



# Graceful Growing Together, Inc.

8011 Old Georgetown Road  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Phone: 301-652-5160  
Fax: 301-652-2301

info@ GracefulGrowingTogether.org  
www.GracefulGrowingTogether.org

## SB349 and HB 715

February 23, 2015

### Bethesda’s Graceful Growing Together Community Center Testimony to Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation & House Appropriations Committee

#### Board of Directors

Barry M. Lemley  
President

Paula Bobb-Semple  
Vice President

David R. Lambert  
Secretary

Donald Cuming  
Treasurer

Dr. Raymond Albright  
Board Member

Melanie Folstad,  
CFP®, CRPC®  
Board Member

David V. Heffernan  
Board Member

Rev. Mansfield Kaseman  
Board Member

Mark E. Miller, Esq.  
Board Member

Ann Posner  
Board Member

Good morning. My name is Barry Lemley, President and Executive Director of Graceful Growing Together, a Maryland 501(c)(3) corporation of our non-profit parent, Christ Lutheran Church. Testifying with me is Don Cuming our Treasurer. We thank Senator Susan Lee and Delegate Marc Korman and District 16 colleagues for their co-sponsorship and for your time today. We would like to briefly demonstrate how our Community Center project will greatly increase **Public Benefits and Jobs, is Shovel Ready with new Tax Revenues, and has Major Funding.**

#### First - We Provide a Unique Opportunity to Increase the Public Benefit and New Jobs

For 80 years we have shared our facilities with all Maryland citizens as a public mission. Bethesda Cares, Adat Shalom, Ivymount School, Bethesda Fellowship House for Alzheimer Care, and GGT’s Culinary Arts Incubator are just a few notable examples of non-profits who had their initial start at our site. Many continue to share our relatively small current space today. We have deep experience, clear vision and now, perhaps a one-time opportunity to significantly expand our service capability to future generations for: (a) Community Child Care; (b) Recreation; (c) The Arts; (d) Seniors; (e) Job Training; and, (f) a Non-Profit Center. Downtown Bethesda is also unique in many ways - including that it **does not** have a much needed community center. Our Center’s approved major expansion is summed up by Montgomery County’s Recreation Director, Gabe Albornoz, who has often stated “*Your plans are ideal for a multi-generational, neighborhood health and wellness center.*”

#### Second - We are Shovel Ready and Will Produce Annual New Tax Revenues

We’ve owned 2 acres on Old Georgetown Road between Bethesda Metro and NIH since 1936. In 2010, the Montgomery County Council approved re-zoning of the aging property for a complex of 107 new taxable residential market rate and MPDUs units, plus a new, 6 floor, 64,000 GSF church and community center – providing expanded services to all citizens and 1M annually in new tax revenue. We’ve completed Market Demand, Feasibility Studies and Schematic Design. Current schedule has a 2Q16 construction start and 2Q18 occupancy.

#### Third and Final - We Have Major Funding Commitments

Our Center’s estimated total capital cost is \$23.8M and over \$19M or 80% is already under contract to come from the partial sale of our land to Bush Construction Company who will develop the 107 residential units. We have also secured private donations and predevelopment financing with EagleBank. A further \$3M in long term debt would then be reduced by non-profit level rentals and a capital campaign with government, foundation and community grants. Support has already been received from Montgomery County FY15 Capital Budget plus proposed for FY16. Today we are seeking your important support for a FY2016 State Bond Bill of \$400K for prorated design and construction costs of \$8M dedicated to the multi-generational health and wellness and job incubator areas in the center.

On behalf of the many Maryland citizens we all support, thank you for your consideration.



*Connect, Enrich, Innovate, Impact*  
*Celebrating over 75 Years of Community Service*