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January 14, 2002

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Mayor Anthony Williams  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Williams,

Eager to bring the national pastime back to the nation's capital and our hometown, we are encouraged by promising reports. We are writing to voice our support for your continued efforts, as well as to reiterate ideas for a permanent home for our team.

Early on, the Committee of 100 lent its voice to cheers for bringing baseball back to Washington. In doing so, and after considering options for ballpark locations, we expressed our preference for RFK – either in a modernized form as proposed by George Dove or at a newly constructed stadium at the Starplex campus. We are concerned with continuing press reports suggesting Mt. Vernon Triangle remains in consideration.

As regards RFK, and recognizing the financial needs of any ownership group, the preferences of major league baseball, the economic objectives of related businesses and the city, and the desires of residents citywide and those of impacted neighborhoods, we suggested a concerted planning effort be undertaken for the Starplex campus. Among the notions that emerged was the concept of a national sports and fitness campus, where stadia and other athletic venues would interplay with water-sports and improved bicycle and hiking trails along the Anacostia and its islands. Wellness and fitness clinics would be established to research and educate both city residents and peoples worldwide. Commercial activities, in support of and made viable by combined neighborhood and visitor patronage, would be incorporated into the campus plan. Improved transit connections and careful management of the auto would internalize and buffer transportation impact from surrounding neighborhoods and the environment, while ensuring access to all. The synergy of these

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components could make the campus a truly spectacular asset.

Indeed, the recent developments with baseball, continuing efforts on the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, preparation for the 2012 Olympic bid, the success of soccer, the opportunity to reposition DC General facilities, joint initiatives by the Office of Planning, Department of Transportation and WMATA for expanding transit to the RFK environs make this the opportune time to aggressively advance such a concept. The potential exists to offer baseball and prospective ownership groups with a venue that not only meets their financial requirements, but gives them profile to the world as well.

There may be other sites where such potential exists, but we haven't found them, and we are troubled by continued reference in the press to Mt. Vernon Triangle as a potential stadium site. Longstanding planning policy and the just reaffirmed community support for it calls for that sector to be redeveloped as a predominantly residential, in-town neighborhood. The only, and very few at that, voices in support of a stadium there during recent planning efforts were those of the D. C. Sports and Entertainment Commission and its staff, who conceived of this out-of-context, out-of-step scheme. With compatible redevelopment plans now launched and others in pipeline, the Mt. Vernon Triangle stadium proposal should be firmly abandoned. Development there should proceed with the certainty that a vibrant, in-town neighborhood will emerge in keeping with the expressed desires of our citizens.

Major League Baseball has become a unique private-public endeavor. Private ownership seeks to establish partnerships with cities wherein the city makes huge investments to facilitate private viability. Successful cities recognize this reality and structure partnerships to also ensure that municipal returns are optimized. As we mentioned some time ago to Councilmember Evans, we reject the notion that various site options should be left open for ownership groups to decide. The better play is for cities to determine which locations present opportunities for achieving both private and public objectives – and do this by fully and openly involving the public in making those decisions. Then, it involves a working relationship to put in place the elements of success for that location. It requires building a team before getting a team.

Under your leadership, there is time to build that first team. We are available to work with you, baseball, prospective owners and potential neighbors of the stadium in that effort.

Sincerely,

Ann Hughes Hargrove

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Chairman

cc: Members of the Council of the District of Columbia

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