

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, May 22, 2018
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

BILLS 180261, 180347, 180351, 180392, and
180393

- - -

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
3 morning, everybody. We will begin the
4 public hearing on Finance. The Chair
5 recognizes that a quorum is present. To
6 my right, Councilwoman Bass, Councilman
7 Oh, Councilman Domb, and to my left,
8 Councilman Greenlee.

9 For the record, we will be
10 holding Bill Nos. 180347, 180351 to the
11 call of the Chair.

12 Clerk, would you please read
13 the titles of the bills.

14 THE CLERK: Bill No. 180261, an
15 ordinance amending subsection 19-2604(6)
16 of The Philadelphia Code, under which
17 businesses may enter into agreements to
18 make contributions to community
19 development corporations and certain
20 other organizations to receive credits
21 against business income and receipts
22 taxes, by increasing the number of
23 businesses for which the credit shall be
24 made available to, all under certain
25 terms and conditions.

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.

2 180392, an ordinance amending
3 Chapter 19-1400 of The Philadelphia Code,
4 entitled "Realty Transfer Tax," by
5 amending Section 19-1405, entitled
6 "Excluded Transactions," by replacing
7 gendered marital signifiers.

8 180393, an ordinance amending
9 Title 19, Chapter 2900, of The
10 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Senior
11 Citizen Low Income Special Tax
12 Provisions," to make certain technical
13 changes; all under certain terms and
14 conditions.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

16 Is there anyone here from the
17 Administration that wishes to provide
18 testimony for Bill Nos. 180392 and
19 180393.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
23 morning. You may approach. State your
24 name for the record and then begin with
25 your testimony, and thank you.

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2 MS. HIKES: Fantastic. My name
3 is Amber Hikes and I am the Executive
4 Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBT
5 Affairs. The Office of LGBT Affairs
6 develops priorities for the City on
7 issues including public safety,
8 education, economic development, health
9 and City services, and civil rights
10 regarding LGBTQ Philadelphians. As
11 Executive Director, I develop policy and
12 serve as the principal advisor to Mayor
13 Jim Kenney on issues that affect the
14 LGBTQ community. Thank you for
15 introducing these bills and for the
16 opportunity to support this legislation
17 which replaces gendered marital
18 signifiers in the Realty Transfer Tax and
19 Senior Citizen Low Income Special Tax
20 Provisions.

21 Eradicating the use of gendered
22 language in these ordinances ensures that
23 Philadelphia is protecting its LGBT
24 community members, as well as recognizing
25 that all genders' sexual orientations and

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2 relationships are vital components of our
3 city. Using non-gendered terms such as
4 "spouse" is a simple solution to a
5 serious problem. For trans and
6 non-binary community members, the terms
7 "husband" and "wife" or "widow" and
8 "widower" fails to accurately recognize
9 their relationship. In the case of
10 gender transition, gendered terms can
11 create at least uncomfortable and at
12 worst dangerous situations where the
13 assigned sex of an individual is public
14 information even after transition because
15 of their marriage certificate. Changing
16 the language shows our respect for
17 marriages and the identities of LGBTQ
18 Philadelphians, and it streamlines the
19 legal and estate proceedings wherein such
20 documentation is relevant. In the
21 interest of efficiency, using the word
22 "spouse" prevents the necessity of
23 administrative changes to documents
24 without detracting in any way from the
25 importance of the gravity of the

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2 relationship formed in marriage.
3 Additionally, using non-gendered language
4 also sets a standard of acceptance, which
5 will inspire more confidence in our
6 judicial system's ability to recognize
7 and support people of all genders and
8 sexual orientations. Given that we now
9 celebrate the rights of all residents to
10 love and marry who they choose, it is
11 vital that concrete changes of this kind
12 occur to prevent any residual inequality
13 or discrimination in our laws.

14 The Office of LGBT Affairs
15 wholeheartedly supports Bills 180392 and
16 180393 and any measures to affirm and
17 accommodate LGBTQ individuals,
18 specifically those who are non-binary and
19 transgender. In situations like these
20 that are deeply personal and incredibly
21 important, the value of these
22 improvements cannot be overstated.

23 Thank you, Councilman Green,
24 Chairwoman Blackwell, and members of the
25 Committee on Finance for your time and

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 effort in addressing these important
3 issues that impact LGBTQ Philadelphians.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 The Chair recognizes that we
7 were joined by Councilwoman Parker.

8 We do have someone else on the
9 panel before I open it up for questions.
10 Sarah Stevenson, if you are here, could
11 you please approach.

12 (Witness approached the witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: You may
15 state your name for the record and
16 proceed with your testimony, and then we
17 will open it up for questions.

18 MS. STEVENSON: Good morning.
19 My name is Sarah Stevenson and I'm here
20 today testifying in my personal capacity,
21 although I will say the Water
22 Commissioner did grant enthusiastic
23 leave, which shows the Administration's
24 support of these moves.

25 Good morning, members of the

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 Finance Committee. I'm before you today
3 as a gay Philadelphian currently residing
4 in the Second Councilmanic District. I
5 support the code changes proposed in
6 Bills No. 180392 and 180393 and thank
7 Councilman Derek Green for their
8 introduction.

9 I married my wife in 2014 at
10 Christ Church at 2nd and Market. I
11 believe that the City of Philadelphia is
12 a progressive place and a residence of
13 choice for many LGBT inclusive people.
14 While we certainly have work to do, I
15 believe the vast majority of residents
16 and the City government itself want to do
17 the right thing and provide a safe and
18 welcoming home to all types of people.
19 This legislation keeps us moving in the
20 right direction.

21 My work requires that I follow
22 the legislation that comes out of this
23 body very closely. While reviewing
24 another bill amending Philadelphia Code
25 Section 19-1405, I noticed that the terms

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2 "husband" and "wife" are still being used
3 with respect to real estate transactions
4 when same-sex marriage has been legal in
5 Pennsylvania for several years. I
6 recommended replacing these terms with
7 "spouse" so there would be no mistake
8 about who was entitled to an exemption
9 from the realty transfer tax in
10 Philadelphia. I imagine Revenue has been
11 applying the exemption equally in
12 accordance with what the Constitution
13 requires, but words matter in the law and
14 in public discourse.

15 Thank you again to this Council
16 and in particular to Councilman Green for
17 sponsoring these bills and supporting the
18 LGBT inclusive community in Philadelphia.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
20 for your testimony.

21 Any questions on the Committee?

22 The Chair recognizes Councilman

23 Oh.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
25 much, Chairman.

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2 So the bill is fine, but I do
3 have a question in terms of tracking
4 demographics. We generally like to know,
5 for example, what's happening with women
6 versus men, people over a certain age
7 versus under a certain age, someone who
8 is African American versus someone who is
9 Caucasian. We generally like that
10 information because it helps us to
11 understand what's happening and if there
12 are cases of discrimination, they can be
13 addressed.

14 And so while this bill is fine,
15 ultimately if language is being changed
16 to surviving spouse, if we don't have a
17 way of tracking whether that surviving
18 spouse who is receiving a benefit or
19 taking advantage of a program or in fact
20 is dominating an area that that surviving
21 spouse is in fact a man versus a woman,
22 how would we correct that?

23 What are your kind of thoughts
24 on that? For example, if there were a
25 surviving spouse and optionally you could

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2 put in male or female, if you don't want
3 to identify your gender, that would be an
4 option or is this just where we're
5 heading, is we're just going to be gender
6 neutral? Are we ultimately not going to
7 identify any of these demographic
8 information?

9 MS. HIKES: To my knowledge, we
10 don't actually ask for gender. We're not
11 tracking that data as it stands. So I
12 can tell you specifically when it relates
13 to sexual orientation and gender
14 identity, we're not tracking that data
15 anywhere in the City.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: For example, in
17 domestic abuse, we say domestic abuse
18 spouse, we wouldn't have the information
19 about what percentage are female versus
20 male, for example?

21 MS. HIKES: Right. So, again,
22 as I'm understanding, there are certain
23 organizations that may be tracking that,
24 but as a city, I'm not sure about that
25 data being collected.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: I'm saying if
3 we change the terminology within
4 legislation, do we end up not, for
5 example, tracking, having the resulting
6 demographic information that these
7 organizations use in order to lobby,
8 advocate, seek additional funding to
9 address disparities in the system?

10 MS. HIKES: Right. Absolutely.
11 And, again, we're not tracking that data
12 now, so this change would not affect data
13 that we're already not tracking.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. While
15 we're not tracking, it somehow is being
16 tracked, I would think. It's trackable.

17 MS. HIKES: It could be
18 trackable, but I'm saying for the
19 purposes of this bill, that information
20 is not being collected.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: For the
22 purposes of this bill. I don't have a
23 problem with this bill. I'd like to know
24 overall policy-wise if we head in this
25 direction, how will we know, for example,

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2 that in fact there is de facto
3 discrimination? In other words, we have
4 laws that appear to be neutral on their
5 face, then we find that 95 percent of
6 those adversely affected are women, and
7 then we can look at a legal suit or
8 legislation or someone can bring it to
9 our attention. If we don't track who is
10 being affected in which way, how do we
11 address those situations?

12 MS. HIKES: I imagine that that
13 data is being pulled from other resources
14 and other sources and probably not being
15 pulled from the realty transfer tax and
16 the senior citizen low income special tax
17 provisions.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.
19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: The Chair
21 recognizes we are also joined with
22 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown and
23 Councilman Squilla.

24 Is there anyone else on this
25 Committee that wishes -- the Chair

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 I just wanted to thank you all
6 for coming and testifying on this
7 important bill this morning. I think
8 that the changes are long overdue and
9 that they do give a particular level of
10 respect and dignity that we're all trying
11 to work very hard to ensure that all
12 citizens in Philadelphia have.

13 So I just really wanted to
14 thank you for being here and for your
15 testimony and to the bill sponsor,
16 because this is something that's
17 definitely overdue and moving in the
18 right direction for all of our citizens.

19 So thank you so much.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
21 Councilwoman.

22 And I'd like to echo that. I
23 think with the current Administration and
24 previous Administration, we're working
25 towards smart and up-to-date policy for

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2 all citizens of the City of Philadelphia.
3 So I think these technical changes will
4 make a great deal of comfort knowing that
5 your city government understands and is
6 here to support and change our policies
7 as we see necessary. So thank you so
8 much.

9 Is there anyone else here that
10 wishes to testify on Bill No. 180392 and
11 180393?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: That being
14 none, thank you.

15 We are now going to move on to
16 our next bill, which is 180261. Is there
17 anybody from the Administration that
18 wishes to offer testimony on 180261?
19 Panel 1 I believe is Karen Fegely. If
20 you are here, please approach. State
21 your name for the record and you may
22 proceed with your testimony.

23 (Witness approached witness
24 table.)

25 MS. FEGELY: Good morning,

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 everyone, Councilman Henon and members of
3 the Finance Committee. My name is Karen
4 Fegely and I'm a Deputy Commerce
5 Director. I am here to testify on Bill
6 180261, a proposal to amend the Code in
7 order to expand the number of CDCs that
8 can benefit from the CDC tax credit
9 program.

10 Community development
11 corporations are integral to our
12 neighborhood economic development
13 strategy. These non-profit organizations
14 carry out activities such as development
15 of housing and commercial properties,
16 linking businesses to resources,
17 connecting workforce to businesses, and
18 tackling crime and blight. CDCs have a
19 tremendous impact on the economic
20 development of the City and play a vital
21 role in revitalizing our neighborhoods.
22 PACDC's 2012 report measured a \$3.3
23 billion impact to Philadelphia's economy.
24 Lamentably, the funding environment for
25 CDCs is scarce, especially for general

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2 operations, and we believe the funds
3 provided through the CDC tax credit
4 program has been pivotal to the success
5 of many of our CDCs, and the support we
6 provide has leveraged other capital from
7 foundations, corporations, and
8 individuals. We are grateful to
9 Councilman Wilson Goode, Jr. for
10 instituting this program and to all of
11 City Council for your support over the
12 years.

13 Nevertheless, this program has
14 some challenges that have spurred the
15 Department of Commerce, Finance, and
16 several members of Council to explore
17 other models. While we are aware of a
18 number of organizations seeking a slot in
19 the program, there is no way to ensure
20 that the most impactful will be the ones
21 to gain these slots. CDCs have a hard
22 time finding partners that have large
23 BIRT liabilities, especially since this
24 is confidential taxpayer information,
25 meaning we can't provide the CDCs a list

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2 of eligible partners. Further,
3 businesses enrolled in the program
4 receive no material reduction in their
5 liability since they pay 100 percent of
6 the credited tax to the CDC, leaving
7 fewer businesses motivated to
8 participate.

9 Once a business partner has
10 been secured, entry into the program is
11 by lottery; therefore, not guaranteed.
12 Additionally, while the ten-year
13 commitment is intended to provide a
14 long-term stable funding source for a
15 CDC's operation, it is not a guarantee
16 that a business partner will participate
17 for the full ten years. In 2018, there
18 were at least three CDCs scrambling to
19 find new business partners because
20 existing partners dropped out. With
21 job-spurring reduction in BIRT rates over
22 the last few years to help our economy
23 thrive, a reduced number of businesses
24 have BIRT bills large enough to cover the
25 ten years of contributions.

