COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WORKS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, December 1, 2025
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

BILLS: 250573, 250717, 250726, 250801, 250807, 250832, 250833, 250841, 250847, 250913, 251017, 251023

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COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Philadelphia City Council's Committee on Public Property and Public Works. I now note that the hour has come.

Will the Clerk please call the roll and take attendance. Members that are in attendance, will you please indicate you are here by saying present when your name is called.

Ms. Lee, will you please call the roll.

THE CLERK: Chair Lozada.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Present.

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Squilla.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Gauthier -- I mean, Councilmember

Gauthier.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Driscoll.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Harrity.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

Present.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I note for the record that a quorum of this committee is present and that this hearing is called to order. This is the public hearing on the Committee of Public Property and Public Works regarding Bill Nos. 250717, 250573, 250801, 250807, 250841, 250833, 250832, 250847, 250913, 250 -- 251, I'm

sorry, 251017, 251023.

Will the Clerk please read the titles of the bills on the agenda for today.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 250717, introduced by Councilwoman Lozada, titled An ordinance renaming and designating the property commonly referred to as Wissinoming Park, located at 5801 Frankford Ave, as "Margaret Tartaglione Park" in the City of Philadelphia.

And Bill No. 250573, introduced by Councilmember Gilmore Richardson for Council President Kenyatta Johnson, titled An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into an amendment to a lease agreement with 2401 Walnut LP, for use by the City of all or a portion of the premises located at

2401 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, under certain terms and conditions.

And Bill No. 250801, introduced by Councilmember Jones for Council President Kenyatta Johnson, titled An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City, to acquire fee simple title or a lesser interest in real estate, by purchase, dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in lieu of condemnation, or otherwise, in certain parcels of land along the Schuylkill River and the Wissahickon Creek together with all improvements thereon and all associated easements and appurtenances, for public recreational purposes, all under certain terms and conditions.

And Bill No. 250807, introduced by Councilmember

Squilla, titled An ordinance authorizing the commissioner of public property to acquire on behalf of the city, fee simple, tighter title or lesser interests by purchase, dedication, donation, condemnation agreement in lieu of condemnation or otherwise for the purpose of making, enlarging, connecting, extending, operating and maintaining public parks for recreational use certain parcels of land generally bounded and located between Vine Street, Fairmount Avenue, 8th Street and 12th Street, together with all improvements thereon and all associated easement and appurtenances, and to lease the property or a portion thereof to the Certain to Center City District, all under certain terms and conditions.

And Bill No. 250841, introduced by Councilmember

Driscoll for Council President Kenyatta Johnson, titled An ordinance authorizing the Director of the Department of Aviation, on behalf of the City, to transfer or convey real estate interests to resolve litigation with Tinicum Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, under certain terms and conditions.

And Bill No. 250833, introduced by Councilmember Lozada, titled An ordinance amending Title 16 entitled "Public Property" to add a new chapter to explicitly require the Philadelphia Land Bank to submit an annual report to Council that details the disposition of all land subject to the Land Bank, under certain terms and conditions.

And Bill No. 250832, introduced by Councilmember Jones, titled An Ordinance formally

renaming the Wynnefield Branch Library, located at 5325 Overbrook Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131, as the "Reverend Louise Williams Bishop Library" to honor the dedication and service of former Pennsylvania State Representative Louise Williams Bishop.

Bill No. 250847, introduced by Councilmember Bass -- I'm sorry, yeah, introduced by Councilmember Bass, titled An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to acquire fee simple title or a lesser real estate interest in and to all or a portion of the properties known as 1948 Cayuga Street, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 251017, introduced by Councilmember Gilmore Richardson for Council President

Kenyatta Johnson, titled An ordinance authorizing the Director of the Department of Aviation to acquire, on behalf of the City, fee simple title or a lesser real estate interest by purchase, amicable negotiation, dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in lieu of condemnation or otherwise, in and to all or portions of a certain parcel of land known as 4521 Island Avenue, under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 251023, introduced by Councilmember Lozada, titled An ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into an agreement with the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development or the Philadelphia Municipal Authority to fit out a Health Center Facility based on plans and specifications

acceptable to the City that will be developed on premises located on Frankford Avenue in the vicinity of Pratt Street and Dyre Street and to repay the landlord for the costs of the fit-out, under certain terms and conditions.

There are no further bills being heard today, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you very much. I would like to note that Bill No. 250726 is being held at the request of the sponsor.

Would the Clerk please call the first panel to testify on Bill No. 250717.

THE CLERK: Yes, ma'am. Pennsylvania State Senator Christine Tartaglione.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Good morning. Before we continue, I'd like to recognize for the record that Councilmember Gauthier is present.

Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning. Senator, please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

SENATOR TARTAGLIONE: Senator Christine Tartaglione. I represent the 2nd District in Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you. Begin with your testimony.

SENATOR TARTAGLIONE: Thank you, Councilwoman Lozada, and thank you to the members of the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak today. This is a deeply personal moment for me and my family. Wissinoming Park is more than a green space in our

community. It's a gathering place, a refuge and a reflection of a neighborhood spirit. And my mom was known for having Ward meetings every Wednesday night, except for the Wednesday before Christmas and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and every Wednesday night before that meeting.

Her committee people and my mother went to that park, painted over all the graffiti, and they cleaned up those 44 acres. So this is a profound honor of asking that it bear the name of someone who embodied that spirit every single day of her life, my mother Marge Tartaglione.

My mother was a force of nature, fiery, fearless and fiercely loyal. She was one of the toughest women ever to enter Philadelphia politics and she had to be. When she first ran for

office in 1975, women weren't invited to the table. She pulled up her own chair, made her own place and never let anyone forget she had earned it.

She was the first woman elected citywide in Philadelphia's history. And for more than 35 years as a City Commissioner, she shaped the course of our city with grit, conviction and compassion. Behind all the stories, the smoke filled ward meetings in our basement, the legendary political battles, the sharp tongue and even the sharper sense of justice.

She was at her core, a wife, married to the love of her life Gene, for 59 years, a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother who loved her family, her neighborhood and her city. She fought for the people of Northeast Philadelphia the same way she

fought for us at home, without hesitation, without fear and without ever backing down from what she believed was right.

My mother believed in showing up, whether it was fixing a streetlight for a constituent, mentoring young people in government service or standing up to anyone who tried to bully her community. She never turned away from a fight, if it meant making life better for people she served. Even in her most challenging years, recovering from surgery or battling illness, she showed that trademark toughness she was. Simply put, Philly through and through.

Renaming Wissinoming Park in her honor is not just a recognition of her career. It's an acknowledgement of her legacy. It is a way to ensure that generations to come, children who run in those

fields or families who gathered under those trees will know the name of a woman who helped pave the way for so many others.

A woman who stood up when others stayed seated, a woman who cared deeply about this community and dedicated her life to serving it. I am grateful to the community members, organizations, local leaders, and especially to my dear friend Councilwoman Quetcy Lozada who supported this effort.

I am grateful to all of you for considering this tribute to a woman who gave our city everything she had. Thank you for the opportunity to share who my mother was, not just the public figure, but the heart behind the work. It would mean the world to my family and it would mean the world to me to see Wissinoming Park officially become Margaret

Tartaglione Park. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you so much for your testimony. Before I open the floor, I just want to say that I never had the opportunity to meet Ms. Marge personally. But anyone I have spoken to in that Wissinoming community and throughout the Democratic Party or here in Philadelphia city government, any time I mention Ms. Marge there's nothing but great things that are said about her, right.

Although people say, you know, sometimes we didn't agree and she was firm in what she believed in and she stood firm in what she was, she was feisty, but she stood her ground if it meant that the decisions that were being made would impact the residents of the community in her neighborhood.

The residents of

Wissinoming Park have great admiration for her and many of them speak about her and how she impacted their lives. And so, on their behalf and on behalf of the residents of the 7th Council District where you and your family have served for many, many years, I just want to say thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you, Senator, for testifying. I just want to say it's really fitting that Marge's name will be on the park. Marge was feisty, but the person who made this all happen reminds me a little bit of a younger Marge, somebody who really is passionate about her community, who really cares about the community.

And I was thinking about

it the other day when it was first mentioned that it would be named, and I said there was no perfect person to name the park after your mom as our Councilmember Lozada, because it really is a great resemblance there between the two. And when they're fighting for you, they have your back and nobody else is going to change that. So congratulations. It's a great honor.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

The Chair recognizes Councilman Driscoll.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

Well, welcome Senator Tartaglione. As you know, but perhaps the Chair does not know, your mother had a lot of titles. But to me, the first title and the last title for me to your mother was Mrs. Tartaglione, because I happened to have gone through 1st

grade through 8th grade with Senator Tartaglione. And she was tough.

But as the Senator said and as Councilman Squilla said, her word was her bond. You didn't have to worry about -- I just wish politics was a little bit like that, where all this stuff that goes on she just told it like it was and it was what it was. And she did have to be tough because she was in it early and she tried to -- they tried to bully her.

But personally as I grew older and I got involved in politics, I gotten to witness grown men afraid to go into your mother's basement for her endorsement. I'm talking about governors, judges, senators from all across the Commonwealth that would be afraid to go into that basement, because you didn't come out of that

basement with an endorsement without having to sing a song. And a lot of these folks weren't singers, but you didn't get off the hook. You had to sing a song or you weren't getting that endorsement.

So the toughest people made up a song and they sang that song, whether it was good or bad. And your mother did that I think really just to break the ice and see if they could get outside the box, that they were going to have to be if they were going to be a judge or a senator or a governor.

