



**Testimony of Beth McConnell
Policy Director, Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations**

**On the 2017 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and FY19
Budget Needs
Before the Division of Housing and Community Development and Department of Commerce
City of Philadelphia**

February 13, 2018

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Beth McConnell, and I'm the Policy Director for the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC). PACDC is a membership association of more than 120 CDCs and other organizations that are dedicated to equitable neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment.

First, we want to thank the Kenney Administration for the support of our Community Development Leadership Institute. A strong city needs strong neighborhood organizations that have the training, relationships, and skills to implement city programs that encourage economic development and create affordable housing opportunities. In FY17, we presented seventeen trainings as well as the Fourth Annual Equitable Development Symposium and our first full-day Equitable Development Conference. Altogether, 780 community development practitioners and related professionals attended capacity-building sessions on such topics as *Answering the Call to Preserve Philadelphia's Affordable Housing and Incubating New Business Development on Neighborhood Commercial Corridors*.

As you consider neighborhood needs while preparing the preliminary Consolidated Plan for FY19, PACDC makes the following recommendations:

Work with Council to pass an ordinance that at least doubles dedicated revenue to the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund, and creates more mixed income housing opportunities.

As you know, the need for more resources for affordable home production, preservation, and to end homelessness is overwhelming. While the Trump Administration proposes massive cuts to HUD's housing programs, and elimination of funding for other housing programs, Philadelphia must take a proactive approach to generate local resources to expand, not contract, our affordable housing strategies. PACDC has been working with Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez to push legislation that would require that market rate developers begin to contribute their fair share toward creating more affordable homes, either by providing affordable units in their developments to create more mixed income communities, or by making payments to the Housing Trust Fund. While debates are ongoing in Council about the various proposals, we urge the Kenney Administration to become more forceful advocates in

favor of a policy that will make a meaningful impact on our housing affordability needs by generating significant new resources for the HTF.

Help our Commercial Corridors Stabilize and Grow. We thank the Kenney Administration for continuing General Fund support for two programs that are critical to our neighborhood commercial corridors, including the Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) and the corridor cleaning program. These programs make our neighborhood shopping districts more attractive and friendly places, which brings out more foot traffic and investment that benefits very small businesses. We urge you to continue funding those programs, as well as the Targeted Corridor Management Program (TCMP) that provides the vital staff to help small business access city-funded programs like the Power Up Your Business Program, and be compliant with city rules and requirements like the soda tax, or property maintenance and licensing. PACDC is hearing from our corridor managers about three major challenges that we hope you will consider finding new resources to support in FY19:

1. *The need for more translation services.* Immigrant-owned businesses are driving growth and investment on our corridors, but many of our CDCs don't have access to reliable and regular translation services in the variety of languages spoken on any one corridor. This makes it hard to connect businesses to programs and services they are eligible for, and from which they could benefit. We urge the Kenney Administration to examine ways to make translation services and resources more widely available to non-city staff that work with our immigrant entrepreneurs.
2. *Support for the rising cost of police for neighborhood events.* More and more CDCs are finding that the costs of Philadelphia police presence at their neighborhood events is becoming untenable. We understand the important role the police play in keeping the public safe, but the growing demands and costs have not come with increased funds. This has placed some events that are critical to marketing our corridors and creating community cohesion at risk of being cancelled or significantly curtailed. PACDC would like to work with the Kenney Administration to address those rising costs.
3. *Capital budget needs to keep our corridors well-lit, safe, and attractive.* CDCs are clamoring for more resources to make capital improvements on our corridors, including lighting, repair and improvements of sidewalks, streets, intersections and curbs to make it safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, street furniture and landscaping that attract shoppers and community members into public spaces. Although the capital budget is not directly addressed in the Consolidated Plan, we wanted to note the importance of boosting those investments that directly affect the success of programs funded in the Con Plan.

Continue support for the NAC program. PACDC thanks the Administration for continuing to fund Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs), staff of whom are critical in helping residents save their homes from tax and mortgage foreclosure, as well as gain access to other benefits and services that help low income families. We hope you will continue your support for the NAC program in FY19. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