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2 So rather than expand the
3 number of slots in this program, we want
4 to propose instead offering a direct
5 grant program that would provide very
6 similar benefits for CDCs that are not
7 currently participating in the CDC tax
8 credit program. Commerce would
9 administer a competitive grant program
10 and, similar to the tax credit program,
11 the grants could be used as the CDC
12 leadership sees fit for operating and
13 program expenses in exchange for carrying
14 out their economic development plans.

15 The Administration would like
16 this Committee to consider leaving the
17 number of slots as is while we pilot this
18 grant in 2019 with \$300,000. This will
19 allow an expansion of the number of CDCs
20 receiving City support for their
21 operations, while also eliminating the
22 exhausting search by CDCs for business
23 partners and allowing the City to better
24 ensure that taxpayer dollars are being
25 allocated in accordance with an

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2 organization's need, capacity, and
3 outcomes. We envision the grants being
4 approved for three subsequent amendments,
5 providing four years of funding as long
6 as the organization continues to perform.

7 As slots in the CDC tax credit
8 program become available, either through
9 ten-year expiration or the early exit of
10 a business partner, we would ask Council
11 to consider legislation to leave those
12 slots unfilled when equivalent funding is
13 made available in the grant program. As
14 a safeguard, the legislation could
15 specify that if the operating budget in
16 any given year does not provide for the
17 grants, then the tax credit would come
18 back and the open slots would be filled.

19 I want to reiterate that I am
20 really glad to have the opportunity to
21 testify and grateful that we are partners
22 in supporting neighborhood economic
23 development.

24 Thank you for your
25 consideration. I'm happy to take any

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 questions.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
4 for your testimony. I do have several
5 questions here. I'd like to start it
6 off. First, thank you, the department,
7 and thank you for working with our
8 commercial corridor managers throughout
9 the City and our CDCs and in particular
10 the Sixth District. Very prideful of the
11 work that all our CDCs and our commercial
12 corridors do, because they are the vein
13 and the revitalization I think from the
14 corridors to the neighborhoods. That's
15 how we shop. We shop local. We
16 encourage that. We encourage walkable
17 districts. And that's why I think this
18 is extremely important, and I do applaud
19 Councilman Goode for seizing this
20 opportunity to create it early on.

21 So how long has the City had
22 the CDC program or how long -- how many
23 CDCs do we know exist in the City of
24 Philadelphia? Are you aware?

25 MS. FEGELY: You stumped me on

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 the first question. So there's not an
3 official -- there's no official
4 designation of a CDC. I mean, a lot of
5 people use it in their name, but there's
6 no like certification or anything to make
7 an entity a CDC. But I would guess
8 probably 60, 70 CDCs or organizations
9 that behave like CDCs.

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: 60 or 70?

11 MS. FEGELY: That's a guess off
12 the top of my head. There's 40 CDCs
13 currently in the program. I'm guessing
14 there's another -- and it's kind of on
15 any given day --

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Another ten
17 waiting to get in?

18 MS. FEGELY: There are some
19 waiting to get in, for sure. And Marisa
20 just gave me -- the program started in
21 2002 with ten slots.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: With ten
23 slots. So you answered --

24 MS. FEGELY: And we're now up
25 to 40, right.

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2 COUNCILMAN HENON: You answered
3 my next question.

4 So with the grant program that
5 you mentioned, would the number of
6 renewals be capped to only allow for four
7 years of funding --

8 MS. FEGELY: That's --

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- as
10 opposed to ten?

11 MS. FEGELY: I mean, we're only
12 currently allowed to enter one-year
13 contracts with three extensions. So that
14 would be the limit there. It's not
15 that -- so an organization would have to
16 reapply after four years. It's not that
17 they couldn't come back in for
18 continued -- for another four years.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: So they
20 would reapply up to --

21 MS. FEGELY: Right. But you'd
22 be applying for a one-year contract, and
23 then we'd be able to extend that three
24 times for four years and then the slot
25 would become open again, sort of similar

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 to the tax credit program.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: So it would
4 just continue if the funding is
5 consistent just to reapply?

6 MS. FEGELY: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: Just like
8 any other CDC.

9 So how many grants would be
10 offered for the \$300,000 pilot that you
11 mentioned?

12 MS. FEGELY: I think we'd have
13 to determine that. Currently the program
14 offers \$100,000 a year. There's been
15 some discussion and some sort of desire
16 for offering smaller grants for some of
17 our newer CDCs to get started with maybe
18 50,000. So we could consider maybe doing
19 two \$100,000 slots and two \$50,000 slots,
20 but that has not yet been determined.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: Would these
22 grants shift the focus of the CDCs from
23 long-term planning and capital
24 improvements to short-term objectives in
25 order to demonstrate compliance with the

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2 grants?

3 MS. FEGELY: I don't think so.
4 I think we would still be asking similar
5 to we do in the tax credit program. We'd
6 still be asking for a five-year plan.
7 We'd still encourage them to look
8 forward. But I do think it would
9 emphasize a little more like what are
10 your results year to year, which I think
11 would be good for all of us to be able to
12 have those sort of talking points and be
13 able to see that action a little more
14 clearly.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Because you
16 do want to see --

17 MS. FEGELY: Yeah. You want to
18 some movement.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- goals,
20 objectives, measurements.

21 MS. FEGELY: And we understand
22 in Commerce that economic development
23 work, especially -- I know you understand
24 too. We're in it for the long haul, but
25 you want to see movement and progress on

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2 a year-to-year basis, for sure.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Right.

4 Okay.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
8 morning. You pretty much answered my
9 question, because when I hear a number
10 off the top of someone's head, I want to
11 know based on what, but you answered the
12 question saying that you started out with
13 40 or when the program started there were
14 40.

15 MS. FEGELY: There's currently
16 40 CDCs participating in the program.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

18 MS. FEGELY: So we know that
19 there are 40, and I would guess -- I
20 mean, in Philadelphia, as you know, we
21 have a number of non-profit organizations
22 and a number of neighborhood-based
23 organizations. Some of them don't even
24 have staff. They're totally volunteer
25 led. So the larger number was really

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 trying to be inclusive of all the types
3 of groups doing this work.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Sure.

5 MS. FEGELY: But it is a guess.
6 I'm wondering if PACDC has a better and
7 accurate number, but she can tell you
8 that when she gets up here.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: So we
11 started out with 15 slots, right, when it
12 was codified?

13 MS. FEGELY: It was ten
14 originally.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Ten, okay.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Councilwoman Bass.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

19 Hi, Karen. How are you?

20 MS. FEGELY: Hi.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just had
22 a couple of questions on the pilot
23 program, and I know you said that the
24 size of grants had not been determined
25 yet, but I was wondering if you would

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2 elaborate a little bit more or do you
3 have any additional details on what the
4 start-up program is. Because it seems
5 that Commerce is really trying to move
6 away from the tax credit program, and if
7 we are trying to move away, I just think
8 that we need something a little more
9 solid to hang our hat on, especially when
10 it comes to our CDCs, because we need
11 them. Our commercial corridors are many
12 times in distress. I have a few in my
13 district that are in significant
14 distress. And so without the CDC --
15 well, let me just say, I can't even
16 imagine what the corridor would look like
17 if it didn't have that CDC functioning
18 and operating on the corridor. And at
19 the same time, I also recognize that it
20 is very hard. We've worked with CDCs to
21 try to get them partnerships with
22 corporations to be able to get that tax
23 credit benefit.

24 So do you have any additional
25 detail in terms of how this pilot program

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2 could potentially work and how it would
3 be helpful?

4 MS. FEGELY: Yeah, and I'll
5 talk about it a little bit, and we did --
6 we sort of drafted like a one-pager, just
7 a concept of it. So I'll make sure
8 that's shared with all of you. But the
9 idea is, we would try to mirror this as
10 closely as possible. What's really
11 attractive, I think, to our CDCs is the
12 flexibility of these funds. They receive
13 them from their business partner. So the
14 City is not -- it's not a City contract,
15 and there's a lot of flexibility. So we
16 would similarly allow them to use it for
17 sort of as they see fit, for overhead
18 expenses, for staff salaries, office,
19 rent, all that kind of thing. In
20 exchange, what we want to see similar to
21 this program, we want to see what is your
22 organization accomplishing. We won't
23 necessarily ask for every invoice and
24 receipt of how the dollars were spent.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right. You

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 want to see a track record.

3 MS. FEGELY: But we want to see
4 the outcomes.

5 What we also would like to do
6 is ensure that we would pay up front in
7 quarterly installments, which I think
8 would be a positive to most of the
9 beneficiaries. One of the other things
10 with the program is it's totally up to
11 the business partner as to when they pay
12 the CDC, when they make their
13 contribution. So some of them do it the
14 whole amount up front, some of them do it
15 in installments, and some of them wait
16 until December 31st and pay them the
17 whole \$85,000 or \$100,000 at that point.
18 So we hope that by doing quarterly
19 installments that an organization can
20 sort of count on, that that will help
21 them with their operating and cash flow.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. When
23 it comes to grants being awarded in this
24 pilot program, you mentioned that you
25 thought start-up CDCs would be one of the

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 targets or would it be more established?
3 When you talk about you want to see a
4 track record, if you want a track record,
5 a start-up CDC isn't going to really have
6 that significant of a track record versus
7 one of our established CDCs that's been
8 of the Avenue that can't find a partner
9 to connect with.

10 MS. FEGELY: You're right. And
11 I guess I'm not sure by start-up if I
12 would actually -- I don't think this
13 program is probably for brand new
14 organizations, because it is a big
15 commitment from the City. I think
16 that -- but we do require a match with
17 this program. We require that the
18 organizations, even in the current CDC
19 tax credit program to be considered an
20 eligible qualifying CDC, you have to show
21 that your organizational budget is at
22 least the size -- double the size of your
23 contribution, and that's because we want
24 to make sure that this isn't the only
25 money sustaining an organization, because

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2 if so, they're not going to be able to
3 have as big of an impact. That can be a
4 big jump for some newer or smaller, not
5 necessarily new, some of our long-term
6 organizations, but they run a very lean
7 ship and they don't have a big budget.
8 And so potentially we would consider and,
9 again, I think this would be in
10 discussion with you and the CDC community
11 if that makes sense to offer smaller
12 ones. So like instead of having to show
13 a \$100,000 match, maybe you can get a
14 \$50,000 grant and show a \$50,000 match
15 and spend four years sort of doing more
16 work that way and maybe building up to be
17 ready to take on the bigger program.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

19 Well --

20 MS. FEGELY: Up for debate.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's
22 okay. It sounds like it's still very
23 much information, and I would just
24 suggest that since we have made it clear
25 from the testimony that we're moving away

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2 from the tax credit model, that we have
3 as much information as possible as soon
4 as possible regarding what that
5 replacement is going to be, because our
6 constituents will be asking us. But I
7 look forward to getting that additional
8 information.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. FEGELY: Okay.

11 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
12 Councilwoman.

13 The Chair recognizes Councilman
14 Squilla.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 We talked about the current
18 program. Would that just go away?

19 MS. FEGELY: No. I mean, the
20 program is -- the people that are in it
21 are in it. They're all in at some stage
22 in their ten years. What we're sort of
23 proposing -- what we are proposing is
24 that as slots expire, that the
25 Administration budget those dollars

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2 towards the grant program so that, yes,
3 slowly it could go away. I mean, I think
4 there's another eight years before the
5 final slots are up.

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But the
7 organization would still need a partner,
8 correct, to --

9 MS. FEGELY: No.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: How do you
11 match the grant funding?

12 MS. FEGELY: I mean, the grant
13 would be a direct grant, and then it's up
14 to the organization to do the general
15 fundraising they already do to match this
16 program, but it wouldn't require any
17 partner. What it could do -- and this is
18 a little bit anecdotal -- is encourage
19 more partners to apply for the state's
20 tax credit program so that they could
21 continue to contribute to these
22 organizations and through the state's NAP
23 tax credit program.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And then
25 where would the money come from for the

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2 grants?

3 MS. FEGELY: It would be City
4 general funds.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Just City
6 general funds.

7 And are you capping it at a
8 value that would be equal to what is
9 there now?

10 MS. FEGELY: Yeah. I mean,
11 that's sort of into the future. So I
12 think time will tell, but, yeah, the idea
13 is that we would have -- it would be
14 basically \$300,000 that we're proposing
15 to pilot it with this year if we keep the
16 slots as is, the 40 slots, plus \$300,000,
17 and then as the slots expire, you add
18 that money over to the grant program. So
19 ultimately rather than -- I think right
20 now the budget is like 3.65 million. It
21 would be 3.95 million.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So you
23 would never lose that additional dollars.
24 We'd have the additional slots available.