So I miss her and I know you do dearly. And this will be an easy vote for me, Senator.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Harrity.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I

too remember Commissioner Tartaglione. I didn't call her Marge. That's for sure. But I got to spend a lot of time when Senator Tartaglione was the Chair of the State Party and I was her young Democrat's president.

And Marge would be up there holding court, plotting and planning and figuring out who the candidates were going to be, and it was something to see. And as my colleague said, you know, you didn't want to mess with Marge. She would get you.

And I kind of agree that Councilwoman Lozada has got that same feistiness that Commissioner Tartaglione had. I remember, you know, even when you were young, she still took the time to talk to you, even if it was just to let you know what you were doing wrong, right.

But she had a way about

her, to say the least. And I remember people going in to sing and it was hilarious. I remember Brady even having to sing over there when he was running, and it wasn't even in his district. So it was kind of funny. But again, like Councilman Driscoll said, this is an easy vote for us. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

There be no additional comments, thank you so much for being with us this morning.

SENATOR TARTAGLIONE:

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

And for the record, I'd like to note that there was testimony submitted from Commissioner Susan Slawson from the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Lee, are there any other individuals here to testify on behalf of (inaudible).

Can you please read the names of the individuals that are here to testify on the record.

THE CLERK: There are no further witnesses for this bill.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, will you please read the name of the person to testify on Bill No. 250573.

THE CLERK: Today the Commissioner of Public Property Joseph Brasky will be testifying on this bill.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY: Good morning. My name is Joe Brasky, Department of Public Property Commissioner.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you for being with us.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY:

Thank you. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee of Public Property and Public Works. My name is Joe Brasky. I'm the Commissioner of Public Property. I'm here today to testify in support of Bill No. 250573, authorizing the Department of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into a lease agreement with 2401 Walnut LP for use by the City of all or a portion of the premises located on 2401 Walnut Street, under certain terms and conditions.

The City of Philadelphia Citizens Police Oversight Commission, CPOC, was established in 2021 to oversee and investigate police conduct, policies and practices to promote accountability

and transparency. As CPOC transitions into a fully independent city department, Department of Public Property identified the need for appropriate office space and moved quickly to evaluate the suitable options.

In December 2024, City Council approved Bill 241022, authorizing a new 10-year lease to house the Department of Licenses and Inspections Central West District office on the fifth floor of 2401 Walnut Street. Given the success of the tenancy and strong working relationship with the landlord and availability of our additional 5561 square foot on the sixth floor.

Expanding within the building to accommodate CPOC was an ideal solution. The space at 2401 walnut offers an affordable rental space and high quality Class A LEED

Gold-certified environment, providing CPOC staff with a modern, efficient and environmentally responsible workplace.

This proposed lease amendment would support CPOC's continued growth and development as the independent department, securing office space through 2035. The Department of Public Property supports this measure. And accordingly, I respectfully ask that City Council approve Bill No. 250573. Thank you. I'll be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you for your testimony.

Are there any questions from the panel?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you for being with us this morning.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY:

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Ms. Lee, will you please call the panel for Bill No. 250801.

(Witness approached witness table.)

THE CLERK: Sarah Clark Stuart, Trails and Transportation Manager for the Department of Streets will be testifying on this bill today.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning.

MS. CLARK STUART: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

State your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MS. CLARK STUART: Thank you. My name is Sarah Clark Stuart. I'm Trails and Transportation Manager for the

Streets Department of the City of Philadelphia. Good morning, Chairwoman Lozada and members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works.

Again, my name is Sarah Clark Stuart. I'm the Trails and Transportation Manager and I'm here to testify in support of Bill No. 250801. Introduced by Councilmember Jones. Bill No. 250801 allows the City of Philadelphia to acquire right-of-way land for the purposes of connecting and extending the Schuylkill River Trail by constructing the Wissahickon Gateway segment of the Schuylkill River Trail.

Upon completion of construction, the right-of-way will be operated and maintained by the Philadelphia Streets Department. The proposed right-of-way runs

between the Wissahickon Creek to the east, the Schuylkill River to the south, the Pencoyd Bridge to the west, and Ridge Avenue and Main Street to the north. The proposed trail that will be built on these right-of-ways will be part of the larger circuit trail system in Greater Philadelphia. This concludes my testimony. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much.

Are there any questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Seeing none, thank you so much for being with us.

MS. CLARK STUART: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Is there anyone else to testify on

this bill?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Will the Clerk please call the first panel for Bill No. 250807.

THE CLERK: John Mondlak -- I'm sorry if I said your name wrong -- First Deputy and Chief of Staff of the Department of Planning and Development will be testifying on this bill today.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MR. MONDLAK: Good morning. John Mondlak. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada, members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. My name is John Mondlak. I'm the First

Deputy Chief of Staff in the Department of Planning and Development and I'm here to testify in favor of Bill 250807.

This bill authorizes the Department of Public Property to acquire, on behalf of the City, title to the defunct Reading Railroad Line that runs from Vine Street to Fairmount Avenue. It also authorizes the City to lease, enter into a long-term lease, with Center City District to build and maintain a new park on top of the viaduct.

This section of the viaduct used to bring passengers and freight trains into the Reading Terminal Head House directly above the Reading Terminal Market where goods were unloaded and sold throughout the city, including at the Reading Terminal Market.

When the Commuter Tunnel

was opened in 1984, most of the Reading Railroad Line was maintained and reused as part of the regional rail system. However, because of the angle of the existing Reading Terminal that went north, south into the Head House and the Commuter Rail Tunnel that went east, west along parallel with Market at this point, there was a section that was almost a mile long that was no longer needed and abandoned.

Consequently, this section of the defunct Reading Railroad has been a source of blight for more than 40 years since rail operations ceased. The rail itself is abandoned. More than 25% of the parcels surrounding the viaduct are abandoned and vacant.

The City's many attempts to engage with the property owners have been fruitless. The area is

desolate and unsafe and will remain so until something is done to change the current conditions. Center City District, working in partnership with the City, is well-equipped to bring about this change. Phase 1 of the Rail Park from Broad Street to Callowhill was built by Center City District in 2018. Center City District has also successfully raised more than $100 million to renovate four other parks in Center City and maintain them in a first-class manner.

Working together, Center City District, the City and community groups including Friends of the Rail Park can turn the viaduct into needed recreational space for nearby neighbors, including Chinatown, Callowhill and Poplar as well as popular destination for visitors.

For these reasons, the

Department of Public Property -- I'm sorry, the Department of Planning and Development supports this measure and respectfully request City Council approve Bill 250807.

And I respectfully request consideration of an amendment that has been circulated or should have been circulated in advance that clarifies the location of the property to be required and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you for your testimony. So I just have one question. So because these railways have been unattended to for years and because they've become blight for the community, we are considering a transfer, correct?

MR. MONDLAK: Correct. We're trying to acquire and, if

necessary, condemn from the Reading Company to build a park, not unlike the High Line in New York or the Rail Park in Chicago or Atlanta or even Paris, France. There's a number of them around the country that have been very successful. And it's an extension of the park that we've already built here.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And is the Department of Planning and Development also looking at other spaces that are very similar to this in other neighborhoods and considering doing the same?

MR. MONDLAK: If there's an opportunity to take advantage of abandoned linear park, we would absolutely look into it.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I would like for you to look at some of these very same railways in other neighborhoods, specifically in the 7th Council District where

we know some of these railways have become spaces where those who are living unhoused tend to retreat to, right, and it becomes a public nuisance, it becomes a hazard, it becomes a public safety issue.

And for many years, community residents have complained about these types of spaces. And I don't recall anyone ever taking the initiative to say, we need to take this land back or we need to hold these individuals accountable and make sure that they do become spaces that can either be reused or that can be maintained by local CDCs.

MR. MONDLAK: I do need to point out that the rail would have to be abandoned. We don't have the ability to take rail. So if it's active rail or there's a railroad right-of-way that is owned by a railroad company, whether

they're using it or not we don't have the ability to take it.

The reason we have an opportunity here is because this section of it, this mile or so section of it was abandoned in 1984 so it's just real estate. It is not rail. It looks like rail because it has bridges and you could see where the tracks were. But if it were active rail, we would not be able to take it.

And as a matter of fact, we just litigated that very issue at the Surface Transportation Board successfully. If we had lost that case, we would not be able to take it. But the Surface Transportation Board agreed with us, determined this is not rail, this is private property. And hence, we're able to acquire it.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: So how do you all help us as a

legislative body or as a representative elected in the community, how do you help us hold some of these agencies accountable?

MR. MONDLAK: It's a good question and I don't have a good answer for you. Railroads are notorious for not returning phone calls, not doing some of the things they should do. I'm happy to have as many discussions as necessary, but I don't have a great answer for you unfortunately.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Okay. Thank, you.

Any other questions? The Chair recognizes Councilmember Young and then Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you.

Good morning, Mr. Mondlak. Just a couple questions again. So what is the --

does the City plan to use eminent domain to acquire this mile portion or how is the City going to acquire this?

MR. MONDLAK: If necessary, our goal is not to have to do that. Our goal is to negotiate with the owners. To date, it hasn't been successful. The victory we had with the Surface Transportation Board I think is a little bit helpful because part of their reluctance has always been you can't take our property, we're a railroad, and that was dispelled through that case. So we're hoping at this point that they're willing to have the conversation with us. So we would only condemn as a last resort.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: And if it is a purchase, would the City be paying for the land or would the entity that will be controlling the

land be paying for it if it's a purchase?

