

Testimony before the Hon. Phil Mendelson, Chairman  
Committee of the Whole, Council of the District of Columbia

Regarding: **Support** for Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”

By Cheryl Cort  
Policy Director  
November 12, 2020

Good morning, my name is Cheryl Cort and I am the Policy Director for the Coalition for Smarter Growth. We are members of the Housing Priorities Coalition, which has engaged in this process since it began four years ago. Together, we have urged the DC Council to pass the Comp Plan without delay.

The plan makes clear commitments to racial equity, equitable distribution of affordable housing, and expanded housing opportunities around transit. This update is urgently needed to encourage more inclusive neighborhoods, and begin to address the gaping racial disparities in housing and economic opportunity. Even now, more than a thousand affordable homes are stuck at the Zoning Commission, waiting for changes in the Comp Plan to move forward.

Some critics say that we need more public process. But we have had extensive public engagement over the last four years. CSG is committed to good public process, and the process has been robust and multifaceted. I’ve attended many of the meetings all over the city - from Deanwood to Tenleytown. Office of Planning provided additional outreach and extended comment deadlines. To let this process go on indefinitely – beyond four years and counting – is a disservice to the efforts of so many residents, ANC Commissioners and stakeholders who have been involved.

Our 2006 Comp Plan is woefully out of date and fails to give us the guidance we need to build a more just recovery, and address a legacy of discriminatory land use practices that have denied wealth, opportunity, and even health, to Black and Brown residents. The updated Comp Plan proposes to increase and equitably distribute housing options across the District, including setting goals for building more affordable homes in currently exclusive neighborhoods.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) changes are also crucial to our city’s ability to address future housing needs, and leverage new opportunities to create affordable housing. The map changes provide 15% more housing capacity, focused around transit stations and corridors. Complementing these map changes is the Expanded Inclusionary Zoning proposal at the Zoning Commission. This would require up to 20% set aside of affordable IZ units in the case of an upzoning. Given the potential increased value created by the map changes, the 20% set aside is a value capture policy that combines needed increases in housing capacity with additional affordability.

We are deeply concerned that the Comp Plan bill review could slip into next year and mean even greater delay. We need the plan update now to help guide city actions to foster a just recovery, restart stalled affordable housing plans, and guide more equitable affordable housing opportunities across the city into the future.

We urge you to pass the bill this calendar year.

Thank you for your consideration.



Alex Baca  
Greater Greater Washington  
Testimony to Committee of the Whole  
Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020—B23-736  
Nov. 12, 2020

Good morning. My name is Alex Baca, and I am testifying on behalf of Greater Greater Washington. GGWash has been engaging our supporters with the Comprehensive Plan amendment process since it began in 2016. We so appreciated the Council's dedication to passing the revised Framework element in October 2019, and are asking you now to pass OP's amendments to the remainder of the Comp Plan, which reflect the revised Framework, by the end of the year.

Our asks of the Council are informed primarily by what comprehensive plans are, and what they can do. Comp plans are fairly typical documents that guide, not regulate, general land-use protocols. The Comp Plan on its own cannot make housing more affordable, or stop displacement, but what it says is a necessary precondition to the legal or fiscal actions that may attempt to do so. Given that the District's high housing prices, low housing supply, and what will surely be a protracted recovery from Covid-19 will require close attention, passing amendments to the 2006 plan as soon as possible is the most productive action we can take right now.

There are few conflicts between the District's Comp Plan and *housing* policy. For example, GGWash is a member of the Reclaim Rent Control coalition. We have consistently testified in support of more funding for affordable housing and community planning, and will be testifying in support of expanded inclusionary zoning at the Zoning Commission on Monday. None of these things are prevented by the Comp Plan.

The Comp Plan does not influence housing policy generally, but land-use regulations specifically. The nexus of the Comp Plan and what happens with housing is *zoning*, and zoning reform is not in front of us today. Office of Planning's amendments are.

We support OP's amendments, not because they are the objectively best language—anyone that knows me knows that I can redline a document—but because it is unconscionable to extend this process further when the Comp Plan is supposed to be fully updated, not amended, every decade. I hope the council will consider procedural reforms to clarify when the Comp Plan is rewritten or amended, and what we as residents can expect when that happens.

I understand why the Comp Plan garners so much attention. Though this is an amendment cycle, most participants in the process have experienced it as a full rewrite, because of its length and level of detail. The budget is challenging, and regulations are opaque, but the Comp Plan—which is more editorial than any other jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan that I’m familiar with—says all sorts of things that resonate with us. Governance doesn’t really happen via prose, but the Comp Plan is prosaic. In that way, the 2006 document is problematic. It has misled many participants in this process into thinking that it, and amendments to it, can do more than is legally possible.

Still, I have come to love this doorstep of a document. I’ve read all of it. I have the Generalized Policy Map and the FLUM hanging in my home, which is bizarre to people who are not particularly concerned with the vagaries of the District’s planning and development regime.

Many people who *are* concerned about those things, though, are in this room today. So many of us are nearly stock characters: We reliably come to these hearings, and ask for meetings, and send our opinions, mostly unbidden, to our ANC’s and councilmembers and listservs.

But *a/so* on the witness list are a number of residents who are speaking directly to their elected officials for the first time about what they’d like to see in their neighborhoods and their city. Their support for the amendments in front of us today, and their sense of urgency—not mine—is what I hope you take into account.

November 12, 2020

Ellen McCarthy

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Council. My name is Ellen McCarthy. I have been a resident of upper Northwest for more than 30 years, and have been a city planner for more than 40 years, including several years as Director or Deputy Director of the DC Office of Planning. I am a member of Ward 3 Vision, and the Housing Priorities Coalition, and, though I am not testifying for either of those groups, I would like to associate myself with their testimony and recommendations.

Let me cut to the chase, since 3 minutes is a very short time. I support OP's proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and urge you and the Council to adopt the plan in this Council term, before the end of 2020.

Today I'd like to focus on two areas in my section of DC: upper Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues.

1. Both arterials have substantial amounts of vacant or seriously underutilized land, which could accommodate substantial amounts of new housing, especially high to mid-rise, mixed-use multifamily residential buildings along the Avenues. Such new housing could provide street vitality, customers for retailers who are barely hanging on, and a chance to provide affordable units in a high-opportunity neighborhood with good transit, parks, libraries, schools and grocery stores, for our children and those who live in areas without access to such amenities.
2. The proposed Amendments to the Future Land Use Maps for both areas call for increased land use intensity, conditioned upon the completion of area plans which would guide any rezoning that would follow the adoption of the FLUM.
3. Such plans would address important concerns such as how to transition from potential higher-density, mixed-use, multifamily buildings along the Avenues to the lower density housing behind them and whether there is a need for increased infrastructure investment to accommodate new growth, including new public schools and recreation opportunities. Part of such a plan would be to identify tools to construct additional affordable housing, to increase access to these high opportunity neighborhoods. Councilmember Cheh specifically included funds in the OP budget to begin that planning work.
4. There is in fact already a proposal before the Zoning Commission to require that any increased density granted through an upzoning would require a substantial increase in the percentage of inclusionary zoning units to be provided. The small area plans could also identify community benefits or amenities desired by residents or meeting citywide

needs that could be provided by any developers who seek to increase density through planned unit developments.

5. A particularly dire situation is Friendship Heights. The area was a lively shopping district; now, former anchor Lord and Taylor has declared bankruptcy, Mazza Gallerie was sold at auction for \$38M to the firm which had lent its owner \$67M, Chevy Chase Pavilion has apparently unsuccessfully tried to reposition its vacant retail space as medical offices. Losses from real estate and sales taxes could easily top \$10M per year.
6. Although the current situation is bleak, Friendship Heights has great potential to reinvent itself as a major residential-based mixed use center, especially on the DC side, surrounded by walkable attractive and desirable places to live, work and be entertained. This model already exists on the Montgomery County side of the location. DC could have a reborn retail center with more than a thousand new residential units, a substantial percentage of which could be affordable, creating over \$2B of new development, and hundreds of new jobs.
7. To accomplish this, we need the proposed FLUM amendments to be adopted by the Council, with one change – WMATA needs to redevelop their bus garage, and the current location, occupying prime space along Wisconsin Avenue is not workable nor the best use of the site. WMATA submitted a request to OP to add a stripe for “Local Public Facilities” to the Lord and Taylor site on the FLUM, which OP has not included in the proposed amendments. Such a change in the FLUM would provide more flexibility to locate the bus garage to a more appropriate location.
8. The small area plan for the area should identify a location for a great neighborhood open space, along with residential, retail and potential office locations to create a vibrant, 24 hour neighborhood center, with a spot for the bus garage which will preserve our excellent transit access, but not adversely affect neighboring residents.
9. Ward 3 has less than 1% of the affordable housing units in the city. Adopt the Comp Plan amendments so we can do our share, and also reduce gentrification pressures on other city neighborhoods.

#### Additional observations:

1. It is clear that there is not an equitable distribution across the city of wealth, opportunity, social determinants of health, educational quality, personal security and other indicators of quality of life. There are substantial amounts of vacant or seriously underutilized land along upper Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. Professor Raj Chetty and the Opportunity Insights project at Harvard University have documented persuasively the importance of providing access to high opportunity neighborhoods in

improving the life prospects of low-income children and families. Areas like Chevy Chase DC and Tenleytown are those types of high opportunity neighborhoods.

2. A key element to achieving a more inclusive city is to improve the amount and distribution of affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods, like upper Northwest.
3. The policies articulated in the Office of Planning's Comprehensive Plan amendments, particularly the proposed increases in land use intensity contained in the Future Land Use Maps, as conditioned in the Generalized Land Use Policy Maps, are essential for creating more high opportunity neighborhoods throughout the city. The Future Land Use Map (or FLUM) proposes increases in land use intensity along those corridors; however, the Comp Plan Policy Map which accompanies the FLUM indicates that both those corridors are "Planning Areas", meaning that, before any changes are made in the zoning to be consistent with the "up-FLUMming", there must be plans created which will address important concerns such as how to transition from potential higher-density, mixed-use, multifamily buildings along the Avenues to the lower density housing behind them and whether there is a need for increased infrastructure investment to accommodate new growth, including new public schools and recreation opportunities.
4. In particular, the FLUM changes, taken together with the recommendations for more detailed Planning Areas for upper Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, are not only appropriate, but totally necessary.
5. Various economic analyses of the outlook for small businesses, of the kind that make neighborhoods livable and desirable, are showing that the prospects are dim, partly due to the so-called "retail apocalypse" that began even before the pandemic, and particularly now that the impacts of the pandemic are being more widely felt. In my little stretch of Chevy Chase DC, there are at least 6 businesses which have closed recently. Bringing more residents to the corridor would provide additional customers and street vitality.
10. Friendship Heights provides a compelling opportunity to improve the city's financial condition, provide affordable, transit-accessible housing and create a great "place". Think about the amount of vacant and underutilized space: the so-called "Homeplate" lot between Mazza Gallerie and Lord & Taylor, the parking lot and rusty parking structure behind L&T, the huge surface lot immediately adjacent to the Jennifer Street Metro entrance currently used just to store buses. The former used car lot soon to be returned to vacancy when PEPCO finishes refurbishing its substation. No city can afford to waste such potential. What a contrast to the Maryland side of the boundary – tall apartment buildings with ground floor retail, a park and community center, office buildings providing daytime customers for the restaurants and shops, in addition to the residents.

## Policy Map



## Comprehensive Plan Policy

Future Planning Analysis Areas



Resilience Focus Areas



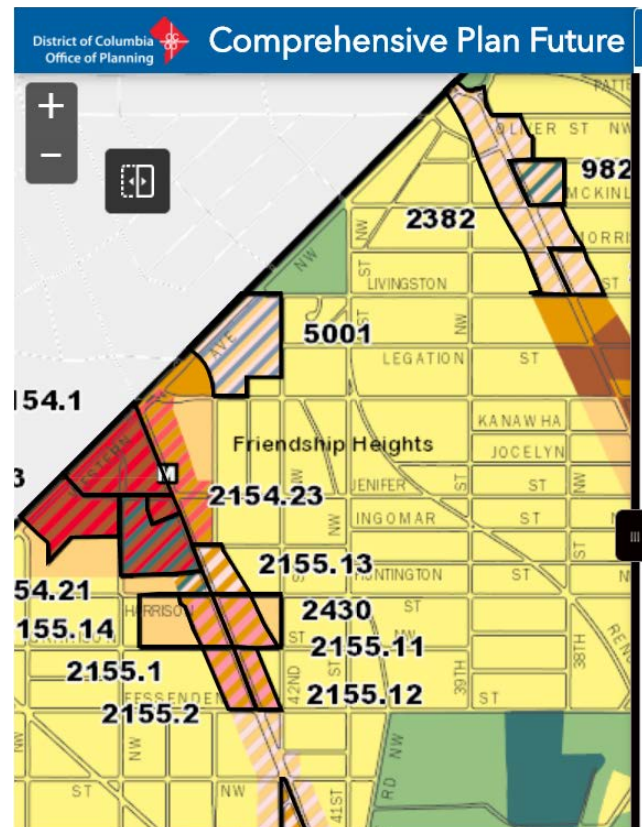
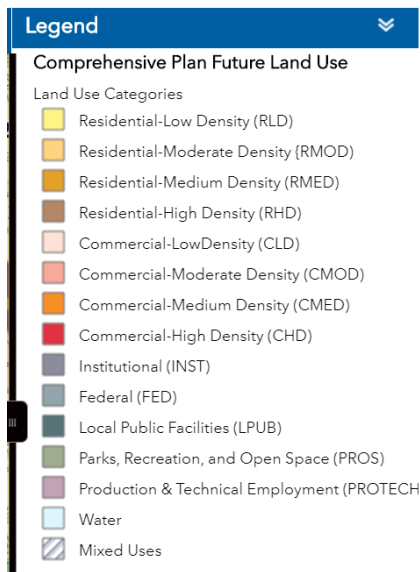
Enhanced/New Multi-Neighborhood Center



Enhanced/New Neighborhood Center



## Future Land Use Map





**Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on Bill 23-736,  
the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

Good morning, Chair Mendelson and members of the Committee. My name is Garrett Hennigan. I am speaking to you today as a public witness, a 7 year Ward 5 resident, and a lifelong Washingtonian. I am here to ask the Council to adopt the Office of Planning’s amendments, to support allowing greater housing density throughout DC, and to approve the Comp Plan by the end of 2020.

I love this city, its people, and its energy. It is exciting to see our population growing and Statehood closer than ever. But we cannot avoid the reality that DC’s prosperity is coming at a grave cost to Black communities, communities of color, and our most vulnerable residents who face rising housing costs, displacement, and rapid change in their neighborhoods. I firmly believe that OP’s amendments to the Comp Plan are critical tools to address these disparities in housing and economic opportunity.

Since you will hear from experts better equipped to talk details, I wanted to share a recent conversation. Last month, visiting with my parents outside their Chevy Chase DC home where my brother and I grew up, my mom was catching me up on neighborhood news. A house down the block recently finished a year-long rebuild and had an open house. This newly refurbished, 4 bedroom house on a small corner lot is advertised at a staggering \$1.65 million. An unimaginable price compared to what my upper middle class parents paid for their home in the 80’s.

She was shocked. Is this what it takes to move into this neighborhood now? How, she asked, could anyone but the most wealthy ever move here to take advantage of the neighborhood’s local schools, fantastic parks, reliable transit, grocery stores, and all the other opportunities that I had growing up there? They could not. I could not. Chevy Chase needs more housing options that people can afford. Without them, she said, the neighborhood and its demographics could never change.

Looking around, she was not worried about having more neighbors or larger buildings or any of the other objections people raise in opposition to density. Instead, she was struck by the brazen unfairness of our city’s housing policy that hoards resources and opportunity for the wealthy, then restricts those neighborhoods to the most expensive and inefficient kind of housing: single family homes. She would gladly accept a duplex next door to prevent displacement somewhere else.

This anecdote is playing out all over the city, making housing deeply unaffordable for most people in far too many neighborhoods and it is rapidly changing the demographics and culture of this city. The Council cannot afford to draw out this process. We need more housing at all affordability levels now, and this Comp Plan update is the tool to do it.

Please say yes to increasing housing options and making our city more equitable by passing the Comp Plan intact in 2020. Thank you.



## **Ward3Vision Support for the Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Ward3Vision is a group of residents who are working to make our neighborhoods even better urban places – more walkable, sustainable, and vibrant. We want a D.C. that grows in ways that are environmentally and socially responsible, positive, and equitable, enhancing our neighborhoods and the vitality of our commercial corridors.

**Ward 3 Vision strongly urges the Council of the District of Columbia to swiftly adopt the update to the [Comprehensive Plan](#) as submitted by the Office of Planning (OP). After [four years of extensive public engagement](#) this update furthers the goals of equity, inclusiveness and sustainability in how growth in the District of Columbia will occur. These amendments allow for implementation of the goals set forth in the [Housing Framework For Equity and Growth](#) as well as the stated aims of both the [Council](#) and [Mayor](#) to address our current housing crisis by producing 1,990 affordable units in Rock Creek West by 2025.**

### **Current Circumstances Create an Urgency to Proceed**

The timely adoption of these measures is critically important to the District in this time of public health, economic crises and urgent demands for social justice, all of which call for swift action to meet our shared social equity goals. [Land use](#) is not the only driver of inequality, but it is such a significant one that gives urgency to the District's efforts to change its approach to land use in affluent areas, including Rock Creek West. These revisions will help guide the District on a sustainable and equitable path to recovery adjusting how and where the District should grow and increasing housing affordability and diversity in our high opportunity neighborhoods and mixed-use transit corridors. To accomplish these goals the Comprehensive Plan amendments include changes to the [Future Land Use Map](#) (FLUM), [Generalized Policy Map](#), [Rock Creek West Area Element](#) and [Housing Element](#) that are consistent with Ward3Vision's mission to create a more walkable, sustainable and vibrant community. The amendments will encourage new housing options for residents of Ward 3 and elsewhere. It will also create opportunities for more affordable housing, through mechanisms like Inclusionary Zoning (IZ).

The Comprehensive Plan<sup>1</sup> is a long-term document that not only addresses how the District will grow, but how it can become more resilient beyond any particular era or

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economic cycle, as laid out in the [COVID-19 Crosswalk](#). The disparity in the impact of the pandemic on communities of color highlights the interrelationships between the social, economic, and housing elements of the plan and underscores the urgency of its implementation. The importance of the underlying principles -- equity, opportunity and prosperity -- are heightened by the pandemic. This crisis has disproportionately affected less prosperous sectors of the city. The inadequate housing stock, especially affordable housing, and resultant crowding in many neighborhoods is something that the Comprehensive Plan amendments begin to address.

The COVID 19 crisis thus makes it more important to proceed now with adopting the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and is not an excuse for delay.<sup>2</sup> Such suggestions for inaction are merely calls for maintaining the *status quo*.

### **The Changes are Modest Reforms**

The proposed changes to the FLUM and other parts of the Comprehensive Plan in the Rock Creek West area element are modest reforms and far from radical revisions. They are nonetheless significant, creating higher intensity land use in Ward 3 at Metro and along transit and commercial corridors including Wisconsin, Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues. These changes to the FLUM support modest increases in Residential and Commercial density in Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, Van Ness and Tenleytown. At Friendship Heights the changes better match land use on the Maryland side, allowing flexibility for redevelopment of the Friendship Heights bus garage. All these changes support the location of jobs and new homes near transit.