25 When do you see the grant

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2 program, would you be able to initiate it
3 or start it so that people would be able
4 to apply?

5 MS. FEGELY: I mean, we could
6 do it as soon as some budget agreement is
7 reached.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: July 1st?

9 MS. FEGELY: Yes.
10 Theoretically, yes.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Councilman.

15 The Chair recognizes
16 Councilwoman Parker.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chair.

19 And good morning to you. Thank
20 you for your testimony.

21 MS. FEGELY: Sure.

22 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So
23 obviously a part of the choir and I am
24 proud that we are going to hear from one
25 of the most successful CDCs in the Ninth

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2 District here today. We'll hear from
3 Stephanie Michel from the North 5th
4 Street Revitalization Project.

5 And with that being said, I
6 want to turn your attention to both two
7 statements that are in your testimony,
8 Karen. We have yet to hear Beth
9 McConnell's testimony, but I want to get
10 your feedback before Beth comes up to
11 testify.

12 You state that CDCs have a hard
13 time finding partners that have large
14 BIRT liabilities, especially since this
15 is confidential taxpayer information.
16 Further, businesses enrolled in the
17 program receive no material reduction in
18 their liability since they pay 100
19 percent of the credited tax to the CDC.

20 In addition, when Beth comes up
21 to testify, she says, Unfortunately an
22 increasing number of CDCs are losing
23 their tax credit partners because fewer
24 companies have adequate BIRT liability.
25 And just for the benefit of the public,

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2 because I hate when people use acronyms
3 and I don't understand, especially when I
4 don't use them every day, BIRT is
5 business income and the receipts tax.
6 And so Beth argues in her testimony that
7 because this number is decreasing, that
8 we should potentially think about real
9 estate tax liability, because then we
10 open up a larger pool.

11 What is your thinking? What is
12 Commerce's thinking about that? So if
13 BIRT, we know that number is being
14 reduced. We also know, as you state,
15 that this is confidential tax
16 information. So two questions. One,
17 have we ever asked or incentivized a
18 business to allow their contact
19 information to be shared. And when I say
20 "incentivized, if you owe BIRT but you
21 allow the City to share your information,
22 you receive a 5 percent or 10 percent
23 reduction, and so now we've incentivized
24 a business's willingness to allow their
25 name to be shared with CDCs. So why

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2 don't I get an answer to that one first.
3 Have we ever thought about that as a
4 tool?

5 MS. FEGELY: No, not that I
6 know of.

7 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Is it
8 possible for us to think about that as a
9 tool?

10 MS. FEGELY: Yeah. Revenue
11 would have to speak to that. I know that
12 even the people that participate in this
13 program, the businesses that participate,
14 we did add a checkbox for them to say
15 whether they were willing to even say
16 that they participated, because really
17 their participation, their receipt of a
18 tax credit is actually a confidential
19 matter. So maybe like half of them even
20 check that box. So some of them don't
21 even -- even once they're in the program,
22 don't want us to talk about it. But what
23 you're talking about -- or the problem is
24 identifying all the other businesses that
25 could potentially be in the program, and

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2 we haven't asked them to sort of
3 self-identify.

4 We speak about it, and we
5 encourage the Chamber of Commerce to
6 encourage their members to seek out the
7 program, but it's different than -- in
8 businesses' mind, when you're telling
9 them about tax credit programs, they're
10 thinking about things that are a benefit
11 to their business, and this -- of course
12 we all want to say there is ancillary
13 benefits, but really this is them acting
14 as a passthrough to the benefit of the
15 community and the community organization.

16 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: While I
17 agree with you wholeheartedly, I would
18 also argue that there are some businesses
19 because of the branding associated with
20 being of assistance to the community at
21 large, they also understand that the
22 added value to their participation in the
23 program is that we find out in our
24 neighborhood that X corporation is a part
25 of this program supporting economic

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2 development, and so we as a community,
3 community-based organizations say, hey,
4 how do we support that company because
5 that company supports us.

6 I asked you on the record
7 because I know that there is some
8 legislation that is forthcoming that will
9 attempt to specifically outline a
10 financial incentive, because you
11 reference the bottom line, right? This
12 has to make good economic sense for the
13 business. So there will be some
14 legislation forthcoming that will do
15 exactly that to incentivize a business,
16 and hopefully they will be more willing
17 to share information, even if it's not
18 public, only with the Commerce Department
19 who communicates with those CDCs, new
20 and/or more seasoned, who are interested
21 in participating.

22 So I just wanted to get your
23 thoughts and ideas on that.

24 In addition to that, I do see
25 Revenue in the room. Is it possible for

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2 Revenue to give us a response relative to
3 what we're going to hear in Beth
4 McConnell's testimony? And I just want
5 to say it again; that is, she talks about
6 real estate tax liability is a growth
7 area for the City. You hear us talking
8 about finding creative ways and being
9 more aggressive to collect delinquent
10 taxes, and that information is publicly
11 available. Have we ever thought about
12 the idea of offering some sort of tax
13 credit, not simply against BIRT liability
14 but against real estate tax liability?

15 (Witness approached witness
16 table.)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:
18 Hi. Marisa Waxman, First Deputy Revenue
19 Commissioner.

20 Yes, absolutely we considered
21 that idea, because it does get around a
22 lot of the hurdles that we've identified
23 with BIRT. One, the confidentiality
24 problem and, two, the fact that we've
25 been reducing our business income and

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2 receipts tax rates for years, and as a
3 result, there's a -- we went from 90,000
4 folks having to pay the BIRT down to
5 30,000 and not having those large
6 liabilities. So that's a tremendous
7 success story that has this consequence
8 for this particular program.

9 And so when we saw the problems
10 with the current program, we started
11 coming up with ideas of, well, what would
12 work better, and we considered the real
13 estate tax, and it really gets around
14 that confidentiality problem beautifully,
15 but there were sort of two outstanding
16 issues for us there.

17 One, 55 percent of the real
18 estate tax goes to the School District of
19 Philadelphia. So if we're going to
20 forego that tax or give a credit to
21 businesses participating in this program,
22 much of the burden then for this program
23 would shift from the General Fund to the
24 School District, and as we're trying to
25 support our schools, that was a real

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2 concern.

3 And then the second one was
4 that there's still that administrative
5 effort that the CDCs then need to put
6 into finding business partners and then
7 having the business partners go through
8 that administrative effort. And so when
9 we evaluated that idea, we came to
10 actually a grant program that really
11 would streamline that process, so --

12 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Let me
13 just interrupt you, because for the
14 benefit of the public that is watching
15 who are committed to public education the
16 way I know I along with all of my
17 colleagues are, please note for the
18 record that if this program were to be
19 defined the way we would sort of not
20 eliminate but we would add real estate
21 tax liability as a tool that interested
22 CDCs could use, we could exempt the
23 School District portion of the real
24 estate taxes. Just so we know, that
25 there's a School District portion and

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2 there's a General Fund portion, but for
3 the benefit of the public that is
4 literally, particularly in middle
5 neighborhoods like mine that for many
6 years have been exempted from using
7 particularly those dollars that come
8 through the Community Development Block
9 Grant funding based on their census track
10 and they weren't able to receive some of
11 that funding -- special thanks to
12 Commerce for working very, very, very
13 hard to come up with a creative way to
14 send dollars there, but there is a way
15 that this could be designed so that we
16 are not in any way, shape or form
17 touching the School District of
18 Philadelphia portion of that tax
19 liability. So I just wanted to get that
20 on the record.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:

22 Yeah. And we appreciate that. We
23 explored that as well, and when we were
24 looking at the size of the pool, that
25 then though shrinks again who has got a

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2 City portion of the real estate tax large
3 enough to cover this.

4 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So shrink
5 the pool, tell me what does that mean.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN: So
7 at that point, if you're going from
8 looking for a property owner who has a
9 \$100,000 tax bill, if you decide, okay,
10 well, 55,000 of that which would go to
11 the School District, that's not part of
12 it, all the sudden what you need is more
13 like somebody with a \$200,000 real estate
14 tax bill. And so there's fewer of those
15 out there for the CDCs to partner with.

16 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER:
17 Mr. Chairman, just for the record, I want
18 to get this on the record, but I
19 appreciate the leeway that you've
20 provided, Mr. Chairman, in this line of
21 questioning.

22 I also want to note that when
23 you talk about real estate tax
24 delinquency and you use that \$100,000
25 model, note here that unlike BIRT where

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2 you're talking about the decrease and now
3 you're at 30,000, we're talking about an
4 increase in volume. So you're getting a
5 larger number because there are a larger
6 number of firms that are delinquent in
7 real estate taxes and even as you just
8 described versus even the 30,000 that
9 you've gotten down to with BIRT. So even
10 if the number is smaller because you've
11 exempted the School District portion, the
12 volume that we're looking at is higher.

13 I just want it to make good
14 economic sense for the people at home who
15 are watching.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:
17 Yeah. Absolutely. You're right,
18 Councilwoman Parker, and we're happy to
19 go back and look at the size of that
20 universe so that we can get a real good
21 understanding about where it is and where
22 it might grow to.

23 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So thank
24 you so very much.

25 And, Mr. Chairman and members

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 of the Committee, thank you so very much
3 for your patience and your leeway.

4 Commerce, let me say for the
5 record, thank you so very much for the
6 creativity you've used in trying to
7 direct much-needed funds to commercial
8 corridors and burgeoning CDCs like our
9 Ninth District superstar, 5th Street
10 Revitalization Corporation, and we look
11 forward to working with you in the
12 future.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Councilwoman.

15 Ms. Fegely, in your testimony
16 you mention that the BIRT liability of
17 any particular company is confidential --
18 we've been having this conversation
19 now -- confidential information and can't
20 be shared with CDCs, and I respect that,
21 and I don't feel that we should
22 unnecessarily be sharing that
23 information. However, since the
24 information is available to the City and
25 Commerce does have an outreach to the

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2 business community and has had previous
3 liability that exceeds the funding level,
4 can we gauge other businesses in their
5 willingness to serve as a partner?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN: So
7 on behalf of the Department of Revenue,
8 that's information that the Department of
9 Revenue is certainly happy to help doing
10 outreach directly to those businesses.
11 Local, state, and federal law would
12 prohibit us from sharing that information
13 with the Department of Commerce to do
14 that, because it's not for the purposes
15 of tax administration. But it is
16 something that the Department of Revenue
17 can certainly step up our outreach and
18 engagement to entities who have tax bills
19 at the level that would make them
20 eligible to participate in the program.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. And
22 I think that would be helpful, something
23 that I ask that we take a look at. This
24 way, we can gauge, we can see who is
25 eligible and that would qualify. There's

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2 no harm in notification, letting
3 businesses know that they are eligible to
4 be a tax credit partner with part of the
5 community. As some of our members had
6 mentioned, there is a lot of value to
7 good, responsible businesses who are
8 actually engaged in their communities,
9 who are partners with their commercial
10 corridors, who are partners with their
11 CDCs, to continue to give back to the
12 City of Philadelphia if they choose so
13 and they may just know not it. They just
14 might not realize there's another
15 opportunity for them to be really
16 supportive of their communities in any
17 fashion.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:

19 And I will actually let you know that in
20 tax year 2016, we introduced a new tax
21 form, very exciting, the special tax
22 credit form, that when businesses are
23 completing their annual tax returns, they
24 can now sort of see a list of all of the
25 tax credits, and that's a great moment

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2 that let's businesses go, hey, there's
3 maybe something out there that I wasn't
4 aware of. And we've seen a real increase
5 in the inquiries from businesses about
6 all of our tax credit programs because
7 now it's part of their tax return that
8 they're filling out.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Wonderful.
10 Thank you.

11 The Chair recognizes Councilman
12 Domb.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman.

15 And good morning. I just had a
16 couple of quick questions. I just wanted
17 to make sure I understand the program.
18 But basically this is a redirection of
19 the BIRT taxes to CDCs.

20 MS. FEGELY: Correct.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And how much
22 in total taxes last year were redirected?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:
24 Hang on. It's in my purse.

25 MS. FEGELY: The total -- I

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2 mean, it's about 3.6 million.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: 3.6 million
4 that goes to CDCs instead of the City?

5 MS. FEGELY: Correct. Correct.
6 So the businesses -- and so there's
7 actually -- the whole program is actually
8 42 organizations. Commerce monitors the
9 program for the CDCs doing economic
10 development. So that's 40. There's 36
11 CDCs and four intermediaries. There's an
12 additional two organizations that are
13 food access-related organizations that
14 the Health Department monitors with
15 Revenue. The majority of them receive
16 \$85,000 a year contribution and the
17 business in exchange for an \$85,000 tax
18 credit. There are about ten slots that
19 get \$100,000 a year. And I think the
20 program has been changed that as the new
21 slots become available, it will be at the
22 \$100,000 level. So the dollar amount
23 changes slightly.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So from the
25 City's perspective, they can budget --

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2 they know what the number is going to
3 be -- that they're not going to get from
4 BIRT taxes from this, right?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WAXMAN:
6 Correct. And the tax year 2016 total,
7 including the healthy one slots, is \$3.72
8 million.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I just
10 wanted to clarify that. Thank you very
11 much.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Councilman.