MR. MONDLAK: Right now it would be Center City District who is in the process of raising funds to build and maintain the park. The City will have to have a role. We would be the property owner. And so, we're going to have a role. I'm sure there'll be a financial ask at some point in the future for specific help. But right now, Center City District has committed to raising money for things like purchase.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you. And you also alluded to an amendment, and I happened to see an amendment here where I guess the equal economic opportunity language has been stricken out from this amendment. So can you talk to us about how, if developed, the residents of the city will have

access to this economic opportunity here?

MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. So the primary purpose of the amendment was really to clarify in the body of the ordinance which areas will be taken for access. There was a change when Reading took down and demolished their train station at Spring Garden right adjacent to the viaduct, which was a beautiful building but somebody filed a conservatorship. They took it down, so that now became an accessible space to build ramping and operate facilities, so we changed that.

The change on the economic opportunity, I think that was done by the Law Department. I haven't had a conversation with them. I believe it's to comply with the current law. So we would have to work with Center City

District to make sure that we are including small businesses and local contractors. We haven't done that. This change really just came through a couple weeks ago or a week ago, but we'll have those conversations before we make any progress on any of this.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: But this particular language here in the amendment doesn't mention anything about certain demographics. So to me, it looks like we are striking out economic opportunity plans. That plan could be for small and local businesses so I just don't see why we are taking that particular provision out of a lease agreement, because you can't work with them on having small and local businesses being incorporated in this project if it's not in the lease if the document doesn't mandate that they

have these small local businesses as a preference there.

So if we're taking that out of this document, what teeth do we have then to ensure that the end user complies with the small and local provisions?

MR. MONDLAK: I believe very strongly that we can include that into the lease, even if it is not in the attached form of a term sheet. We have the ability as the City to negotiate any terms that are better than these terms. And I would say that's --

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: And I understand that. But as a body, as City Council, right, we would like to see that reflected in the legislation that we're passing to authorize it so then you don't have any latitude in negotiating that. Because if we pass this out as an exhibit, as a term, then this has

to be a term.

Right now, if we take it out, it doesn't have to be a term and then it's out of our hand as a body. So that's just my concern with eliminating this provision. And I would ask my colleagues to say I do think that we as a body need to stand firm on allowing economic opportunities for folks. And whether it's small or local businesses or whatever we want to call it, we still have to mandate in our legislative authority that it's there. And that's just my concern with taking that particular provision out.

I don't see anything illegal reading the case laws and everything like that ensuring that small and local businesses have the opportunity, are mandated by this legislative body to be included in anything that we're doing as a

city. So that's just my comment on that. I just don't think that we should be eliminating those opportunities from people. Because if we strike it out the legislation, we're eliminating that opportunity. And if it's not in writing, it's not real, right. So, that's my two cents on this particular legislation itself.

MR. MONDLAK: I appreciate the concern, Councilman. I really do. And what I can say is that we didn't have time to work through what appropriate language would be to go into that, but we feel very strongly that that's a cornerstone of this Administration. And to the extent that something needs to be added in there to make sure that you have that comfort, I have no objection to that. I just don't have anything.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: I

think we do have time because you're not at a point of sale. There's no purchase agreement with the current owner. There's been no condemnation documents filed or anything, so there is still time to include that because what is the time frame, right. Do you have a time frame on when this mile stretch will be acquired?

MR. MONDLAK: No, we're reaching out for negotiations.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you.

MR. MONDLAK: Respectfully, Councilman, I would maybe ask if we could move it out of committee and amend it at Council to your satisfaction before moving it for a vote.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: I think that's something that the members of the committee can discuss and figure out. But I

guess my points have been made on the record. But I also have some other questions about the project specifically.

Is there an anti-displacement plan, right, because we want to talk about what this type of project can do for our city. And we look at other places where parks have been revitalized that create a sense of what the term has been called, green gentrification, right.

And so, it really takes away some of the physical and cultural displacements of vulnerable communities here, right. This is going to be attractive to new people, to wealthier people. And so, what protections do we have in place or will we put in place to ensure that the community who was already there has the ability to enjoy the amenities from this new

rail park?

MR. MONDLAK:

Understood, Councilman. Center City District has done a significant amount of work and actually will be testifying a little bit later in this hearing.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you.

MR. MONDLAK: They have identified the significant amount of affordable housing that is deed-restricted and in the vicinity and we can share that report with you.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yeah, I would love to see that. So I'll wait to save those questions for Center City District.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to weigh in on two parts of the discussion. One, this is a long time coming. I remember this project from several years ago. From what I understand, Friends of the Rail Park and CCD have been waiting on this sort of next part for a long time.

I wanted to chime in on what the Chairwoman said about the ability to do this in other places. That resonated for me. I also have parts of rail, abandoned or not, that have become an eyesore in the community. And like you said, it's very hard to get in contact with these folks and even harder to map out some sort of partnership around making these areas better.

But in this case, just wanted to point out that this was a huge public-private partnership. This is not just the city by

itself. This would not have happened without Friends of the Rail Park, CCD, a lot of money from the Knight Foundation, William Penn Foundation and others as well as the efforts of Parks & Rec partnering to make sure that this happened over years.

So I just wanted to point that out to say we have to continue doing this work in every community, not just the communities nearest to Center City. But it will take our continued investment in the ability to do public-private partnerships, the ability to raise money outside of what the City has, and the continued need for Parks & Rec to have not only programming resources, but capital project resources. All of that is why this is happening at this moment, but it's been a long time coming.

And then wanted to chime

in on what Councilmember Young said about gentrification, right, and how you prevent against that. And I wanted to name as an example the 11th Street Bridge Project in D.C. is very similar to the Rail project, but they thought about sort of equity and gentrification upfront.

So before -- and I'm not sure where this project is at this moment. I haven't checked in for a few years. But before they built a single thing, they worked on a comprehensive plan to make sure that there was equity. So that meant training folks, connecting people to jobs, investing in things like home repair and other aspects of ensuring that there is affordable housing.

I know nobody likes to talk about inclusionary zoning, but sometimes it's necessary to ensure

that we're going to have affordability in particular areas, especially when we anticipate them gentrifying over time. And this project is planned for the last Black neighborhood in D.C., which is why they stepped forward so intentionally.

We could do those same things here. So I wanted to just point out that this is a great public-private partnership that made this area much better, that created this public space and the intention that we can also take around equitable development when we're developing magnificent public spaces. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. Thank you,

Councilmembers. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I think they're both very good questions and I think maybe you'll hear when we have Friends of Rail Park testifying a little later today that they met with the 11th Street organization out in D.C., right, and they came down here did a tour. Rebecca will probably be testifying to some of that, which is proactive zoning and how we look at that.

It's a great idea, because any time we do it and we're talking about that even with the Stitch and some other things. When you look at these things and making improvements, how do you make improvements in a way that's going to benefit the people who are there but also not displace them after it's completed.

So I think these plans

do take some time. Obviously, this park, Reading Rail at the Park, we first started talking about it back in -- I went up and visited 2011 and did a tour there with the vision of what it could possibly be. And I'm sure that this is still some time off, but this planning process will hopefully be codified within legislation as we work with the Friends of Rail Park, CCD, the City of Philadelphia Planning and Callowhill Neighbors and PCDC, all the adjoining neighborhoods, 14th Ward above North Spring Garden Street into Councilmember Young's District to really look at the whole stretch and then see how we can manage that through codifying legislation to hopefully lessen the impacts of gentrification while allowing something positive to be done. And I think that they're very valid

points.

I want to give credit to the Friends of the Rail Park for a lot of their forward-thinking and meeting with these individuals and doing tours and taking people down and looking at not only this part of it, but the cut. So there's a lot of opportunities here, but these opportunities sometimes bring challenges. So it is a lot more work to do. This is just one first step.

I think we need to look at how we also have an equal opportunity plan that's considered by members of Council, whether the language changes or how we do local opportunity as part of that I think is also important. So again, hopefully we could be able to move this forward. And if we need to make future amendments and look at this in a way that could make

everybody comfortable while also working on a plan to codify legislation overall to look at the boundaries associated with this Rail Park and even the cut, we could do it in phases.

The issue with these is it actually takes over several Council Districts, so it's a little more complicated than just one District. John, I think it's important too to go back to Law to see why certain language is removed. Can we possibly amend this in the future on the floor to look at ways to make sure we have protections in place and equal opportunity plans in the future, so thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for being with us.

Are there other questions from members of the

committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

There being none, thank you so much for being with us this morning.

MR. MONDLAK: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Madam Clerk, are there any other witnesses here to testify on Bill No. 250807?

THE CLERK: Yes, ma'am. May I please have Paul Levy, Board Chair for the Center City District come up as well as Sarah McEneaney, the Board of Callowhill Neighborhood Association as well.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Good morning. Thank you for being with good morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MR. LEVY: Sure. My

name is Paul Levy. I am the Chair of the Board of the Center City District. Good morning, Councilmembers and Chair of the Committee. Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify. I've passed out I believe a color copy of my testimony which can focus on the maps as well.

I'm very pleased to offer my support for this Council bill which will create what is six-tenths of a mile park from Vine Street to Fairmount Avenue. The map shows the location where it can connect to the Stitch at the southern end and go all the way up to Fairmount Avenue. And you see on the left where it connects to Phase 1 of the Rail Park.

In 2018, CCD completed Phase 1 of the Rail Park from Broad Street to Callowhill. It's the fifth public park CCD has renovated

in Center City, and Phase 1 has become a great destination for the neighborhood and families with children.

In keeping with the vision advanced by the Friends of the Rail Park and also the equity vision advanced by the Chinatown Development Corporation, we have worked with all the surrounding community groups crafting a design that serves the diverse needs of the communities of Chinatown, Chinatown North, Callowhill and East and West Poplar.

