

Testimony of Buwa Binitie

*Before the Committee on Business and Economic Development
Parcel 13*

Good morning, Chairman Frumin and esteemed Councilmembers. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing. My name is Buwa Binitie, and I'm the Founder and CEO of Dumas Collective, a Black-owned, Washington, DC-based firm committed to creating and preserving affordable housing across the District. Our companies have proudly served the District for nearly 20yrs.

Throughout that time, we've remained at the forefront of delivering affordable housing solutions in Washington, DC. We've partnered with the city on numerous developments to ensure our most vulnerable residents have access to quality, affordable homes. To date, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has invested more than \$300 million into Dantes Partners-led development deals, translating into over \$1 billion in total development cost. These transformative development projects have helped generate generational wealth, foster stable communities, and deliver sustainable impact throughout the District.

I am here today to request support from you and your colleagues in advancing Parcel 13, a project with a legacy deeply rooted in the work of Neighborhood Development Company (NDC). As you may know, NDC assigned its development rights to Dantes Partners, and we are fully committed to building and seeing this project through with your support.

Moving forward on Parcel 13 would mark Dantes Partners 12th project partnership with the District and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic and Development (DMPED). Like Parcel 42 and Capitol Vista – we don't take these responsibility lightly. We also appreciate that both Mayor Bowser and the Council continue to recognize the importance of investing scarce District-owned resources in housing that serves the public good, particularly for residents of modest income.

Our current vision is to divide the Parcel 13 site into two residential components, housing for seniors as well as housing for working class families. Based on our preliminary research there are currently no senior housing options on the St. Elizabeths campus or in the immediate surrounding area. We are honored to introduce what would be the first new construction to this site. Our experience in developing affordable and workforce housing is extensive, including the development of Delta Towers, located in Ward 5, the ward you once represented. We are proud of what we accomplished there and intend to bring that same quality and intention to Parcel 13.

Again, thank you for your leadership and support of Black-owned, locally based firms as we work to build and own a piece of DC's future. I welcome your questions and look forward to further discussion.