15 Anyone else on the Committee
16 wish to ask any questions to the panel?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
19 you so much for your testimony, unless
20 you want to add anything.

21 MS. FEGELY: I wanted to add
22 one sort of clarification. When we
23 started talking, you were asking about
24 the number of CDCs, and I sort of
25 guesstimated 60 to 70. I'm thinking

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2 about the number of organizations on any
3 sort of given day, month, year that are
4 out in our community, non-profits, who
5 are really working to improve their
6 community. The truth is, there is not
7 enough funding out there, not just from
8 the City but out there, to support that
9 many organizations. And so there's
10 really -- I mean, that's the point of us
11 asking for sort of the match in leverage
12 of these City funds, because actual
13 organizations with staff and boards and
14 the capacity to implement programs in
15 their community is probably, I'll roughly
16 say, around 40, and our suggested change
17 to a grant is about making the City funds
18 more equitable and accessible for the
19 organizations that are really doing that
20 work.

21 If there were 70 CDCs or
22 organizations calling themselves CDCs on
23 any given day and they were all eligible
24 to apply for this program, they're not
25 all going to be the ones that are doing

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2 this work and have the track record and
3 have the experience and the capacity to
4 get things done in their community, and I
5 think that is why we're proposing
6 something where we can give a better look
7 at who is doing the work and making sure
8 that these City dollars are sort of
9 leveraging that impact in the community.

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, I
11 appreciate your addition but, again, I
12 want to state for the record that you do
13 a fantastic job holding the community
14 groups, the CDCs, accountable for their
15 hard work, and it is all about outcomes.
16 It's all about measured outcomes,
17 efficiencies, and services that are
18 delivered to the community. So the ones
19 that are receiving it and the ones that
20 will be requesting -- and I know there's
21 a couple in my district that have
22 identified some good business partners,
23 they are absolutely committed. They are
24 responsive to making sure that the
25 deliverables are measured and they have

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2 the outcomes that the program is intended
3 to. So I appreciate your additional
4 comments.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilwoman Parker.

7 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
8 you, Chairman Henon, and you just moved
9 me, Chairman, when you described the
10 importance of maximizing the efficient
11 use of very scarce and limited resources
12 and you talked about those CDCs that were
13 doing extremely well that you were
14 familiar with in your district, but for
15 the benefit of the viewing public and
16 neighborhoods across the City, I want you
17 to understand that the back-room
18 technical capacity of CDCs, those that
19 are just starting, those who find
20 themselves in the middle, and then we
21 have some big guys that sort of mirror a
22 small company, all technical capacities
23 are not created equal. And because you
24 don't have the technical capacity, it
25 does not mean that the skill set needed

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2 to do the work or the intellectual
3 prowess is not there. In some instances
4 it's the funding needed to secure the
5 intellectual property you need. That
6 means the accountant, the administrative
7 assistant, the IT person needed to be
8 able to comply with the grant-writing
9 rules, the government rules, and all of
10 those things that allow the big guys to
11 be seasoned to be able to comply. The
12 rules are -- while the rules are the
13 same, the capacity to make sure that you
14 comply with the rules are not the same.

15 So I just needed to state that
16 for the record, because while I know some
17 that are doing extremely well and they've
18 been responsible for bringing life and
19 vibrancy back to entire communities,
20 there are some like 5th Street that are
21 right there in the middle, and then I
22 have some -- I'm thinking about Medina
23 that are right there, but they need the
24 administrative capacity and the technical
25 assistance to just grow.

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2 So I don't want you to think
3 that anyone in the public watching that
4 the technical capacity of all of these
5 organizations is in any way created
6 equal. Sometimes it's also the board
7 membership that you have, how wealthy are
8 they, the volunteers, what is your
9 individual fundraising prowess like. And
10 so rest assured, the little Ninth
11 District that could, our private
12 fundraising capacity is not going to be
13 the same as the Square, either one of the
14 Squares. It's just going to be
15 different. So I want the public to
16 understand that.

17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
18 the leeway.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman.

21 Thank you both for your
22 testimony and your answers to the
23 questions.

24 We'll move to Panel 2. Beth
25 McConnell, Alex Balloon, and Beth Miller,

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2 please approach. State your name for the
3 record and you may proceed with your
4 testimony.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: Before you
8 start, I do want to recognize Alex
9 Balloon, who is in District 6, who is a
10 fantastic and wonderful commercial
11 corridor manager, who does have a partner
12 who has really, really done a wonderful
13 job. And I got to tell you, when you
14 talk about some of the programs --
15 Councilwoman Parker, you know all about
16 the programs of SafeCam, the commercial
17 corridors, Storefront Improvement
18 Programs, this commercial corridor
19 exceeds by far, I think, a lot around the
20 City of Philadelphia up to like 34
21 storefront improvements, and we were
22 thriving and we're growing and we're
23 succeeding because of this tax credit
24 partnership. So thank you.

25 Beth, you may state your name

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2 for the record and begin with your
3 testimony.

4 MS. McCONNELL: Great. Good
5 morning. My name is Beth McConnell,
6 Policy Director with the Philadelphia
7 Association of Community Development
8 Corporations.

9 I submitted written testimony
10 for the record. I'm not going to read
11 that testimony. I do want to highlight a
12 few things and maybe use the balance of
13 my time to react and respond to the prior
14 conversation.

15 First, I do want to thank
16 Councilman Henon for his leadership, not
17 only in introducing this bill today to
18 expand the tax credit program, but for
19 all of your leadership to support our
20 commercial corridors, not just in your
21 district but across the entire City.

22 And I want to thank other
23 members of the Council. I think every
24 member of this Committee we have
25 partnered with in one way or another to

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2 support our corridors. Councilwoman
3 Parker, to push back against the federal
4 cuts at a press conference recently.

5 Councilman Oh, I know you've
6 toured countless commercial corridors
7 throughout our City.

8 And forgive me if I'm not
9 recognizing everybody, but I do want to
10 acknowledge all of that important work.

11 And I also do want to
12 acknowledge former Councilman Wilson
13 Goode who is here with us today, who is
14 the creator of this program, and I'm
15 going to just read the last line of my
16 testimony before I jump around.

17 Under his leadership, this
18 program has literally become a port in
19 the storm during very unpredictable
20 times. We don't know whether federal
21 funding will be available to support our
22 neighborhood economic development from
23 one year to the next, but CDCs that are
24 in the CDC tax credit program know that
25 they are anchored and will make it

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 through turbulence to continue to serve
3 our communities. And I want to
4 underscore that really important point.

5 I also just want to say that
6 this program has been an enormous success
7 in Philadelphia, and I hope we don't
8 break what isn't -- don't try to fix what
9 isn't broke, although I do think some
10 improvements can certainly be made.

11 It's the reason why we have
12 such a vibrant, strong network of CDCs in
13 every kind of neighborhood in the City,
14 whether it's regional destination
15 corridors like Chinatown, middle
16 neighborhoods like Tacony, low-income
17 neighborhoods like Nicetown, and West
18 Philadelphia where small businesses are
19 facing gentrification and rising rents.
20 Every single neighborhood can benefit
21 from a non-profit CDC whose mission is
22 entirely focused on that specific
23 community and which deploys the right
24 strategies for each neighborhood to
25 provide economic opportunity and

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2 activity.

3 PACDC is a part of the tax
4 credit program and it supports our
5 Commercial Corridor Working Group, which
6 is a monthly gathering of corridor
7 managers throughout the City so that they
8 can learn best practices from each other.
9 We also bring in various City agencies,
10 whether it's L&I or the Commerce
11 Department, Streets, et cetera, to talk
12 about delivery of service and how they
13 can be better prepared to do the jobs in
14 their neighborhoods.

15 We also run a Community
16 Development Leadership Institute with the
17 resources we have from the program that
18 provides training and technical support
19 to CDCs. So these are ways that we help
20 support CDCs that are in the program but
21 also that are not in the program and ways
22 that they can use whatever resources they
23 have to become highly functioning, highly
24 successful organizations in their
25 neighborhoods.

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2 I do want to acknowledge that
3 the three of us that are on this panel
4 are all in the program. So you'll hear a
5 bit more about why it has been useful,
6 and then I know we'll hear from seven
7 organizations today that would love to
8 get into the program and why.

9 As you know, phasing out the
10 CDC tax credit program as has been
11 suggested and replacing it with a grant
12 program would require Council ordinance
13 and Council legislation, and I hope if
14 that's something that this Council would
15 consider, that you would give an
16 opportunity to the 40 organizations that
17 are in that program right now and rely on
18 it as lifeblood to be able to come and
19 talk to you about why this program is
20 valuable as it is and why they'd like for
21 it to remain. We didn't invite all of
22 them to come today in the interest of
23 time and you did have some other things
24 on the agenda as well.

25 I also want to acknowledge that

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2 there may be some smaller CDCs that may
3 not be ready for a ten-year commitment of
4 \$100,000 per year. Maybe they're just
5 getting started and they need a little
6 bit more time to do the community
7 engagement, to build out their board and
8 their management practices, to do some
9 sort of planning. And so a smaller grant
10 program or even a mini CDC tax credit
11 program that's maybe a five-year program
12 or \$50,000 slots might be a great way to
13 help build those organizations up until
14 they're ready to take on the
15 responsibility and commitment of the
16 larger ten-year commitment for \$100,000.
17 But I think you'll see today that we have
18 a number of organizations here in the
19 City that have already reached that
20 capacity and are ready for the CDC tax
21 credit program.

22 I do also want to make sure
23 that Councilmembers are aware that CDCs
24 submit reports every single year to the
25 Commerce Department when they're in the

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2 tax credit program that lay out the
3 accomplishments, what they've done with
4 the resources in the past year, as well
5 as their plans for the coming year. So
6 there's plenty of opportunity to work
7 with CDCs to improve and expand
8 performance if that's necessary within
9 those reports.

10 I know that when I've looked
11 through some of those reports, I've been
12 amazed at the amount of work that people
13 have reported doing with those resources,
14 far beyond what I think they're receiving
15 resources to do in terms of the planning,
16 the streetscape improvements, the
17 community engagement, the fundraising
18 that they -- and a lot of CDCs use the
19 resources to pay for the staff that then
20 go out and raise the money to do the
21 capital improvements on the corridor, to
22 raise the -- manage the Targeted Corridor
23 Management Program, help implement the
24 Storefront Improvement Program, and a lot
25 of the other programs that this Council

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2 has been very supportive of.

3 I also want to acknowledge that
4 there are some corporate partners that
5 are more engaged than others, and we
6 would welcome the opportunity to reach
7 out to corporate partners that have been
8 very engaged to come and talk to you as
9 well. Some corporate partners provide
10 additional in-kind support to the CDCs,
11 maybe on their board of directors. They
12 may provide office space. They may help
13 staff and volunteer events. They may
14 provide in-kind legal counsel. So there
15 are a number for which that participation
16 is pretty vibrant, and we can continue to
17 make it more vibrant for those that have
18 not been as engaged.

19 I guess the last thing -- two
20 last things that I'll say and I'll wrap
21 up and happy to answer questions is that
22 one of -- I know some folks have
23 registered some concern that the process
24 for selecting who gets in the program and
25 out is a bit random. There literally is

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2 a tin can. If there are two slots and
3 three applicants, they pick the names out
4 of the hat. And I know some have
5 expressed some concern that that might
6 not be the right way to do it, but
7 there's a lot of value in that as well.
8 Once a CDC is deemed eligible and
9 qualified to be in the program, this
10 allows CDCs that are in some
11 neighborhoods that otherwise might not
12 get support or attention just as good of
13 a shot as an opportunity as CDCs in other
14 neighborhoods. So there is some real
15 value in that.

16 The last thing I would say, I
17 want to thank you, Councilwoman Parker,
18 for raising our suggestion to allow real
19 estate tax credit partners. I think the
20 more flexibility there is in CDCs being
21 able to find partners from regardless of
22 what the tax is to the City and also a
23 larger number of partners -- right now
24 they're limited to only two partners max.
25 If they're able to have three partners or

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2 four partners, it would make it much
3 easier for them to be able to find
4 whether it's a BIRT partner or a real
5 estate partner to kind of bring that
6 together. And I have not heard from the
7 CDC perspective that that would be an
8 administrative burden on their end. I
9 think they would welcome that opportunity
10 to have that flexibility.

11 I want to thank you again very
12 much for the opportunity to testify, and
13 thank you for letting me go off script a
14 bit, and I'd be happy to answer any
15 questions.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

18 The Chair recognizes Beth. You
19 may state your name for the record and
20 proceed with your testimony.

21 MS. MILLER: Hi. Good morning.
22 My name is Beth Miller and I'm the
23 Executive Director of the Community
24 Design Collaborative. For those of you
25 not familiar with the Collaborative,

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 we're a volunteer community-based design
3 center that coordinates early design
4 services. We match community-based
5 non-profits with design volunteers to
6 strengthen neighborhoods through design.
7 A key program area of our work is
8 community and economic development.