With the support and Councilwoman Gauthier highlighted this, $2 million from the William Penn Foundation, several 100,000 from other foundations, we were able to complete the design development phase of engineering and architectural plans in December of 2024. And recently, we were

very pleased to secure the release of a federal reconnecting communities grant, another $2 million that will enable us to get to construction bid documents by September of 2026.

During the design development phase, CCD engaged in an extensive community outreach program, meeting with the neighborhood groups to understand their concerns, preferences and retaining the independent engagement firm Connect the Dots along with the CCD, conducted 15 separate public meetings and adjacent neighborhoods in both the 1st and 5th Councilmanic District. Those dates of those meetings and the location are in my testimony below.

I would be pleased to provide a full copy of that report and I have attached to my testimony

a simple summary of the recommendations that emerge from the community groups.

During the last two years, CCD also worked closely with the City's Law and Planning and Development Departments. And John Mondlak alluded to this, we helped fund the bringing of a case in front of the Federal Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C., who has oversight over railroads. And they have confirmed what anyone who walks by that line knows, it is not an operating rail line. But Reading continued to insist it was for reasons I'll explain in a moment.

We know that this is a derelict blighted structure that the owner Reading International has neglected for more than four decades, creating unsafe conditions for adjacent residents and

businesses. Because the ruling of the Surface Transportation Board, that operating rail rights were extinguished decades ago, and you'd have to at least probably have hair my color to remember when the Commuter Rail Tunnel opened, that's when this was made obsolete.

So this rail line was abandoned back in 1982 to 1984. But by insisting that they were a railroad company, Reading has maintained an exemption from city codes, taxation and the right of the City to exercise eminent domain over this blighted and contaminated hulk.

Our goal is to transform it into a park for all adjacent communities. The purpose of this bill is to reconfirm that a California-based entertainment company cannot continue their long-term pattern of neglect, that the

adjacent communities and all Philadelphians have the right to enjoy an elevated pathway and park that links our communities together, connecting them to opportunities downtown.

Again, this bill empowers local government to negotiate a donation or purchase. That is our preference. We do not want to have to go down the condemnation route. But if Reading continues their unreasonable posture, this bill that you are considering would authorize the City to use its power of eminent domain which is granted by the U.S. Constitution.

Quite simply to address some of the other issues that were raised before, we did not ask for those lines to be stricken about equal opportunity. Those are lines apparently that the Law Department

wanted to strike. We are fully committed to equal opportunity, minority and small business participation in construction, as we've done in all our projects, and all CCD operations that you see on the street are very reflective of the city of Philadelphia. That would be our goal with this project as well.

I've just included at the bottom two aerial photographs just to clarify the site itself starting at Vine Street, proceeding Northeast, and there's a reverse view from Fairmount Avenue looking south. This is a blighted hulk. This will become an amenity in all our design process.

We want this to reflect the wishes and desires of the surrounding communities, and we are eager to work with the Friends of the Rail Park and the City and

members of Council on a plan that makes sure this benefits the surrounding communities as well. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

Can we hear the following testimony and then we can take questions from the committee. Please begin with your testimony. State your name for the record.

MS. McENEANEY: Good morning, everyone. My name is Sarah McEneaney. And as Board President of CNA, the Callowhill Neighborhood Association, a 501(c)(3) and RCO, I'm here in strong support of Bill 250807, which as we discussed authorized the City to acquire the abandoned viaduct.

Our community organization aims to promote a cohesive community of residents,

businesses and institutions while retaining the diversity and character of this formerly industrial neighborhood. We work to enhance the quality of life for all members of the community to make the neighborhood a better place to live, work and play.

The long-abandoned Reading viaduct has been a blighting influence. And in addition to what you've heard already, in the last several years there's been several arson fires on the viaduct. The train stopped running in 1984 so we formed CNA in 2001. And in 2003, our work with CNA led John Struble who's also here, and myself to form Reading Viaduct Project, today known as Friends of the Rail Park.

We began advocating for the remediation of the viaduct into a public park. CNA has been and

continues to be an organization in support of and in service to the Rail Park. CNA and Friends of the Rail Park work closely with the Center City District to build Phase 1 of the Rail Park from Broad to Callowhill completed in 2018.

I've lived in the neighborhood since 1979 and used to get off at the Spring Garden train station, so I know that rail line really well and I know what a great asset the Rail Park is for all the residents, workers and Philadelphians and visitors alike who come to the park.

Remediating the viaduct into an extension of the Rail Park will benefit our neighborhoods, surrounding communities and the City of Philadelphia. On behalf of the Callowhill Neighborhood Association, I urge you to pass this bill so the much loved and

used Rail Park can grow. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for your testimony this morning. Just one question before I recognize Councilmember Squilla. There are two Council Districts that are represented and who would be impacted by this. How are you all ensuring that the residents of both neighborhoods' concerns or their input is being considered?

MR. LEVY: As I said in my testimony, we conducted a series of meetings in both the 1st and the 5th Districts. I will actually be at a 14th Ward committee meeting this Thursday night to discuss this in partnership with the Friends of the Rail Park.

We have already reached out to each of the neighborhoods West and East Popular, Chinatown

and Callowhill neighbors for this next phase of planning as we aim to get to construction documents. So through design development, we've already had a set of recommendations that this be inclusive of the neighborhood that reflect the history of the neighborhood and our design. That's our commitment to go forward. So we're not just building this, we're going to be working actively in partnership with the communities.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Are you receiving opposition from one side -- I'm sorry. Are you receiving opposition from either side?

MR. LEVY: No, I think there is just a concern you heard addressed, that a park like this could have certain adverse effects. And we're committed to working with

the City on how housing can be developed in this area that can be supportive of all income levels.

Right now about 20% of all the housing units that are in several blocks of this viaduct are long-term affordable. We'd like at minimum to keep that as it goes forward. We obviously see our role as building the park and operating the park in an inclusive manner, but this has to be done in partnership with the City and the community groups on a broader, affordable strategy for the neighborhood.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmembers Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Levy, you mentioned about a friendly purchase or

donation and that has always been the goal. I know that we had conversations back with Reading 10 years ago looking at this. We decided at some point to do the Spur because that that was sort of SEPTA-owned, so we were able to get that off the ground just as a proof of concept, and Parks & Rec was involved.

And obviously, we know that stewardship is a key to making these things work and community organizations and the Friends of the Rail Park to be able to help maintain, to be able to program and other things that are inclusive of this.

But if this legislation that we had done before and passed out reaffirms the will to still condemn if Reading now decides they do not want to sell or grant to the City of Philadelphia, what in

effect the ruling came down would allow us to then condemn and is there any new conversations that we are now having with Reading at this point?

MR. LEVY: Yeah. Again, just to underscore this, as long as Reading claimed that they were an operating railroad, they have not paid real estate taxes on this in 42 years. They've been avoiding code enforcement and they have been claiming that they are immune from state and city power of eminent domain.

The real importance of this recent decision at the end of September from the Federal Surface Transportation Board is to confirm what is obvious, they are not an operating railroad, they do not have rail rights. That gives the City this power of condemnation.

As you said, our clear

preference is to sit down at the table with them and negotiate a reasonable purchase. We were at the table with them in the last administration and started that conversation and they walked away from it.

The importance of what you're authorizing is to say clearly to Reading, the City is prepared to use the power and condemnation. If you don't want to be reasonable, the City is going to take it from you. We don't want to get there. But if you authorize this, this gives the City the tool to do what is necessary, to take frankly an irresponsible owner and bring them to the table and end the blight so we can create a park that benefits the surrounding communities.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

Thank you.

And then, Sarah, you and John were one of the ones that took us up there. And I don't know it was legally or illegally go up on the viaduct to really look at it with the vision of what it could mean for the adjoining communities. And I heard that Callowhill supports it and looking forward to this.

But as this plays out and working with the Friends of the Rail Park, would you be able to offer suggestions from the communities to the Friends, to Planning, to the City on codifying legislation, sort of like 11th Street mentioned what was done in D.C. and other things, just to make sure that we look at the current residents that are in there that will be positively impacted by that, but the challenges that may go along with that where other

people may want to move into the community to be near something like this that once is developed?

We know there's adjacent parcels. Mr. Levy said that 20% of the properties nearby are affordable units. Not only do we want to keep them, do we incentivize, do we look at opportunities sort of like D.C., in that we as a city could make sure we codify that within a certain geographic area to really have the people understand that this is for you, this is for them and that we want to be able to keep these neighborhoods, residents to enjoy it, but also be able to stay there?

MS. McENEANEY: Yeah, absolutely. And we, Callowhill Neighborhood Association, convene meetings all the time and we've hosted meetings with Friends of the Rail Park, CCD and Connect the

Dots, the consultant team that did the outreach. And so, we're always open to hosting those meetings and we look to host them.

And I mean, personally I, myself, have to worry about getting pushed out of my own neighborhood that I've been in since 1979. I'm an artist and I bought a rundown building in a rundown neighborhood and now it's not so rundown anymore around me. So I totally think about that.

So, yeah, we want to be out there and we want to be part of that conversation. And the one thing -- I'm on the park virtually every day. And the one thing I hear from all my neighbors and all the visitors of the park is when's the next park coming, when's the next park coming. Everybody wants to see it grow and see it happen, but we want to see it done right.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you.

Are there any questions? Chair recognizes Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you and thank you all for your testimony today. I do think that you know greening this space can be a positive. But as I mentioned earlier, there can be concerns about displacement.

And I know you mentioned the 20%. Most of that 20% are already owned by the Philadelphia Housing Authority. So that's not a concern of mine, right. There are other tax credit projects that will be coming off the rolls in this community. That's a concern of mine. And so, when we talk about this plan, right, this anti-displacement plan or whatever, I

really think that it has to be tailored to know what each community needs are, right. Because as was mentioned, this stretches multiple Council Districts, right.