Other changes support higher intensity mixed use designations along neighborhood retail corridors such as Cathedral Commons, the Spring Valley Shopping Center, Chevy Chase and Forest Hills along Connecticut Avenue, all adjacent to bus lines that provide frequent service.<sup>3</sup> These changes could allow for a significant number of new homes and increased housing options mixed with commercial space to be built in some of the most [exclusive and affluent areas](#) in the District. Notably, this potential development in Ward 3 can occur with little if any displacement of low-cost housing.

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<sup>1</sup> We also urge that, in the future, comprehensive planning efforts should be done at regularly scheduled intervals that are legally prescribed, incorporating new data and continuing to guide development in a

<sup>2</sup> See, [Letter from Committee of 100](#) to Chairman Mendelson and the DC Council, May 15, 2020. <sup>3</sup> Chevy Chase with L1/2 & E4/6, Forest Hills L1/L2 & M4, Wisconsin Ave 30N+S/31/33/96/H4, Mass Ave with N4/6 and the AU Shuttle.

Given the changing face of retail, many shops have suffered economically and will only thrive if there is sufficient foot-traffic from an increased number of local residents. Greater diversity of residents (age, income, race) will also support a more varied choice of commercial establishments adding vibrancy to our neighborhoods.

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timely manner. This should include well defined parameters to start and end dates for comprehensive rewrites of both the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code as well as a time limit for legislative approval. The full list of amendments recommended for up-FLUMing can be viewed on this [interactive map](#) and further comments on individual proposals can be found in the [Appendix](#).

The [Generalized Policy Map](#) reinforces that the revisions are modest changes to land use designations with only two amendments within Rock Creek West, one on land owned by Howard University Law School and the other at the Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home.<sup>3</sup> Almost all the other proposed changes for Rock Creek West are slated to occur on the 13% of land already zoned for multi-family housing. Only two minor modifications to Residential Low Density designations in Rock Creek West are proposed and they are now covered by surface parking and unimproved land between Garrison and Harrison Streets within a block of Wisconsin Ave.

### **The Rock Creek West Area Element Needs to be Updated**

Ward3Vision lauds the proposed changes to the [Rock Creek West Area Element](#) that strips much of the exclusionary language from existing Comprehensive Plan and highlights the racial, social, and economic inequities that are reflected in income and home prices. We believe that the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and Housing Policies will start to resolve these entrenched problems.

We would welcome more technical fixes throughout the document, particularly regarding the details of affordable housing, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, deemphasizing “Level of Service” for vehicular traffic and highlighting the struggles that local businesses face.

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<sup>3</sup> Exceptions to this are two Institutional Land Use changes for Howard University with amendment 2352 & amendment 9969 at the Lisner Home that facilitate the expansion of residential density at the Howard site and a small increase in commercial uses at the Lisner site.

While we do not agree with all of the assertions in this portion of the document, it is a major improvement over previous iterations and should be approved, so that it can be implemented.

### **Update of the Housing Element Is Particularly Important**

Ward3Vision supports the update to the [Housing Element](#) of the Comprehensive Plan which describes the importance of housing to neighborhood quality and the importance of increasing housing opportunities for all segments of the population throughout DC.

The District remains attractive to higher-income households, so there is a low inventory of homes which puts upward pressure on rents and home prices, resulting in a greater number of lower-income households facing rising housing costs. Ward3Vision believes greater public action is needed to fulfill the vision of an equitable and inclusive District. In

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order to meet the demand for a wide range of housing types, it will be critical to increase the overall production of both market rate and affordable housing to take pressure off the limited supply of existing housing and serve a greater range of household incomes.

In addition to the policies outlined in the Housing Element, Ward3Vision supports many of the proposals laid out in OP's ["Single Family Zoning"](#) report, especially the use of the "gentle density" design approach to create "missing middle" development in residential zones. A crucial first step in the process is for the Council to approve OP's amendments to the Comprehensive Plan which designate a targeted increase in the allowable density in Rock Creek West.

### **Recommendations in Housing Element Applicable to Rock Creek West**

The addition of housing in Ward 3 has the potential to provide more affordable housing as well as market rate. To build out to the additional densities proposed will likely require the full menu of the District's land use tools (especially expanded IZ<sup>4</sup> and both federal and local funding) to achieve the goal of producing 1,990 units of additional affordable housing in Rock Creek West by 2025.

Ward3Vision would like to highlight several policies in the Housing Element as important to implementing these goals:

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<sup>4</sup> Ward3Vision also conceptually supports the ["Inclusionary Zoning Plus"](#) proposal from OP that is being advanced as a way to encourage a significantly more development of affordable housing in Rock Creek West.

- Production incentives (Policy H-1.1.2) encourage regulatory and tax incentives that promote housing production, with an emphasis on high-cost areas (H-1.1.8) for both market rate and affordable housing with “innovative tools and techniques”.
- Housing Affordability of Public-Owned Sites (H-1.2.1) could be used to great effect in Rock Creek West on publicly owned sites in Tenleytown and Chevy Chase, as well as at UDC or the many other sites owned by DC government in Rock Creek West. We believe publicly owned property such as the Chevy Chase Community Center and Library should be studied for co-development opportunities that would produce significant amounts of affordable housing as well as enhanced community amenity.
- Policy H-1.2.7 encourages zoning incentives through density bonuses for market rate developers to provide a “substantial amount of affordable housing above and beyond any underlying requirement”.
- Action H-1.2.E which calls for greater Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) requirements when “zoning actions” permit more density. We believe that any upzoning consistent with upFLUMing in the Comp Plan revisions be subject to enhanced Inclusionary

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Zoning (IZ) requirements to maximize the provision of affordable units and provide for an equitable benefit from public action.

- Action H-1.2.H, which prioritizes incentives and financing tools in areas lacking affordable housing (less than 15% of housing stock) in accordance with goals to affirmatively further Fair Housing.
- Action H-1.3.A, which focuses on production and retention of larger units in multifamily housing, and
- Action H-1.5.D, which supports the study of whether recent changes already made to zoning are enough to support ADU construction. ADUs can produce moderately priced units in single-family and duplex areas of Rock Creek West.

## Conclusion

While not perfect, we believe that these amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are a critical step in the right direction for DC as a whole and Ward 3 in particular. OP’s amendments propose the first loosening of exclusionary land use restrictions of significant scale in Rock Creek West since the [introduction of zoning](#) in the District of Columbia.<sup>5</sup> They advance walkability and sustainability by allowing more transit-oriented

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<sup>5</sup> As Richard Rothstein documents in *The Color of Law*, segregation was not *de facto* -- the result of chance

development. They chip away at the exclusionary zoning regime that has made Rock Creek West neighborhoods the most expensive in the District, and in turn, [exacerbated income and racial segregation](#) citywide. The comprehensive plan amendments provide an excellent foundation for the beginning of changes needed to make the city more affordable and equitable.<sup>6</sup>

For these reasons, we implore the Council to move this legislation forward without delay.

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## Appendix: Support of FLUM Proposed Changes

### Cleveland Park: Amendment 2123

The Office of Planning has proposed an increase to the density of the Cleveland Park commercial strip on Connecticut Avenue. The current FLUM designation is Low Density Commercial and is zoned NC-3 for low density mixed use. The proposed new FLUM designation is mixed Moderate Density Commercial/High Density Residential. The zone contains five moderate density historic apartment buildings, but single-story commercial is the predominant building type. The zone is immediately surrounded by varying levels of residential density: low, moderate, medium and high, and the surrounding zones include R-1-A, R-1-B, R-2, RA-1, RA-2, RA-4, and R-5-A (PUD). Adjacent to the area are tall residential buildings such as the Broadmoor and Kennedy-Warren (each 9 stories), Woodley Park Towers (7 stories), and Quebec House (13 stories).

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or income stratification – but rather was *de jure* – brought about by policies, regulations, and laws at the state and federal level which intentionally segregated society by race and provided fewer amenities to communities of color. DC has its own history of zoning, Model Cities, and other programs which wiped out black neighborhoods, such as the original Reno (now part of Tenleytown), and created white enclaves.

<sup>6</sup> Other DC ordinances and regulations will need to be built on this foundation to reach the goals of providing more affordable housing and breaking down barriers to enable racial integration. These include, but not limited to: further expansion of the IZ regulations, voucher programs, rent control rules, single-family zoning legislation, and affordable housing financing programs (including the Housing Production Trust Fund and federal low-income housing tax credits).

The area is a prime candidate for new housing as it sits atop the Cleveland Park Metro station and is served by both north/south and east/west bus lines. It is walkable to shops and services, restaurants, the post office, schools, parks, and the branch library. To both the east and west, the area is buffered by alleys and parking lots, and to the north and south by streets, across which lie higher density zones.

#### **Woodley Park: Amendment 9822 + Wardman Park Marriott Site**

The Office of Planning has proposed an increase to the density of the Woodley park commercial strip on Connecticut Avenue and Calvert Street (Amendment 9822). The current FLUM designation is Low Density Commercial and is zoned NC-4 and NC-5 for low density mixed use. The proposed new FLUM designation is mixed Low Density Commercial/High Density Residential. The zone contains just a smattering of residential units, with the predominant building type low density commercial. The area is immediately surrounded by varying levels of residential density including the RF-1, RA-2 and RA-4 zones. Adjacent to the area are taller residential and hotel buildings including the Omni Shoreham, the Wardman Marriott and seven and nine story apartment buildings.

The area is well suited for more mixed-use density as it includes the Woodley Park Metro station and is served by north/south and east/west bus lines and connects bike lanes from the northwest to downtown. It is walkable to shops and services, restaurants, schools, parks and downtown. The area is buffered from adjacent zones by alleys and streets. While not included in OP's recommendations, we believe adding Low Density Commercial striping to the High Density Residential area that covers the Wardman Park Marriott site on the FLUM would be an improvement. Any future residential development here would be enhanced by the inclusion of neighborhood serving first-floor retail that could allow for a grocery store, for example, which Woodley Park does not have.

#### **Van Ness and Connecticut Ave.**

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) recommendations from OP would allow more housing along the Connecticut Avenue corridor at several locations. The addition of housing in these areas as described below also offer the potential for more affordable housing as well. The additional densities called for may allow for the full menu of the City's land use tools, such as Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and finance tools such as the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), to be used. The areas recommended for up-FLUMing include the following (see FLUM map for details: <https://plandc.dc.gov/page/future-land-use-mapand-generalized-policy-map>)

Van Ness (2352.1, 2352.2, 180 and 1690). This area is also on both sides of Connecticut Avenue from approximately Upton Street north to Albemarle. A significant portion of the land is related to Howard University (east of Connecticut Ave and south of UDC) and UDC (mostly on the west side of Connecticut Ave) and the remainder of Connecticut Avenue up to Albemarle. Land use changes add residential uses at Low, Medium and High densities.



Forest Hills (5013). This area is also on both sides of Connecticut Avenue from 36th Street to Nebraska Avenue. Land use changes from Commercial Low Density to Commercial Medium Density and Residential Medium Density.

Chevy Chase (2238, 2382 and 9821). This area runs on both sides of Connecticut Avenue from Livingston Street to Chevy Chase Circle and includes the Public Library & Community Center. Land use changes include adding residential uses of Moderate densities

Each of these areas could provide both more housing and affordable housing, especially if developments come in at a scale to use the full range of the city's land use and finance tools.

**Amendment 26: 5000 & 5100 blocks of Connecticut Ave. (between Fessenden and Nebraska):**

Increased FLUM density designation from moderate or low to medium residential and commercial. The height that this change would allow is consistent with existing apartment buildings in the adjoining blocks. This area is on a major commercial and transit corridor, with bus service, a bike share station, and within walking distance to two metro stations. It has the potential to accommodate additional needed housing, including multi-family housing that would offer more housing options. Such development would support existing and added retail and restaurants. This will benefit the neighborhood, making it more vibrant and walkable. Currently, there are three gas stations located there and several empty commercial spaces. We believe that changing the FLUM in this manner will encourage better and more diverse commercial use of this area.

**Wisconsin Avenue: Macomb to Upton**

The amendments covering Cathedral Commons and McLean Gardens/City Ridge codify what has occurred and provide for infill density. Therefore:

Ward 3 Vision supports FLUM amendment 2803 which increases the density at the Cathedral Commons area from low density commercial to medium density residential and moderate density commercial. This amendment recognizes the changes that have taken place over the past decade and provides an opportunity for still more infill development at the site over time. Since the Cathedral Commons development has reinvigorated the Cleveland Park-Wisconsin Avenue commercial district and provided some mixed-use residential development, Ward 3 Vision agrees with this change on a well-served bus corridor that will allow further solidification of the area as a retail/commercial hub in its community.

Likewise Ward 3 Vision supports FLUM amendment 9814 which will achieve a similar purpose, building upon the initial City Ridge and McLean Gardens developments and ensuring further opportunities for new residents to live in the area. It changes the land use designation from moderate density residential to medium density residential and moderate density commercial.

**Wisconsin Avenue: Upton to Western**

Ward3Vision supports the proposed amendments to the FLUM to increase the density along Wisconsin Ave in the blocks immediately to the north and south of the Tenleytown metro stop. For the most part, the area is currently commercial uses (both retail and office with some residential flats above), institutional (AU Law School), public facilities (library, middle and high schools), religious and parkland with a large condominium building constructed above a historic commercial structure (Cityline Condominiums). We concur with all the FLUM recommendations put forth in the February 2020 [resolution by ANC 3E](#), yet do not make the amendments contingent on production of a small area plan. In addition, we support OP's amendment regarding parcels to the south of Tenley Circle, tracking #'s 2795 and 9823, to be mixed use commercial medium density and residential high density. Although not proposed earlier, we also support up-FLUMming the site of St. Anne's school to be medium density residential.

This concentration of development along the transit corridor is an ideal setting for increased density of both residential and commercial construction because it is already buffered from small-scaled single-family dwelling. In particular, the east side of Wisconsin between Albemarle and Brandywine has been designated as both commercial and residential high density which we concur is appropriate for the above stated reasons. We appreciate the designation of the entire Wisconsin Ave. corridor from Western Ave. to Massachusetts Ave. as a "Future Planning Analysis Area." We believe a more detailed analysis of potential land use and associated zoning categories would provide greater confidence for significant redevelopment of larger areas.



smart growth • vibrant neighborhoods

## **Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan (B23-736)**

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and Council members—

My name is Susan Kimmel and I am the chair of the Ward3Vision Steering Committee. We support smart growth, including walkable and inclusive neighborhoods. I want to voice our support of the proposed legislation to amend the Comprehensive Plan for the first time since 2011 and urge the Council to take swift action and vote it into law before the end of the year. The current pandemic increased the urgency because it has shown a spotlight on the inequalities across the city and we as residents of Ward 3 support the Comprehensive Plan amendments which will begin to redress exclusionary zoning and provide more affordable housing.

As Chairman Mendelson pointed out in a recent meeting, the Comprehensive Plan is aspirational. It paints a picture of how we want to see the city grow over the next 20 years. The proposed legislation includes hundreds of pages and multitudes of provisions but the main themes are clear: We want a city that is more inclusive, equitable, affordable, walkable, with community amenities; we want a city that is environmentally sustainable, and resilient to natural or man-made disasters including public health pandemics. The Office of Planning has done a terrific job proposing measures which advance these goals District-wide.

I would like to concentrate on land use, equity and affordable housing. Article after article point out that exclusionary zoning and other land use restrictions (such as historic preservation) drive up housing prices and rents. San Francisco is the poster child of exclusionary practices leading to extreme housing shortages, homelessness, exorbitant housing costs forcing outward migration and consequently longer commutes, more sprawl and environmental degradation. By contrast, Minneapolis and Portland have recently implemented more inclusionary zoning which allows up to three units to be located on land that had previously been zoned exclusively for single-family. There are lessons to be learned from each example.

The Office of Planning has taken a very wise middle course by recommending changes to the Future Land-Use Map which would allow parcels along major transit corridors to

be rezoned for higher density. As the Chairman has pointed out, this is not a mandate – there is no obligation to rezone. This is not self-actualizing – the rezoning doesn't happen automatically; each site would require approval by the Zoning Commission. But it is legally binding -- zoning cannot be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and more specifically the land use designation in the FLUM. More intense development will enable better use of scarce urban space for more housing and more residents are needed to support more and better retail and other amenities. It is worth noting that OP's proposal for Expanded Inclusionary Zoning will capture much of the increase in value from upzoning by requiring higher levels of affordable housing than would otherwise be required.

Ward3Vision applauds OP for lowering the walls of exclusionary zoning in Rock Creek West. By enabling modest increases in allowable density for residential use, more housing can be constructed along transit corridors. This increase in the housing supply will, over time, help reduce the upward pressure on rents throughout the District. And with inclusionary zoning requirements, it will enable the construction of more affordable housing. Expanded IZ will enable an even greater number -- up to 20% of the units.

Though we recognize that IZ units alone will not solve the affordable housing crisis, it is a beginning. Other programs, such as use of city-owned land, are additional tools proposed in the comp plan. Even then, the Comp Plan changes are necessary. For example, the proposed changes to the FLUM are needed to support an imaginative co-development of the Chevy Chase DC Community Center and Library with new affordable housing. But this is a chance to chip away at historic barriers and bring about change.

I don't want to harp on them, but there have been several missed opportunities along Wisconsin Ave.: mixed use of the Tenleytown library site with residential above and shared public facilities with Janney elementary school; Georgetown Day School's proposed mixed-use building between Davenport and 42<sup>nd</sup> St.; and a proposal for a modest, new residential building to replace the existing Fox News building. If the proposed FLUM had been in place, each of these sites would provide even more housing choices for singles and families, as well as contributing to the vitality of one of the Main Streets that make the District so livable and attractive in the first place..

Several years ago, when Ward3Vision conducted a charrette of the Tenleytown Metro station area, residents envisioned re-development of the block where the Whole Foods is located and imagined more homes mixed with shops and restaurants, perhaps some offices, and even recreational uses such as a skating rink. Charrette participants – our neighbors -- noted that the buffer provided by the schools and Fort Reno parkland, and the area's role as a transportation hub, provided the opportunity for a much more exciting and vibrant neighborhood center than what is there now. Let's pass this amended plan now so this kind of urban life can thrive.

As you know, there are now a number of projects across the District that are on hold waiting for passage of the Comp Plan before they can move through the review process with the Zoning Commission). Other developers are holding back projects awaiting the Council's action on the Comp Plan. Continued uncertainty has had a chilling effect on the construction of more affordable housing. As we have learned from the past, delay leads to missed opportunities.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and we understand that the Council is currently reviewing these proposed amendments, but it is important to note that OP has been through a thorough and impressively robust public engagement process. After over 4 years of discussion, hundreds of public meetings, thousands of amendments, and dialog with the ANC's, all the issues you are considering now have been vetted and for the most part endorsed by ANCs throughout the District. Public review and comment is baked into the amendments before you. Now is the time for action.

Ward3vision urges the Council to approve OP's proposed legislation immediately.

**From:** [Bob Ward](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Mendelson, Phil \(COUNCIL\)](#); [Bonds, Anita \(Council\)](#); [Grosso, David \(Council\)](#); [Silverman, Elissa \(Council\)](#); [White, Robert \(Council\)](#); [Cheh, Mary \(COUNCIL\)](#)  
**Subject:** CPSG Comp Plan Testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 9:58:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [CPSG FLUM Letter.pdf](#)

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Dear Chairman Mendelson,

Attached is the written testimony from the Cleveland Park Smart Growth Steering Committee supporting the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, with special emphasis on FLUM Amendment 2123 in Cleveland Park and the Future Planning Analysis Areas in Rock Creek West. We urge swift passage of the Plan.