9 Through the Community
10 Development Tax Credit Program, the
11 Collaborative became a qualifying
12 non-profit intermediary in 2012, along
13 with Regional Housing Legal Services,
14 PACDC, and LISC. And this dedicated
15 support for us really allows us to
16 leverage pro bono preliminary design
17 services for community development
18 corporations.

19 Our ten-year target is to
20 deliver 50 design grants with a pro bono
21 value of \$1 million in preliminary design
22 services through 2022. Since 2012,
23 through the tax credit program alone, the
24 Collaborative has delivered 32 design
25 grants that have leveraged nearly 12,000

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2 pro bono hours, with a value of 1.25
3 million in pro bono design services.

4 In recent years, we've worked
5 with Germantown United, Frankford CDC,
6 Allegheny West Foundation, and Called to
7 Serve. Currently, we have active design
8 grants with Nueva Esperanza, Tacony CDC,
9 and the Passyunk Square Civic
10 Association.

11 Soon we'll be soliciting
12 nominations for the 2018 Storefront
13 Challenge that's undertaken in
14 partnership with Commerce. That biannual
15 award, they celebrate storefront
16 improvement projects in neighborhoods
17 throughout the City. They also amplify
18 the impact of community development
19 corporations, corridor managers, private
20 businesses, and building owners.

21 We could not do this work
22 without our two business partners,
23 Ballinger and Volpe Koenig. They were
24 hard to find, but we're very glad to have
25 them. They make annual contribution

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2 totalling \$85,000 for our program. This
3 private non-profit partnership has also
4 allowed us to provide Ballinger, a
5 national design firm based in
6 Philadelphia since 1878, a great
7 opportunity to introduce their employees
8 to public interest design opportunities
9 in Philadelphia.

10 Active and engaged communities
11 are a linchpin of equitable
12 neighborhoods, and the City has been a
13 key partner in supporting, implementing,
14 and promoting equitable community
15 development. The CDC tax credit program
16 supports these efforts throughout the
17 City and should be expanded.

18 Thank you very much for your
19 time.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
21 Alex.

22 MR. BALLOON: Thank you so much
23 for your introduction, Councilman Henon.
24 My name is Alex Balloon and I'm the
25 Executive Director of the Tacony CDC

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 located in Northeast Philadelphia. I'm
3 here to testify in support of the bill.
4 We participate in this program with our
5 partner, Waste Management, and we applaud
6 Councilman Henon, not only for your
7 leadership with respect to this bill but
8 also your unwavering support for our
9 revitalization efforts in Tacony.

10 The CDC tax credit program has
11 been an enormous success in Philadelphia
12 and as a critical tool for middle
13 neighborhood revitalization. Working
14 hand in hand with the Commerce
15 Department, we have championed the
16 low-cost high-impact investments to move
17 our market from disinvestment towards new
18 investment. Many of our city's middle
19 neighborhoods don't qualify for CDBG
20 funding because their average income may
21 be just slightly over the limit.

22 The most critical piece to the
23 CDC tax credit program is the ten-year
24 term. Any community development
25 professional would tell you that

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2 neighborhood development moves at the
3 speed of trust. It takes years to build
4 and cultivate that trust with neighbors
5 and business owners to encourage them to
6 do a storefront project, camera project
7 or new business investment. This work
8 doesn't get done on an annual grant
9 cycle. Six years in, we would not have
10 been able to fix up our 34 storefronts or
11 install more than 100 cameras without
12 this long-term stability. The City's
13 other grant programs like TCMP are very
14 short-term cycle, typically 12 to 24
15 months. That makes it difficult to be
16 strategic and intentional on that
17 short-term budget cycle merry-go-round.

18 Finally, commercial corridor
19 revitalization is one of the best returns
20 on investment the City of Philadelphia
21 can make. For every dollar invested, we
22 leverage an additional \$18 in private and
23 other investment. No other economic
24 development program achieves that kind of
25 leverage. We know other neighborhoods

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2 want to follow this model, and they too
3 can achieve success.

4 We at the Tacony CDC urge the
5 City Council and the Mayor to approve the
6 bill to continue the critical investment
7 in our city's neighborhood economic
8 development.

9 Thank you very much.

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
11 for your testimony, and we're proud of
12 all of the CDCs and the PACDC and the
13 Commerce Department for all the technical
14 support, and the Collaborative.

15 I have a question for the CDCs.
16 So how does the CDC tax grant leverage
17 other technical supports and other
18 resources to help grow the CDC, the
19 participation, and other partners? And
20 that could be for anybody, because I
21 think the PACDC and the Commerce
22 Department offer wonderful programs, and
23 I offer as PACDC, as you know, Beth, in
24 your testimony, that you have services
25 that you bring out to the corridors. I

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2 do on my commercial corridors. I have
3 business services happy hour where we
4 bring -- the Revenue Department has been
5 gracious to come out. You have the
6 Commerce Department. You have L&I. You
7 have other special services that the City
8 has to offer right there on the
9 commercial corridor in one of its
10 businesses, local businesses, to partner
11 with the CDC or a BID or another special
12 service opportunity.

13 So how does the tax credit
14 really leverage and grow the technical
15 support and other capital fundraising
16 opportunities?

17 MS. McCONNELL: So the CDC tax
18 credit funding provides the core support
19 to hire the staff, to keep the lights on,
20 to pay the rent and the utilities so that
21 you have folks there that can build the
22 organization, that can then go out and
23 apply for the Targeted Corridor
24 Management Program and prove that they
25 have the capacity to and could hire the

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2 staff to implement that; to apply for
3 corridor cleaning grant programs and
4 again manage those programs; to go after
5 state funding or other federal funding
6 maybe to do mixed-use development on a
7 commercial corridor. You need the staff
8 to go out and apply -- to research those
9 funding opportunities, to go out and
10 apply for them, to apply for them again
11 after you get denied and apply for them
12 again after you get denied the third time
13 and then, once successful, have the staff
14 to implement and manage and oversee all
15 of that work over time. And also think
16 about the organizational development
17 opportunities, what are the ways to
18 engage neighbors more effectively and
19 thoroughly to engage volunteers and
20 engage donors. Most federal and state
21 grant opportunities don't provide the
22 resources for the staff to do that kind
23 of hard work. It's very outcomes driven,
24 perform this particular function in this
25 particular period of time and then fill

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2 out this form in triplicate. And I may
3 be exaggerating about the forms, but the
4 CDC tax credit program is kind of the
5 yeast basically that helps the bread
6 rise.

7 Alex, you want to share any of
8 your particular experiences.

9 MR. BALLOON: I'll just say,
10 Councilman Henon, when we started, most
11 of our problem properties were on
12 Torresdale Avenue when we started our
13 Problem Property Task Force. Now many of
14 those houses have been completely
15 renovated, are home to new families
16 largely in the workforce, but most of the
17 money that we leverage is private
18 investment from businesses, residential
19 development. So Beth did a good job
20 summing up other government money that we
21 could tap, like the state or federal
22 government, but I'd say mostly it's
23 private investment.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I think
25 it's important for everybody to know that

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2 you may have the seed of the credit, but
3 it leverages a lot more accountable and
4 strict grant resources to help grow,
5 because not one person can run an
6 organization like that without leveraging
7 other additional resources and having
8 partnership with the City. I mean, I
9 made a commitment to my district and I
10 put a district office right there on
11 Torresdale, which Torresdale needed a
12 little TLC, and we're giving it to them
13 and we're doing it all together in a
14 collaborative way and we're utilizing all
15 the resources that we possibly can
16 through your hard work. Everybody that
17 volunteers their time, the board and the
18 community's hard work, is helping
19 revitalize neighborhoods throughout the
20 City of Philadelphia, and that's why I
21 will -- you mentioned unequivocally in
22 your testimony. I will never blink on
23 neighborhood organizations who are trying
24 to better the quality of life and build
25 up our communities. So thank you.

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2 The Chair recognizes
3 Councilwoman Parker.

4 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I just wanted to for the
7 record, Mr. Chairman, say, one, thank you
8 for you. So I want you to know we are
9 going to steal your business services
10 night model and try to see if we can
11 duplicate what you've done in the Tacony
12 area in the Ninth District.

13 And I specifically wanted to
14 say to you, Alex, this is probably about
15 the second or third time I've seen you
16 come to testify regarding economic
17 development or something impacting middle
18 neighborhoods and wanted to tell you
19 specifically thank you for how you
20 communicate the work that you do, and
21 that when you talk about fixing up 32
22 storefronts and installing more than 100
23 cameras, if you didn't feel the energy, I
24 was kicking my heels under the table,
25 Mr. Chairman, just trying to say, well,

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2 wow, you've given us something to use as
3 a benchmark for how we can begin
4 measuring progress. I want to say thank
5 you to you.

6 To both -- I was getting ready
7 to call you two Beths, but then I said
8 I'll just call them Beth M, but both of
9 you are Beth M, so that doesn't even
10 work. But to Beth from the Design
11 Collaborative, thank you so much, because
12 that technical pro bono support is
13 what -- and I won't name them today, but
14 there are some neighborhoods who have
15 engineers, architects, attorneys who are
16 residents of a particular community and
17 because they live there, they just
18 naturally contribute their skill to
19 advance the neighborhood in which they
20 live in, and then there's some
21 neighborhoods that are not that
22 fortunate. So what you all do is give
23 neighborhoods, particularly those that
24 don't have that in-house technical
25 residency there, you give us also the

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2 opportunity to access design experts.
3 And so we want to say thank you to you
4 and to Beth. Thank you for -- and I was
5 talking to Councilman Henon's staff and
6 Rachel in my office. When you talked
7 about the different levels or capacity of
8 CDCs, those who are just starting, those
9 who are in the middle, and those who are
10 seasoned, it is true that the grant
11 program that could be done at a very
12 smaller scale proposed by Commerce, it is
13 an awesome opportunity, and we are
14 excited about that, but the importance of
15 preserving, Councilman Henon, which is
16 why this legislation is so important and
17 thank you for your leadership here, but
18 it's so important to keep it sort of
19 institutionalized, because it is working
20 and it is successful, but when you
21 acknowledge that the smaller guys haven't
22 been able to access or not even prepared
23 or have the capacity to access the
24 program, I appreciate you just putting
25 that on the record. And I think we

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2 should be able to walk and chew gum at
3 the same time and take advantage of the
4 development, which I think is very
5 creative. Commerce should be commended
6 for it, the grant program, but also
7 finding a way to increase the pool and
8 make available the opportunity to the
9 program in itself.

10 So I just wanted to say thank
11 you on the record.

12 And thank you, Mr. Chairman,
13 for your leeway. I appreciate it.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
15 Councilwoman.

16 Any other member on the
17 Committee?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
20 you all for your testimony.

21 Clerk, would you please read
22 our next panel.

23 THE CLERK: Stephanie Michel,
24 Musa Trawally, Andy Trackman.

25 (Witnesses approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's
4 still good morning. How are you?
5 Please, whoever would like to start. I
6 think, Stephanie, your name was mentioned
7 first, so if you'd like to identify
8 yourself, please, and proceed.

9 MS. MICHEL: Good morning. My
10 name is Stephanie Michel and I am the
11 Director of the North 5th Street
12 Revitalization Project. Thank you so
13 much, Councilwoman Parker, for all of
14 your high remarks and being an advocate
15 for North 5th Street Revitalization
16 Project and Olney. We do so much because
17 of you and your support, and I just
18 wanted to say thank you.

19 So we work closely with the
20 merchants and residents of Olney to
21 improve the North 5th Street commercial
22 corridor. In 2006, we received funding
23 with the support of then-Councilwoman
24 Tasco through the City's Commerce
25 Department allowing us to initiate a

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2 project for revitalization on our
3 commercial corridor. Since then, the
4 North 5th Street commercial corridor has
5 begun to flourish and radiates from its
6 hub at 5th and Olney all the way down to
7 5th and the Boulevard. So we have a mile
8 and a half stretch, and we have over 330
9 active businesses, and it is a vibrant
10 pedestrian and public transit-friendly
11 shopping area.

12 For several years, our office
13 only ran on the manpower of volunteers.
14 Our work and staff has progressed,
15 although slowly, with a two-person office
16 assisting businesses in securing the
17 required licensing for their businesses
18 and signage, providing technical
19 assistance through workshops and
20 one-on-one consulting, managing the
21 business association, providing -- our
22 day never ends. It's always something --
23 providing technical assistance, providing
24 a daily cleaning service, organizing and
25 hosting multiple marketing events to

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2 attract customers to the district, and
3 providing business services. We are
4 operating like a one-man band, developing
5 a plan, networking with partners,
6 providing services, and supporting our
7 merchants, encouraging those who want to
8 open new businesses and, of course,
9 constantly chasing the new funding
10 possibility.

