

**Testimony by Eugene Dewitt Kinlow  
Trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City  
Public Oversight Hearing By the Committee of the Whole on  
Spending and Performance at the Office of Planning**

**February 26, 2001**

Good evening, My name is Eugene D. Kinlow, and I am a trustee of the Committee of 100. I am here in the stead of our chairperson Kateri A. L. Ellison, who could not attend this hearing.

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City was established in 1923 to provide responsible oversight for all areas of community development, including parks and conservation, historic preservation, planning and zoning, land use regulation, renewal planning, and transportation planning. We are the City's oldest planning advocacy organization.

We are glad to be here today, so that we can reaffirm our commitment to a fully engaged, resourced, and staffed Office of Planning (OP). The Committee has been one of the most ardent proponents of increased stability at the Office of Planning, and have made numerous attempts to highlight the need to re-establish, re-integrate and enhance the legitimate planning functions of the Nations Capital in a revitalized Office of Planning.

Major concerns of the Committee with respect to OP have focused on efficacy, capacity and utility. As you are well aware, the severe cuts of personnel through the financial reform years decimated (OP's) ability to do anything more than react. It's only in recent times that OP has been able to proactively anticipate and engage stakeholders, including city agencies, federal agencies, business interest and citizens on functions basically identified as planning activities.

Over the last five years the Committee of 100 has vigorously focused its comments on staffing and its effect on OP product quality. Each year in our testimony before the council, we have identified the lack of staffing as a major detriment, and as a key indicator of performance within that office. We are happy to observe a reversal of that ignominious indicator.

In the last seven quarters we witnessed the acquisition of fully energized Director, Andrew Altman, and increased staffing. We have also witnessed additional enhancements of that office by way of new personnel, and additional augmentation of core staff through the use of consultants. We have also witnessed an integration of the Historic Preservation Division into the OP. Hopefully this action will offer significant economies of scale and efficiencies.

It is our opinion that OP is developing the capacity that is required to handle the large number of projects that will continue throughout this fiscal year, including but not limited to:

- The Campus plans
- The Downtown Action Plan
- McMillan reservoir
- The NoMa Plan
- The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative
- Neighborhood Revitalization Planning
- Transit Station Planning
- The NCRC

In Closing, the threshold question at this juncture is whether the OP can sustain high levels of performance where population projections, and project projections are on the rise, without adjusting their FTE formula. The Committee of 100 supports a funding level that provides for a quality level of staffing. We need an OP that can meet the needs and expectations of the residents, the business community and government in a world class manner, without severe structural constraints that limit staff and access to expertise. Thank you