Respectfully,

Bob Ward, Chair  
CPSG Steering Committee  
[cpsmartgrowth.com](http://cpsmartgrowth.com)



CLEVELAND PARK  
SMART GROWTH

November 10, 2020

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

The Steering Committee of Cleveland Park Smart Growth endorses the proposal by the Office of Planning to increase the density of the commercial area on Connecticut Avenue between Porter and Macomb Streets on the Future Land Use Map from Low Density Commercial to a mix of Moderate Density Commercial and High Density Residential (amendment 2123), and asks the Council to approve this change to the Comprehensive Plan.

Our steering committee also supports passing the amendments to the Generalized Policy Map creating two Future Planning Analysis Areas in the Rock Creek West Area along Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, especially where they include areas of Cleveland Park. We invite future focused planning to increase housing for a range of incomes along our transit corridors and to develop design guidelines, especially in the commercial area of our historic district, so that growth is both allowed and is architecturally compatible.

We have also reviewed the proposed Amendments to the Rock Creek West Element, the Housing Element, the Land Use Element, the Transportation Element and the Historic Preservation Element, and support the passage of these proposals. We believe the changes are forward-looking and envision growth that helps both the District and our area achieve key public policy goals while retaining protections for what we love about our city and neighborhood.

Last night we held an event for 92 area residents where we heard from Councilmember Cheh and representatives from the Office of Planning and the Historic Preservation Office. The meeting confirmed what many of us believed, which is this: wholesale maximum development of the commercial area in Cleveland Park is not likely given the constraints of our historic district. We should therefore allow the possibility of greater density and leave it to future plans from property owners and a robust community engagement to consider proposals that both add density and fit the context of the neighborhood's architecture.

There are many reasons why allowing the potential of high density residential and moderate density commercial in the Cleveland Park commercial area is a public policy we all should support. We have outlined several of these below.

### Revitalization

A benefit that is self-evident is the positive **economic impact** a greater density of residents and daytime foot traffic at the commercial area would have. As noted in the submission of amendment 2123, “The density that would once have sustained a vibrant neighborhood-serving commercial corridor no longer carries the same economic throughput for our brick and mortar stores.” It was also noted that businesses that closed in 2017, like Ripple and NamViet, said that customer traffic to their stores was down substantially. Adding more customers is not a cure-all to the neighborhood’s retail slump. However, the opportunity for place-making and the new managed Main Street, coupled with the prospect of respectful development increase the potential for revitalization significantly.

### Sustainability

High density boosts our efforts to combat **climate change**. Transportation is the single greatest contributor to carbon emissions in the United States. Adding housing virtually anywhere in D.C. for someone who works in D.C. or in nearby Metro-accessible areas, at any price point, is green. Living close to work, rather than in the suburbs, reduces vehicle miles traveled. Putting housing at a transit nexus like the Cleveland Park commercial area is *extremely green*. Locating housing where people can live car-free or car-lite is the best public policy, as people can walk to transit, shopping and entertainment.

### Equity in Growth

There is an **equity** benefit in adding more housing here. Since 2000, growth in other parts of the city has added pressure of displacement on low-income residents. Adding housing in Cleveland Park, where the amenities of good schools, parks, libraries and shops are in walking distance, is an issue of equity. The plan to update the Inclusionary Zoning requirements would come into play in our neighborhood, as would the encouragement of PUDs and the prioritization of affordable housing outlined in the Framework Element. Ward 3, Cleveland Park included, has a history of exclusion and now has a responsibility to share in the growth of our inclusive city.

### Design Review

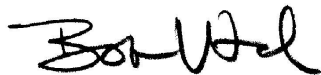
The entirety of the commercial area is included in the Cleveland Park Historic District. That will continue to be the case if the change to the FLUM is approved by the Council. The DC Historic Preservation Act requires any substantial physical changes, be they alterations or additions to contributing resources, or infill development, be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board for design compatibility with the commercial area of the historic district. Developments proposed in 2019 at 3432 and 3400 Connecticut Ave are among the first significant commercial



area changes since the historic district was formed over thirty years ago. Both were subjected to review and revision by the Historic Preservation office and HPRB, as would any future development.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that the council approve the Mayor's proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as quickly as possible. We are happy to discuss this with you and any Council Member or staff. Thank you for what you do for our City!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Ward", with a stylized, cursive script.

Bob Ward  
Chair, Steering Committee, CPSG

cc: Hon. Mary Cheh  
Hon. Anita Bonds  
Hon. David Grosso  
Hon. Elissa Silverman  
Hon. Robert White, Jr.

### **About CPSG**

Cleveland Park Smart Growth is a community association of over 500 Cleveland Park area residents who share an interest in promoting, sharing and discussing urbanist and smart growth issues in Washington D.C. with an emphasis on Cleveland Park. Our mission is to advance policies in Cleveland Park to ensure an economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, walkable and socially inclusive neighborhood. We do this through educating, organizing and advocating. Learn more at [cpsmartgrowth.com](http://cpsmartgrowth.com).

Name: Corey Holman, ANC Commissioner 6B06  
Bill: Bill B23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
Date: November 12, 2020

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Good morning Chairperson Mendelson and \_\_\_\_\_.

My name is Corey Holman, commissioner for SMD 6B06 and chair of ANC 6B's Planning and Zoning Committee. Though I am speaking as an individual today and my spoken and written testimony does not officially reflect the views of individual commissioners, I will note that ANC 6B submitted a formal resolution requesting passage of Bill B23-736 this council period and supporting the text and map changes made that directly impact our ANC.

For the last three-plus years, ANC 6B has participated in the process that has led to today. Commissioners and neighbors have spent untold hours discussing the current plan, suggesting changes, reviewing OP feedback, and on and on and on. In February, ANC 6B submitted our final comments to OP. Some of our suggested text and map changes were rejected. Some were accepted. All were addressed by OP both in writing and in followup meetings. Never before have I seen the amount and earnestness of opportunity given by an executive agency. This bill is ready and has been ready to move forward and I encourage you to markup and pass it as soon as possible.

I'll point out a couple of smaller items in my SMD that could be affected by unnecessary delay in adoption of this bill

- 1) The bill changes the FLUM and GPM for the "temporary" Southeast Boulevard stub. In next year's capital budget, DDOT is planning to include a request to spend federal highway dollars to widen this temporary road. We will of course oppose this funding and encourage you to as well, but it's important that opposition is based on inconsistency with the guiding land use document for the city as well as transportation and environmental guidance.
- 2) At some point soon, the City Administrator will advance a plan to move the MPD heliport next to Boathouse Row in my SMD. There is PDR-zoned land nearby there that is proposed to be changed to high density residential FLUM. And adjacent to that is a just approved PUD that desperately needed design guidelines from OP. The Comp Plan seeks to stop this haphazard planning and land use, including the area as a Planning Focus Area in the GPM.

Thank you and your and Council staff for creating these opportunities for discussion. You will hear a lot today and tomorrow. I wanted to make you aware of our experiences as an ANC through this process and stress that the Comp Plan changes affect not just zoning in Ward 3, but the entire city in ways large and small.

"We have to keep moving forward." Campaigning a couple years ago for ANC Commissioner, back when it was safe to mingle with new people, I remember speaking with someone who'd grown up on U Street. I only moved to the neighborhood in 2011. In just a few years, my beloved community had transformed -- many buildings towered over rowhouses; luxury apartments replaced a hot dog store. The process, I knew, had been ongoing for decades before I arrived.

I asked my neighbor, who'd been around for so many ups and downs, what she thought of all the change. Some called it gentrification. I won't forget her response: "We have to keep moving forward."

And that, I believe, is what we are called to do today. As we revise the District's Comprehensive Plan, we have a once-in-a-decade opportunity to decide how we will keep moving forward.

We must move forward to even greater inclusion, sustainability, and opportunity for all.

As ANC Commissioner, I am privileged to represent the area around 14th and U St NW. I truly believe that it is our nation's greatest neighborhood. I think most residents of DC would make the same claim. We live in a great city. People want to be here. But that means we must plan intentionally for the future we want to create.

I chaired ANC 1B's Comprehensive Plan Task Force, and we submitted detailed comments. Thank you for taking them into consideration. I am here today, not representing the Commission, to emphasize a simple point: we should pass the Comp. Plan with the Office of Planning's amendments intact.

In speaking with dozens of community members, across many public meetings we hosted, I heard many views. One thing I didn't hear was, we shouldn't revise this document -- or we should just hope things remain exactly as they are.

Perhaps that's because some of the city's most wonderful projects are right in my neighborhood. Portner Flats integrates affordable and market-rate housing along U Street. The renovated Grimke School will house an expanded African-American Civil War Museum, anchoring the cultural corridor envisioned by the Duke Plan.

The Comp. Plan must enable more of these projects, everywhere. It's a statement of principle: neighborhoods that have seen limited new development should grow, increasing in density to welcome new residents and businesses. We can't allow some neighborhoods to be "preserved" while others are the sole recipient of an international influx of capital. That approach risks destroying what makes our communities so great in the first place. And it impacts longtime District residents the most.

Let's invert our priorities. Focus on preserving and creating affordable housing. Grow our city - but especially in the wealthiest areas.

There will be ample opportunities for future public engagement, on individual projects. But we can leave that for the future. Now is the time to heed my neighbor's words. Keep moving DC forward. With OP's amendments, we will move towards the vibrant and inclusive future that our city deserves.

**From:** [Adam Kent](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** LISC Testimony for B23-736 Comprehensive Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2020 12:09:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020 LISC Testimony\\_Nov2020.pdf](#)

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Hi-

Please see LISC's testimony for tomorrow's hearing attached.

Thanks,  
Adam

**Adam Kent, Deputy Director**  
**LISC DC | Local Initiatives Support Corporation**  
**T 202.739.9283**  
**E [akent@lisc.org](mailto:akent@lisc.org)**  
**@LISC\_DC**  
**[www.lisc.org/dc](http://www.lisc.org/dc)**

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Committee of the Whole  
Bill B23-736 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
November 12, 2020

Adam Kent  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
1825 K Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20006  
[akent@lisc.org](mailto:akent@lisc.org)  
(202) 739-9283

Dear Chairman Mendelson, Members of the Committee, and Staff of the Committee:

My name is Adam Kent and I am a Ward 1 resident and the Deputy Director of the DC office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). **I am here today to urge the Council to approve and enact the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act in 2020.**

LISC is a national community development organization, with a flagship office in DC. Established in 1982, LISC works every day to help create healthy and resilient DC neighborhoods that are good places for low-and moderate-income families to live, work, raise children, and conduct business.

During our nearly 40 years in DC, we have seen our city change dramatically, going from a city beset by population loss and disinvestment to one that has become one of the most desirable places to live, with the growth to match. In some very meaningful ways, this change has benefited the residents living in some of the communities where we work: crime has dropped significantly; neighborhood parks, recreation centers, libraries, health clinics, and schools are new, frequently used, and state-of-the-art; commercial corridors are more vibrant.

However, over this same time period, we have witnessed an extreme loss in affordable housing, coupled with increased displacement pressures on many DC residents – particularly Black residents and residents of color, who have disproportionately borne the brunt of our city's inequitable growth. **We believe that this type of inequitable change is not inevitable.** It is, in part, a function of market forces acting within structures established by DC's current Comprehensive Plan.

To address these dramatic inequities, DC needs an updated Comprehensive Plan that accurately reflects our city's priorities for achieving greater racial equity and access to opportunity, housing affordability, public health, and resiliency. **We believe that the amendments considered by the Council today represent a critical step in that direction.**

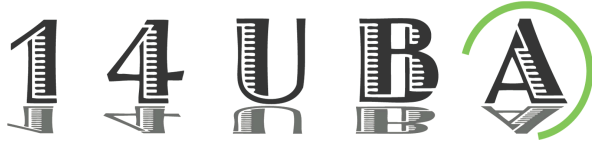
**The proposed amendments seek to combat the pernicious effects of past and current planning on Black and Brown residents that have contributed to dramatic wealth, health, and housing disparities we see today.** The amendments make specific and long-overdue steps to address the legacy of redlining and racial segregation by prioritizing the expansion of housing opportunities to all areas of DC, while also elevating anti-displacement principles such as one-for-one replacement and build first. In addition, amendments throughout the various Elements of the Comprehensive Plan – from Land Use to Arts and Culture – specifically elevate policies and actions focused on more equitable outcomes.

**The amendments presented by the Office of Planning represent four years of work where proposed changes were rigorously reviewed, refined, and improved upon by many DC residents with varying perspectives and needs.** Because of this unprecedented level of engagement, this document does not contain many surprises. Instead, it honors and expands upon the Framework Element that the Council has already adopted.

We acknowledge and support the Council's desire to review and affirm that the amendments reflect the community's values and will achieve our priorities across the District. We are confident this can be done in a timely fashion because the community has done so much work for so long already to submit a Comprehensive Plan worthy of adoption.

**We hope the Council will treat review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as it deserves – as a time-sensitive priority to help thousands of District residents, employers, nonprofits, and other stakeholders succeed and have more sustainable opportunities to live, work, and grow.** The time is now to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



14th St. Uptown Business Association

**Taalib-Din A. Uqdah, President / Executive Director**  
**14UBAdc@gmail.com**

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

**OF**

**TAALIB-DIN UQDAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**obo/ 14<sup>th</sup> Street Uptown Business Association**

5401-14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
[14UBAdc@gmail.com](mailto:14UBAdc@gmail.com)  
202-421-8945

**BEFORE**

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Chairman Phil Mendelson

**BILL 23-736 – THE “COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT  
ACT OF 2020”**

**ON**

**Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 10:00AM**  
**Live Via Zoom Video Conference**

Thank you Mr. Chair and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Taalib-Din Uqdah, founder and executive director of the 14<sup>th</sup> St. Uptown Business Association (1-4 UBA). We represent 13 owners and entities of 32 commercial properties, located in the 4600-4700 blocks of 14<sup>th</sup> St., between Buchanan and Decatur – across from the Northern Division Bus Garage.

1-4 UBA supports the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020, but with serious issues of inequity, integrity and fairness that we want the Mayor and current director of OP to address and honor. OP's director needs to keep and maintain the position of his agency's two previous directors and affect the zoning map change in our two blocks and the mayor's office needs to recommit itself to its affordable housing policy and not allow WMATA to redevelop a 4.5-acre site back into a diesel-fueled bus garage in a residential community, where there are alternatives.

In 2009, over the objections of OP and DMPED, 1-4 UBA, with the help of (then) Councilmember Muriel Bowser, was successful in having 14<sup>th</sup> St., from Spring Rd. to Longfellow, declared a Target Area that eventually led to a "Great Streets" designation and the creation of a Revitalization Small Area Plan for 14<sup>th</sup> St., approved by the Council in 2012.

Components of that plan, dubbed Node 2, recognized then that continuing a low density classification for our 32 commercially-zoned properties, was counterproductive to our city's revitalization efforts; that the key to our success could be found in a more moderate density classification – MU-4 – and we all agreed. The upgrade was more appropriate in both land use and zoning and that our two-blocks could remain competitive with other corridors along Kennedy St., 14<sup>th</sup> St. and the redevelopment of WMATA's Northern Division Bus Garage, but today that's not the case.



The Comp Plan's land use map reflects the moderate density classification we fought for – and that's good – we thank them for that, but now OP is waffling on affecting the change in the zoning map classification we need to move forward; it's now saying they can't see the justification for it. They can justify doing it for the McMillan Reservoir or Walter Reed projects, but can't find that same justification for a cadre of black and minority-owned commercial property owners like myself; not even after promising for over a decade to do so; there's no honor in that.

We ask that this Committee recognize our continuing efforts to improve our city and help the Mayor's office and OP to find the justification it needs to honor its commitment to the city and us. We thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today and would be glad to answer any concerns or questions you may have; thank you.

# # #



4000 Cathedral Ave., NW – Apt. 221B  
Washington, DC 20016  
Ph/Fax: 202-546-4536  
E-mail: [megmaguireconsultant@msn.com](mailto:megmaguireconsultant@msn.com)

**Testimony on**  
**B23-0736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020**  
Thursday, November 12, 2020

I am Meg Maguire, a resident of Ward 3. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on *Myths and Mirage of the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite*.

Enumerating the myriad mythologies driving these amendments is beyond the scope of my brief remarks, but here are three:

Myth #1: Citizens who file pesky land use lawsuits are to blame for lack of affordable housing and must be disempowered so that unfettered development can proceed. Really?? The Court of Appeals did not fault citizens for bringing these suits; rather, it rebuked the Zoning Commission for failure to justify project approvals. Yet the Office of Planning seeks a radical shift of power from residents to the Mayor and the unelected Zoning Commission by wholesale up-zoning throughout the city and by

**Emasculating the verbs!**

*protect* – a meaningful verb -- becomes *respect* (an attitude)

*retain* becomes *encourage*

*ensure* = *should*

*must* = *should*

*shall* = *should*

The city will be so busy respecting, encouraging and should-i-fying that city officials – especially the Zoning Commission – will be able to rubberstamp whatever development it wishes.

**A vote for these amendments is a vote to disempower the residents of the District of Columbia to have any meaningful role in planning.**

*Myth #2: The amendments will produce the affordable housing the city needs.*

In fact, the goal of 36,000 new units -- only a fraction of which are for those who need it most -- is dependent on massive market rate developments for trickle-down affordability benefits. The Council can transform housing mirage into housing reality by adopting the *Housing Justice Priorities for the DC Comprehensive Plan* that the DC Grassroots Planning Coalition will submit during this hearing.

*Myth #3: Digital billboards in Designated Entertainment Areas will enliven and animate our city.*

Buried deep within the Historic Preservation Element -- where it does not belong -- is a provision that will overturn the city's model law prohibiting construction of new billboards:

*Policy HP-1.6.5: Commercial Signage* is full of holes. Continuing to allow billboards in so-called "Designated Entertainment Areas" will open a floodgate of industry-sponsored sales pitches that billboards enhance economic vitality, a claim that has been refuted by the sad experience of cities around the world where no one wants or needs these light blasts when they are trying to work or sleep, mocking the benefits of much-needed mixed-use development. *Digital billboards belong inside ballparks, not in the public realm.*

Remember the Evans saga? The protests of Gallery Place apartment owners and office tenants who despised the direct and bounced billboard light they had to endure? And the long, drawn-out court order requiring Digi Media (now Lumen 8) to remove most of its illegally erected signs? These are but signs of more trouble to come.

Joni Mitchell said it all:

**Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got  
Till it's gone...**

*Yellow Taxi, 1970*

Thank you.

Suggested Changes to OP's Comprehensive Plan Housing Element Amendments (4/19)

DCGPC Blueline for Rent Control

*Attachment to Andrea Rosen's Testimony on B23-0736, 11/13/20*

**Key:**

<del>Consider</del>	OP's deletions
<u>Develop</u>	OP's additions
<del>Improve</del>	DCGPC's deletions of OP text
<u>Stabilize</u>	DCGPC's additions

**500.5e** By contrast, “market rate” housing is defined as housing with rents or sales prices that are allowed to change with market conditions, including increased demand. Some market rate housing may be naturally occurring affordable ~~housing that~~ moderate and some low-income households can afford. However, the supply of naturally occurring affordable units can be unstable due to potential pressure from both sides. With too little demand, decreasing rents are may be insufficient to cover maintenance and the units may fall into a state of disrepair and become vacant and underused. With too much demand, rents may be raised frequently and/or steeply, or the units are may be rehabbed into higher cost units. Rent-controlled apartments ~~are counted as~~ occupy a special position between “market rate” ~~“market rate”~~ and affordable units because while there are no occupancy restrictions by income, rents do not freely respond to market conditions. The District’s rent control law stipulates that rents on market rate apartments built prior to 1975 may rise only as fast as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for older adults and tenants with disabilities and the CPI plus two percent for everyone else.500.5e

500.47 ~~The city’s~~ Washington, DC’s housing stock is varied in type and size, with developments since 2006 shifting the makeup of the District’s housing. Table Figure 5.42 shows the number of units by type, year built, size, and vacancy rate and how these have changed over 17 years. The figure shows that owner/renter rates have fluctuated. In addition, Figure 5.2 shows that, despite a modest increase in the number of detached/attached single-family homes, which represent 75 percent of large units (three or more bedrooms), a shift toward multi-family units has been consistent. The shift is also visible in Figure 5.3 New Housing Units Authorized: 2000-2017.