So Chinatown's needs are a little bit different than East Popular's needs, right. And so, I do think that it has to be tailored to the community groups that's there. And I went through -- I'm looking at your testimony, Mr. Levy. Could you talk to us and explain I guess what's the difference between when you did a presentation to the community versus like a pop-up somewhere?

MR. LEVY: We retained the firm of Connect the Dots, so we went out and did presentations with civic associations, but then they would set up randomly in locations where people would just walk by and

there'd be information and people could ask questions. So it was a way just to engage people informally on the site.

So we used both of those mechanisms. And as I said, I'm fully committed as we now restart design, as we freed up the federal money to continue that process.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yeah. So I would say I would like -- because I'm looking at where the pop-ups were, and the pop-ups seem to be in places where there is more of a minority presence, right. Nehemiah Homes down in Chinatown, these were pop-ups rather than having actual presentations to the community.

Now, in the 5th District portion of it, it's very diverse communities. There are multiple different community groups and there are groups that I haven't

seen from this letter here that have not been engaged in this process, right, because they may not be an RCO, but they are community organizations or there are community advocates in this part of the community who I can probably call right now.

I can give you a woman's name. Have you ever spoken with a woman named Wasina Williams, right? She is someone who is very known in that part of the community. But if I give her a call right now, I don't think she's been engaged in this process, right. So, I really would like to work with you and the other community organizations that are involved to make sure that every person who wants to know about this has opportunity to know about this and participate in this process here.

Because again, the

concerns of displacement, and not just displacement, but exclusion, right, because when these things are built, sometimes folks, the minority population in that community may feel like this is not for us, right. We may feel like we may not be able to use this space, right. Because particularly when it becomes wealthier, there's a lot of political vulnerability that's there.

And so, we want to make sure that we have the ability to balance the economic growth with the displacement -- without displacement rather, and that's a huge concern of mine. I think this is a great idea. I really do. But the devil is always in the details of how we can make sure that this is a space for every single person in our city, not just those that will want to now come here to that

part of the neighborhood. It's already a part of the neighborhood that's booming right now, it's already.

But when you add these types of green spaces that attract more folks because of a space that was never there before, it's just going to I think overnight essentially it can rapidly increase values in this neighborhood and we want to make sure that the people that are there still have access to these same amenities as well. So my question is now how will you market the park to the community that already exist there?

MR. LEVY: Market for the planning process you're saying?

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: No, no. Essentially once if everything goes well, how we would like it to and this park gets constructed, it's done, it's open, we can go to

a nice ribbon-cutting, Councilmember Squilla and I, right, how will you market this to the communities that already exist?

MR. LEVY: So let me just go back a half step because what you said, I -- one of my advantages of being semi-retired now is I have a lot of time for meetings. I will work with you and your staff to come to any meetings you would like to hold in your district. You've got my commitment to do that. And I think that's an incredibly important part. Because before you market a finished park, we really need to work with communities in planning and designing the park.

We've done part of that now and that is my commitment to go ahead and do that because I think that's essential. I think there's been a lot of success that the

Friends of the Rail Park has had in managing Phase 1. We're not yet at a fully-developed management plan for Phase 2, but we're prepared to commit to market that plan to the park, the very diverse communities in the area. But Step 1 is to engage them all in this next phase of planning.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you.

MS. McENEANEY: Can I say something in response to that? I don't know, Councilmember Young, if you visited Phase 1 of the Rail Park yet. But if you went there, you would see it really shows all of Philadelphia and people feel very welcome there. And I'm sure Friends of the Rail Park can attest to that because of all the programming and things that happen. But really, it is a park that looks like all of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yeah, I've been here.

MS. McENEANEY: Okay. Good.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Are there other questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Madam Clerk, are there others to testify?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you so much for being with us this morning.

MR. LEVY: Thank you.

MS. McENEANEY: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Madam Clerk, can you please call the next panel to testify on Bill No. 250807.

THE CLERK: May I please have John Chin from PCDC and

Rebecca Chan from Friends at the Rail Park please.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MR. CHIN: Sure. Good morning. Thank you. John Chin, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation.

MS. CORDES CHAN: Rebecca Cordes Chan, Friends of the Rail Park.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you. Begin with your testimony.

MR. CHIN: Okay. Good morning, Committee Chair Lozada, Vice-Chair Squilla and Councilman Young and members of the Committee. My name is John Chin, Executive

Director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation. For nearly six decades, PCDC has fought to preserve Chinatown and protect its families and small businesses.

We develop affordable housing, provide homebuying counseling and deliver wraparound social services to help families achieve stability and economic mobility. For decades, the Reading viaduct has loomed as a symbol of neglect. Illegal dumping, crumbling bridges and unsafe conditions have burdened families and businesses beneath it.

The recent federal ruling confirms what we have long known, this is not an operating rail line and now is the time for the city to act. But as we move forward, we must confront a hard truth. Without safeguards, major

investment in public spaces accelerates displacement of low-income families, residents and small businesses.

Chinatown has lived this reality before and we cannot let history repeat itself. Equity cannot be an afterthought and must be the foundation. PCDC is leading an equity and anti-displacement plan built with community input to ensure development strengthens rather than uproots our neighborhoods. This plan addresses housing affordability, cultural continuity and economic opportunity for low-income residents and small businesses.

So we call on the City and Center City District to adopt and implement this plan alongside the Rail Park community's first plan, which provides a roadmap for inclusive development across 10

neighborhoods. Phase 1 of the Rail Park shows what's possible when equity and community engagement guide development. It transformed a derelict rail line into a green space where cultural programs, celebrations and outdoor activities are designed for the neighborhood residents. Let us build on that success, but with stronger guardrails to protect vulnerable communities.

Passing this legislation is a necessary step to lift residents and small businesses from decades of blight and neglect and to replace it with opportunity, equity and green space. PCDC fully supports Bill 250807. And I just want to add to my prepared comments that I really appreciate the thoughts coming from this committee, equity participation, anti-displacement and housing.

I will add that small businesses are in this neighborhood and also need the help like residents do to stay in this place and enjoy the benefits of this coming green space. Economic opportunity on the construction and maintenance is important, so I appreciate the -- I can't read my own handwriting. So I also appreciate the negative experiences you have experienced in your districts with railroads and as a nonprofit director who does neighborhood development, I am making myself available to you to help you find resources to do planning and organizing for your sections of districts and neighborhoods. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you.

Please state your name for the record and begin with your

testimony.

MS. CORDES CHAN:

Rebecca Cordes Chan, Executive Director, Friends of the Rail Park. Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers and members of the committee. My name is Rebecca Chan. I'm Executive Director of Friends of the Rail Park.

Friends of the Rail Park is a nonprofit that programs, maintains and operates the Rail Park's existing phase in Chinatown North and Callowhill in partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.

We are also the organization leading the long-term vision to transform three miles of historic rail infrastructure into a public greenway connecting Chinatown and Northern Liberties all the way over to Lemon Hill and Brewerytown, a role we have carried

since 2011. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Friends of the Rail Park supports advancing this bill because acquiring the viaduct is a necessary step toward building a cohesive rail park that serves residents across 10 neighborhoods.

We believe deeply in transforming this historic rail infrastructure into public green space that strengthens communities across the city. At the same time, several conditions are critical for the project's long-term success, and we've heard about those throughout this hearing.

We know this based on years of community engagement lessons from Phase 1 and studying best practices from around the country, including the project mentioned in D.C.

First, expanding the

Rail Park must include a transparent, community-driven planning and design process. Phase 1 is a treasured space, but has also revealed challenges around accessibility, maintenance and operations.

The next segment cannot repeat these missteps and the public needs clarity on accessibility improvements, long-term stewardship and how the space will be operated, especially since the viaduct greenway is not currently planned as a Philadelphia Parks and Recreation park.

The Rail Park extends far beyond Center City and its future must be shaped by the communities who live in its footprint. A comprehensive, equitable development and anti-displacement plan must be at the core of this project. Without it,

major investment in a new green space will accelerate displacement instead of supporting neighborhood stability and cultural continuity that we all love so much and cherish about these neighborhoods.

This project must move forward with strong policy and programmatic guardrails that ensure equitable and inclusive development. The Rail Park will bring new attention, investment and these benefits should uplift longstanding communities rather than displace them.

Our Rail Park community First Plan is an equitable development plan developed in partnership with PCDC's Equity Plan. The community-driven plan would provide a roadmap for how major investments, including the viaduct greenway and the rest of the rail park's infrastructure can

be leveraged to support housing affordability and stability, generate inclusive economic development and positively impact the health of the neighborhoods it is a part of. We urge the City and CCD to join us in full support and aligning with this ongoing work and implementing its recommendations.

In closing, Friends of the Rail Park supports this bill and the city's acquisition of the viaduct, and that support depends on commitments to transparency, meaningful community partnership, equitable development and governance structures that honor the people who have lived alongside the viaduct for decades. Together we can create a rail park that not only is a remarkable public space, but a model for how Philadelphia grows, a model rooted in inclusion, shared stewardship and equitable

opportunity for all. Thank you for your time.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you both for your testimony this morning.

Before I recognize the committee members, can either of you speak to what you are doing to prioritize those residents who are long-term residents, right, who have dealt with all of the nuisance activity and the blight around this particular project and who may be feeling like some of my colleagues mentioned, that when this investment happens, they are the ones that don't belong, right?

