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March 4, 2015

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Zoning Case (ZC) 14-22: Proposed Text and Map Amendment to Create New Zoning for the District's Portion of the Former Walter Reed Campus

Testimony of Juanita Hardy, Executive Director, CulturalDC

Good Evening Commissioners,

My name is Juanita Hardy, and I am the Executive Director of CulturalDC, a local nonprofit in the District of Columbia dedicated to making space for art. We strongly support the enactment of Zoning Case 14-22 to create new zoning for the District's portion of the former Walter Reed Campus. The zoning enactment is on the critical path to unlocking one of the richest cultural resources, and associated economic development benefits, that the District of Columbia offers.

To provide a little more information about our organization: Each year CulturalDC serves over 1,000 artists and arts groups and 30,000 audience members through the activation of art space and presentation of contemporary visual and performing arts at our two spaces, Flashpoint and Source, and in nontraditional venues across the city. Through our programs and services we work with artists, arts organizations and real estate developers to build the creative infrastructure that fuels the arts and builds community in Washington, DC. We have been part of the Hines-Urban Atlantic-Triden Master Development Team from its conception, prior to its selection as Master Developer by the District of Columbia Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA). We and George Koch of Artomatic and the Center for the Creative Economy worked closely with the team to develop an arts plan that builds on the platform established by the Small Area Plan (SAP). Together, we responded to the SAP's call to activate the Walter Reed site early in the development through arts and culture, with an early emphasis on the southern portions and the site but also with an eye for integrating the arts throughout the new community.

Following the SAP, we envision exciting interim uses for the project's construction period such as an Internal Artomatic on Cameron Glen, as well as seasonal events including Easter Egg rolls, outdoor concerts and movies, a kite festival and scavenger hunts. We envision a large tent at the corner of Aspen and Georgia where pop up restaurants, food and wine festivals, performing arts, DC Photo Week, veteran artist projects and a jazz fish fry can be held.

For the long term, we envision ongoing arts exhibits, performances, and cultural activities in some of the historic buildings onsite that provide cultural and entertainment for Ward 4 and the broader city. We solicited letters of interest from local arts businesses and nonprofits

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 14-22

WE MAKE SPACE FOR ART

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 14-22
EXHIBIT NO. 13



around the city – including Washington Glass School, Flux Studios and Joy of Motion Dance Center – who have a strong interest in permanently locating within the Walter Reed campus. We also envision an outdoor Arts Market for local artists and artisans to sell their wares. Artist housing has been contemplated as part of the early phases of development, and public art and memorials commemorating the sacrifice and honor of veterans are planned for some of the earliest buildings to be redeveloped. A creative arts and history walk is planned to run throughout the site to enhance the public space experience of walking or riding through Walter Reed, as well as iconic public art initiatives that help to create a sense of place.

Not only does this arts programming support the cultural life within the District of Columbia; the arts have proven to play a key role in economic development, creating local jobs and local business opportunities. We eagerly look forward to bring this economic activity to Ward 4 and the broader city.

We are pleased that the draft zoning that the Office of Planning has developed for Walter Reed is based on the SAP and supports these uses, and that the project is moving forward quickly. With real estate prices increasing rapidly throughout the District of Columbia, the need for affordable art space, as well as artist housing, grows ever more critical. The new Walter Reed will help meet these demands, contributing life, vibrancy, character, culture, and economic benefits to the entire city. We strongly support the enactment of the Walter Reed zoning so that this important cultural resource can be unlocked without delay.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Juanita Hardy
Executive Director, CulturalDC

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