Washington, DC’s housing stock is becoming both older and newer as pre-1939 buildings are being preserved and remodeled to have more units while post-World War II buildings are more often torn down and the sites redeveloped to add new, modern apartment buildings. The latter trend has contributed to the erosion of the District’s rent-stabilized housing stock. The rent-stabilization program covers only rental units permitted before 1976, and their number has been significantly reduced by demolition and replacement, and gut renovations, as well as by conversions from rental to condominium/cooperative ownership. Although the government has not yet done a definitive count of the number of rent-controlled units that exist, the Urban Institute estimated in 2015 that the number of rent-controlled units numbered 91,386 in 2014, down from 130,000 in 1985, when the modern rent-stabilization law was enacted.

Of the ~~city's 248,000~~ **281,000** occupied housing units in ~~2000~~ **2017**, ~~41~~ **42** percent were owner-occupied, and ~~59~~ **58** percent were renter-occupied. ~~Forty~~ **Thirty-seven** percent of the housing units in the ~~city~~ **District** are single-family units, and over ~~35~~ **34** percent of the housing stock was built before 1940. 500.47

500.69 ~~In the eight years since~~ Since the Comprehensive Plan was ~~last amended~~ **adopted in 2006**, ~~there has been a tremendous an ongoing~~ **the** increase in housing demand **and costs has been ongoing, affecting homeowners and renters alike. Demand and costs have been** driven by **a national recession and recovery**, demographic shifts, low interest rates, regional economic growth, falling crime rates, renewed confidence in District government, and improvements in public services. **Rising costs have accelerated since the recovery began in 2010, with the median sales price of single-family homes increasing 7.3 percent per year, condominiums increasing 2.8 percent per year<sup>i</sup>, and average rents increasing 2.9 percent per year between 2000 and 2017.<sup>ii</sup> Part of the increase in sales price is attributable to declining interest rates, which went from eight percent to below four percent between 2000 and 2017. Declining interest rates enabled a 37 percent increase in home buying purchasing power and contributed to rising prices.<sup>iii</sup> The increase in demand has propelled a steep upward spiral ~~an increase~~ in housing costs, ~~impacting affecting~~ renters and homeowners alike. **With higher prices came greater down payment and mortgage requirements, making it more difficult for renters to transition to homeownership. The actual reduction of the number of rent-controlled units, and the effective loss of stabilization through exploitation of loopholes in the rent-stabilization law have contributed to the District's profound loss of affordability to the 58 percent of households that rent homes.** 500.69**

500.16 Rents have also risen, making it more difficult for many to afford to live in the District. Between 2006 and 2017, at 3.4 percent per year, rents in Washington, DC rose faster than the MFI of the region, which grew by only 1.8 percent per year. Much of the increase in rents was due to new amenity-rich buildings that attracted higher income households to the District. However, even rents in buildings built prior to 2006 rose at a rate of 2.7 percent per year.<sup>vii</sup> As a result, between 2006 and 2017, nearly 18,300 fewer units affordable were available to households earning equal to or less than 60 percent of the MFI (See Figure 5.10 Change in Supply of Rental Units by Affordability). There are many reasons in addition to rising rents for the overall reduction in the number of lower cost units, including demolition of older buildings and conversion to condominiums, **which would have removed thousands of rent-controlled units from the affordable portfolio.** 500.16

503.4011 *Action H-1.1.B: Annual Housing Reports and Monitoring Efforts*  
~~Consider development of~~ **Develop** an ~~A~~ annual "State of ~~DC~~ **the District** Housing Report", which improves the quality of information on which to make housing policy decisions, ~~and/or~~ a Housing Oversight Board ~~comprised~~ **composed** of residents, for-profit, and non-profit developers that reports each year on the effectiveness and outcomes of the District's housing programs. **Include information on trends and needs, such as the availability and affordability of units by income, tenure, building type, number of bedrooms; and production patterns and capacity by Planning Area and other characteristics. Incorporate data collected by the Office of the Tenant Advocate on rent stabilized units. The report should also include a framework for evaluating progress toward measurable goals.** 503.4011

#### **510.3d Addressing Displacement in Washington, DC**

**Washington, DC has one of the strongest sets of anti-displacement programs in the country, which includes rent control, eviction protection, Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA), locally subsidized rents, tax assessment caps, and tax credits for low-income and older homeowners. For District residents to fully realize the benefits of these programs, rent control, which has lost an 40,000-50,000 units since 1985 (Urban Institute, 2011, 2015<sup>♥</sup>) must be expanded; and DOPA must be funded. 510.3d**

#### **504.28 Action H-1.2.H: Priority of Affordable Housing Goals**

**Prioritize public investment in the new construction of, or conversion to, affordable housing in Planning Areas with high housing costs and few affordable housing options. Operating from data to be collected by the Office of Tenant Advocate, exclude units covered by the rent-stabilization program from any conversion programs to avoid cannibalizing existing affordability and displacing one group to accommodate another. Consider land use, zoning, and financial incentives where the supply of affordable units is below a minimum of 15 percent of all units within each area. 504.28**

#### **509.5 510.5 Policy H-2.1.1: ~~Protecting~~ Conserving Affordable Rental Housing**

Recognize the importance of preserving rental housing affordability to the well-being of the District of Columbia and the diversity of its neighborhoods. Undertake programs to ~~protect~~ **preserve** the supply of subsidized rental units, **rent-controlled units**, and low-cost market rate units, **with an emphasis on preserving affordable units in high-cost or rapidly changing neighborhoods, where the opportunity for new affordable units is limited.** ~~509.5~~ **510.5**

#### **509.10 510.10 Policy H-2.1.6: Rent Control**

Maintain, **expand, and strengthen** rent control as a tool for ~~moderating~~ **preserving** the affordability of ~~older~~ rental properties and protecting ~~long-term~~ residents, especially ~~the elderly~~ **older adults, low-income households, and those with disabilities, from unpredictable and destabilizing rent increases.** In ~~considering~~ **acting on** future refinements improvements to the rent control program, the District should ~~be careful to determine~~ **focus primarily on** whether the proposed changes **will improve advance equity** effectiveness, fairness, **adherence to building codes**, and affordability, ~~without discouraging maintenance~~ and **encourage** preservation of rental **stabilized** housing units. **Rent control must not be restructured as a subsidized housing program, and units subject to rent stabilization should not be commandeered to fulfill the city's myriad affordable housing obligations.** ~~509.10~~ **510.10**

#### **510.18 Action H-2.1.F: Affordable Housing Preservation Unit**

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<sup>♥</sup> **The Urban Institute estimated in 2011 that 79,145 rent-controlled units remained in DC. Their 2015 study estimated 91,386 units were rent controlled. [Tatian and Williams, A Rent Control Report for the District of Columbia, June 17, 2011. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/rent-control-report-district-columbia> and Tatian et al, Affordable Housing Needs Assessment for the District of Columbia, Phase II, May 2015. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/affordable-housing-needs-assessment-district-columbia> ]**

Establish and maintain a division within District government to systematically and proactively work with tenants, owners of affordable housing, investors, their representatives, and others associated with real estate and housing advocacy in Washington, DC to establish relationships and gather intelligence to preserve affordable housing and expand future opportunities by converting naturally affordable unassisted units, [excluding units covered by the rent-stabilization program](#), to long-term dedicated affordable housing. 510.18

***518.19 Action H-4.3.D: Aging in Community***

Establish programs to facilitate low-income older renters aging in place. Examples include tenant-based vouchers or other rental assistance to older adults on fixed incomes or funds for renovation of multi-unit buildings, individual apartments, and single-family homes to create appropriate housing options for older adults to age in community. [The rent-control program facilitates renters aging in place; expansion of that program benefits any resident who needs to control housing costs, including those who may eventually be on fixed incomes.](#) 518.19

Testimony in Opposition to  
**B23-0736: “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020**  
Andrea Rosen, Ward 4 resident  
November 13, 2020

I’m a native Washingtonian living in Rock Creek West and a member of the DC Grassroots Planning Coalition (DCGPC), although I speak for myself. Thank you Chairman Mendelson for holding these hearings so residents can provide feedback about the Office of Planning’s wide-ranging and profound alterations to the Comprehensive Plan.

**What’s Envisioned for My Neighborhood?**

Before the full Council votes on Bill 23-736, Ward Councilmembers must familiarize themselves with what OP has in mind for their Wards (via the Maps, and Land Use and Area Elements) – in order to then engage with their constituents about these changes, at properly noticed, well-publicized, participatory meetings. I’m well aware that OP held Ward-level meetings and conducted surveys, etc., but these were scripted, top-down affairs heavy on *Smart Growth™ = Affordable Housing* talking points, and nonexistent on community-specific detail. The only informative engagement around changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), **ground zero** of OP’s amendments, was done at roundtables held by the DCGPC last Fall in each planning area of the city. Which means communities have been circumvented with regard to input – even though ***the changes to zone definitions already passed in the Framework, text changes proposed in the body of the Plan, and changes to the Maps, harm residents’ ability to leverage benefits through Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).***

**Orwellian Amendments**

Language matters, and in its amendments, the Office of Planning has replaced what little proscriptive language exists in the current Plan with precatory language. It has manipulated the language to at once give the Zoning Commission free reign **and** eliminate all solid footing by which residents can appeal Zoning approvals. This is a 180-degree flip from what most witnesses asked for when they testified before the Committee of the Whole about the Framework in March 2018.

Despite its PR, OP betrays its lack of seriousness about meeting the needs of housing-burdened residents and the un-housed when it removes all specificity in the Plan regarding levels of affordability, from public housing to workforce housing, treating affordability as a monolith. This is important because the Framework makes “affordable housing” pre-eminent among goals, so sweeping aside competing interests can be justified even for projects that provide only a small amount of tiny units for households earning 80 percent Area Median Family Income, well above DC’s median.

Except in Rock Creek East (Ward 4), references to neighborhood character are banished, never mind that people all over DC cherish their own neighborhoods and the character of other neighborhoods, too — there’s a reason that many residents proclaim love for this city, and that people with means like Greater Greater Washington’s founder, David Alpert, live in Historic Districts. OP ensures that the built environment, containing our personal and the larger culture’s histories, is to be “respected” only until the front-loader rips it to shreds.



The Plan's reporting obligations, by which Council could exercise oversight if they were observed, have been scratched. Nods to exploring the use of alternative financing structures for affordable housing, like land trusts and limited-equity co-ops, have been archived. Anything that doesn't fit the "just build it" narrative is expunged.

### **Up-FLUMING: Density For Everything That Ails Us**

Increasing density is portrayed as the only mechanism to attain affordability and is thus offered as the rationale for changes running through the Plan. Yet we don't see affordability resulting from the significant amount of new, denser construction on the ground, despite the fact that some of it is uninhabited (see The Wharf at night), and housing providers report they have so many vacancies, they're offering two months' free rent to entice tenants.

OP has it backwards, for as Jane Jacobs observed in *The Death and Life of the Great American City*, neighborhoods need to retain old building stock to ensure that there are affordable homes and commercial spaces, since **new construction is always more expensive**. Indeed the very up-FLUMing of land immediately raises its market value. The real purpose of the increases in density proposed through amendments to the FLUM is to enable new construction affordable to the deep-pocketed, with a smidgeon of affordability required by Inclusionary Zoning. Big new projects displace people and individually owned small businesses, and they cannot afford to return. Current residents are supposed to take solace from the fact that their homes and neighborhoods are being rendered **into** something else, very likely **for** someone else, in the name of equity — although there is no language to guarantee equity. The dynamic reminds me of the 1960s fight against "White Men's Highways Through Black Men's Homes." "Equitable" is Greater Greater Washington's new "affordable," which itself was the new "green."

Moreover, up-FLUMing is not the result of actual planning — let alone **community-led** planning (which is desirable in a democracy). Serving on the Comprehensive Plan Task Force of Chevy Chase's ANC 3/4G last winter, I learned that the Office of Planning up-FLUM the blocks just south of Chevy Chase Circle along upper Connecticut Avenue in response to requests for more density submitted by property owners for particular blocks and lots. Here and there, OP at its discretion smoothed out the mapping to include intervening lots in the up-FLUMING. However, when asked why they ignored similar blocks just south of the up-FLUM'd stretch, OP replied that no one had submitted requests for more density on those blocks. No thought was given to the fate of the small businesses that inhabit the existing mostly two-story buildings, and the facts that the area is a successful Main Street as is and an exemplary gateway to the District.

Meanwhile, across town in Ivy City, OP granted ProFish's request to up-FLUM the historic Crummell School site as well as two adjoining properties from Production & Technical Employment (PROTECH) to mixed-use Residential Medium Density & PROTECH. When ProFish makes good on those FLUM changes, the development will encompass an entire city block, towering above two- and three-story buildings typical in the community.<sup>1</sup> Approval of these FLUM changes will have the effect of cutting the community and ANC out of any

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<sup>1</sup> The Crummell School site has never been "surplused" and disposed of, nor has it gone through the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) or Zoning processes. Perhaps the developer was waiting to up-FLUM first.

chance of negotiating community benefits, including additional affordability beyond what IZ requires. If the administration were serious about pressing the development industry for greater affordability, it would down-FLUM all over the city, thereby exerting pressure on developers to provide significantly more affordability for greater density.

Another rationale for up-FLUMing with a broad brush is that more housing is needed to accommodate the continuous influx of new residents. But statistics published by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) show in-migration has declined every year since 2012, with the result that net growth in the adult population was under 400 in 2019. Change-of-address notices filed with the Post Office between February and July 2020 indicate a net 15,000 people departed the city, almost three times as many moves out of DC as during the same period in 2019.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps these were temporary pandemic-triggered moves, but maybe we have yet to see the swell of out-migration when more people realize that working from home means home can be anywhere.

I'm not a planner, but it seems that when it comes to meeting the range of affordable housing needs, actual planning would (1) take stock of what size units are needed for households at various income levels, and (2) craft a nuanced plan for fulfilling those needs. The city would start with its portfolio of land and use alternate financing structures to develop housing for residents with lower incomes. But the amended Comp Plan de-prioritizes affordable housing by making it incidental to market projects and puts the responsibility for the whole effort in the hands of private enterprise. Deeply affordable housing, i.e., public housing, won't be touched by the market--and is hardly touched by the Plan.

#### **COVID19 – Probably Not the Last Pandemic**

Before the Council gives license to developers, through the Comp Plan's Land Use Element and Maps, to rebuild the city, it should give much greater thought to the repercussions from the COVID19 pandemic than OP has done in its amended Plan. Studios and one-bedroom apartments are the unit sizes of choice for new development, but their inhabitants have found them much less desirable during the pandemic than when they could spend hours at cafes, restaurants, and bars. Parents find schooling children while working from home requires additional space. Homes with outdoor space has never seemed so necessary by those fortunate to live in them. (Who would live in a micro-unit under ground now?)

The journal *Nature* just published a study that used mobility data tracked between March and May through the cell phones of 98 million Americans living in 57,000 census tracts in ten metro areas, including Washington, to determine what locales contributed most significantly to COVID19 infections. According to the *Washington Post*'s coverage of the study,

The study discerned another pattern: Lower-income people, many of them essential workers, were less able to reduce their mobility during shutdowns and more likely to be exposed to crowded venues. Within low-income neighborhoods, with higher percentages of residents who are people of color, more people would be infected, which mirrors real-life patterns of transmission.

This study suggested a grocery store would be twice as dangerous for a person in a low-income neighborhood as a person in a high-income one. The authors hypothesized that

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<sup>2</sup> "A Net 15,000 People Moved Out of DC During the First Part of 2020," *Washingtonian*, October 13, 2020

this was because those stores had nearly 60 percent more visitors per square foot per hour, and they shopped there longer on average.<sup>3</sup>

Have OP's amendments addressed the downside of density and the serious consequences of allowing neighborhoods to continue resource-poor? Or the importance of access to open green space for all residents, particularly those living in dense environments?

### **Rent Stabilization**

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan must articulate the goals of (1) expanding the number of rent-stabilized units, including extending coverage to buildings built after 1975; and (2) strengthening the law to close loopholes that have led to continuous erosion in the number of housing units and exorbitant rental increases in units subject to rent stabilization. Additionally, the Housing Element must mandate adherence by housing providers to DC's housing habitability laws. Finally, the Element should prohibit any District action that would siphon off rent-controlled inventory into other affordable housing programs, such as Section 8 voucher programs and Inclusionary Zoning, or use rent control as a substitute for preserving public housing. I attach a "blue line" of changes that the DC Grassroots Planning Coalition recommends for strengthening the rent control language in the Plan.

### **Whither Single-Family Zoning?**

OP commissioned a study of the effectiveness of eliminating single-family zoning in DC for achieving affordable housing, an as-yet unproven tactic embraced by Minneapolis and Oregon. In its RF-1 districts, DC offers a wealth of examples of such redevelopment already. Two follow.



Single-family home at 4309 Kansas Ave, NW (Petworth) in 2018; 4309-4311 Kansas Ave., NW, in November 2020

The lots at 4309/4311 Kansas Avenue are zoned RF-1, which limits dwelling units to two, unless the structure existed prior to 1958, in which case more than two are allowed. The 5-bedroom, 3-bath single-family home at 4309 was built in 1897. It sold in 2018 for \$899,900. A four-unit condominium replaced the single-family home in 2020. Sotheby's recently held open houses for two units, each with 3-bedroom, 2.5 baths, listed at \$850,000 and \$925,000.

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<sup>3</sup> "These venues are high-risk areas for spreading the coronavirus, model suggests," *Washington Post*, 11/10/20



Who wore it better? 930 Madison St., NW (variously called Brightwood Park and 16<sup>th</sup> Street Heights) in 2004 and 2020

930 Madison St., NW, built in 1908, was a 3-bedroom, 1-bath single-family home until its sale in 2016 for \$256,500. It was subsequently remade into a two-unit condominium. The units, each with four bedrooms, 3.5 baths, sold for \$759,000 and \$695,000 (reduced) this Fall.

Unlike when people buy houses to live in, developers who insert themselves in the turnover of land does so for the purpose of extracting profit (so-called highest best use). Consequently, prices go up.

11/12/20 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow  
on B 23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020

I, Barbara Kahlow, live at 800 25<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. in the Foggy Bottom-West End part of Ward 2. Today, I am representing the West End Citizens Association (WECA), one of the oldest citizens associations in DC (we began in 1910). The WECA is primarily interested in maintaining the quality of life for the existing residential community in Foggy Bottom-West End.

I am testifying in opposition to B23-736, a proposed bill to amend the DC Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). On March 20, 2018, I testified before the Council on behalf of the WECA in opposition to B22-663, which is now the first/Framework Chapter of the proposed new Comp Plan. Today, I will discuss objections to: (a) widespread upzoning to allow out-of-scale development projects which are incompatible with existing low-density residential zoning; (b) 3-fold expansion of the downtown (including into part of Foggy Bottom-West End) at the cost of environmental protection analyses and affordable housing which should be in all parts of DC; and (c) protection of Federal-DC land in Foggy Bottom which was made and then retained as permanent parkland in each past Comp Plan since 1994.

