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Subject: Case No. 26-06 – Written Testimony of Devon Coleman (401 14th Street SW)

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Testimony – Zoning Commission Case No. 26-06, 401 14th Street SW

Good afternoon, Chairman Hood and members of the Commission. My name is Devon Coleman, a Ward 5 resident and community advocate. I am testifying with concerns about the proposed map amendment to rezone 401 14th Street SW to D-8.

First, community notice. I learned about this case almost by chance. This was federal land, sold by the General Services Administration to a private company, and it sits between the National Mall and the waterfront. A decision this significant deserves citywide notice. Most residents have no idea it is being made today.

Second, the city's own plan. The Future Land Use Map designates this site as Parks, Recreation, and Open Space. The Office of Planning's own report calls this "the most significant inconsistency" with the Comprehensive Plan. I ask the Commission to take that seriously.

Third, there is no plan to review. The report says there is no specific development proposal for the site. Rezoning to the city's highest-density zone without knowing what will be built asks the public to approve a blank check.

Fourth, the location. This site sits at the busy junction of 14th Street, Maine Avenue, and Raoul Wallenberg Place, beside the Tidal Basin and steps from the Washington Monument. It is a tourist corridor full of pedestrians, cyclists, and buses. Yet the report includes no traffic analysis.

Fifth, history and environment. The Liberty Loan Building dates to 1918. It could be restored and reused as a museum, cultural, or educational space that serves residents and visitors. The mature trees here provide shade in an area surrounded by pavement. The site is also in a Resilience Focus Area, where flood risk must be addressed. As DC faces hotter summers and stronger storms, we should protect green space, not build over it.

My requests:
1. Do not approve the D-8 rezoning without broader community notice, including a formal position from ANC 2A.
2. Require traffic, flood, environmental, and heat-island studies before any approval.

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3. Give serious consideration to preserving and reusing the historic building for public benefit, with the trees protected.
4. If any rezoning moves forward, require a clear plan for affordable housing on this public land, and evaluate whether current programs, including Inclusionary Zoning, truly serve the residents who need them. Affordable housing should be defined by what DC residents at every income level can actually afford, including family-sized homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Devon Coleman
Ward 5 resident