We talk a lot about the importance of protecting long-term residents in neighborhoods, especially when development or investment happens. But often times they are the ones who feel like they don't belong there when

the investment actually happens, right. So they champion for please invest, please fix, please repair, fix my parks, fix my centers, remove these blighted spaces from my neighborhood. And then it happens and they feel like my voice wasn't heard. I no longer belong here. This is no longer for me to use.

What are you specifically doing as part of this displacement plan or the anti displacement plan? What are you doing to ensure that that doesn't happen? Tell me specifically what you're doing.

MR. CHIN: Well, I think specifically it's engagement. This plan is planning for the people by the people. So the planning that we're doing around equity, inclusion, anti-displacement is engaging the workers and residents

of these communities, seeking their input, surveying for their ideas and vision, and this plan is their plan and when is their plan. I think they can buy into the project.

Now, you're right. It quite often happens when these projects are developed and operating. Sometimes people feel like they don't belong there, right. But I'll ask my colleague here to speak on that because the Rail Park, what we call Phase 1, the Rail Park has deliberately designed and created programming that targets the residents and workers in the neighborhood. And because they've done that, I see residents happily and comfortably attending events at the Rail Park Phase 1. And I imagine that's a continuation of what's going to happen.

MS. CORDES CHAN: And I will just add in specific to the planning process. We currently have 18 meetings scheduled for January and February that are taking place in community centers, libraries, kind of places that people commonly gather. These meetings will have child care, there will be food and drink.

There will be translation, when necessary, to really invite a broad, broad swath of folks to feel welcomed, engaged and like they're able to participate. And then I would just add to John's point about programming and kind of what happens in public space.

It's those same little details around engagement. It's making sure that our materials around engagement are translated into Spanish, Mandarin, whatever

language we need to have to again make folks feel welcome.

It's creating culturally responsive programming. One of our most popular events at the Rail Park is our Lunar New Year Festival because it is a part of Chinatown North in Chinatown. But it's also thinking about the smaller engagements that happen weekly and that there's always activation, that the park feels safe, accessible and welcoming. So it's this balance of kind of long-term vision and inviting folks to be a part of that long-term vision and really hearing them and incorporating that feedback. But it's also the day-to-day maintenance and operations and programmatic work of stewarding a public space.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

MR. CHIN: Oh, Chairwoman, I'll add that in addition to the babysitting, we actually go to where the workers work as well and during hours where they have free breaks. So we try to make it as convenient as possible so we have full participation. So those are some things that we do.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you. Just really quick and I just glanced at the D.C.'s plan for the 11th Street Bridge. And just want to know is that incorporated in their legislation? The actual plan itself, is that something that's legislated or it's just a plan that had come up?

MS. CORDES CHAN: It's a

plan, but they have a lot of political backing for it and financial investment that goes with it as well.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

Point of information. When we met with them, there was codified legislation that actually took the plan and then codified it with overlays of such. And so, there was actually legislation that went with not so much the plan to do it, but it was added legislation to make sure that the planning process and the concerns that were met were put into legislation to hopefully address the concerns that residents had, 11th Street Bridge and they're continuing still to do that and look at it. And hopefully, we will be able to copy the same type of legislation moving forward, which I have to say they really did a lot of work and a lot of engagement

when they did their process.

And obviously, you always want to do the best you can with legislation. But as they find out, some things may have unintended consequence when you do it. So they're going back and looking at things and constantly updating that to make sure that everybody's concerns will be met through the codified legislation from the plan.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you, Councilmember. I appreciate that. I do think that's something that we should try to do here. Because again, legislation going through this body having passed that out, it allows the residents to hold those involved accountable to what they're saying that they're trying to do.

And so, if this body was able to pass some type of plan out,

then I think it would make it a lot easier for community groups, for residents to get behind it, not saying they are, not saying they aren't, right, not saying they aren't, but it just makes it easier to know that there are documents in place that they are able to hold those involved accountable to make sure that those plans are met and those goals are met.

But thank you for your advocacy on this. I do think again that this is something that's going to be great for our city.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: The Chair recognizes Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. Thank you, Councilmember Young, and very good questions. I just want to say that not everybody supported the first phase of the viaduct. And because

of the challenges that were thought -- and I want to give credit to the Friends of the Rail Park. The programming and the use of the park has really engaged the community in a way that says, you know what, maybe we didn't support it at first and we thought certain things were going to happen, but because of the stewardship and the support of the organization there, included the communities in the programming and things like that, not that was not codified in the legislation.

Hopefully we'll be able to do that as this bigger swath is done. And I believe we will be able to work on it hopefully over the holiday season into the new year to come up with something. Again, it may not be perfect. But I think the framework of that needs to be put in place, working with

Planning and the Law Department to look at that because the key is to get trust first.

And I think the only way you build trust is showing people and residents that you're serious about codifying any of this into the legislation so they know there are protections in place, but it would not have happened without the great work of the Friends of Rail Park and the programming that has been done. So thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you.

Are there additional questions from members of the committee for this panel?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you so much for being with us today.

Madam Clerk, are there other individuals here to testify

on this bill?

THE CLERK: No, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, will the Clerk please call the next or the first panel to testify on Bill No. 250841 and 251017.

THE CLERK: Kate Sullivan, Chief Commercial Officer for the Department of Aviation, will be speaking to both of these bills.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning. Thank you for being with us this morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MS. SULLIVAN: Great. Good morning. I'm Kate Sullivan, the Chief Commercial Officer for the Department of Aviation.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Please begin with your testimony.
MS. SULLIVAN: Thank you. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. My name is Kate Sullivan, Chief Commercial Officer for the Department of Aviation, which manages both Philadelphia International Airport or PHL, and Northeast Philadelphia Airport, PNE. I'm here today to testify in support of Bill No. 250841, authorizing the Director of the Department of Aviation, on behalf of the City, to transfer or convey real estate interests to resolve litigation with Tinicum Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, under certain terms and conditions.
PHL is a self-sustaining entity which uses no local taxpayer dollars for its operations and

generates a significant annual economic impact for our region. In 2023, the Department of Aviation commissioned an economic impact study which showed that activity at PHL generated $18.7 billion for the regional economy and supported over 102,000 jobs.

The airport creates this economic impact on a very small footprint, 2584 acres, when compared to other large hub airports across the nation. So when opportunities for acquisition of near airport property arise, it is essential for our team to take an interest in order to aid future airport expansion efforts or to prevent development detrimental to airport operations.

Bill No. 250841 would authorize the city's Department of Aviation, which manages PHL, to acquire a 9.25 acre parcel of land

that was formerly Tinicum Island Road. Tinicum Island Road has been relocated to the airport's perimeter to allow parcels along PHL's western edge have unimpeded access to the airfield.

This is an important component in ongoing conversations regarding the development of that area. In addition to the acquisition of this parcel, this ordinance also authorizes utility easements access, to ensure future tenants of this space are able to develop fully functional facilities.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on Bill No. 250841, and I kindly ask the committee for a favorable recommendation and that the rules be suspended to allow for first reading at the next session of Council.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Thank you so much.
Are there any questions from members of this committee?
(No response.)
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
There being none, thank you so much for being with us this morning.
MS. SULLIVAN: Thank you. I'm still Kate Sullivan.
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Would you like to begin your testimony or please begin your testimony for Bill No. 251017.
MS. SULLIVAN: Yes, thank you. So still Kate Sullivan, still Chief Commercial Officer for the Department of Aviation. So again good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. My name is Kate Sullivan, Chief Commercial Officer for the Department of Aviation, which

manages both Philadelphia International Airport, PHL, and Northeast Philadelphia Airport, PNE.

I am here today to testify in support of Bill No. 251017, authorizing the Director of the Department of Aviation to acquire, on behalf of the city, fee simple title or a lesser real estate interest by purchase, amicable negotiation, dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in lieu of condemnation or otherwise in and to all or portions of a certain parcel of land known as 4521 Island Avenue, under certain terms and conditions.

PHL is a self-sustaining entity which uses no local taxpayer dollars for its operations and generates significant annual economic impact for our region. In 2023, the Department of Aviation

commissioned an economic impact study, which showed that PHL generated $18.7 billion for the regional economy and supported over 102,000 jobs.

The airport creates this economic impact on a very small footprint, 2584 acres, when compared to other large hub airports across the nation. When opportunities for the acquisition of near airport property arise, it is essential for our team to take an interest in order to aid future airport expansion efforts or to prevent development detrimental to airport operations.

Bill No. 251017 would authorize the City's Department of Aviation, which manages PHL, to acquire a 2.5 acre vacant parcel of land located at 4521 Island Avenue. This property is located directly across from PHL's economy lot and

is adjacent to property being used as a TNC staging site currently owned by the Department of Aviation.

The Department of Aviation will conduct future analysis to assess potential uses for this property, but the location makes this an attractive option for near airport development. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on Bill No. 251017 and I kindly ask the committee for a favorable recommendation that the rules be suspended to allow for first reading at the next session of Council.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for your testimony. Your testimony says that you are looking at the expansion for future potential uses for the property. Do you have an

idea of what you are considering?

MS. SULLIVAN: Yeah. We're looking at a range of potential uses. I think the main thing for us is that we are an extremely land-constrained airport. We're 2584 acres. And so, when a piece of property that is adjacent and proximate to the airport comes up for sale, we do look at those opportunities depending on a number of criteria to potentially purchase it for future activity.

This location particularly is across from the economy parking lot and it is right next to our TNC staging area. And so, we're looking at a range of uses that could include expansion of the TNC staging area.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

Are there any questions from members of this committee for

either bill?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you so much for being with us this morning. Thank you very much.

Will the Clerk please call the first panel to testify on Bill No. 250833.