11 Ten years later the bulk of our
12 funding still mainly comes from the
13 Commerce Department Targeted Commercial
14 Corridor Program and corridor cleaning
15 grants, both of which are funded through
16 CDBG dollars and limits the funding that
17 we can support. We are thankful for
18 Councilwoman Parker's support through the
19 Philadelphia Activities Fund, which
20 allows us to host community-focused
21 activities that encourages residents to
22 come to the corridor, such as Open Mic
23 Night in Olney, classes like yoga, zumba,
24 bop and cha-cha, self-defense classes and
25 so much more at our local library and our

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2 neighborhood park at Fisher Park. The
3 vast majority of our businesses are
4 immigrant-owned mom and pop shops with
5 limited resources. So we rely solely on
6 Commerce Department funds for our
7 economic development activities. Our
8 ultimate goal is to establish a
9 partnership for CDC tax credit for
10 unrestricted funding. With unrestricted
11 funding, our organization would be able
12 to take our efforts to the next level and
13 improve on existing programs as well as
14 accomplish many more activities such as
15 expand our staff; help more merchants
16 with storefront improvement, workshops,
17 and enhanced technical assistance;
18 improve streetscape with public trash
19 receptacles, benches, public art, bike
20 racks, and murals; improve safety with
21 security cameras and street lighting;
22 green the corridor with trees, planters,
23 and landscaping, as well as promote the
24 corridor through more events, activities,
25 and publications.

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2 Like all good things in life,
3 community and economic development takes
4 time. We see that ourselves in building
5 relationships with business owners,
6 residents, and community partners. The
7 largest investment in economic
8 development is time and consistency.

9 Many of our business owners on North 5th
10 Street are immigrant business owners and
11 are leery of anything that resembles
12 government. The benefit of having a
13 secure funding source for a ten-year
14 period is immeasurable. Secure ten-year
15 funding to an organization provides
16 services to an underserved neighborhood,
17 especially through business development
18 and neighborhood improvement, which
19 inspires community pride and may also
20 spur the creation of jobs, and that
21 benefits the community as a whole.

22 Secure funding allows a CDC such as ours
23 to develop a longer strategy, provide
24 better services, and implement a
25 neighborhood plan more efficiently. Our

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2 2012 neighborhood plan to revitalize

3 North 5th Street includes a timeline to

4 implement over the span of ten years.

5 One would think all you need to do is

6 have a plan and, bam, those ideas just

7 come to life, but it takes years to get

8 everyone to know and understand the plan,

9 to know their role in implementing the

10 plan, and lastly to execute. It takes

11 time, but that's where the beauty in

12 restoring a community lies.

13 The impact to a commercial
14 corridor and its surrounding residents is
15 more than physical, more than economic.

16 It lifts the whole spirit of the
17 neighborhood, creating a better place to
18 live, work, and play so that people can
19 honestly say this is my community, I live
20 here, I work here, and I'm responsible
21 for what happens here.

22 For the past ten years, we have
23 been identifying and meeting with
24 possible partners in order to be prepared
25 to take advantage of the CDC tax credit

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2 program. We have tried every possible
3 avenue to secure a possible spot. We've
4 met with local businesses and
5 institutions. We've tried using the
6 networks of board members as well as
7 cold-calling possible partners, with no
8 success and much anxiety. One of the
9 main issues we've faced in our efforts
10 has been to identify a partner
11 organization that has a yearly BIRT tax
12 liability of 100,000. Although we have a
13 considerable number of large corporations
14 in the City, there is no way of
15 determining who is eligible short of
16 meeting them. We have found that we
17 often end up at a dead end with a
18 possible corporation. With the reduction
19 of the BIRT tax rates over the past
20 years, it's getting harder to find
21 businesses that have that level. Being
22 able to partner with a company that has a
23 real estate tax liability, that would
24 open up a larger pool of opportunity and
25 potential businesses that we can recruit

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2 to participate. This change would make
3 the recruitment process less daunting and
4 would save time, as it would make it
5 easier to find targeted businesses since
6 their tax liability is public
7 information.

8 An effective and accessible CDC
9 tax credit program works hand in hand
10 with the City's efforts to keep
11 Philadelphia neighborhoods sustained,
12 equitable, and restored. The CDC tax
13 credit program has the potential to being
14 a holistic approach to neighborhood
15 development by making sure that CDCs that
16 are social workers, nurses, teachers, and
17 the cleaning crew of our neighborhoods
18 are well funded. Without dedicating
19 resources to our neighborhood's main
20 streets, the ecology of Philadelphia's
21 redevelopment remains out of balance.

22 On behalf of the merchants of
23 North 5th Street and Olney, I urge City
24 Council to expand the CDC tax credit
25 partner. With this committed investment

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2 to restoring communities, CDCs can
3 continue their efforts in making their
4 community shine, and I thank you all for
5 your time today.

6 MR. TRAWALLY: Thank you. My
7 name is Musa Trawally. I'm a Commercial
8 Corridor Manager for the African Cultural
9 Alliance of North America, ACANA. I want
10 to thank the Council for giving us the
11 opportunity to come here and testify on
12 behalf of the CDC tax credit.

13 The African Cultural Alliance
14 Community Development Corporation urges
15 the City Council Finance Committee to
16 extend the CDC tax credit program to help
17 benefit commercial corridors, especially
18 commercial corridor like Woodland Avenue
19 in Southwest Philadelphia. This section
20 of the City is a low-income neighborhood
21 with an average median household income
22 of \$30,391.

23 The extension of the tax
24 program would help ACANA to fund a
25 partnership with business owners and

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2 provide technical assistance to enhance
3 the commercial corridor and make it
4 inviting and safer for shoppers,
5 residents, and business owners and
6 overall for the City of Philadelphia.

7 ACANA CDC will help small
8 business owners to include storefront
9 improvement, security camera
10 installation, and lighting the commercial
11 corridor to create more visibility. The
12 enhancement programs on these commercial
13 corridors will reduce crime rates and
14 increase shopper traffic flow to these
15 businesses, which would lead to huge
16 revenue generating and job creation
17 opportunity in this low-income
18 neighborhood.

19 In addition, the ACANA
20 Community Development Corporation will
21 help to assist more business owners with
22 technical assistance, to increase the
23 presence of small business online, which,
24 in our opinion, is lacking primarily for
25 immigrant business owners, many of whom

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2 English is their second language.

3 Members of the City Council
4 Finance Committee, the ten-year term of
5 this program will ensure the stability of
6 ACANA for the long term and allow us to
7 plan, implement, and fundraise for
8 projects and programs that will have a
9 lasting impact on the commercial corridor
10 and surrounding communities.

11 I want to thank you for the
12 opportunity.

13 MR. TRACKMAN: Good morning.
14 My name is Andy Trackman. I'm Executive
15 Director of Germantown United CDC.

16 The CDC tax credit program has
17 been an enormous success in Philadelphia
18 and is largely the reason why we have
19 such a strong network of CDCs.
20 Germantown United strongly supports the
21 expansion of the number of slots to be
22 added to this program per Council Bill
23 No. 180261, and we urge Council to pass
24 this bill by June of this year. We also
25 urge Council to work over the summer to

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2 create increased flexibility in the type
3 of City taxes that can be used in this
4 program, such as real estate taxes.

5 My organization is not
6 currently in this program, although it is
7 not from lack of trying. Challenges we
8 have faced in entering the program:

9 First, finding the businesses who can
10 meet the \$100,000 BIRT obligation
11 requirement. We have either found
12 businesses who were willing to
13 participate but didn't meet that
14 threshold by themselves or we've found
15 more than two combined which exceeded the
16 two business maximum for this
17 partnership.

18 Secondly, there's not been any
19 slots available for us to even apply for.
20 Were we able to be in this program, the
21 additional funds would give us the
22 stability to address the many needs of
23 the Germantown neighborhood with
24 additional staff, enable us to help grow
25 the capacity of our smaller neighborhood

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2 partner organizations, leverage these
3 funds for private foundation grants, and
4 provide a source of matching funds for
5 many of the state and government grants
6 for economic development.

7 Economic development work at
8 the neighborhood level is a long-term
9 strategy. It takes time to build
10 relationships and trust with business
11 owners, particularly smaller businesses
12 or immigrant-owned businesses that may be
13 suspicious of government programs.

14 True community development is
15 done with the community, and that
16 requires planning, stakeholder engagement
17 and input, and then execution. It takes
18 longer, but creates more buy-in from the
19 local residents and businesses that are
20 the fabric of our neighborhoods, and they
21 deserve and need to be part of this
22 process.

23 Knowing that the organization
24 will still be in business and have staff
25 over the long haul means Germantown

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 United CDC can plan projects such as
3 capital projects that take a lot of time
4 and events, then implement them over the
5 years. Other funding sources are very
6 short term, and we typically can't rely
7 on them beyond a 12- or 24-month grant
8 cycle.

9 Thank you for the opportunity
10 to testify and thank you for your
11 consideration in expanding investment in
12 neighborhood economic development.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
14 you all for your testimony.

15 Anybody on the panel wish to
16 ask any questions?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you so
19 much for coming down here and providing
20 us with your testimony. Keep up the
21 great work. We're all so proud of what
22 you do, and we wish you growth and
23 success and continuing to serve our
24 community. So thank you.

25 (Thank you.)

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2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Now we will
3 go to our next panel. I'm going to put
4 my glasses on, because I'm getting old.
5 Mike Harris, Bryan, Linda Colwell-Smith,
6 and Tara Gontek.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: And for the
10 record, two of the panelists are in the
11 Sixth District. So I want to thank them
12 for trudging down 95 during this
13 construction process here. It could take
14 about an hour to go 11 miles. But there
15 are many other community groups and CDCs
16 that are in the district that could not
17 be here who have actually wrote me
18 letters that I will be providing for the
19 record in support of this legislation.

20 And also, Councilwoman Parker,
21 when we do our business services, we
22 don't just do it in Tacony. We do it all
23 over the place and we kick it and we have
24 a great time.

25 So with that, I'd like to ask

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2 Linda to state your name for the record
3 and you may proceed with your testimony.
4 Thank you for being here.

5 MS. COLWELL-SMITH: Thank you,
6 Councilman. My name is Linda
7 Colwell-Smith and I am Vice President of
8 the Holme Circle Civic Association in
9 Northeast Philadelphia. I want to thank
10 you, Councilman, and the members of the
11 Committee for the opportunity to express
12 our Association's support for Bill No.
13 180261.

14 Since we were founded in 2008,
15 Holme Circle Civic has been working to
16 improve the quality of life and to
17 promote civic involvement within our
18 boundaries, and we think we've kind of
19 met that goal. We have a lot of civic
20 engagement. We are active in many
21 community affairs, and we're kind of like
22 a sounding board for the community's
23 issues. But now we believe we can do
24 more, and we have begun the process of
25 forming a CDC for the Holme Circle area.

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2 We know there's a lot of work involved,
3 and the more I hear in these hearings,
4 the more scared I get, but the success
5 achieved by our counterparts in the
6 Mayfair and Tacony Civic Associations and
7 their respective neighborhoods is very
8 encouraging.

9 For example, anyone who walks
10 down Frankford Avenue in Mayfair or
11 Torresdale Avenue in Tacony can see for
12 themselves the positive economic benefits
13 that a CDC can bring to a community.
14 These neighborhoods have an identity, a
15 cohesiveness, a sense of prosperity that
16 is obvious to the most casual observer
17 riding by in either a 56 bus or 66
18 trolley. We want this for our
19 neighborhood as well.

20 As someone who has had family
21 in Tacony for more than 50 years and I've
22 been going down there since the late
23 '60s, I can say that the neighborhood has
24 really benefited from the CDC's efforts.
25 I have never seen Torresdale Avenue look

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2 that good, quite frankly. It's not
3 because of the new library either, even
4 though that's a big part.

5 While we're still in the very
6 beginning planning stages, literally at
7 the beginning, some of our preliminary
8 outreach to businesses and residents
9 within our boundaries has shown
10 significant interest and a lot of support
11 for the CDC idea. I think we're ready to
12 start the process.

13 Now, we understand that not
14 every CDC application will be granted and
15 that it's a long process, but yet we
16 think that the economic and social
17 benefits that having a CDC would be very
18 beneficial to our community and that it
19 should be available to any interested and
20 qualified party in any neighborhood.

21 So that's why we support this
22 bill, and we thank you, Councilman Henon,
23 for your leadership and support. I mean,
24 expanding a proven program that helps
25 communities and neighborhoods to improve

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2 their quality of life by bringing new
3 economic opportunities to its residents
4 and businesses is a win-win scenario and
5 it's actually a no-brainer. We support
6 it, and we thank you very much for your
7 consideration.

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
9 Tara.

10 MS. GONTEK: Hi. Good morning.
11 My name is Tara Gontek. I've submitted
12 written testimony for the record, and I'm
13 going to go ahead and read that, and I'd
14 also like to take a moment at the end to
15 respond to some of the conversation
16 that's been going on thus far.

17 So as I said, my name is Tara
18 Gontek. I am the President of the newly
19 formed Holmesburg Community Development
20 Corporation. I am also the President of
21 Holmesburg Civic Association. I serve on
22 the Police District Advisory Council
23 Board and several other boards in the
24 neighborhood.

