pursued if these programs were provided by a nonprofit, ECS ceased operations and Community Services Foundation (CSF) was formed. The programs are now offered in partnership with Mid City Development and Community Services Foundation from the time school lets out until 6pm, from 11am-6pm when school is closed for staff development days and from 9am to 6pm during the summer. An additional benefit of the program is that it provides breakfast, lunch, supper, snacks and weekend bags for free during the summer and snacks and supper during the after school program, thanks to CSF's partnership with Capital Area Food Bank. The summer program is also enhanced by on site swimming instruction classes, weekly field trips to local venues and health and wellness activities.

Once participants age out of the youth program, they are able to participate in CSF's onsite Teen Program. The teen program includes art initiatives, music development, communication skills, conflict resolution, homework assistance, computer instruction and a host of job development activities. These programs are provided either in the teen space or in the main Community Center at Brookland Manor, that ownership has so willingly maintained for these activities, along with an outdoor playground and garden.

Adults and seniors participate in CSF's onsite programs which include social activities, receiving donated food items, computer instruction, job search assistance in the on site computer lab, social development activities, referrals for agency assistance and a host of health and wellness programs that assist with their everyday needs. But, the community center programs are so much more. When the rental office conducts unit inspections and learns that there are families that are residing in their units, but sleeping on the floor of their apartments, they reach out to Community Services Foundation to help. CSF will work with its community partners to find donors who are willing to provide new mattresses and beds for the families. Also, each year, during what can be a difficult holiday season for families in need, adults and seniors receive either Thanksgiving food baskets or gift cards, in addition to youth who express various needs in Letters to Santa have them fulfilled from the employees of Mid City Development, Edgewood Management Corporation or community based organizations that partner with CSF. As the years have passed, Mid City Development

continues to generously fund these community service programs for the residents and CSF works to expand funding, writing proposals to agencies such as DC Trust (formerly known as DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation) who have funded the summer programs for 12 of the past 15 years.

The commitment of Mid City Development to the current residents is also evident in its planning and dedication to retaining deeply affordable housing units as a part of this redevelopment. MidCity Development has committed to offer housing in the redeveloped community to all residents in good standing. In addition, Mid City Development and Edgewood Management Corporation are working to ensure families are moved into a comparable unit while renovation is taking place. At this time in the nation's capital, the Brookland Manor Apartment community is located on prime real estate that could, easily, be used for the construction of housing with prices starting, at least, in the upper \$500,000 for a single dwelling. However, this is not the course of action even remotely considered by Mid City Development. From the onset, Mid City Development has conferred with residents to determine their needs as to what will make the new development a success. From the implementation of green spaces on the property for recreational area uses to the consideration of a highly accessible building for the elderly for ease of living, to the continuation of the community services programs on the property, the development was designed with more than a focus on just bricks and mortar. This level of detail and commitment to ensuring the quality of life for residents is unprecedented and underlines the care and concern Mid City Development is taking to consider the impact that the new development will have on residents, while continuing to keep Mr. Ford's vision very much alive.

Community surveys are being administered to assess the impact the project is having on the community and to determine areas that need to be addressed. Community information meetings are regularly held in an effort to keep residents abreast of the redevelopment. Mid City Development has also participated in community service events to allow residents the opportunity to raise concerns. All of these forums have been designed to take suggestions into consideration for determining solutions. Along with all of these efforts, Mid City Development continues to reach out to community services in an effort to gather feedback on additional steps that can be implemented in an effort to help ease the concerns of residents to share in the development of this project. Community invested individuals and organizations have worked with each level of this project to help outreach to residents and to positively impact the development. We know that helping communities transition can sometimes, be a daunting task. However, Mid City Development has painstakingly taken steps to help educate and alleviate resident concerns.

It is for these reasons that I stand with them in their pursuit to bring this development to fruition. Finally, on a personal note, I am a native Washingtonian. My family and I have lived in the same neighborhood as Brookland Manor for over three decades. We've seen the community at its lowest point with abandoned buildings, poor upkeep of occupied homes, apartments and high crime. We believe that this redevelopment is coming at a time when the community is beginning to thrive again and have services in the neighborhood whereby residents can access and find conveniences needed very close to where they call "home." I believe that Mid City Development's redevelopment of Brookland Manor is very timely and needed to sustain the homes for residents and contribute positively to the inevitable needs of the community.