THE CLERK: Will Angela D. Brooks, Chair of the Board of the Philadelphia Land Bank, come to the table as well as Will Gonzalez, the Executive Director of Ceiba.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: We waited until you walked away in order to call you to come testify. Good morning. Thank you so much for being with us this morning. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony. Either one.

MR. GONZALEZ: Buenas diaz. Thank you, City Council, for the opportunity to testify on this important matter. My name is Will Gonzalez. I'm the Executive Director of Ceiba. Ceiba is a coalition-building organization in the Latino community of Philadelphia.

We welcome City Council Bill 250833, an ordinance requiring the Philadelphia Land Bank to submit an annual report to City Council that details the disposition of all land subject to the land bank. The legislation builds on the movement to increase transparency from the Land Bank assessment, a recent Land Bank assessment conducted by Guidehouse aimed at improving the Land Bank disposition process in addressing longstanding issues. We look forward to seeing that assessment

soon since we've heard about it through various channels.

We also think that the Land Bank has made an improvement by naming Ms. Angela Brooks as the new Board Chair of the Land Bank. And so, we look forward to continuing transparency from that institution. Bill 250833 is timely as the City embarks on the transformational H.O.M.E. Initiative, the use of public land for public good, which is the chief purpose of the Land Bank, puts the Land Bank at the center of many important decisions related to affordable housing in the city.

From what we understand, the H.O.M.E. Initiative will impact $1 billion in public land. Key also to the H.O.M.E. Initiative is the multi-pronged streamlining of Land Bank processes. Accordingly, it will be very productive for the

City and for the community, for the Land Bank to report all of its dispositions in a clear, effective way so that we can track its success and ensure the productive use of public land for public good. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify today on this important matter.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

MS. BROOKS: I didn't pay him to say that for the record. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada, members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. My name is Angela Brooks, Chair of the Board of the Philadelphia Land Bank and the Chief Housing and Urban Development Officer for the Mayor's Office.

I'm here to testify on Bill No. 250833. The Land Bank and the Administration recognize and

acknowledge the impact of having an effective and high performing Land Bank. And to that end, the Administration has completed its formal review of the Land Bank to identify and develop policies and processes that will expedite the return of vacant and tax delinquent properties to productive use.

As a part of that review, we have identified the need for consistent and transparent reporting of the Land Bank's activities and we are supportive of this legislation. As a part of the formal review, we have identified the following next steps, implement a tracking system using a single customer relationship management or CRM system from application to settlement, which will streamline operations, track parcel status, communicate with applicants and coordinate agency reviews and

approvals.

We want to automate tasks, automate manual tasks such as application review, to enhance operational efficiency and improve response times, improve data tracking. We want to enhance data collection methods, set key performance indicators or KPIs and establish evaluation methods to allow for deeper analysis and better measurement of outcomes.

The Land Bank and the Administration are committed to working with City Council on improving the Land Bank to streamline the process and remove barriers that delay the creation of units across the city. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Bill No. 250833. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you so much. Thank you for being with us this morning. This bill was important for me because I've been in city government since 2008 and I remember the creation of this legislation, right. And I remember the why, and it was because people like my grandmom took care of land, city-owned land for many, many, many, many years and always expressed interest in I would like to own that land because all of my money is being invested in making sure that that land or that parcel is safe for members of my community, right.

I remember her advocating year after year, year after year to the Urban Gardening program, to the city and saying, right, I am investing here, I am saving the city money, how do I become the owner of this property. My grandmom passed away and never

got to see that. And she took care of the land for over 30, 40, years.

And like my grandmom, there are many people in my community who are taking care of public land, who are making sure that these parcels in their community are safe spaces, that these spaces remain green spaces for the children in the community, right.

And when this Land Bank was being created, I remember the author saying, this is to make it easier for community residents to take ownership, legal ownership, of these spaces. And in my experience, that has been far from the truth, because we have tons of people in my community who since early 2010 have applied for land, whether it be a side yard, whether it be because they want to keep it as a green space for children to

come play in or because they want to create a garden or because, heck, they are tired of fighting their neighbors for parking, they want to be able to own it and create separate parking spaces.

They are still fighting to get disposition of this land. And I can't tell you the number of times that I'm in community meetings and people are like when am I going to get this position of this land, when is the city going to consider me and all of the sweat equity that I have on this particular parcel and I can't get a hold of it.

But then you have these private developers that are supporters of different people or who know different people in the city and they get disposition of land very quickly or they're a developer who have a relationship

and they get through the process very quickly. And there's another developer who doesn't have a relationship and has to go through all of these hurdles to be able to get this position and then there's no communication.

And so for me, it was important to bring back what I hear was already a part of the legislation originally, which was to create a reporting system that would help build trust in the community, create transparency and allow for people to be able to go in and see where they are in the process.

And so, I appreciate Chair Brooks, the fact that you all recognize that there's a need for this and that you've come prepared with next steps. But do these next steps include a way for a resident or a developer to be able to -- or

for a community to be able to see who is the applicant, right.

I want to know who's at applying for this parcel, when is this person going to do or hold a community meeting in my community so that I can speak to this particular project or so that I know and I'm informed about what the intention for this particular parcel is. Will these next steps include that?

MS. BROOKS: Yes, that's part of the CRM system that we want to move to so that you can go online and track a process. I will also add in that particularly for the Land Bank parcels that will be a part of the H.O.M.E. Initiative, you also as a Council request a quarterly report, so you'll be getting those as well and updates on those parcels as well, so there will be plenty of reporting out.

But the goal is to have an easier tracked process, but not just for even community members, for applicants themselves, right. You've got a lot of the people complaining are people who have applied, so to have a system where people are able to easily access that as the goal. I don't have a timeline for that because that's going to be some technology stuff that we're working through, but it's one of the top priorities.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I wanted to start off by congratulating you, Chair Brooks. I'm also excited that you're chairing the Land Bank and I'm glad that this is happening. I

agree with Madam Chair that we've needed this for a long time.

One thing that I'm hopeful to see come out of this effort is more movement on dispositions. I think that it often gets held up erroneously in my opinion, that City Council is the hold-up on land dispositions by the press, by whomever.

But I just want you to know that I've processed 103 dispositions. I put forward and passed the legislation for them since June of 2024 for Turn the Key, which is supposed to be our priority. 75% of these dispositions are to Black and Brown developers and I'm still waiting. The Council part is done, right.

And so, I think we have to have honesty not only in what we're disposing of, I think we have to have honesty about what we need

to do from an internal operations perspective and back that with our budget resources.

And just going back to something that Madam Chair said, we have to have a vision and a plan. Because you're right, I was also around when we were first forming the Land Bank. I was in the nonprofit sector.

And the goal was that this would be land disposed of for affordability, for helping people who've been tending to gardens. And just in terms of how that's played out from a disposition perspective, I'm not sure that that's true. But we don't have sort of a guiding vision that is holding us to that, right.

And I also want to say that I believe that this is coming about partly from the hearing that you and I did, Madam Chair, that

was pushing not only for an annual report, but for a strategic plan and some type of plan on operations. So those would be some of the remaining items that we really need to get into place, particularly because we want to allow H.O.M.E. to move forward in the best way possible. But I do think that this is a great start while we move towards those other pieces.

So thank you for being here. Thank you for your work. Congratulations again. And also, thank you, Mr. Gonzalez. I really appreciate your work at Ceiba. Thanks for being here with us.

MS. BROOKS: If I could just add really quickly. It might be helpful now that we're finalizing the Land Bank assessment we can work on getting a briefing for Council as well. That would

probably be helpful. And there is quite a bit of information in there around staffing and what would be optimal. So you'll get to see that. And I can imagine as we enter the budget system season, you'll see some different type of requests around that as well.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you.

Are there any additional questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you so much for being with us today.

MS. BROOKS: Thank you.

MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Will the Clerk please call the first panel to testify on Bill No. 250832.

THE CLERK: Kelly Richardson, President Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning, Mr. Richards. Thank you so much for your patience. Thank you for being with us this morning. State your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

MR. RICHARDS: Kelly Richards, President, Director of The Free Library of Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Please begin.

MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. My name is Kelly Richards and I'm the President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia and

I'm here today to testify in support of Bill No. 250832.

I would like to thank Councilmember Jones for introducing this legislation and thank the committee for its thoughtful consideration. It is a pleasure to speak in favor of renaming the Wynnefield Library as the Reverend Louise Williams Bishop Library of Wynnefield.

Reverend Louise Williams Bishop's legacy is one of the extraordinary service, deep faith and multi generational impact. For nearly 70 years, she was a pioneering presence in Philadelphia broadcasting and one of the first Black women to host the radio program, a trusted voice to countless families and the creator of the longest running gospel program in the city's history, known as the Queen of the Airwaves,

and later the Gospel Queen of Radio.

Reverend Bishop provided inspiration, information and connection to listeners of all ages. Her influence extended far beyond the radio broadcast studio. Reverend Bishop served more than 25 years in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as the first Black woman elected to represent the 192nd Legislative District.

She was an advocate for education and the well-being of her constituents, drawing on her deep commitment to justice and community empowerment. Reverend Bishop's journey from her childhood as the eldest of 12 during the Great Depression to her decades as a broadcaster, minister and lawmaker embodies the values that guide the Free Library.

Her life's work reflects

our commitment to expanding literacy, strengthening cultural connections and creating pathways to economic opportunity for every Philadelphia. Her legislative service further underscores the importance of equitable access to education and civic participation.

These are foundational pillars of library service and the Free Library continues to support communities, the same areas that Reverend Bishop championed, learning empowerment and the tools needed to thrive. For these reasons, naming the Wynnefield Library in her honor is both fitting and meaningful.