Before I discuss these three objections, I want to note that, on April 23, 2020, the Washington Business Journal reported that only 16% of the community's proposed changes were adopted by the Office of Planning (OP) in its bill submitted that day to the Council. That is astonishing and justifies the Council's not rubber-stamping B23-736 without making very much needed changes.

Widespread Upzoning to Avoid Possible Lawsuits and Change Neighborhood Character

As I testified in March 2018, in late 2010 (i.e., 10 years ago), a **Ward 5** ANC Commissioner asked me to help oppose a proposed clearly out-of-scale Planned Unit Development (PUD) project in Brookland for 901 Monroe Street (the Colonel Brooks site). The 200-Footers filed three DC Court of Appeals cases, resulting in remands and finally a May 2016 full repeal of the Zoning Commission PUD Order. The repeal was largely because the proposed development was clearly inconsistent with the Comp Plan's Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

The Comp Plan bill before you today would use unprofessional spot-zoning to upzone this largely low-density residential site<sup>1</sup> and to upzone many other sites across DC in a revised FLUM. Upzoning would permanently change the residential character of many neighborhoods. In fact, a recent (10/27/20) Bisnow article<sup>2</sup> admitted for the 901 Monroe Street site, "The developer is now waiting for the new Comprehensive Plan before restarting the process Menkiti Group CEO Bo Menkiti said." Would widespread upzoning be fair to long-term residents in many low-density residential communities across DC?

Expansion of Downtown with Exemption from Key Protections

In the WECA's December 12, 2019 letter commenting on OP's full Draft Comp Plan, the WECA objected (comment #1348) to OP's essentially redefining "Downtown" and "Central Area" into a 3-fold expansion (including into part of Foggy Bottom-West End) of the Federal statutorily-defined Central Employment Area (CEA). The Comp Plan bill before you today

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<sup>1</sup> Map Amendment #1866 and Text Amendments #1882 & #1887 for 901 Monroe Street NE (Square 3829).

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/economic-development/thousands-of-dc-housing-units-waiting-for-new-comprehensive-plan-as-council-considers-punting-to-2021-106480?utm\\_medium=email\\_share&utm\\_source=website](https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/economic-development/thousands-of-dc-housing-units-waiting-for-new-comprehensive-plan-as-council-considers-punting-to-2021-106480?utm_medium=email_share&utm_source=website).



would exclude this larger CEA area from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-required environmental impact analyses (20 DCMR § 7202.1(g)) and we understand it would also exclude the expanded area from the desirable Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) regulatory requirements (11 DCMR § C1000 et seq.). We hope that the Council wants more, not less, affordable housing and to be located everywhere in DC, including downtown. **The WECA recommends that the Council add** an applicability of IZ requirement to the entire area. *[ANC-2A also submitted to OP a 2/14/20 resolution on this.]* In addition, **the WECA recommends that the Council delete** “the CEA may include additional land” in renumbered §305.7, Policy LU-1.2.2.

#### Threat to Permanent Foggy Bottom Parkland

In the WECA’s December 2019 comment letter, WECA asked (comment #2520) for retaining current law which, since 1994, has defined the publicly-owned Federal and DC land<sup>3</sup> between M Street and Virginia Avenue and between 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets as permanent parkland and which specifies that this land shall not be used for development. The WECA is opposed to OP’s revision to current law in §2115.10 (renumbered as §2115.11), Policy NNW-2.5.4, West End/Foggy Bottom Parkland by removing the protective provision that the parkland “shall be retained as parkland and shall not be used for development or highways.” This is flatly unacceptable!

The WECA also opposes OP’s addition to this subsection that the parkland shall be “part of a larger study on open space accessibility, transportation infrastructure reconfiguration, urban fabric reconnectivity for Foggy Bottom” and also recommends removal in its entirety of OP’s new §2115.12, Policy NNW-2.5.5, Study Potential for Removing Highway Infrastructure in Foggy Bottom,” and new §2115.15, Action NNW-2.5.C, “Foggy Bottom River, Park, and Cultural Access Study.” **The WECA strongly recommends that the Council retain** the current statutory language in its entirety which has protected this Federal and DC parkland since 1994 **and delete all of OP’s proposed drastic and impractical changes** in §§2115.11, 2115.12 and 2115.15. The Foggy Bottom-West End community, especially the surrounding community, is united in its opposition to any new development in this permanent parkland area. Is OP as out-of-touch with the will of other long-established residential communities?

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

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<sup>3</sup> The permanent parkland area is complicated and includes several Squares. For example, 2 of them are: (a) Square 0001 with 6 lots - 2 federally-owned (Lots 0843 & 0848), 3 DC-owned (Lots 0847, 0849 & 0850), & 1 with unknown ownership (Lot 0840); and (b) Square 0004W which is all federally-owned except 1 DC-owned lot (Lot 0811).



**Testimony of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City on B23-0736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020, virtual hearing on Thursday, November 12, 2020, 10am**

I am Kirby Vining, Chair of the Committee of 100, presenting testimony on behalf of the Committee of 100. Today in the three minutes provided me I will point out main points we suggest you change in the Amended Comprehensive Plan, to be followed up by much lengthier comments on many more specific policies and actions in the draft Plan that we will submit later.

We have argued that this amended Plan is so flawed that it should be sent back to the Office of Planning. But we are also aware that if it were sent back, the Office of Planning is under strict instructions to support the Mayor's Housing Initiative and might return a version even worse than this. Thus the importance of Council consideration of the Plan as presented. The Council is, according to law, the ultimate arbiter of this Plan.

We see extensive changes in the proposed amended Plan made to accommodate the Mayor's Housing Initiative and question how much of any Plan should be changed to accommodate the administrative wishes of any one particular administration. We also argue that the amended Plan has been skewed by the use of 2017 census statistics, statistics from a time when our population growth was still relatively robust. Not only is population increase trending downward, it may have gone negative during the current pandemic and it was in any event heading in that direction even before the pandemic. Yet the projections and trends behind proposed changes to the Plan ignore all that entirely.

Below are examples of key points we recommend the Council look at before we submit more extensive comments on policies and actions for Council consideration:

- The Amended Plan is littered with changes that specifically address the Mayor's Housing Initiative call for 36,000 housing units to be created by 2025, at the expense of existing prudent planning language which in most cases should be restored.
- To support the 36,000 unit initiative, demographic figures from 2017 are cited throughout the amended Plan. The Comprehensive Plan process mandates that the Plan be updated periodically to "reflect updated data and analysis of forces driving change and growth projections," among other things. While the Office of the Chief Financial Officer has published information in a 2019 report showing that the District's population growth peaked in 2013 and has been falling since, resulting in net in-migration in 2019 of only 398 persons(!), these numbers are nowhere to be found in the Amended Plan<sup>1</sup>. It appears that these current updated figures were avoided because they do not support the alleged need for 36,000 additional housing units. We question the extent to which the basic Plan for our city should be bent to a specific Mayor's specific policy agenda.

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<sup>1</sup>  
[https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/DC%20Economic%20and%20Revenue%20Trend%20Report\\_January%202020.pdf](https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/DC%20Economic%20and%20Revenue%20Trend%20Report_January%202020.pdf) See Migration and Population Appendix, page 23, for figures and charts showing this figure of net in-migration of 398 persons in 2019. No more recent data is available from the OCFO.

- Many specific terms in the Plan have been changed to weaken the protections of both the character of our existing neighborhoods and the image of the city itself. Reference to it is proposed for removal, for example, in Action LU-1.1: “Neighborhood character is no longer to be “protected” but is now to be “respected,” whatever that means, as in Policy LU-2.1.3 and elsewhere, and the term is eliminated entirely in Policy LU-2.3.4 and elsewhere. Is this antecedent to changing the name of one of our boards to the *Historic Respect Review Board*? The imperative “must” has been weakened to “should” five times in the Land Use Element, first at 305.2, and three times in the Housing Element. “Ensure” is likewise changed to “should” several times, including at LU-2.3.3. “Ensure” has a common and defensible meaning, but “should” is arguably not enforceable. In LU-2.3.3 “should” is now accompanied by a new term, “buffer,” whatever that means. If these topics are policy, why weaken the language to unenforceability? How is a citizen to seek implementation of the weaker words such as “respect” and “should”? These assaults on citizen involvement with the planning process follow on several deliberate weakenings of language in the Framework Element, such as the insidious insertion of “and other zones may apply” in the descriptions of all residential and commercial property types. Strong verbs are needed to assert mandatory compliance where relevant, such as extend rent control; require action on maintenance, preservation and redevelopment of public housing; and mandate specific goals for supportive housing. The single mention of the word “viewshed,” in the existing Urban Design Element at 903.7, has been removed. Why?
- Given that our Home Rule Charter explicitly states that the Council is prohibited from making any changes to the Height of Buildings Act of 1910, references in the amended Plan to considering this are out of place and should be eliminated. The Housing Element, Action H.1.1.D, explicitly encourages this and it should have no place here.
- Most useful language concerning the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans and the 1910 Height of Buildings Act has been moved to the Urban Design Element, which is a question in itself, but perhaps more importantly: do the HPRB and HPO staff know to find it there, language that would seem to find a natural home in the Historic Preservation Element?
- Housing figures that guide the Housing Element, paragraphs 500.6 – 500.8, cover only the period up to 2017 and thus do not indicate that in-migration growth is flat or negative. These figures, and policies and actions based on them, must be revised to reflect a very different trend we’re experiencing now. The ‘increase in demand’ so frequently cited is just not the case now.

In the appendix to this testimony please find more specific examples of the above. We will provide much more detailed material to the Council before the close of the record.

Thank you.

(signed)  
Kirby Vining  
Chair  
Committee of 100 on the Federal City



## Appendix

### Key examples of changes and deletions to the Plan in support of our remarks:

~~309.8~~310.10 ***Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods***  
Recognize the importance of balancing goals to increase the housing supply, including affordable units, and expand neighborhood commerce with parallel goals to ~~protect~~respect neighborhood character, preserve historic resources, and restore the environment. The overarching goal to “create ~~successful~~ vibrant neighborhoods” in all parts of the ~~city~~ District requires an emphasis on ~~conservation~~conserving units and character in some neighborhoods and revitalization in others, although all neighborhoods have a role to play in helping to meet broader District-wide needs, such as affordable housing, public facilities, and more. ~~309.8~~310.10

***Comment:*** *Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods.* The goal to protect neighborhood character should not conflict with providing affordable housing so the replacement of protect with respect, which is a meaningless concept, should be deleted. This section should be premised on balancing goals to increase the supply of affordable housing, which should be the expressed housing priority throughout these amendments. Similarly, the original language using the *General Policy Map designation of conservation to distinguish neighborhoods that don’t need revitalization should be restored.* Conservation has a larger meaning and distinguishes neighborhoods that don’t need the level of government resources that neighborhoods identified for revitalization need. The amendments make a clear statement at the beginning of the Land Use Element that a major goal is the creation and preservation of affordable housing. It should not be necessary to interject phrases to reiterate the overarching goal.

~~312.10~~313.14 ***Policy LU-2.4.6: Scale and Design of New Commercial Uses***  
Develop ~~Ensure that~~ new uses within commercial districts ~~are developed~~ at a height, mass, scale, and design that is appropriate for a growing, densifying Washington, DC, ~~and that is compatible~~ with surrounding areas. ~~312.10~~313.14

***Comment:*** *Policy LU-2.4.6: Scale and Design of New Commercial Uses.* This section includes amendments that reframe the intent of the policy from ensuring compatible height, mass, scale, and design to developing at a height, mass, scale and design that reflects a growing, densifying city...and secondarily is compatible with the adjacent neighborhood. The amendment curbs dissent when a neighborhood finds that a development proposal overwhelms the development pattern in a neighborhood. The amendment says clearly that any intensity of development will be acceptable when growth is invoked. This is contrary to decades of Land Use Element policies that promote neighborhood engagement and the goal of compatible development.

~~304.16~~305.20 ***Action LU-1-~~1.2~~C: Development of Air Rights***

Analyze the unique characteristics of the air rights development sites within Washington, DC the District. Development sites should address the growing need for housing, and especially affordable housing, reconnect the L'Enfant grid, and enhance mobility. ~~Determine appropriate zoning and means of measuring height for each unique site consistent with the Height Act, taking into consideration the ability to utilize zone densities, the size of the site, and the relationship of the potential development to the existing character of the surrounding areas.~~ ~~304.16~~305.20

***Comment:*** Deleted reference to 'consistent with the Height Act' should be reinstated.

~~309.8~~310.10 ***Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods***

Recognize the importance of balancing goals to increase the housing supply, including affordable units, and expand neighborhood commerce with parallel goals to ~~protect~~respect neighborhood character, preserve historic resources, and restore the environment. The overarching goal to “create ~~successful~~ vibrant neighborhoods” in all parts of the city District requires an emphasis on ~~conservation~~conserving units and character in some neighborhoods and revitalization in others, although all neighborhoods have a role to play in helping to meet broader District-wide needs, such as affordable housing, public facilities, and more. ~~309.8~~310.10

***Comment:*** Protecting neighborhood character should be allowed to stand.  
“Respect” has no legal meaning.

~~903.10~~ ***Policy UD-1.1.4: Height Act of 1910***

~~Protect the civic and historical character of the city, particularly the “horizontal” urban quality of Central Washington, by limiting building heights in accordance with the Height Act of 1910. Basic principles of the Height Act are shown in Figure 9.4.~~ ~~903.10~~

***Comment:*** Restore reference to limiting building heights in accordance with the Height Act.

921.4 ***Policy UD-4.3.1: Recognize the Legacy of the Height Act***

Utilize the basic principles for regulating building height by street width in the Height of Buildings Act of 1910 to guide the redevelopment of corridors and new large site developments, continuing Washington, DC’s historic design tradition of well-proportioned streets and consistent building height (see Figure 9.22). Examine opportunities where enabling buildings to exceed zoning height restrictions can encourage better site massing and architectural design. 921.4

***Comment:*** “Examining opportunities” to circumvent the Height Act has no place here.

311.5312.5

***Policy LU-2.3.3: Buffering Requirements***

**Buffer** ~~Ensure that~~ new commercial development adjacent to lower-density residential areas ~~provides effective physical buffers~~ to avoid adverse effects. Buffers may include ~~larger~~ setbacks, landscaping, fencing, screening, height ~~step-downs~~ ~~step-downs~~, and other architectural and site-planning measures that avoid potential conflicts. 311.5312.5

*Comment:* Replacing “Ensure” that neighborhoods avoid adverse impacts of commercial development should be left intact. What does “buffer” mean?

503.13

***Action H.1.1.D: Research New Ways to Expand Housing***

**Continue research to expand market rate and affordable housing opportunities in Washington, DC, such as expanding existing zoning tools and requirements. Consider a broad range of options to address housing constraints, which could include updating the Height Act of 1910 (a federal law) outside of the L’Enfant Plan area, if it can promote housing production.**  
503.13

*Comment:* Explicit challenge to the Height Act is out of place here in the Housing Element.

504.67

***Policy H-1.2.1: Affordable Housing Production as a Civic Priority***

Establish the production **and preservation of affordable housing** ~~for low and moderate income households~~ as a major civic priority, to be supported through public programs that stimulate affordable housing production and rehabilitation

*Comment:* Unless the words “for low and moderate income households” are restored, Our housing program approvals will continue to produce housing primarily at the 80% AMI level. Absolutely must restore this language.

504.14

***Policy H-1.2.7: Density Bonuses for Affordable Housing***

Provide zoning incentives, **such as through the PUD process,** to developers proposing to build ~~low-and-moderate-income~~ **a substantial amount of affordable housing.** ~~Affordable housing above and beyond any underlying requirement. The affordable housing proffered~~ shall be considered a **high priority** public benefit for the purposes of granting density bonuses ~~when new development is proposed,~~ **especially when the proposal expands the inclusiveness of high-cost areas by adding affordable housing. When density bonuses are granted, flexibility in development standards should be considered to minimize impacts on contributing features and the character of the neighborhood** ~~Density bonuses should be granted in historic districts only when the effect of such increased density does not significantly undermine the character of the neighborhood.~~ 504.14

*Comment:* Same as above: unless the original language is restored, this language Will be used to encourage more 80% AMI housing in government programs.

**Policy H-1.1.6: Housing in ~~the~~ Central ~~City~~ Washington**

Absorb a substantial component of the demand for new high-density housing in ~~the~~ ~~Ccentral~~ Central Washington, ~~DC~~ **Planning Area** and along the Anacostia River. Absorbing the demand for higher-density **housing** within these areas is an effective way to meet housing demands, **maximize infrastructure and proximity to jobs,** create mixed-use areas, and ~~conserve~~ **minimize the cost pressure on existing** ~~single-family~~ residential neighborhoods throughout the ~~city~~ **District. Market rate and affordable** ~~Mixed~~ **mixed-income,** higher-density downtown housing also provides the opportunity to create vibrant street life, and to support the restaurants, retail, entertainment, and other amenities ~~that are~~ **desired and needed** in the heart of ~~the city~~ **Washington, DC.** 503.78

*Comment: The Central Planning Area has miraculously crept into Anacostia and this policy would have a huge accelerating impact on displacement and gentrification in an area that is already having a very difficult time absorbing it. The developments at St. Elizabeth's, east and west, are already threatening to overheat an already precarious neighborhood in the Barry Farm area.*

**From:** [Dennis Williams](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** TNA Testimony on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
**Date:** Friday, November 6, 2020 4:44:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [TNA TESTIMONY ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT ACT OF 2020.pdf](#)

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To DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson

Dear Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association (TNA), I am submitting Testimony on the Comprehensive Plan Act of 2020 ( Bill 23-726) for presentation at the public hearing before the Committee of the Whole on Thursday, November 12, 2020. The Testimony follows immediately below. For your convenience, I am also attaching at the end of the email a pdf version of the same Testimony.

Sincerely,  
Dennis Williams  
Treasurer and Member of the Board of Directors  
Tenleytown Neighbors Association

#### TENLEYTOWN NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION TESTIMONY ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT ACT OF 2020

Tenleytown Neighbors Association (TNA) urges the DC Council to reject Bill 23-726 in light of new data challenging the Plan's outdated and overly optimistic population estimates and the Plan's failure to assess the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the District's future.

The Framework Element enacted by the City Council in February 2020 was several years in the making. Because of this lengthy production time, the Element relies on population data through 2017 in determining its socio-economic forecasts. From the perspective of 2017, the Element concludes: "Rapid growth in population and jobs has made the District one of the fastest growing large cities in the United States..." (202.1). Indeed, the Element projects DC population to reach 842,000 in 2030, an increase of 15% over 2020. (217.2)

Reflecting this upbeat assessment of growth in the District, Bill 23-726 includes 21 amendments to the Future Land Use Map for Upper Wisconsin Avenue where our members live. If approved, all but one of these amendments would encourage developers to invest in high-rise, high-density developments along Wisconsin Avenue from Friendship Heights to Tenleytown.

More recent analyses suggest that such high-density development may be both risky and unwise. In January 2020, the District's Chief Financial Officer reported that net migration into DC has been declining for the last 7 years from over 10,700 in 2012 to 400 in 2019. As a result,



the total DC population in 2019 amounted to less than 706,000, an increase over the prior year of 4,202, the smallest increase in 12 years. According to one private forecasting firm (IHS Markit) cited in the CFO report, this trend could lead to a net **out-migration** of 6,000 by 2030 and a total population of 744,000, or 98,000 less than the estimate used in the Framework Element.