25 Holmesburg is a middle

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2 neighborhood in the Lower Northeast. We
3 are a neighborhood rich with history,
4 with scores of historical landmarks,
5 including the Kings Highway Bridge, the
6 oldest continuously operating bridge in
7 the United States. Our organization is
8 hoping to apply for the CDC tax credit
9 program later this year and also hope to
10 be among those selected.

11 It's been sort of the
12 perception that the attitude of our
13 legislators is that the Northeast in
14 general is taking good care of itself,
15 yet middle neighborhoods like Holmesburg
16 are starting to teeter dangerously close
17 to the edge. We've seen a dramatic
18 increase in quality of life challenges
19 over the last several years - trash in
20 our streets, dilapidated storefronts,
21 food insecurity across the community, and
22 a severe lack of programming for
23 businesses and residents.

24 Our goal as a CDC is to address
25 these concerns head-on. We want to use

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2 the opportunity afforded to us by the CDC
3 tax credit program to support historic
4 preservation, increase safety on our
5 commercial corridors through streetscape
6 improvements and regular cleaning, create
7 services for our local businesses to
8 increase economic vitality, implement
9 programs to benefit our community members
10 such as employment search assistance and
11 ESL classes and decrease food insecurity
12 by building community gardens and
13 starting a food co-op.

14 We also appreciate the need to
15 communicate among our diverse population,
16 and it's been proven that the arts speak
17 a language beyond words. With this
18 understanding, we also plan to utilize
19 the resources afforded to us by the CDC
20 tax credit program to present more
21 community events surrounding the arts
22 such as outdoor theatre, concerts, and
23 interactive art shows to further promote
24 our commercial corridors.

25 The CDC tax credit has fostered

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2 incredible improvements over the years in
3 the neighborhoods that needed it most,
4 and by expanding the program, middle
5 neighborhoods such as Holmesburg will
6 have the opportunity to reproduce those
7 same benefits in our communities.

8 I'd like to thank you guys all
9 for your time and attention to this
10 important issue, and I'd especially like
11 to thank Councilman Henon, not only for
12 bringing this issue to light but for his
13 continued support for all of our
14 community groups in the Sixth District.

15 And I wanted to add one more
16 thing to Councilwoman Parker's point.
17 Not all CDCs are created equal, and we've
18 talked a lot about start-up CDCs, and
19 those aren't all created equal either.
20 At this point, the reason that we moved
21 towards starting a CDC is because we have
22 exhausted every resource that we possibly
23 can on a volunteer-only basis. We've
24 hosted tree giveaways. We've sent most
25 of our board members to the Citizen

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2 Planning Institute to educate themselves.
3 We attend conferences with PACDC and
4 training exercises, and we've networked
5 with CDCs across the City. And I can
6 speak to my organization, and I'm sure
7 there are several other start-up
8 organizations that feel the same way,
9 that we've done our homework and I don't
10 feel that it's a one-size-fits-all model.
11 I think that we should all be considered
12 on our own merit. And I wholeheartedly
13 hope that you will strongly consider
14 expanding this great program.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
16 for your testimony.

17 State your name for the record
18 and proceed with your testimony.

19 MR. FENSTERMAKER: Sure. Still
20 good morning, I think. My name is Bryan
21 Fenstermaker. I am the Executive
22 Director for the Passyunk Avenue
23 Revitalization Corporation in South
24 Philadelphia, Councilman Squilla's
25 district. I'd like to take the

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2 opportunity to testify in support of Bill
3 180261.

4 For those who don't know, PARC
5 has an ongoing mission, which is to
6 provide community services through a dual
7 strategy as both a non-profit real estate
8 development and management company and
9 public space maintenance and enhancement
10 organization. PARC provides public space
11 maintenance, public event support, and
12 improvement services on Passyunk Avenue
13 and the surrounding neighborhoods. As a
14 management company, PARC owns real estate
15 primarily on East Passyunk Avenue on the
16 retail corridor and commits to community
17 engagement and business attraction to
18 ensure a quality retail mix that serves
19 both the neighborhood and the region.

20 Keeping it clean is what PARC
21 does every day. We strive through
22 six-day-a-week year-long cleaning with
23 subcontractors. The team maintains trash
24 cans, addresses short dumping, graffiti
25 and poster removal on the Avenue and

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2 South Broad Street. These are essential
3 services for retaining East Passyunk
4 Avenue's regional attraction and visitor
5 appeal.

6 For example, in 2017, our crew
7 removed 7,300 bags of trash from the
8 neighborhood sidewalks. That's
9 approximately 140 tons of garbage and
10 more than 16 dump trucks.

11 There are little to no
12 financial resources available to
13 non-profits in middle neighborhoods to
14 support this type of work. PARC operates
15 entirely from revenue generated from its
16 properties, which isn't enough and not
17 sustainable. PARC is a lean organization
18 with one and a half staff and pays real
19 estate taxes on its properties.
20 Approximately 40 percent of PARC's budget
21 is dedicated to cleaning services and
22 another 30 percent to support maintenance
23 and beautification of the public spaces.
24 The CDC tax credit bill will allow for
25 continued services along the Avenue and

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2 South Broad Street. An expansion of this
3 program would go directly to Philadelphia
4 neighborhoods and the vital commercial
5 corridors.

6 The program has had great
7 success and built capacity for community
8 development corporations through the
9 City. I was the recipient of one in The
10 Enterprise Center in West Philadelphia
11 some years ago. As competitive as the
12 program is, there is also partnership
13 challenge, which has been discussed
14 earlier today, specifically for a
15 non-profit finding a partner with BIRT
16 liabilities. The courtship process is
17 time-consuming and usually leads to dead
18 ends. To that point, I've had more
19 success finding a wife.

20 I urge you to pass this bill as
21 it stands now and work with PACDC and
22 others to provide avenues for broadening
23 the partnership track. For example, when
24 we talked about the real estate partners,
25 that would be an opportunity to open.

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2 I thank you for the opportunity
3 to testify today and look forward to your
4 questions.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
6 for your testimony.

7 Mike, if you may state your
8 name for the record and proceed with your
9 testimony, please.

10 MR. HARRIS: Good morning, and
11 thank you for the opportunity to quickly
12 testify in favor of this bill, which
13 would expand the CDC tax credit program.
14 My name is Mike Harris. I'm the
15 Executive Director of the South Street
16 Headhouse District. The South Street
17 Headhouse District represents over 430
18 businesses in the South Street area and,
19 thanks to City Council, was recently
20 reauthorized to continue to build on the
21 services and initiatives we have
22 undertaken for the past 25 years. I want
23 to thank Councilman Henon, Chairwoman
24 Blackwell, Councilman Squilla, and the
25 other members of this body for

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2 recognizing the importance of the CDC tax
3 credit program and supporting its
4 expansion.

5 For the past three years, the
6 District has been trying to become a
7 participant in this program, frankly
8 without success. First, the process to
9 identify and secure sponsoring businesses
10 is difficult and requires a good deal of
11 effort, as been explained. Without full
12 information, CDCs must try to determine
13 which businesses might meet the tax
14 liability thresholds and then contact
15 them to see if they are already in the
16 program with another partner and, if not,
17 would be willing to participate. We
18 contacted well over a dozen different
19 businesses before we were able to secure
20 an interested and available company.

21 In January 2017, we finally
22 found a willing corporate partner and
23 submitted an application. We did not end
24 up getting awarded in a slot in 2017
25 because we were drawn third in a lottery

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2 for two lots. Currently, The
3 Philadelphia Code states applications are
4 accepted on a first-come, first-served
5 basis and that the Revenue Department
6 shall, when necessary, randomly choose
7 via a lottery. There were three
8 applications submitted in January 2017
9 and only two slots available. To get
10 this far and to not be selected in a
11 random lottery was a deep disappointment
12 to the South Street District and our
13 corporate partner and a lost opportunity
14 to invest \$100,000 into our community
15 this year.

16 In looking at the 40 slots that
17 are allocated currently, there is also an
18 unevenness to the schedule of the
19 openings. Based on the best information
20 that I have, there were two openings in
21 2017, none in 2018, perhaps one to three
22 in 2019, none in 2020, and then 13 in
23 2021. Now that we have identified a
24 business willing to participate and
25 sponsor the District, we run the

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2 possibility that the business may not
3 still be interested to engage again two
4 years from now. Clearly, from 2021 to
5 2023 many slots will be opening up, but
6 that is many years and many deferred
7 initiatives from now. And not to
8 begrudge any of the existing CDCs
9 currently in the program, but it does
10 create a resource disadvantage for those
11 CDCs trying to do the same work but that
12 are not in the program.

13 Fortunately, our business
14 partner still wants to partner with the
15 District and sees the benefits of
16 participating in this program and
17 contributing directly to neighborhood
18 community development.

19 The South Street Headhouse
20 District is the second oldest BID in the
21 City and manages and maintains one of the
22 highest profile and most visited tourist
23 areas in the City. Our mission and task
24 is to keep the area safe, clean, and
25 economically vibrant on a daily basis.

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2 As a BID and CDC, we do not have a lot of
3 options to expand and grow revenues,
4 though we maximize other non-assessment
5 sources as much as possible, which is the
6 reason these tax credit program funds are
7 so critical. Having a ten-year reliable
8 source of income would allow us to invest
9 more into cleaning, marketing, and other
10 economic development initiatives at this
11 critical time for South Street, which is
12 one of the top destination spots for
13 tourists visiting from around the country
14 and world.

15 Also due to its census tract
16 location between Society Hill and Queen
17 Village, the South Street Headhouse
18 District is not eligible to participate
19 in CDBG-funded and other income-based
20 programs, though the needs are there.
21 Again, this is another reason this
22 program is so important and such a high
23 priority for us.

24 Not to diminish the City's
25 revenue needs, but the award of \$100,000

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2 annually into the District's budget would
3 have a significant and direct impact to
4 our community and commercial corridor
5 that would be demonstrable. With the
6 efforts made to get to this point and
7 finding a willing partner and the high
8 positive impact these funds would have in
9 our community and neighborhood, I
10 respectfully request that you seek to
11 expand the program with the new slots
12 proposed in this bill.

13 Thank you for your
14 consideration, and I am available to
15 answer any questions you may have about
16 what this initiative means to the South
17 Street District.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
20 you all for your testimony.

21 The Chair recognizes Councilman
22 Domb.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 I just had a few technical

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2 questions and maybe -- I'm not sure you
3 can answer it, but maybe someone here
4 can, and, that is, to find a partner, you
5 need a partner who pays \$100,000 in BIRT
6 taxes?

7 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So when
9 you're in these neighborhoods that are
10 smaller neighborhoods, there probably
11 aren't many people in those neighborhoods
12 who pay \$100,000 in BIRT taxes, which is
13 an impossibility, right? That's your
14 challenge, I guess, right? And so what
15 was the reason for setting the bar at
16 \$100,000? Does anybody know?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Does Commerce
19 know? I'm just curious, why is it
20 100,000? Who set that bar?

21 MS. FEGELY: I think Wilson can
22 answer that question.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Come on up
24 here. The Chair will recognize the port
25 in the eye of the storm, W. Wilson Goode.

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2 Come on up here.

3 (Applause.)

4 (Councilman Goode approached
5 witness table.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: How long
7 has he been waiting to sit up there?

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: It's
9 different being on the other side, huh,
10 Councilman?

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
12 afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of
13 the Committee. My name is W. Wilson
14 Goode, Jr., Senior Policy Advisor, Office
15 of City Council President.

16 Good afternoon, Councilman
17 Domb. This program was actually
18 patterned after a state program, which
19 still exists, which offered \$250,000 per
20 year. It's patterned after a program
21 called The Philadelphia Plan, which had
22 ten slots and was focused on more housing
23 development. This was focused on
24 economic development, and we decided that
25 you needed at least \$100,000 to provide

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2 the type of resources that are needed for
3 that type of group. But the program does
4 actually allow for two different
5 businesses to partner to make up that
6 \$100,000 threshold.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So it doesn't
8 allow two businesses to partner?

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It does.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Oh, it does?

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It does.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can you have
13 three businesses partner?

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: As it's
15 currently written, we don't, but we could
16 change it to that. But right now two
17 businesses can partner to meet that
18 \$100,000 threshold.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Because I'm
20 just thinking in one of the
21 neighborhoods, Holmesburg, I'm not sure
22 that those businesses are generating
23 enough business that pay the amount of
24 BIRT taxes required for this program.

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The partners

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2 generally don't come from those
3 neighborhoods. We've been lucky when
4 they have, but we've been able to
5 actually expand the program from ten
6 slots, to 15 slots, to 25 slots, to 35,
7 40 slots and hopefully to expand it to 50
8 slots. Partners will know if there are
9 slots available, and we actually know in
10 one of the cases there's already a
11 partner available. And so we've been
12 able to fill slots as the program has
13 expanded.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Does the
15 partner have to live in that area?

