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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday March 31, 2025

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### **Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr. Returns from Taiwan Cultural Exchange Focused on Innovative Housing and Community Development**

**Washington, D.C.** — Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr., Chair of the D.C. Council's Committee on Housing, recently returned from a cultural and policy exchange trip to Taipei, Taiwan. The five-day visit, organized by Taiwan Sister Cities through the support of Hello Taiwan provided an in-depth look at Taipei's innovative approaches to affordable housing, urban development, and open-source data systems—offering valuable insights that could help D.C. better address its housing challenges. During the visit, a delegation of D.C. residents—including Councilmember White, Dr. Christine Warnke, State Director of Washington, D.C. Sister Cities International, and Professor Hung-bin Ding—engaged in high-level discussions with city leaders focused on housing and urban planning. "Taiwan Sister Cities is honored to have City Councilman Robert White and other civic leaders join this delegation to Taipei. This visit has highlighted numerous shared interests between Washington, D.C., and Taipei, laying the foundation for future collaboration. We look forward to building on this momentum to foster learning opportunities, joint initiatives, and potential sister city partnerships." Said Professor Hung-bin Ding. Councilmember White had the honor of meeting with the Mayor of Taipei, several cabinet members, and five Taipei City Councilors. During one formal session, he lightened the atmosphere by asking the mayor's staff if he could take a joke—an icebreaker that set the stage for a candid discussion on housing policy.

A key highlight of the trip was a visit to a 1,500-unit housing complex, where Councilmember White met with the head of Taipei's Department of Housing. The facility redefines traditional housing models by integrating libraries, medical services, daycare, retail outlets, and green spaces—creating a dynamic, community-centered environment. Designed not only for low-income residents but also for young professionals and families with children, the complex demonstrates how mixed-use housing can contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive city. The project is maintained by specialized divisions for maintenance, operations, and housing services, ensuring high-quality management and long-term viability.

One of the most striking differences between Taipei and Washington, D.C., is the use of open-source data to track and manage housing inventory. "In Taipei, they have real-time data on the number of vacant units and those coming onto the market across the entire city," said Councilmember White. "Here in D.C., it's taken a decade to get an accurate account of how many units we have." This level of transparency and data-driven decision-making is something we must prioritize to better serve our residents. Taipei's approach highlights how data accessibility can inform policy, streamline development, and enhance government accountability—lessons that Councilmember White is eager to bring back to D.C. "This was a chance to step outside of D.C. and see how other cities are using technology and innovative policies to meet the needs of their residents," said Councilmember White. "Bringing these ideas back to the Council is essential as we continue to push for policies that improve the quality of life for all D.C. residents."

Councilmember White looks forward to sharing insights from the trip with colleagues on the Council, local housing advocates, developers, and community leaders. His goal is to explore how Taipei's best practices—particularly in open-source data and mixed-use housing—can be adapted to advance bold and equitable housing policies in the District.

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