Bill 23-726 was introduced in April 2020 and makes no attempt to forecast the long-term impact of the covid-19 pandemic on future trends in the District's population and economy. That impact could be dramatic. Indeed, as reported by Steven Pearlstein in his October 4 story in the Washington Post, "In the short term, the pandemic is likely to accelerate ...out-migration of jobs, people and capital to the suburbs and mid-size cities." (In fact, as cited in the CFO report, Moody's Analytics projects payroll employment growth in DC to fall from 17.3% in the last decade to 5.4% in the next decade). But once rents and real estate prices decline, a process that could last for a decade, cities like Washington "...will be able to rebalance themselves for a post-coronavirus world of slower growth, less density and lower prices", i.e. cities that are "more affordable and livable again". (As reported in a October 18 Washington Post story, Zillow Research classifies DC rents as "high and falling" suggesting that this process may have already begun).

Given these very different forecasts, City Council members face a clear choice: To approve a Plan that forecasts robust growth in population despite recent trends and ignores the potential effects of the pandemic, or reject Bill 23-736 and leave the current Comprehensive Plan and zoning districts in place until time and the 2020 Census provide a better understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the economy and our community. The first choice risks encouraging developers to invest in high-density developments in Upper Wisconsin Avenue that many residents oppose and might well fail in a post-pandemic environment. The second choice highlights the plentiful opportunities available now for mixed-use development that are consistent with a more affordable, post-pandemic world of slower growth and less density.

TNA urges the City Council to follow the second path and reject Bill 23-736.



**Government of the District of Columbia  
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

**COMMISSIONERS**

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony before the  
Committee of the Whole on the  
Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
November 12, 2020**

Thank you Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers for this opportunity to address proposed changes to the District's Comprehensive Plan, the "Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020," Bill 23-736. I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G, and I submit this testimony on behalf of our Commission, which approved it by a vote of 4 to 0 on November 9, 2020 (a quorum being 4). We generally support the significant aspects of the proposed amendments related to the "Chevy Chase Gateway" (i.e., the Connecticut Avenue corridor from Chevy Chase Circle to Livingston Street, NW). These provisions mostly align and are consistent with the Commission's recommendations and will provide guidance for any future development in that specified area. While we have significant reservations about some of the other proposed Comprehensive Plan elements,

we do not oppose the Council’s approval of Bill 23-736 based on representations that the Comprehensive Plan will be completely rewritten by 2025.<sup>1</sup>

Since March 2018, our Commission has actively reviewed and commented on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.<sup>2</sup> The Commission’s comments have focused particularly on recommended changes to the Future Land Use Map that would permit mixed-use, low-density commercial and moderate-density residential development along the Chevy Chase Gateway.<sup>3</sup> The ANC’s February 10, 2020 resolution supported these proposed changes but with an essential proviso:

that [the Office of Planning] include a provision in the Comprehensive Plan that the Zoning Commission may not approve any proposed density changes until completion of a Small Area Plan. The Small Area Plan should be a prerequisite so that new development will be consistent with that Plan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Staff Report from the Director of the Office of Planning to District of Columbia Council Members, April 2020, page 8, available at <https://bit.ly/3jPCT8l>.

<sup>2</sup> “ANC 3/4G Testimony before the Committee of the Whole on the Comprehensive Plan Framework Amendment Act of 2018,” March 20, 2018, available at <https://bit.ly/2MSuCD8>; “ANC3/4G Resolution Regarding the Comprehensive Plan Amendments Act of 2019 (B23-0001),” July 22, 2019, available at <https://bit.ly/2GkpIhS>; “Comprehensive Plan Task Force Report and Recommendations,” January 23, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/324DWex>; “ANC 3/4G Resolution Requesting Changes to the Office of Planning’s Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,” February 10, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/2Ir1Gzb>.

<sup>3</sup> Future Land Use Map, April 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/2JtU1nE>.

<sup>4</sup> “ANC 3/4G Resolution Requesting Changes to the Office of Planning’s Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,” February 10, 2020, paragraph 9, available at <https://bit.ly/2Ir1Gzb>.



The Office of Planning accepted this condition and revised the Generalized Policy Map accordingly to identify the Chevy Chase Gateway as part of a “Future Planning Analysis Area” defined as

areas of large tracks or corridors where future analysis is anticipated to ensure adequate planning for equitable growth. . . . Planning analyses usually include, but are not limited to, *Small Area Plans*, Development Frameworks, Technical Studies, Retail Strategies, or Design Guidelines. Such analysis should precede any significant zoning change in this area. The planning process should evaluate current infrastructure and utility capacity against the full build out and projected population growth. Planning should focus on issues most relevant to the community that can be effectively addressed through a neighborhood planning process.<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with the Generalized Policy Map, the approved FY 2021 Budget included \$150,000 for the Office of Planning to prepare a Small Area Plan for the Chevy Chase Gateway.<sup>6</sup> That approved budget was executed, and work has already begun.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments related to the Chevy Chase Gateway have incorporated that aspect of our Commission’s recommendations, and we support that portion of the Plan.

Our Commission also supports the Comprehensive Plan’s goals for more affordable housing along the Chevy Chase Gateway. We have repeatedly suggested that

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<sup>5</sup> Generalized Policy Map, April 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/2TvxCZ6> (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> Fiscal Year 2021 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, August 27, 2020, page B-79, available at <https://bit.ly/3bVYeKO>.

<sup>7</sup> “Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, ANC 3/4G Meeting, October 13, 2020, Erkin Ozberk, DC Office of Planning,” available at <https://bit.ly/360S4Xc>.

any new development along the Connecticut Avenue include a significant number of affordable housing unit — e.g., above the new Chevy Chase Community Center and the new Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library as well as on current privately owned sites such as Safeway, Wells Fargo Bank, and the WMATA bus depot. The Commission’s Task Force on Racism is currently working on specific recommendations to address these affordable housing objectives. The Comprehensive Plan amendments related to the Chevy Chase Gateway will help promote the creation of more affordable and workforce housing in our neighborhood.

The Commission continues to have serious reservations, however, about some aspects of the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes. Since 2018, we have questioned the basis for the Office of Planning’s assumption that the District’s population would increase to almost one million by 2045.<sup>8</sup> We continue to believe that such projections are not well founded, could be based on changing lifestyles that are being accelerated by the current public health emergency, and could create unrealistic expectations and planning assumptions, as described below.

The COVID-19 public health emergency casts doubt on many of the assumptions that underly the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. The pandemic may create permanent shifts in the places where people work, the kinds of services that they require,

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<sup>8</sup> “ANC 3/4G Testimony before the Committee of the Whole on the Comprehensive Plan Framework Amendment Act of 2018,” March 20, 2018, pages 2-3, available at <https://bit.ly/2MSuCD8>; “ANC3/4G Resolution Regarding the Comprehensive Plan Amendments Act of 2019 (B23-0001),” July 22, 2019, paragraphs 4 and 5, available at <https://bit.ly/2GkplhS>.

where people want to live, and how public spaces are used. It is impossible now to predict how those changes will impact the Comprehensive Plan. No matter what Comprehensive Plan changes the Council adopts, there is a strong probability that they will almost immediately be obsolete as the key assumptions morph.

Finally, and most importantly, despite our repeated criticism, the Comprehensive Plan amendments do not contain specific planning for the infrastructure that will be necessary to support projected growth. The Commission advised the Office of Planning to “include a policy that addresses the need for infrastructure — e.g., transportation, parks and recreation, libraries, utilities, and schools — that accommodates projected population growth” and

to create a specific plan for where, when, and how the District will locate, build, and fund public schools for the children in the Wilson High School Feeder Pattern so that new development and population growth will not exacerbate current school overcrowding.”<sup>9</sup>

The Office of Planning’s only response was that our request for a specific plan was “beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Plan.”<sup>10</sup> It is irresponsible to plan for significant population growth and to encourage significant new affordable housing without a commensurate emphasis on planning for critical infrastructure like schools and recreation space.

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<sup>9</sup> “ANC 3/4G Resolution Requesting Changes to the Office of Planning’s Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,” February 10, 2020, paragraph 16, available at <https://bit.ly/2Ir1Gzb>.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Andrew Trueblood to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3/4G, re: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3/4G Comprehensive Plan Resolution, April 23, 2020, page 7, available at <https://bit.ly/328HQTD>.

The Office of Planning's proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments are incomplete in terms of overall community planning, opaque as to how amendment recommendations were solicited, analyzed and proposed, and may be based on seriously flawed assumptions. The only saving grace is that they will be replaced by the 2025 Comprehensive Plan rewrite. For this reason, we do not oppose the Council's approval of Bill 23-736 based on representations that the Comprehensive Plan will be completely rewritten by 2025, when the Office of Planning will better understand the long-term impacts of population growth trends and COVID-19.

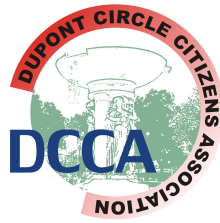
**From:** [Speck, Randy \(SMD 3G03\)](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** ANC 3/4G Testimony on Comp Plan Amendments 11-9-20  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2020 11:22:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [ANC 34G Testimony on Comp Plan Amendments 11-9-20.pdf](#)

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Please accept this testimony on Bill 23-736 on behalf of ANC 3/4G. Thank you

Randy Speck  
Chair, ANC 3/4G

For the latest information on the District Government's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).



## **Testimony for hearing on the DC Comprehensive Plan, Bill B23-0736**

The Dupont Circle Citizens Association (DCCA) thanks Chairman Mendelson for the opportunity to testify, and for considering postponing the Council's final decision until the next Council session.

DCCA testified on the Comp Plan in 2018, and we were pleased that Framework passed by Council addressed some of our concerns. In particular, the Framework adopted in October 2019 strengthens language giving priority to the Plan to provide oversight of the zoning commission and thereby allowing citizens to appeal zoning commission decisions. In addition, there was added language on equity and affordable housing.

DCCA also submitted comments on the amended Plan released in October 2019, in which we focused on the Near Northwest Element. The Plan now under consideration, released in April, did incorporate one of our suggestion, to restore to every Area Element the section entitled "Planning and Development Priorities" in which communities detailed their hopes, desires, fears, and aspirations for their neighborhoods.

While the Plan has improved in some areas owing to feedback from ANCs, community organizations, and individuals, DCCA has remaining concerns with the amended Plan:

- We urge Council to postpone consideration of the Plan until it is possible to assess the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic on how we live, work and commute in DC. In particular, the need for a large increase in market rate housing, as projected by the plan, should be reconsidered until we have a better estimate of population growth.
- Although the Framework now includes additional language on housing equity and affordability, these principles are not adequately incorporated into the amended Plan. The Plan should include specific plans for community-led equitable development and much more emphasis on the preservation of existing affordable housing and building new affordable housing in all wards. Affordable housing should be defined to include housing that is affordable to families, existing residents, and people with low and moderate incomes (e.g., city workers, restaurant employees).
- At community meetings in 2019, Near Northwest residents expressed a strong desire to prevent future giveaways of city-owned land without adequate public benefit (e.g., significant amounts of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income residents, and the creation or preservation and maintenance of public green space). This matter is of particular importance to us given the pending conversion to public/private use indicated on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Reeves Center at 14th and U Streets (parcel 9813), the Division 3 Police Station (parcel 707), and potentially other city-owned parcels in Near Northwest, either within or just outside the borders of our association.

- The DCCA borders include all or parts of three historic districts – Dupont Circle, 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and Greater 14<sup>th</sup> Street. These historic designations contribute to the unique character of our neighborhood, and therefore we request that the FLUM for our area remain as is in the Plan, except for changes of commercial zones to mixed use, south of Dupont Circle, to allow for the conversion of office buildings to housing.
- Although there is certainly room for more development in our area, both within and outside these historic districts, DCCA is concerned that the language on building design in the Dupont Circle Section 2112.3 has been seriously and consistently watered down in various versions of the plan. First, the October 2019 version replaced the words “consistent with” with “sensitive to.” Then, in the April 2020 version, the words “require” and “ensure” were replaced with “encourage” in three instances.<sup>1</sup> We request that the stronger language be reinstated.

**Submitted by:**  
**Glenn Engelmann**  
**President**  
**Dupont Circle Citizens Association**

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<sup>1</sup>• ~~Require~~ **Encourage** a scale of development ~~consistent with~~ **sensitive to** the nature and character of the Dupont Circle area in height and bulk;

• ~~Ensure a general compatibility in the scale of new buildings with older low-scale buildings by restricting the maximum permitted height and floor area ratio of the new buildings to that of the underlying zone~~ **Encourage a general compatibility in the scale of new buildings with older lowscale buildings by enacting sensitive design and appropriate transitions;**

• ~~Ensure~~ **Encourage** compatibility of development with the Comprehensive Plan, **including District-wide goals to address the affordable housing need, by promoting increased housing opportunities. 2112.3**

# Charles Bien AICP

November 12, 2020 Testimony before  
the District of Columbia Committee of the Whole  
Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020

I am Charles Bien, a certified Community Planner who has practiced community and environmental planning for over half a century. Positions I have held include: Assistant Director of the California Coastal Conservation Commission where we saved the coastal lands and waters of California, Director of the Cleveland Community Renewal Program, ran the US DHUD Office of Environment and Energy, and Research Director of the Congressional Advisory Committee on National Growth.

In the limited time I have here today, I would like to stress a couple of points that show why replacing the existing plan with the proposed plan amendments will release a torrent of development that will forever deplete the quality of life in DC neighborhoods.

1. The Plan amendments fail to take into account the impact Covid 19 will have upon DC land



development and use. Working at home computers could become the norm and not an aberration.

This might result in drastic land use demand changes throughout the city and metro area. We all know the impact computer shopping has had on brick and mortar commercial. A similar transformation might be possible from working at home.

There is much discussion in the planning profession about Covid's impact. For example, the 2020 American Planning Association's Convention had three separate sessions devoted to this topic. Our own Wash COG supported a recent study on the subject entitled "Employer Telework Survey". Both agree that change is coming and there might be less demand for inner city office, commercial and residential space. There is some thought that as generation X and Z families form and grow in cramped inner-city apartments, movement to the inner city will slow and some reverse movement might occur.

The point is we all know change is coming and we should wait until we have a better handle on how much and where and when, before we adopt the plan that will have permitted helter-skelter new density increases and elimination of the DC's quality of life that is the envy of the world.

2. The Plan fails to take into account the huge impact it will have for additional public services and major new capital projects

One example is found in the Plan's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element. The Park Element references the 2014 DC Parks and Recreation Master Plan for information and park standards. The Parks Master Plan set a standard of 12.4 acres per 1,000 residents when the DC population was a little more than 630,000. The Framework section of the Plan amendment calls for a population of 986,000, but only calls for 180 additional acres of public parkland, when an additional 4,418 acres are needed to maintain the 12.4 acres per 1,000 residents standard.

The Plan amendments are replete with such impact omissions, such as traffic congestion schools, libraries and flood wall construction.

Thank you,

Charles Bien AICP

To be submitted separately are specific word changes recommended for the Land Use, Urban Design and Open Space Elements proposed Plan Amendments.



Independent Research. Poverty Solutions. Better DC Government.

**Testimony of Doni Crawford, Policy Analyst  
at the Public Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
Committee of the Whole  
November 12, 2020**

Good morning, Chairperson Mendelson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Doni Crawford, and I am a policy analyst at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI). DCFPI is a non-profit organization that promotes budget choices to address DC's racial and economic inequities and to build widespread prosperity in the District of Columbia, through independent research and policy recommendations.

I'm here today to urge the Council to pass the Office of Planning's amendments to the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) intact by the end of 2020. I am a resident of Ward 5, and I care deeply about ensuring that DC is a place where all Black and brown residents can live without fear of involuntary displacement and have the same opportunities to experience positive life outcomes in economic security, job retention, and physical and mental well-being as historically entitled to most white residents. District planning policy is a way to achieve this.

### **This Moment Calls for Dismantling the Structures of Racial Inequality**

This week, the Council passed landmark legislation to incorporate racial equity as a key focus of DC government, as envisioned in the Racial Equity Achieves Results (REACH) Amendment Act of 2020.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore timely that the Comp Plan update is before us today because the Comp Plan is one tool that can be used to help dismantle the structures and policies that make Black communities and other communities of color face the greatest housing, economic, health, and environmental inequalities in DC. It can also be used to remedy deeply entrenched racial residential segregation that results in a built environment that leaves many Black residents with poor air quality, limited access to full-service grocery stores, and even intergenerational trauma.<sup>2</sup>

Racial inequities in DC have gotten worse and continue to be exacerbated by the public health crisis. This is not an accident; this is by design. Black and brown communities have been neglected by public policy for far too long, and we now have the responsibility to ensure that these communities are not further displaced as the District continues to grow. As a result, any new amendments to the Comp Plan should support DC Housing Priorities Coalition guiding principles that will:

- encourage the equitable distribution of affordable housing, especially in affluent neighborhoods;
- meet housing needs at all income levels, especially deeply affordable housing for families with the lowest incomes;
- preserve existing affordable housing; and,
- protect tenants.<sup>3</sup>

Any new Comp Plan amendments should also support DC Grassroots Planning Coalition guiding principles that will:

- urge the Comp Plan update to benefit residents and communities of color, especially Black residents and communities;
- aim to prevent involuntary physical, economic, and cultural displacement of those residents; and,
- prevent the exacerbation of poverty and racial wealth disparities.<sup>4</sup>

### Considerations for the Full Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Process

We support the Council's desire to review and affirm that the Comp Plan reflects the community's values and will achieve our racial equity priorities across the District. Given that the Office of Planning has signaled that a full rewrite of the Comp Plan is on the horizon and will conclude by 2025, the Council should consider incorporating language into this update legislation that will simplify and make that process more accessible and inclusive of residents.

As a paid advocate with a broad policy agenda, this 1,600 page plus redlined document was not easy to follow and wonkier and weedier than even I prefer. The Council can legislate that the forthcoming rewrite incorporate national best practices in comprehensive planning, including that it be high-level, accessible, and user-friendly; be nimble to address new responses to events such as an unexpected global health pandemic; have mandated specific timeframes for rewrite commencement and completion; and be community driven and formalize more equitable engagement practices.<sup>5,6</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the District of Columbia, [Racial Equity Achieves Change Amendment Act of 2020](#), B23-0038, Second Vote November 10, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Brittney Drakeford and Ras Tafari Cannady II, [City planners need to talk about race. The lives of our residents depend on it.](#), Greater Greater Washington, March 12, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Housing Priorities Coalition, [Housing Priorities Coalition - Background](#), Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND), 2020.

<sup>4</sup> DC Grassroots Planning Coalition, [About the Coalition](#), 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Trueblood, [Letter to DC Council](#), DC Office of Planning, April 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Alex Baca, [Can DC build a better Comp Plan process? An Office of Planning report hints at "yes."](#), Greater Greater Washington, May 6, 2020.

**From:** [Doni Crawford](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** Comp Plan Testimony (DCFPI)  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 5:11:52 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-qeieixoc.png](#)  
[Outlook-ri15fzpr.png](#)  
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[Outlook-a3hrbd2h.png](#)  
[Outlook-uln2qnnp.png](#)  
[11.12.20 Comp Plan COW DCFPI Testimony.pdf](#)

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Hi all,

I hope you are well! Please find attached my testimony for Thursday.

Thanks,

Doni

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Testimony of Carol Aten  
Bill 23-736 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
DC City Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole  
November 12, 2020

The proposed amendments to the DC Comprehensive Plan offer a changed vision for our city. But I don't think it's a better vision, and I urge you to look beyond the many individual changes and note their cumulative impact. The amendments turn a plan for residents into a plan for planners and developers by promoting growth, change, and density for their own sake.

