



May 28, 2018

BZA Board

**Re: Mi Casa Anacostia Properties**

To Whom It May Concern:

Building Bridges Across the River is writing to express our support for Mi Casa's side-yard relief zoning proposal on two historic Anacostia properties that were conveyed as part of PADD's 2017 solicitation. These properties are located at 1528 W Street SE and 1928 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Both properties are corner lots and do not conform to the new zoning guidelines which require to eight foot side yards, essentially rendering them unbuildable. Mi Casa has a long history of providing quality affordable housing to low and moderate households in Washington D.C. These lots will help create needed affordable housing east of the river.

Building Bridges Across the River is leading the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park – a collaboration with the District Government to transform an aged-out freeway bridge into a new civic space linking the city. From the beginning, community engagement and feedback have driven the conceptualization and design of the Bridge Park. Throughout this community-led process, it became clear that the Bridge Park had the potential to be more than just an innovative public space. In particular, the Bridge Park could symbolize a new unity and connection between a booming area of the city and one that has long been overlooked and excluded from the city's economic progress. This is especially important for D.C. residents and small businesses located east of the river that have thus far been largely excluded from the city's economic progress. Decades of disinvestment, coupled with the economic, racial and geographic segregation of Wards 7 and 8, mean that many of the communities east of the river—especially those closest to where the Bridge Park touches down—are areas of low homeownership, as well as high poverty and unemployment.

In 2015, the local community together with other city stakeholders came together to draft an Equitable Development Plan to address these issues intentionally and early. Efforts to promote long term housing affordability were key recommendations. Mi Casa's zoning application is part of their larger work to create new affordable housing, increase ownership opportunities and promote economic development – all critically needed in Ward 8 and the city.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Kratz".

Scott Kratz

Vice President, Building Bridges Across the River  
Director, 11th Street Bridge Park

CC: Fernando Lemos, Executive Director, Mi Casa  
Elin Zurbrigg, Deputy Director, Mi Casa