



PASSYUNK AVENUE REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

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Testimony of Bryan Fenstermaker
Executive Director, Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation

Before the City Council Committee on Finance
Hon. Jannie Blackwell, Chair

Bill No. 180261
May 22, 2018

Good morning Chairwoman Blackwell, Vice-Chairman Henon and members of the Committee on Finance. My name is Bryan Fenstermaker and I am the Executive Director of Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation ("PARC"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Bill No. 180261 which would amend the City of Philadelphia Code, under which businesses may enter into agreements to make contributions to community development corporations that deliver neighborhood level services and programs.

PARC has an ongoing mission which is to provide community services through dual strategies; as both a non-profit real estate development/management company and a public space maintenance and enhancement organization. PARC provides public space maintenance, public event support, and improvement services on Passyunk Avenue and in the surrounding neighborhoods. As a management company PARC owns real estate primarily on East Passyunk Avenue retail corridor and commits to community engagement and business attraction to ensure a quality retail mix that serves both the neighborhood and the region.

Keeping it clean is what PARC strives for on a day-to-day basis. Our team provides six days a week cleaning all year long. The team maintains trash cans, addresses short dumping, graffiti and poster removal on Passyunk Avenue and portions of S. Broad Street. These are essential services for retaining East Passyunk Avenue's regional attraction and visitor appeal. For example, in 2017 our crew removed 7,383 large (55 gallon) bags of trash from neighborhood sidewalks - that is approximately 140 tons of garbage, or more than 16 dump trucks!

There are little to no financial resources available to non-profits in middle neighborhoods to support this type of work. PARC operates entirely from revenue generated from its properties which isn't enough and not sustainable. PARC is a lean organization with one and a half-staff and pays real estate taxes on its properties. Approximately 40% of PARC's budget is dedicated to cleaning services and another 30% support maintenance and beautification of public spaces. The CDC tax credit bill will allow for continued services along the Avenue and S. Broad Street. An expansion of this program will go directly to Philadelphia neighborhoods and their vital commercial corridors.



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The program has had great success and built capacity for community development corporations throughout the city. As competitive as the program is there is also the partnership challenge. Specifically, for a non-profit to find a partner with BIRT liabilities. The courtship process is time consuming and usually leads to dead ends. To that point, I have had more success finding a wife than finding a tax credit partner. **I urge you to pass this bill as it stands now and work with PACDC and others to provide avenues for broadening the partnership track.** For example: expanding the partnership track to include real estate partners could alleviate another difficult part of the program. Time is money for CDCs so any opportunity to streamline the partnership process is valuable to a small organization like PARC.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to take any questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bryan R. Fenstermaker'.

Bryan R. Fenstermaker
Executive Director