The vision of Washington as a city that values its varied and interesting neighborhoods and has a cohesive central business district is unraveled by:

- undermining neighborhood protections;
- changing the land use map to allow significant up-zoning;
- redefining the central employment area as a sprawling mash up that looks like a badly gerrymandered congressional district;
- making unrealistic assumptions of huge population growth;
- conflating affordable housing with equity; and
- diminishing the role of residents in planning for their city.

Diminished Role of Residents in Planning

Starting with the last one first. Despite the “public involvement” touted by the planners, it was not interactive. We were given canned public presentations, invited to blindly submit proposed amendments absent a Framework Element with new data and focus, and then provided the opportunity to comment on extensive changes in a 1500 page document with most of our comments summarily dismissed. The 2006 plan that is being amended was developed with citizen workshops, meetings with stakeholders, working with ANCs and other meaningful interactions with communities—a far cry from this amendment process with its very extensive changes to the 2006 plan. Now, the amended plan is before the City Council. You are our best hope to be the “voices” of the residents that have been essentially ignored.

Adding insult to injury and further discounting citizen input, the Planning and Development Priorities sections specific to each area element of the 2006 plan were all deleted in the initial draft. After comments noted that these sections provided important community context and direction and had been developed with extensive community involvement, they were reinserted in the version before you, but then basically invalidated by the following statement that was inserted at the beginning of each section:

**This section summarizes the opportunities and challenges residents and stakeholders prioritized during the 2006 Comprehensive Plan revision. During large community workshops, residents shared their feedback on District-wide and**

**neighborhood specific issues. Since the 2006 community workshops, however, some of the challenges and opportunities facing the community have evolved. The following summary does not reflect new community priorities or feedback from either amendment cycle but summarizes the most important issues during the 2006 Comprehensive Plan revision.**

Admittedly, there have been changes and projects completed, but rather than update them, all the actual and still valid citizen involvement is dismissed as history.

#### Undermines Neighborhood Protections

By methodically replacing clear words with weak, vague and judgement-based words, the amendments destroy the force of the plan and diminish its direction and certainty.

A few examples include:

“Require” and “ensure” changed to “encourage”

“Protect from” intrusions changed to “buffer” intrusions

“Must” changed to “should”

“Consistent” and “inconsistent” changed to “compatible” and “incompatible”

Some of these might seem like minor, semantic changes, but words have meaning. For example, whereas one might clearly see that something is inconsistent, it would certainly be more of a judgement call and a weaker standard to find it incompatible. And encouraging something suggests it might or might not happen depending on what the one being encouraged decides to do, whereas require or ensure means the desired outcome will happen.

There is an obvious pattern here: Even where the plan stays the same, these changes weaken the ability of citizens to rely on it and make it virtually impossible for them to challenge zoning or development decisions that are inconsistent.

Lastly, the map changes are being superimposed on neighborhood throughout the city with no citizen involvement.

#### Sprawling Central Employment Area

The map in the Land Use Element contemplates a greatly expanded central business district that sprawls across the river, potentially includes some discontinuous pieces, and encroaches on neighborhoods. Maybe we need to have some “employment nodes”, but trying to link everything together and designating such an unwieldy area risks significantly weakening the



area we currently think of as downtown. Between the Central Area Element and its adjacent eight focus areas, the 2016 zoning rewrite that tripled the size of what is zoned as “downtown”, and the new map of the Central Employment Area in the Land Use Element (none of which have the same boundaries), there is considerable need to determine what our CBD should be and, in light of the pandemic, to be concerned about maintaining some cohesiveness and viability. We should be wary of shiny new developments draining tenants from our long established downtown and decreasing occupancy.

### Unrealistic Population Growth

There is some evidence that DC’s growth has plateaued and may even decrease some in coming years. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer is projecting less than 5,000 new residents a year through 2024. The amendments suggest we need to sacrifice our quality of life to accommodate extraordinary growth. I believe we need to challenge that premise.

### Affordable Housing and Equity

Last but not least, I think the City Council needs to consider what “equity” means for the residents of this city beyond providing affordable housing. Even that is a bit of a myth when much of what is provided is at 80% AMI and beyond the reach of many who are in need. But equity is not likely to mean “even” for all. I frankly have a hard time visualizing how one would put affordable housing in the Kalorama neighborhood for example or even why we would want to do that. There needs to be housing available at all income levels, and it would be good to be more dispersed throughout the city. But it seems unrealistic to think that it can go everywhere. What does need to be everywhere are good schools, access to medical facilities and grocery stores, more parks and recreational areas, good infrastructure, protection from flooding, etc. We need to address issues of income disparity, but I think we are fooling ourselves if we think that up-zoning neighborhoods is going to do anything to really address equity. We should focus on tools to address the affordable housing problem, some of which the city hasn’t even used on the land it controls, like community land trusts. We are not going build our way out of the affordable housing problem—“trickle-down” from more housing supply may occur 20 years out and IZ, while laudable in concept, is having a minimal impact on the supply of affordable housing let alone deeply affordable housing. We don’t need to mangle the comprehensive plan to accomplish the Mayor’s housing goals, but we do need to use the tools at hand to create a more equitable city.

Please do not rubber stamp these amendments. They are not in the best interest of our city and its residents.

Thank you.



# SIERRA CLUB

## WASHINGTON D.C.

**Testimony of  
Payton Chung  
Sierra Club, Washington DC Chapter  
to the District of Columbia Council, Committee of the Whole  
Hearing on Bill 23-736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
November 12, 2020**

The Sierra Club's Washington DC Chapter applauds the work that the Mayor's Office of Planning, the Department of Environment and Energy, and the Department of Transportation have put into updating the 2006 Comprehensive Plan for 2020. We urge the Council to adopt the Office of Planning's (OP) amendments soon, as they will amplify the implementation of critical recent environmental victories. We also urge OP to begin laying the groundwork now for an all-new Comprehensive Plan, which will be necessary to guide the District's built environment towards its midcentury goal of net zero carbon emissions.

These updates have strengthened the Comprehensive Plan to better reflect the Club's mission "to enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment."

Many policies that the Chapter has championed are reflected in this document, including incorporating DC's carbon neutrality goal and implementation of a cleaner energy system; fishable and swimmable surface waters throughout the District; a zero-waste goal for solid waste source reduction; and reducing safety and health dangers from the transportation system. The Club has worked with the Council and other District agencies on improving legislation and plans, including the Clean Energy DC Omnibus Act, the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act, and the Vision Zero Action Plan, and we are glad to see that the updated Comprehensive Plan text reflects these policies and plans. We are also heartened to see new text addressing necessary climate adaptation and resilience measures, as these measures will only become more necessary in the years ahead.

We also applaud suggested revisions to the Housing Element, such as policy H-1.1, which seek to better balance jobs and housing in high-opportunity parts of the District and region. This policy reflects the Sierra Club's Urban Infill Policy, which states:

*An essential strategy for reducing urban related carbon emissions is supporting dense, mixed-use communities and land uses that prioritize walking, biking or transit to meet daily transportation needs, as well as balancing jobs and housing within the region... All neighborhoods should be open to people of all income levels and backgrounds.*

We look forward to engaging soon with the District in the multi-year process that will shape the next Comprehensive Plan. That should begin over the next year or two, with a public process to foster agreement on the core values and guiding vision that the upcoming plan will achieve. This approach has proven critical to helping other climate-leader cities around the world adopt transformative new Comprehensive Plans, and to make significant progress towards achieving their climate and equity goals.

The 20-year horizon of the next Comprehensive Plan, from the 2020s to the 2040s, must be an era defined by a just transition away from the fossil-fuel era. Otherwise, the continued suitability of the District of Columbia as human habitat will be in grave doubt.

We have, on several occasions, applauded the District's commitment to achieving net zero carbon by 2050. The built environment (buildings and transportation) account for the lion's share of DC's carbon emissions, so the Comprehensive Plan will shape much of this transition. Future Comprehensive Plans should root themselves in foundational themes of sustainability, resilience, and justice, rather than siloing "environmental protection" off into one element among many.

OP should take lessons and inspiration from its colleagues at DOEE and DDOT, whose strategic plans make achieving sustainability the goal, not just an element. An example is DOEE's 2012 Sustainable DC plan, which set a goal of cutting carbon emissions from transportation and set a travel mode target, with 75% of commute trips via non-auto modes. A complementary target urged 20-minute neighborhoods, with daily services within walking distance for all District residents. DDOT then adopted DOEE's goal as its own, requiring that mode share goal be achieved through its 2014 MoveDC Plan and rejecting scenarios that did not achieve it.

Those two plans treat a sustainable built environment in DC as a destination that actions can achieve, and make measurable progress towards, rather than merely as one of many worthy directions that we can reactively steer existing movement towards. The current Comprehensive Plan timidly assumes that the unsustainable, unjust status quo and "business as usual" can only be tinkered with; the next Comprehensive Plan must instead boldly imagine and forge a sustainable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council on this important bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Payton Chung". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Payton" and last name "Chung" clearly distinguishable.

Payton Chung  
Chair, Smart Growth Committee  
Sierra Club, Washington DC Chapter

**From:** [Michael Whelan](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony Submission for Nov 12th Hearing on B23-736 (Comp Plan)  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 2:04:36 AM

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I am submitting the following as testimony for the November 12th Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan amendments:

Good Afternoon Councilmembers.

My name is Michael Whelan and I live on Kansas Ave in Petworth. I want to make sure we can keep housing affordable here in my neighborhood. The only way we can do that is if DC is welcoming towards our new neighbors, instead of trying to turn them away or say that they can only live in one or two neighborhoods.

Because I support welcoming new neighbors to our community, I am really glad that the Office of Planning has put together such a great set of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. These amendments build upon the "framework element" that you passed almost exactly one year ago by pushing for housing across the whole city, ensuring that each neighborhood does its fair share to solve our housing crisis. I ask that you *pass all OP amendments with urgency* - at least before the end of the year.

I would also urge you to support any other amendments that may be offered up by members of the Council if they further bolster the goal of ensuring that every part of DC accommodates homes for people. This is especially true because COVID-19 has shown that we really need to support our small local businesses. Here in Petworth, we have had a spate of business closures on Upshur Street, even before the pandemic. I am hopeful that if we can get some more neighbors in the community, we could support more great local businesses.

If any Councilmembers propose amendments to weaken the OP's proposal or exclude some part of the city from doing its fair share to support homes for our neighbors, I ask you to please vote those amendments down. Language like "protect the neighborhood from apartments" is immoral during a housing crisis, and unfairly biased against renters and people who live in apartments, such as myself.

Please also add language to the plan to speed up this process next time. I can't believe it's been a year since the framework was passed!

Thank you to each one of you for listening, and for your hard work to keep our city safe during this pandemic.

Very Best Wishes,

Mike Whelan  
4014 Kansas Ave NW, Apt 105  
Washington DC, 20011

**Committee of the Whole**  
**Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**  
**Testimony of Natalie Avery, November 12, 2020**

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am a DC native and lifelong resident of Washington DC currently raising my family in Mount Pleasant. I’m here today to urge the Council to pass, intact, and without further delay, the Office of Planning's amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Passing the Comprehensive Plan is absolutely essential to building a more equitable DC with more abundant housing options, especially in the neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park where I grew up. I have been following this process for years and am deeply impressed with the level of engagement and the many ways in which the plan centers equity and reckons with the legacy of racism on our city’s built environment. The plan incorporates thousands of community comments and reflects input from dozens of community meetings.

After the Council adopted the Framework Element last year, Council staff and community members from a variety of perspectives have worked tirelessly to bring forward ideas and solutions that both honor and expand upon the core values expressed during that process.

I know you’ve heard concerns from constituents concerned about the impact of allowing more density on their quality of life. I can tell you that as a resident of a very dense mixed use neighborhood, that more density and more housing types, including multifamily buildings and duplexes and fourplexes, means a greater diversity of neighbors, more people to support great neighborhood amenities and more variety. Unlocking the ability to build more housing in parts of the city that have seen very little new residential development will not only expand housing supply, enabling more people to live in amenity rich neighborhoods. I truly believe it will bring new life and variety to areas of the city that have seen little change over the decades.

I have also heard the concerns that the plan does not do enough to stop displacement and build a more equitable DC and therefore should be further delayed. I strongly believe that passing the Comp plan is an essential step in the right direction. The work of building a more just and equitable city will continue on many fronts. Further delaying its passage will only thwart efforts to bring new housing online, including hundreds of affordable units.

Chairman Mendelson, and the rest of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I am glad to add my voice to the chorus of support for Passing the Comp Plan, intact, in 2020, with no further delays.



**Rainbow Caucus of  
LGBTQ Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners**  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Phil Mendelson Chairman,  
Council of the District of Columbia 1350  
Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 504  
Washington, DC 20004

Via E-mail

12 November 2020

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

My name is Japer Bowles and I am the current chair of the ANC Rainbow Caucus. Since the past election, the ANC RAINBOW CAUCUS has grown from 26, to now 36 LGBTQ ANC Commissioners. Our mission is to address issues impacting LGBTQ residents of the District of Columbia, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. We represent the diversity of the LGBTQ community in race, gender, education, location, age, and income and we have come together to be a voice for LGBTQ people in DC. It is our mission as to why I am speaking today.

Like others have said previously and will continue to say, this document is extremely important and determines the direction of the city. Frankly speaking, the Comprehensive Plan isn't gay enough!

DC has the largest LGBTQ population per capita in the nation and we face real problems-- 48% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ, our community faces record hate crimes, and housing and job discrimination is still rampant.

My testimony today is to better educate the council on two passed recommendations from Rainbow Caucus members from ANC 1A, 1C, 2A, 2B.

1. Improving Access to Long-Term Supports and Services for Vulnerable Populations and Action and Improving Coordination and Service Delivery among District Agencies: T
  - a. Recognizing that vulnerable populations include many members of the LGBTQ community and their needs need to be included in any effort to create and implement a cross-agency case management system that can enhance coordination among relevant agencies to improve service delivery. For example, in health care and services LGBT patients often are overlooked as a group that faces disparities. However, like other populations identified as at-risk or



**Rainbow Caucus of  
LGBTQ Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners**  
Washington, D.C.

disadvantaged, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has faced stigma, lack of cultural competence and insensitivity to their unique needs.

2. The Housing Element needs to address the following issues and oversights as it relates to LGBTQ Youth, Seniors and our Transgender/GNC community.
  - a. LGBTQ Seniors: LGBTQ adults face unique circumstances, such as fear of discrimination. Many do not have children to help them in older age. Senior housing, transportation, legal services, support groups and social events are the most commonly cited services needed in the LGBT community. LGBTQ older adults are generally an underserved and understudied population, yet, by 2060 their numbers will exceed five million, and will account for more than 20 million older adults, including those who do not publicly self-identify but have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior, or romantic relationships, and/or are attracted to members of the same sex. Much of this increase is fueled by millennials.
  - b. LGBTQ Youth Homelessness: LGBTQ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than non-LGBTQ youth. Right off the bat, these young people are presented with an uneven playing field. It's estimated that about 7% of youth in the United States are LGBTQ, while 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ.
  - c. Transgender Housing and Homelessness: One in five transgender people in the United States has been discriminated when seeking a home, and more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes, because of their gender identity. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued guidance stating that discrimination against transgender renters or homebuyers based on gender identity or gender

Our caucus encourages DC Council to dig in deep to be inclusive of all people in every section and every element.

Although none of you identify as LGBTQ+, please listen to us and rely on your LGBTQ+ staff to make recommendations for a more inclusive plan.

Thank you for your time today.

Japer Bowles,  
ANC Rainbow Caucus, Chair



**Rainbow Caucus of  
LGBTQ Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners**  
Washington, D.C.

Citation/Track #	Element	Comments	OP Comments
CSF-2.3.9; CSF2.3.D	Community Services and Facilities	The Rainbow Caucus welcomes this policy and action item. However, we urge OP to include language that references and/or recognizes that vulnerable populations include many members of the LGBTQ community and their needs need to be included in any effort to “create and implement a cross-agency case management system that can enhance coordination among relevant agencies to improve service delivery.” For example, in health care and services LGBT patients often are overlooked as a group that faces disparities. However, like other populations identified as at-risk or disadvantaged, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has faced stigma, lack of cultural competence and insensitivity to their unique needs. ANC Rainbow Caucus asks that language be added to the Comp Plan to ensure that these needs are equally considered among efforts to address service for every vulnerable population in the District of Columbia.	The text was changed to include the proposed language. See the Framework Element for a discussion of federally defined protected classes.
H-4.3	Housing	<p>ANC Rainbow Caucus recommends that language be added to the Housing Element to address the following issues and oversights:</p> <p>H-4.3 Meeting the Needs of Specific Groups – LGBTQ Community</p> <p>ANC Rainbow Caucus strongly recommends that language be added identifying the LGBTQ community as a “Specific Group”, recognizing the unique needs of this community, and outlining specific housing strategies to address their needs. We note that Persons with HIV/AIDS, Older Adults, and other identified groups may address some of the needs ... but they fall short of fully and comprehensively understanding overall housing needs and homelessness in the LGBTQ community. Specifically, the three following areas need to be addressed in the comprehensive plan and are currently absent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LGBTQ Seniors: LGBTQ adults face unique circumstances, such as fear of discrimination. Many do not have children to help them in older age. Senior housing, transportation, legal services, support groups and social events are the most commonly cited services needed in the LGBT community. LGBTQ older adults are generally an underserved and understudied population, yet, by 2060 their numbers will exceed five million, and will account for more than 20 million older adults, including those who do not publicly self-identify but have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior, or romantic relationships, and/or are attracted to members of the same</li> </ul>	Added language regarding at LGBTQ+ youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. See H-3 Housing Access and protected classes and Action H4.2.D: Ending Youth Homelessness





**Rainbow Caucus of  
LGBTQ Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners**  
Washington, D.C.

		<p>sex. Much of this increase is fueled by millennials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ LGBTQ Youth Homelessness: LGBTQ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than non-LGBTQ youth. Right off the bat, these young people are presented with an uneven playing field. It's estimated that about 7% of youth in the United States are LGBTQ, while 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ.</li><li>○ Transgender Housing and Homelessness: One in five transgender people in the United States has been discriminated when seeking a home, and more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes, because of their gender identity. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued guidance stating that discrimination against transgender renters or homebuyers based on gender identity or gender stereotypes constitutes sex discrimination and is prohibited under the Fair Housing Act (FHA). Unfortunately, general lack of awareness has contributed to continued discrimination, eviction and homelessness of transgender people in the United States. In the District of Columbia, LGBTQ leaders have also identified that service gaps exist for Transgender youth who age out of housing and are forced to live on the streets as they have not been homeless "long enough" to qualify for adult housing services.</li></ul>	
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## **Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan**

Emily Hamilton

Ward 5 Resident & Senior Research Fellow, Mercatus Center at George Mason University

D.C. Council

November 12, 2020

Chairperson Mendelson and members of the D.C. Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment. I'm a housing economist and Ward 5 resident. I have three points to make today.

- First, I encourage the Council to pass the Office of Planning's amendments to the Comprehensive Plan immediately.
- Second, I support a Comprehensive Plan rewrite in the near future that acknowledges it is not a valid purpose of public policy to prevent expensive neighborhoods from accommodating more residents over time.
- Third, I encourage the Office of Planning and the Council to adopt a less prescriptive approach to determining what type of housing may be built in which neighborhoods.

To my first point, the outdated plan and Future Land Use Map are holding up badly needed housing and standing in the way of achieving the Bowser administration's important housing goals. The time has come to adopt OP's proposed amendments to move past the barriers of the 2006 plan.

To my second point, OP should now begin work on a simpler, more progressive comprehensive plan rewrite. OP has suggested a modest improvement by changing the plan's language from "protecting neighborhood character" to "respecting neighborhood character." As OP has pointed out, regulations intended to protect neighborhood character contribute to racial segregation in housing markets. But tweaking the comprehensive plan's language does not remedy the District's exclusionary land use policies, and a future comprehensive plan should reject exclusionary zoning rather than respect it.