The Reverend Louise Williams Bishop Library of Wynnefield will stand as a lasting tribute to her belief in the transformative power of knowledge, culture and community. I welcome

any questions from the committee and thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for your testimony?

Are there any questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you so much for your testimony and for being with us today.

Madam Clerk, are there any other members of the public that are here to testify on this bill?

THE CLERK: No, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, would the Chair please -- or would the Clerk please call the first panel to testify on Bill No. 250847.

THE CLERK: Joseph

Brasky, Commissioner of Public Property, will be speaking on this bill today.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good morning. Thank you for being with us. Please state your name for the record and begin with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY: Thank you. Joe Brasky, Department of Public Property. I'm here today to testify on Bill No. 250847. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee of Public Property and Public Works. My name is Joe Brasky, Commissioner of Public Property.

I'm here today to testify in support of Bill 250847, authorizing the Department of Public Property, on the behalf of City of Philadelphia, to acquire

fee simple title or lesser real estate interest in and to all portions of the property of 1948 Cayuga Street, under certain terms and conditions.

The Philadelphia Water Department is advancing the full design of a new stormwater management system along Cayuga Street and the surrounding area. In June, City Council approved Bill Nos. 250538 and 250884-A, authorizing the acquisition of various parcels on the 1800 and 1900 blocks of Cayuga for this same project.

The 1948 Cayuga Street parcel was conveyed by the Department of Public Property to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, PRA, in 1967. Bill No. 250847 is authorized by the City Council. PRA is prepared to convey the parcel back to public property

for a nominal price of $1.

Upon conveyance, PWD has committed to manage and maintain the site and oversee installation of the new stormwater infrastructure. Construction and equipment installation could take one to two years, after which the new system will be fully operational and provide significant stormwater management benefits to the community.

The Department of Public Property supports this measure. And accordingly, I respectfully ask City Council approve Bill 250847. Thank you. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for your testimony. You're also here to testify on Bill No. 251023.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Can we have you read that testimony as well and then if there are questions, we can go from there.
COMMISSIONER BRASKY:
Sure. Thank you. My name is Joe Brasky, Department of Public Property. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of the Committee of Public Property and Public Works. My name is Joe Brasky. I'm the Commissioner of Public Property.
I'm here today to testify in support of Bill 251023, authorizing the Department of Public Property, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to enter into agreements with the Philadelphia Authority Industrial Development or the Philadelphia Municipal Authority to fit out a health center facility based on plans and specifications acceptable to the

city that will be developed on the premises located on Frankford Ave in the vicinity of Pratt Street and Dyre Street to repay the landlord for its cost of fit-out, under certain terms and conditions.

In June, Philadelphia City Council authorized the development of a new health center at the former Penn Fruit Company Supermarket near the Frankford Transportation Center, a major transit hub. At that time of the hearing, the City has not yet determined the most efficient strategy to complete the interior fit-out or procure the required furniture, fixtures and equipment.

Subsequent discussions with project stakeholders made it clear that the most effective approach is for the landlord to procure the FF&E and interior fit-out components on the City's

behalf, rather than the City purchasing these items directly.

This approach is expected to save time, streamline administrative processes and reduce overall project cost. Ultimately, this FF&E and fit-out expenses will be deducted from the final purchase price of the health center.

If this ordinance is enacted and full project funding is authorized, the City will be positioned to proceed with the lease and purchase option of a turnkey delivery health center. As discussed in June, the Department of Public Health plans to offer a comprehensive range of services at this location, including adult and pediatric primary care, women's health services, podiatry, pharmacy, laboratory services, dental care, radiology, integrated behavioral health and other

essential health services, resources.

Additionally, the broader mixed-use development designed to expand food distribution and affordable housing has the potential to greatly enhance the neighborhood and deliver lasting transformative impact on the community. The Department of Public Property supports this measure. And accordingly, I respectfully ask City Council to approve Bill 251023. Thank you. I'll be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you for your testimony. Bill No. 251023, this is a project that would allow for Frankford CDC to build the health center, the affordable housing --

COMMISSIONER BRASKY:

Yes, this is the one.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Okay. Are there any questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you so much for your testimony.

COMMISSIONER BRASKY:

Thank you. Have a great day.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

And as I mentioned at the beginning, Bill No. 250726 is being held at the request of the sponsor.

Will the Clerk please call the first panel to testify on to 250913.

THE CLERK: Yes. For the final bill on the agenda today is Kelly Richards, President and Director of Free Library of Philadelphia.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
I'm sorry. I wish I would have saw that earlier. I would have had you testify back to back as well.
MR. RICHARDS: That's all right.
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Please state your name again for the record and begin with your testimony.
MR. RICHARDS: Kelly Richards, President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Good morning, Chairperson Lozada, and members of the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. Again, my name is Kelly Richards. I'm President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Bill No. 250913.
I want to thank Council President Johnson for introducing

this legislation and for recognizing the importance of honoring one of Philadelphia's most distinguished public servants. I'm here today in strong support of renaming the Paschalville Library as the Hardy Williams Library at Paschalville.

Senator Hardy Williams was a trailblazing Philadelphian whose life and career embodied perseverance, civic commitment and steadfast dedication to equality. Born in 1931 and raised in West Philadelphia, he excelled academically and athletically, becoming the first African American to earn a varsity letter in basketball at Penn State and later completing his law degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

His service to our nation as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army during the

Korean War demonstrated his deep commitment to public service. Upon returning home, Senator Williams built a respected law career and served as Assistant City Solicitor before entering elected office. His historic run for mayor in 1971 helped open the path for future Black political leadership in Philadelphia, including the election of Mayor Wilson Goode more than a decade later.

Throughout his terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and later the State Senate, he was a champion for civil rights, educational equity and social justice. The Free Library shares Senator Williams' belief that education, equity and access are essential for our communities to thrive. His advocacy for public education, his commitment to strengthening social supports align

closely with our mission to promote literacy, cultural connection and economic opportunity for Philadelphians of every background.

Paschalville Library, located in a diverse, resilient community that has long benefited from his leadership continues to serve as a hub where residents learn, grow and access vital resources. Renaming Paschalville Library as the Hardy Williams Library of Paschalville is a meaningful and a fitting tribute to a leader who dedicated his life to expanding opportunity and advocating for communities across Philadelphia. It will serve as a lasting reminder of his legacy and as an inspiration all who walk through our doors.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I respectfully urge the committee to

vote in favor of this legislation and I welcome any questions you may have.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Are there any questions from members of the committee?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: There being none, thank you for being with us today.

MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Madam Clerk, are there any other panelists or any other members of the community here to testify on any of the bills on the meeting agenda?

THE CLERK: There are no further witnesses, Ms. Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you. This concludes the

hearing. We will now go into the public meeting. We will now convene the public meeting to consider the actions being taken on the bills before this committee.

Will the Clerk please call the roll for attendance. Members, please acknowledge that you're present by saying present when your name is called.

THE CLERK: Chair Lozada.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Present.

THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Squilla.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Present.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Driscoll.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Harrity.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

Present.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thank you. I will note for the record that a quorum of this committee is present. I would like to note that Bill No. 250726 is being held at the request of the sponsor.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Driscoll for a motion on Bill No. 250807.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I offer an amendment to Bill No. 250807. A copy of the amendment has been circulated to

all members of the committee. I move that the amendment to Bill No. 250807 be adopted.

(Duly seconded.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you. It has been moved and properly seconded that the amendment to Bill No. 250807 be adopted.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Those opposed?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: The ayes have it, the motion carries. The amendment to Bill No. 250807 has been adopted.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Driscoll for a motion on Bill Nos. 250717, 250573, 250801, 250841, 250833, 250832, 250847, 250913, 251017, 251023.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:
(Inaudible).
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: We just did that one so -- just for clarification, it was moved and properly seconded that Bill No. 250807 as amended be adopted.
All those in favor please signify by saying aye.
(Aye.)
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
Those opposed?
(No response.)
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
The ayes have it that Bill No. 250807 as amended has been adopted.
The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Squilla for a motion on Bill Nos. 250717, 250573, 250801, 250841, 250833, 250832, 250847, 250913, 251017, 251023.
COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
Thank you, Madam Chair.
I move that Bill Nos.

250717, 250573, 250801, 250841, 250833, 250832, 250847, 250913, 251017 and 251023 be reported for this committee with a favorable recommendation and further move the rules of Council be suspended as to permit the first reading of this bill at the next session of Council.

(Duly seconded.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: It has been moved and properly seconded that Bill Nos. 250717, 250573, 250801, 250841, 250833, 250832, 250847, 250913, 251017, 251023 be reported from this committee with a favorable recommendation and further move that the rules of Council be suspended to permit first reading of these bills at the next session of Council.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Those opposed?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

The ayes have it and the motion carries.

There being no further questions, are there any questions from members?

(No response.)

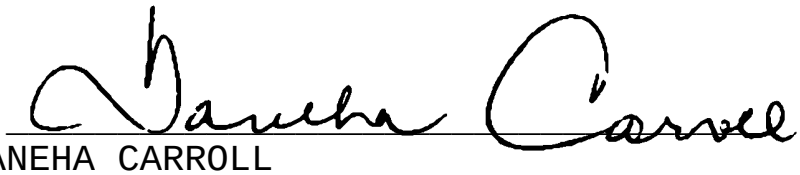
COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

There being no further questions from members of the committee and no other witnesses to testify, this concludes the business before the Committee on Public Property and Public Works. Thank you very much for being in attendance and for being with us today. Thank you.

(Committee on Public Property and Public Works concluded at 12:01 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.



TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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