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UPDATE ON FORMER MASONIC TEMPLE BUILDING REVITALIZATION PLAN

PITTSBURGH, PA (Aug. 27, 2014) The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) has terminated Allegheny City Development Group LLC's rights to develop the Masonic Temple building. The developer's option to develop the building had been awarded on May 12, 2011 and expired on July 28, 2014. Termination follows a 45-day extension that had been granted in June to the developer.

The anchor tenant for the Masonic project has been the Northside-based nonprofit City of Asylum Pittsburgh and it remains committed to the project. City of Asylum intends to build out Alphabet City, a literary center that will include the organization's offices, a bookstore, performance and workshop spaces, and a full-service restaurant. The organization is nationally recognized for its innovative use of the arts to transform the Central Northside, known as "creative placemaking."

The URA and City of Asylum are continuing to work together to move the project forward at the historic Masonic Building, which will be renovated as part of the effort.

"Our goal is to see City of Asylum Pittsburgh in the Masonic Building, and we are working with them to expedite the project," said Robert Rubinstein, URA acting executive director.

Kevin Acklin, the Mayor's chief of staff and URA board chairman, added, "We believe that Alphabet City will be the cultural and social hub of the community and will spur revitalization of the Federal North area." Approval from the URA board will be required to act on City of Asylum's intentions.

City of Asylum has been an important part of the neighborhood's revitalization. Andrew Wickesberg, president of Allegheny City Central remarked, "City of Asylum has contributed to the vitality of our neighborhood, bringing residents of diverse backgrounds together."

"We appreciate how creative the URA has been in responding to the situation. It gives us confidence to know that the URA and the City share our commitment and our belief that Alphabet City is a transformative project," said Henry Reese, City of Asylum's co-founder.

Allegheny City Development Group, headed by Philadelphia-based developer Wayne Zukin, is continuing its development of the Garden Theater which is slated to open as a restaurant in 2015.

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The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is the City of Pittsburgh's economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City's tax base and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements.

Founded in 2004, **City of Asylum** is a model for arts-based community development, bringing writers, readers and neighbors together through global literature and cultural exchange. Located on Sampsonia Way in Pittsburgh's Northside, City of Asylum's campus of redeveloped houses serve both as homes for exiled writers and as public artworks. It has presented more than 250 authors and musicians from 50 countries in free readings and concerts.

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