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East Capitol Urban Farm & Food Hub Re-opening Day: An Urban Farm & Aquaponics Facility in Ward 7

(Washington, DC)—On Saturday, May 21, 2016, partners and friends of East Capitol Urban Farm & Food Hub will come together to celebrate the re-opening of East Capitol Urban Farm—a model for temporary use of vacant lots, fresh food access, and community education.

East Capitol Urban Farm is one of several Urban Food Hubs pioneered by the University of the District of Columbia's College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) to improve Food Security and Sustainability in DC neighborhoods through food production, food preparation, food distribution, and waste and water management. East Capitol Urban Farm & Food Hub is a result of a major local, federal, public and private alliance between the University of the District of Columbia's College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES), the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, several District of Columbia government agencies, community organizations, churches, and businesses to transform a vacant, three-acre parcel of land to become the city's largest-scale urban farm of its type to increase access to local and sustainable produce and fish for Ward 7. Features of the project include also include community garden space, demonstration area, exercise trails, nature discovery area, public art, rain and pollinator gardens, market place and an aquaponics facility.

Over a year ago, the University of the District of Columbia's College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) partnered with the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to lease the vacant lot located at 5901 East Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC to transform the parcel into a remarkable community asset. Select agencies of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership—14 federal agencies working collectively to address environmental and economic challenges in cities across the country in underserved communities also partnered in the effort. Specifically, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry have contributed to the vision of and provided resources for the Farm which will promote urban agriculture, improve food access and nutrition through a community-centered farmers market, offer nutrition education, youth engagement, provide community gardening, and create opportunities for entrepreneurship.

The challenge and opportunity was to develop the site as a model for temporary use of vacant lots while demonstrating on-site storm water management and local food production. To that end, Bradley Site Design, co-led site design for the farm. UDC has also mapped the District's underused properties to ensure a continued, viable future of the site.

DCBIA members who helped plan & construct the site in the Fall of 2015 includes: Forest City Washington, Hines, HITT Contracting, and Property Group Partners provided funding for the construction of the project. Additional funding provided by Balfour Beatty Construction, Clark Construction, Fidelity National Title Insurance Company, Fort Lincoln New Town Corp., Grunley Construction, JLL, Quadrangle Development, and WC Smith. Through community engagement and partnership, which began early in 2015, DCBIA, UDC and design and general contracting teams held design charrettes to envision the site. Companies who have volunteered their time to this effort include individuals from Cunningham Quill Architects, David M. Schwarz Architects, HOK, RTKL Associates, SmithGroupJJR, Balfour Beatty Construction, Clark Construction, Corenic Construction, DAVIS Construction, Gilbane, HITT Contracting, Langan Engineering, LendLease, Monarc Construction, Turner Construction, among others.

Re-opening day begins at 9:00 am at 5901 East Capitol Street, NE on Saturday, May 21, 2016. A ribbon-cutting will take place at 11:45 am with District and Federal Officials and representatives of the following partners: American Forests, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, DC Housing Authority, District Department of Energy & Environment, Groundwork Anacostia DC, Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Association, University of the District of Columbia, and Urban Waters Federal Partnership. Community vending spaces are available and may be obtained by contacting us at sustainability@udc.edu or (202) 274-6682.