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To: Downtown Investment Authority
From: Lisa Grubba, Interim Executive Director, Greenscape of Jacksonville, Inc.
Re: Public Comment, Esplanade Plan/Jessie Ball duPont Fund
Date: July 7, 2021

Good morning. I'm Lisa Grubba, Interim Executive Director of Greenscape of Jacksonville, 1468 Hendricks Avenue. I'm pleased to speak today on behalf of the Greenscape Board of Directors.

Greenscape's mission is to plant, protect and promote trees which we've been doing for 46 years in Jacksonville. We've added more than 350,000 trees to the city's tree canopy. Greenscape was a founding member of the Riverfront Parks Now Coalition.

Greenscape supports the excellent work done by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund – in particular, its conceptual planning for utilization of the area from the Shipyards to Metropolitan Park. Viewed as a whole, the preliminary plan described in the duPont Fund report as the Esplanade, advances several objectives important to Greenscape.

First, it preserves a significant portion of the overall site as open space, which can act as a resilient buffer for the river.

Second, it provides for a continuous pedestrian walkway all the way to Metropolitan Park. Unlike the Southbank Riverwalk, this Riverwalk extension will have sufficient space to provide what most people want more of along a Riverwalk – more trees, especially shade trees.

Third, the Esplanade plan makes some sound recommendations for the Future Development Parcel and the projected MOSH parcel. It recommends that development on those sites be located adjacent to Bay Street, leaving at least half those sites closest to the river be preserved as open space.

This is very important because it provides the opportunity to create some exciting and innovative designs to promote resiliency along the river. Also, people love trees, especially shade trees, in recreation areas. But, let's face it – shade trees need more room to grow. The Esplanade plan's increased open space gives room for more, and larger, trees.

It's critical as we develop the Shipyards area that we create a continuous linear park along the river, and not just a narrow riverwalk squeezed in front of dense development. That way, we'll have spaces we can be proud of here in the River City that also support resiliency and benefit the environment.

I'll provide a copy of my remarks for your records with a list of the members of Greenscape's Board of Directors.

Thank you.

A member of the Florida Urban Forestry Council and Arbor Day Foundation's ACTrees

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