

Testimony  
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Public Hearing  
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District of Columbia Zoning Commission

My name is Rob Tilson, and I represent the Potomac Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Our profession encompasses the analysis, planning, design, management, and stewardship of natural and built environments. In short, landscape architects create places where people feel connected to their families, neighbors, and communities.

We share the belief that the new ballpark for the Washington Nationals should be such a place. Our members stand in strong support for placing parking facilities for the new stadium underground in order to encourage mixed-use neighborhood development around the ballpark.

As you know, there are many design elements and other factors that come together to create that 'sense of place' that draws people together. The ballpark will have a key advantage—the draw of the baseball games six months out of the year. However, to make this development a boon to the community, the draw needs to reach beyond the 81 home games each season. The area surrounding the ballpark must become a vibrant neighborhood and destination as well. ASLA <sup>WOULD</sup> ~~is~~ deeply concerned that a decision to create above-ground parking ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> severely inhibit the sense of place so critical to the success of this project. This impact goes beyond economic development in Southeast. If the city does not develop a place where Washingtonians want to live and to visit, the Nationals will struggle to develop their fan base as well.

By contrast, the Verizon Center has leveraged viable development for several blocks on all sides, creating an exciting, diverse neighborhood every night of the

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EXHIBIT No. 49  
EXHIBIT NO.49

year. The Verizon Center demonstrates how mixed-use development can create a vibrant neighborhood for residents, tourists, and sports fans alike. We believe that the decision to locate the Center's parking underground has been critical to this success. This success can be repeated with the new ballpark, but it will take a long-range vision, well beyond Opening Day of the new stadium.

ASLA supports Mayor Anthony Williams' compromise proposal for a combination of underground and aboveground parking that is hidden from view. Even without all parking below-ground, this plan preserves the mixed-use principles that will tie the ballpark together with the neighborhood and help create a lively environment in baseball season – and in every season.

In conclusion, we appreciate the opportunity to offer the expertise of our members, landscape architects who live and work in the greater Washington metropolitan area. Thank you for your kind consideration of our position.