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: No. The
17 partner just has to be a BIRT payer.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
19 you very much. Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: You're
21 welcome.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
23 I did have a question for
24 Mr. Harris.

25 MR. HARRIS: Yes, Councilman.

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2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: You said
3 you're the second oldest district?

4 MR. HARRIS: We're the second
5 oldest business improvement district,
6 after the Center City District, yes.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Maybe there
8 is. I think there is. Do you have like
9 a district tax in your district?

10 MR. HARRIS: There is a
11 district assessment, yes. We're one of
12 the 14 BIDs in the City that does do an
13 assessment. However, it is a capped
14 assessment by which the demands and the
15 costs will continue to increase, but we
16 are capped at the assessment. So we do
17 fill in with non-assessment income to
18 carry out the services and initiatives
19 that we undertake.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is that
21 assessment based off the real estate
22 taxes?

23 MR. HARRIS: It is based off
24 the assessed valuation of the property.
25 It's capped and then redistributed

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2 amongst the properties based on the
3 City's valuation of those properties.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So over the
5 last two years, while we've all seen
6 assessments dramatically increase, does
7 that mean that your BID has received more
8 revenue?

9 MR. HARRIS: No, sir, it does
10 not. We are set and capped by City
11 Council and by the ordinance that was.
12 So we don't grow with the assessment.
13 Basically think of it as the pieces of
14 the pie get reshifted every year based on
15 the valuation, but we do not grow in
16 proportion to the City's --

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How much is
18 ball park your annual budget?

19 MR. HARRIS: Our annual budget
20 right now is \$800,000, and of that, 575
21 comes out of assessments.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And that
23 800,000, how is that invested back into
24 South Street?

25 MR. HARRIS: We are a

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 two-person organization. We pay for
3 daily street cleaning. We support the
4 mini station. We do marketing events and
5 PR. We do SafeCam incentive program
6 where we incentivize businesses to put
7 cameras on the street, and we do other
8 business and economic development to try
9 to keep the area vibrant and fill the
10 vacancies that are on the street.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So let me
12 just ask you this question, because I'm a
13 little familiar with it. The other side
14 of South Street from Broad to, let's say,
15 25th in the last five to seven years has
16 developed amazingly well, amazingly well.
17 But the side from Broad to Front is still
18 struggling, in my opinion. Why do you
19 think that is?

20 MR. HARRIS: Well, this month's
21 Philadelphia Magazine had a feature
22 article on South Street that I think kind
23 of explained a lot of the history of it.
24 There's a number of varieties of reasons
25 to go into it, but it's not from the lack

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 of trying of our organization to bring
3 property owners along, to engage them, to
4 bring in good tenants that support both
5 the tourist industry as well as the
6 neighborhoods and the communities that
7 live around us. So we have older smaller
8 buildings, but that's why we take
9 advantage of the Storefront Improvement
10 grant and we try to encourage people to
11 be part of that.

12 Like any commercial corridor,
13 historic commercial corridor, it goes
14 through its ebbs and flows, and right now
15 we are -- we have new businesses coming
16 in. Sometimes it doesn't happen as
17 quickly or as perceptively as we'd like,
18 but we do bring in over a million people
19 a year, so we still are a destination.
20 We just simply are trying to make it as
21 economically viable and vibrant to best
22 represent the City as we can.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I still
24 remember that song by The Orlons, right?

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: The who?

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Orlons. You
3 don't even know who they are. Orlons.

4 MR. HARRIS: I actually found
5 another song.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Who? What?

7 MR. HARRIS: I actually found
8 out there was a song the other day by The
9 Taffies called Do the South Street. It's
10 a totally different song. So now South
11 Street has two songs I didn't know about.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: When I go
13 down there and I see what's going on, I'm
14 concerned that it can't be so much
15 better. It has so much potential. It's
16 in the middle of everything that's
17 exploding, and here we have South Street,
18 and that little corridor that I think has
19 tremendous potential, tremendous
20 potential. I think one of your
21 challenges is, I think there's a New York
22 owner of real estate -- I'll just be very
23 blunt about this -- that owns 35 or so
24 properties and there's no master plan on
25 how those properties should be developed

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 and handled in that corridor. That's, I
3 think, affecting your ability, because
4 when you look at the other side, the
5 reason why it did so well, it was kind of
6 open and there was opportunity to have
7 bigger locations and so forth. Here it's
8 more controlled.

9 But whatever we can do to work
10 with that person in New York that owns
11 these properties to -- I think that's
12 holding back that section of South
13 Street, and that's really bad for that
14 whole community.

15 MR. HARRIS: The owner in
16 question is somebody that we do work with
17 and communicate with. He does own
18 several properties. I think one of the
19 issues is we also have historic
20 properties, not legal historic but
21 historic with a small H that are also
22 small footprints. So they're anywhere
23 from 1,200 to 2,000 square feet, so these
24 are smaller, independently owned and
25 operated, and they don't, without

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 demolition, really allow for bigger
3 footprints. We actually have only two or
4 three properties that have sort of
5 significant-sized footprints.

6 So it allows us to be
7 independently owned and operated. We
8 have 400 small businesses of our total,
9 and so I think we're a unique area. I
10 think we're important to the City and the
11 history of the City, and we want to make
12 sure we live up to that and make it even
13 better.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I mean, the
15 best example is 13th Street 15, 20 years
16 ago before Tony Goldman accumulated all
17 that property and changed what occurred
18 there.

19 MR. HARRIS: I look at that a
20 lot. I study that. We look at how
21 Chicago and other areas have transformed
22 neighborhoods and taking the older
23 commercial corridor and making it more
24 relevant. South Street is not the only
25 spot in town anymore, and so more

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 competition, but that's why this tax
3 credit program, to get back to that, is
4 so important, because it allows us to
5 have resources to do -- if we were to
6 have it, we would increase our cleaning
7 equipment. We would do retail market
8 analysis. We would continue our SafeCam
9 incentives and do things to support
10 storefront improvements, whether it be
11 through beautification or incentives to
12 fill those, and these funds would allow
13 us to do those things.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I agree
15 with you on the tax credit, but for your
16 situation, it's maybe 12 percent of your
17 budget, and for Holmesburg it could be 75
18 percent of their budget. So I can see
19 where the impact in the smaller corridors
20 is very important. I'm in favor of all
21 of them. I'm just saying in general I
22 could see where it's more impactful than
23 the smaller ones.

24 I would be happy, if you want,
25 to help you get South Street back on

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 track. I have some ideas. So if you
3 want to meet after this, let me know,
4 because I go down there and see what's
5 going on and it bothers me what's going
6 on there.

7 MR. HARRIS: I will make a
8 beeline to you.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's not
10 acceptable for us. We should improve it.

11 MR. HARRIS: Thank you,
12 Councilman. I appreciate that.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Councilman,
16 thank you.

17 And I just want to clarify for
18 the record -- thank you for your
19 testimony. South Street, you're talking
20 about it's a unique neighborhood or a
21 unique district. The City of
22 Philadelphia has unique neighborhoods all
23 with its clear and prideful distinctions
24 that people want to share. We're talking
25 about Holmesburg. We got the oldest

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 operating bridge in the country right
3 here in the City of Philadelphia called
4 the Kings Highway. It was an edict that
5 was brought down by the King of England
6 who said, hey, listen, you either are
7 going to build a bridge as a community or
8 we're going to tax you to build a bridge
9 and we're going to get it built. But
10 what it did, it allowed the commerce to
11 come down to Center City right here and
12 build the epicenter of where the wagon
13 wheel has developed our great City of
14 Philadelphia because of that bridge, and
15 along that bridge you develop not just
16 Holmesburg but you develop Tacony, you
17 develop Mayfair, you develop Frankford,
18 you develop Bridesburg and all the way
19 down Fishtown, all the way down to where
20 we are right now where we're doing the
21 work of the people here in this great
22 building. And there are inequities when
23 it comes to start-ups and CDC
24 opportunities. We have special service
25 groups. Mike was just talking about

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 South Street Headhouse. It's a special
3 service district. Tacony and Holmesburg
4 and other parts of my district, they are
5 not special service districts. They do
6 not have that dedicated funding where
7 they can rely on. They will solely rely
8 on sweat equity, fundraising, support of
9 their elected officials, and a CDC tax
10 credit partner. So that would be their
11 lifeline or go broke, and that's really
12 where we are and that's why I think --
13 and it's not just me. I appreciate the
14 accolades, as every member of this
15 Committee and City Council that wants to
16 see that uniqueness of every
17 neighborhood, which makes us a Philly of
18 neighborhoods, thrive and grow.

19 So I just want to show that and
20 mention that distinction between a
21 special service district, which are BIDs,
22 and other resources where businesses are
23 defined by legislation, just as the CDC
24 tax credit is defined by legislation to
25 find a partner, to be a good partner

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 financially, give it back to the
3 community. CDC tax credit -- or BIDs
4 also define areas of commercial corridors
5 or various of business which can
6 fluctuate in size that creates more
7 equity than another person. Northeast
8 Philadelphia is rocking, and we do a
9 great job with limited resources. We
10 just do it with hard work, gloves,
11 commitments on Saturdays and Sundays to
12 give back. So I'm sure we are no
13 different than any other neighborhood in
14 the City of Philadelphia. So everybody
15 keep up the good work.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
19 morning, everyone.

20 What is the protocol or
21 procedures that CDCs go through to reach
22 out to, access, lean on neighborhood
23 businesses to buy into the CDC mission?
24 And when is the last time -- have you had
25 an opportunity recently to sit down,

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 confer with the City Planning Department,
3 South Philadelphia -- South Street CDC?

4 MR. HARRIS: Well, in terms of
5 the process -- are you speaking to the
6 terms of the process we went through to
7 do the CDC tax credit?

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

9 MR. HARRIS: Frankly, we took
10 the list that we had of who is already
11 participating. We had a list of who is
12 participating. We took, frankly, the
13 Philly Business Journal and went through,
14 and you have to make guesses, educated
15 guesses, of who has the tax liability of
16 \$100,000, and then you start calling
17 them. Basically you start cold-calling
18 them. You start doing it that way. And
19 you have to educate people on the
20 program, why they should be part of it.
21 And eventually we did come to an
22 organization, a company, that's not in
23 our neighborhood, but it is in
24 Philadelphia, of course, who is both
25 interested, saw the value in it, wanted

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 to participate in it, and have the tax
3 liability.

4 So once you secure them, that's
5 like a precious partnership. So we have
6 confirmed with them that they would still
7 be very interested in being partners with
8 us. They see the value of investing,
9 corporately investing, directly and
10 supporting a neighborhood development.
11 So I think there's benefits to the
12 businesses as well as the CDCs.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of course.

14 For any of those at the table
15 or any others who have spoken, is it a
16 common practice to sit with the City
17 Planning Department or the City Planning
18 Department representative assigned to
19 your particular district to confer with
20 them and learn from them what the
21 long-term goals may be for that
22 particular community?

23 MS. GONTEK: Thank you for your
24 question, Councilwoman. I can speak to
25 our experience in Holmesburg. We consult

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 the Planning Commission at pretty much
3 every juncture to make sure that our
4 plans are in line with the 2035 plan and
5 whatever else that they have in mind. So
6 yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good.

8 MS. COLWELL-SMITH: Yes,
9 Councilwoman. I mean, we're at the very
10 beginning of the process, and it sounds
11 like this is a best practice we should
12 follow as well. Thank you for the
13 question.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

15 Absolutely.

16 I would suggest that be a
17 fundamental first step as part of the
18 homework and back-room intel that you
19 should have before you invest dollars
20 that lead you down a road where you then
21 discover that you're not in alignment
22 with what the City's goals and missions
23 might be. So kudos for, well, at least
24 recognizing that is an important
25 fundamental first step, because it's just

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 a way of working smarter with the limited
3 dollars that you have.

4 Thank you very much for the
5 testimony of everyone.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
8 Councilwoman.

9 And thank you all for your
10 testimony.

11 Is there anyone else here that
12 wishes to testify on Bill No. 180261?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: That being
15 none, we will end our public hearing on
16 the Committee of Finance and go into our
17 public meeting of the Committee of
18 Finance.

19 And the Chair recognizes
20 Councilman Greenlee.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill Nos.
23 180261, 180392, and 180393 be reported
24 from this Committee with a favorable
25 recommendation and further move that the

1 5/22/18 - FINANCE - BILL 180261, ETC.
2 rules of Council be suspended to permit
3 first reading of these bills at our next
4 session of Council.

5 (Duly seconded.)

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: It's been
7 seconded. All those approve signify by
8 saying aye.

9 (Aye.)

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: Opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: The ayes
13 have it. Bill Nos. 180261, 180392, and
14 180393 will be reported out of this
15 Committee with a favorable recommendation
16 and be reported at our next Council
17 session.

18 I want to thank you all for
19 your testimony and your time and your
20 patience, and this concludes our meeting
21 of the public hearing of Finance.

22 Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 (Committee on Finance concluded
25 at 12:20 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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