Like all localities, the District's authority to regulate land use comes from its police power to enforce regulations that benefit residents' health, safety, and general welfare. Land use regulations that prevent change may benefit landowners in exclusionary neighborhoods, but they do not benefit the general interests of this majority-renter city. A future plan should support denser residential redevelopment—particularly in the highest-income neighborhoods.

Finally, to my third point, the comprehensive plan suggests implementing rules to discourage mansionization by limiting the size of new structures. However, these proposed restrictions could backfire. Minneapolis policymakers replaced single-family zoning with triplex zoning, but now other restrictions on the size and location of buildings are standing in the way of actually building triplexes. Further, had anti-mansion rules been on the books historically, they would have choked off an important source of relatively low-cost housing today for roommates who

share large houses in neighborhoods from Capitol Hill to Takoma. Instead of banning mansions, we should make it legal to build multi-family housing in rich neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering my comments. I urge the Council to adopt OP's amendments now, and I hope to see a future comprehensive plan that will make the city a more affordable and inclusive place.

**TESTIMONY OF AIDAN JONES BEFORE THE DC CITY COUNCIL    11/12/20**  
**RE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**The Proposed Amendments, particularly to the Future Land Use Map, Are Deeply Flawed**

- The Amendment process was flawed from the start because initiated **based on a false assumption**—that DC’s population would continue to increase, when, in fact, the data and the Jan. 2020 analysis by the Mayor’s own Chief Financial Officer reflect that it had already begun to decline, and, excluding for several thousand new births, still is declining and is not expected to increase significantly in the immediate future.
- A flawed process of input-gathering that OP controlled, along with OP alone deciding what Amendments to recommend, predetermined a flawed result. Inevitably, the result was a proposal almost entirely reflecting developers’ wishes, not those of DC’s citizens and neighbors—a result based on the flawed premise that DC needs up-zoning and much greater density, a result that would flow from a radically revised Future Land Use Map.
- Also, the proposed Amendments were drafted before the Covid Pandemic and only superficially updated to account for its effects. The Pandemic has demonstrated greater infection risk with more dense living arrangements, not to mention constricted mobility in high rise buildings.
- And the Pandemic has already engendered greatly changed living and work patterns. Any appropriate Comp Plan should consider what OP’s proposed Amendments do not.
- It was not time for a new Comp Plan, and these Amendments were an attempt to do a major re-write without neighborhood citizens’ participation without considering greatly changed global health concerns. Without moving to the country or the suburbs, we can preserve the livability of our communities in DC.

**Why Did the Office of Planning Propose Such Flawed Amendments?**

- Quite simply, OP, at the behest of the Mayor, preconceived and preordained an outcome in order to favor developers by greatly up-zoning and increasing density—at citizens’ expense.
- To achieve the Mayor’s goal, OP designed a process where only *it* decided what to propose amending, thereby ignoring citizen wishes.

**What Should City Councilmembers Do?**

- Listen to your constituent-neighbors, not developers, who typically have little skin in the game, and not to the large corporate investors and hedge funds who typically fund development projects-- whose sole goal is to make a profit for their investors -- not to safeguard DC residents.
- Remember that developers, to profit more, always push elected and non-elected officials to up-zone for higher, denser buildings, even when they can make a fair profit with existing zoning.
- Voters can’t afford to take you out to lunch to lobby you to protect their zoning rights, but they elected you--and will only continue to support you if you support them.
- Use your legislative power to hold developers accountable to you and those who elected you. That means not allowing developers to radically up-zone and harm residential neighborhoods throughout all 8 Wards. That means rejecting OP’s proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly its proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map.

Testimony prepared by:

LaToya Thomas Principal, Brick & Story and Housing Policy Director, HAND

November 12, 2020

**Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today to lend my wholehearted support to the comprehensive plan and to urge the Council to review and adopt the amendments and updates with all expediency.

My name is LaToya Thomas, Principal & Founder of Brick & Story, a Ward 7-based small business. I am also a proud of native Washingtonian. Today, however, I am here in my capacity as the Housing Policy Director with the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers - better known as HAND.

HAND is a nonprofit membership association comprised of over 450 organizations working across the private, public and nonprofit sectors to collaborate in the production and preservation of affordable housing in the Capital Region of Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond. Through education, engagement and regional advocacy, HAND builds the capacity of its diverse membership to support the development of sustainable communities for individuals and families at all income levels. HAND is also a member of the Housing Priorities Coalition, which includes organizations like the Coalition for Smarter Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, that was formed to help guide the updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

In early 2021, HAND will be releasing its Housing Indicator Tool (HIT), a digital platform of real-time data that will provide information on housing production and preservation throughout the Capital region. Tracked against the housing targets established by Metropolitan Council of Governments in 2019, the tool will tell us - both at the local and regional levels - how we are doing and if the policies and programs we have in place to further housing opportunities are really working. The tool will look at a variety of indicators as inputs to help us understand the effectiveness of the work happening in each jurisdiction. The adoption of a strong and equitable comprehensive plan is one of the key indicators we are tracking.

Firstly, we applaud the Office of Planning’s hard work to develop the updates to the plan, particularly the robust public engagement process they undertook to bring all of DC into the planning process. This is the type of work that makes for a more equitable and inclusive city and a more transparent government.

Just as this process has been equitable and inclusive, we need to ensure that the comprehensive plan updates are adopted immediately so that our land use policies can help to further equity and inclusion throughout the city.

Housing affordability - something that is central to HAND's mission and also a critical issue for many residents in the District - can be addressed through the provisions in the updated comprehensive plan. The District is already one of the most aggressive jurisdictions in the region with its goal to produce 36,000 units by 2025; now we need the land use policies in place to ensure that those units are allocated in a way that creates opportunities across the economic spectrum. We also need to ensure that the entire city takes responsibility for housing affordability and that we are creating housing opportunities for those who need it most in all 8 wards of the District.

We also know that COVID-19 has thrown a major wrench into our local economy (not to mention the global economy); adoption of the comprehensive plan can ignite the economic rebuilding effort that will ultimately help families stabilize and then thrive.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to mention the framework of racial equity that is crafted into the proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan. At this point, most of us know the role that land use and planning has played in shaping American cities, resulting in segregated neighborhoods, displacement of people of color, and severe wealth, education, and health disparities that persist to this day. We are finding ourselves in a unique moment of reckoning as a country, and many cities along with the District are taking a second look at their land use policies and how those policies can be reshaped to create opportunity for those who, for generations, have been without. The policy recommendations outlined in the comprehensive plan updates are key to preventing displacement and achieving the opportunity and equity that our city needs and that our people demand.

In closing, I again commend the Office of Planning and the Council for giving the proper time and attention to the development of the Comprehensive Plan, a tool that can have a transformative impact on so many residents in this city for years to come, and I encourage you to adopt the comprehensive plan so that we can finally have the foundation in place to build a more equitable DC.

Thank you again for your time and attention today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

**Testimony of Scott L Parker, President, Spring Valley West Homes Corporation**

**Opposing the Proposed Zoning Changes to area 5009 in the Comprehensive Plan**

**November 11, 2020**

## **Scott Parker's Testimony to the City Council re: The Proposed Comprehensive Plan**

The purpose of this testimony is to provide important historical background and constraints on the area shown in the proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as 5009 and to oppose the potential re-zoning for 5009. I represent the Board of Directors of Spring Valley West (SVW), as its current President, because our immediately adjacent community would be affected by the proposed changes. All nine Board members, including me, are elected, are resident homeowners, and are all unpaid.

The 5009 area referenced in the proposed FLUM is in Spring Valley in Ward 3. It is bordered by 49<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Massachusetts Avenue NW, Yuma Street NW, and 50<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Toward the southern portion of 5009, it is bordered by Warren Street NW; part of our SVW sub-development. Another portion of SVW is across 50<sup>th</sup> Street NW and down farther west on Yuma Street NW. The SVW Board wants to make the Council aware of long-term and perpetual restrictions that affect the 5009 area.

- The northern portion of 5009 (i.e. Massachusetts Avenue) is currently zoned Commercial Low Density (CLD), while the southern portion is currently zoned Residential Low Density (RLD).
- The proposed changes requested by Holland & Knight on behalf of WC and AN Miller (Miller) would add Residential Moderate Density (RMOD) to the northern portion of the site, making it CLD/RMOD, and, would move the southern portion of the site from RLD to RMOD.

So, a bit of background on what is currently on the site and about the restrictions that affect it, both for the next thirteen years, and, with some perpetual restrictions. There are currently four commercial buildings on 5009, totaling 133,000 square feet, plus a central surface parking lot behind the buildings:

- The oldest is 4900 Massachusetts Avenue, built in the 1960's, and it's largely used by eight medical and dental practices. It is 35,000 square feet in a three story, above ground structure. There is also a bank and other commercial service providers.
- The next building, 4910 Massachusetts Avenue, finished in 1986, is 74,000 square feet, also is three stories. It is also predominantly used by medical and dental practices (two dozen), in addition to other professional offices, such as small, local law firms.
- For over 35 years, these two buildings have provided medical and dental services to many residents in the surrounding population of Ward 3. They house important service providers to residents of much of the surrounding areas, well beyond simply Spring Valley. The next closest alternatives are in the offices adjacent to Sibley Hospital and in Chevy Chase, MD. Both of them are already heavily used for other medical and dental practices, so there is no other logical local alternative for the over thirty practices now housed on Massachusetts Avenue.
- There are also two small commercial buildings that front on 50<sup>th</sup> Street. They were built in the late 80's and are used as business offices, rather than for medical or dental practices.

The most important fact to know with respect to the proposed Comprehensive Plan and the FLUM is that further development of 5009 is significantly restricted until October, 2033, and, even then, there are perpetual restrictions that affect development beyond 2033. Those restrictions are legally recorded, and they were the result of an agreement in October 1983 between Miller and the community, as then represented by the Spring Valley Wesley Heights Citizens' Association (SVWHCA) at the time.

As part of that agreement, Miller was able to reconfigure and rezone the 5009 area to create an additional 64,500 sf of commercially zoned property, which largely contributed the space for the larger



medical building and the two smaller commercial buildings that were built, and it allowed for the 157 single family units now known as Spring Valley West to be developed in return for:

- A 50-year limitation on any further building other than potentially two other small commercial buildings. No residential, including multi-family development, is permitted until after 2033.
- Perpetual limitations on this tract (known as Tract A in the agreement). In perpetuity, the total square footage cannot exceed 232,000 sf of which not more than 139,000 sf can be commercial. In other words, even after late 2033, there would be no more than 100,000 additional sf available for residential development, unless the existing buildings were demolished. These perpetual restrictions reduce any future development substantially below the levels permitted under the current zoning. If the medical and dental practice buildings were razed after 2033, to accommodate the RMOD change that Miller seeks, the provision of medical and dental services to the surrounding community would be severely and detrimentally affected. That outcome would also be incompatible with the existing neighborhood, which is overwhelmingly Residential Low Density and, across 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Commercial Low Density (e.g. small restaurants + a Crate & Barrel store.)

To complete the history and to further clarify the restrictions, the 1983 agreement was amended by the same parties, Miller and SVWHCA, to allow an additional 24,000 square feet to be added to the original 4900 Massachusetts Avenue building (in lieu of the two additional, small commercial buildings that were never built), while maintaining the 1983 restrictions and adding that no commercial building could front on Warren Street.

In discussions with the Ward 3 planner for the Office of Planning and with Councilwoman Cheh's Chief of Staff, neither knew about the restrictions of the original nor amended agreements. Their focus was on ultimately moving the zoning for 5009 to include moderate density residential use which could add more residential space. But the restrictions on 5009 will not allow that before 2034; 14 years from now.

The Zoning Commission-approved Ladybird PUD, which will be just across Massachusetts Avenue from 5009, presumably in the next few years, will add well over 220 dwelling units, including some affordable units, certainly in time to help the City toward its residential unit goals. By contrast, the prospective development of 5009 is much further into the future.

It is reasonable to assume that we will know more about the effects on vehicular and pedestrian traffic in this greater neighborhood commercial and residential area a few years after Ladybird is open and occupied, so future development can adjust accordingly. What we know now, however, and what will continue to be the case several years from now, is that the Spring Valley, AU Park, and surrounding areas need service complements to truly offer a vibrant neighborhood mix of residences, both the currently and predominantly low density residential as well as the RMOD addition of Ladybird. A very important service complement has been and hopefully will continue to be medical and dental services. Vibrant neighborhoods require more than restaurants and small offices in the limited commercial space.

The proposed zoning change by Miller seems at best premature and is potentially detrimental to the long-term health and welfare of an evolving neighborhood, given the current and continuing restrictions on 5009. The proposed change would very likely reduce the total commercial space in the area, mostly the medical and dental services, in order to use the RMOD re-zoning, if it were to pass the Zoning Commission. Given the historical protection constraints on adjoining lots on both sides of Massachusetts Avenue, those services would be lost, while RMOD development would increase the demand for all commercial services. That would be out of balance and not in the best interests of the community.

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF KAREN GAAL, ANC 1B04 CIVIC ASSOCIATION, CHAIR TO  
SUPPLEMENT ORAL TESTIMONY DURING HEARING REQUESTING AMENDMENT  
CHANGES TO BILL 23-736 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT ACT OF 2020**

Submitted to Committee of the Whole  
Chairman Phil Mendelson  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20004

From Karen Gaal, Chair  
ANC 1B04 Civic Association  
1424 W Street, NW  
Suite 101  
Washington, DC 20009  
[KarenGaalANC1B04@gmail.com](mailto:KarenGaalANC1B04@gmail.com)  
202-352-5449

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson and fellow Council Members my name is Karen Gaal the Chair of the ANC 1B04 Civic Association and ANC 1B04 Commissioner Candidate. I am here today to offer testimony in favor of and to request that these changes be implemented to the Bill 23-736 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020.

The changes that I am requesting to the act is threefold they're all correlated to the Housing, Transportation, and Workforce Investment elements for the comprehensive plan.

**1. Transportation Element: Roadway System – Auto Movement, Sidewalks, Bike Lanes**



This photo applies to the suggested upgrades for bike lanes under the **Transportation Element: Roadway system auto movement action item**. My suggestion is to make the bike lanes much more inclusive for everyone in the city. This will help for everyone who rides their bikes and

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uses any type of mobility device as well as scooters etc. This surface transfer will allow bicyclist to use the lanes without the hazard of being hit by vehicles. It will improve the surface transit for everyone in the city. By moving the lanes from the street and adding additional space to the sidewalks (as pictured) it will also allow there to be ample parking for the residents of the District of Columbia. The functionality is safer and will increase accessibility for all residents. This moves bike lanes from the current long city roadways making it safer and bike friendly and there is a way to include traffic calming techniques as well as technologically monitoring the process by installing tech systems underneath the sidewalks to also help with Traffic Safety. This program will help the economy and infrastructure of the District of Columbia as well as the safety of our residents and visitors.

**2. Housing Element: Rezoning Commercial Space and adding to the Housing Supply  
through acquisition of Commercial Space in All Wards**

As we look around the District of Columbia, we can see several unhoused residents throughout the streets in living in encampments. This is due to the unaffordable housing situation as well as the compounded need for long term treatment facilities for substance abuse and behavioral health. Compounded with the COVID-19 pandemic we need to address this situation with a lot of care and concern for the ongoing health of the residents of Washington DC.

Unhousing doesn't occur because of low housing stock but because the ongoing allocation need to be major priority. We have to make choices in ensuring that everyone has access to a home. The suggestion is to increase the housing stock with unused commercial properties. This repurposing this will require the acquisition of unused commercial property stock. COVID-19 has shown that we have several large entities in various wards throughout Washington, DC some specific sites that have 899 thousand square feet of space. This ongoing project can have a lot of Interagency input and rezoning while applying the best use of housing stock for the unhoused. We can utilize agencies specializing in transitional, low- and moderate-income

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housing and community care. This ongoing project can provide needed incentives for owners looking to have their private properties utilized to add to the housing stock. Addressing the reasons for homelessness while providing housing is a win - win for the District of Columbia and it keeps the disparities of housing low. Washington DC is a City of Leadership and we should build on our wealth of knowledge to tackle the lack of stabilization in the housing of residents who are high risk, zero to low income and vulnerable with 90% of their income going towards housing and many other factors and which leads to the homelessness situation. This leads to the next element on Workforce Investment.

### **3. Workforce Investment Element**

Oftentimes the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) in Washington DC is underutilized especially when it comes to helping to identify unemployment or job services needed in a neighborhood, identifying unused housing spaces which can often be resolved with just sheer consistent communication/outreach with the residents. With funding to assist in making outreach and ongoing project. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission can create better neighborhood planning to assist in having a thriving workforce. The District's interagency workforce investment can help address residents who earn \$30,000 to \$0 yearly income with an ongoing solution. The issues to address are inadequate food subsidies and benefits, past due utilities, housing, transportation costs, and underemployment. COVID-19 has shown that telework is possible and training investments and revamping the workforce to include paid positions to fulfill the dual roles, and new adjustments made by a majority of D.C. residents. Building on the technological skills, essential services skills, etc. an ongoing job creation plan could help get the city moving forward with all of the listed elements. All of these should be listed as ongoing with the oversight that's necessary to keep the programs intact.

**Testimony of Barbara Kraft on Bill 23-736,  
On behalf of the WIN Ward 3 Affordable Housing Work Group**

Chairman Mendelson and Councilmembers, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of more affordable housing in Ward 3, as contemplated by the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes before you. We urge Council to act now to approve these changes. Delay will stall new housing development and inhibit investment needed for an equitable economic recovery.

My name is Barbara Kraft and I am co-chair of the WIN Ward 3 Affordable Housing Work Group. I also chair Temple Sinai's WIN (Washington Interfaith Network) Core Team and have lived in Ward 3 almost 10 years. Jamie Butler, a 36-year Ward 3 resident and social justice leader at Adas Israel Congregation, is also a co-chair of our WIN Ward 3 Affordable Housing Work Group.

Our work group comprises activists from Adas Israel, Temple Sinai and National United Methodist Church, and includes our clergy and social justice leaders. All three congregations are members of WIN, a group of about 40 congregations across the city who act together to accomplish positive change. Virtually all our Ward 3 work group members live in northwest DC.

Many of us have been members of our congregations, and residents of Ward 3, for decades. Today we live in neighborhoods whose rents and housing prices are out of reach for almost all but the affluent. Our neighborhoods boast excellent libraries, schools and other infrastructure, all presenting opportunities and conferring advantages to those of us living here

Affordable housing, meanwhile, is inequitably distributed across DC. The Office of Planning has identified 15,000 dedicated affordable units in the Far Southeast and Southwest planning regions; in Rock Creek West, in contrast, there are only 500 dedicated affordable units.

**Now** we are prepared to take, and our city must take, what Ibram X. Kendi calls **antiracist action** to rectify the long history of segregation in northwest DC. Our ANCs have researched and reported on how restrictive covenants in Chevy Chase

DC, for example, prevented Black families from buying homes and how a citizens association worked to drive Black families out of the neighborhood. Since then, exclusionary zoning laws that were explicitly racist in the early 20th century have continued to keep Black families out of suburbs and high-opportunity neighborhoods like ours.

Our WIN Ward 3 Affordable Housing Work Group is committed to creating more affordable housing units in Rock Creek West and other high-opportunity areas and to supporting the Mayor and the Council in making this happen. We want to see low and moderate-income residents of color have access to the neighborhood services and social, educational and economic opportunities we enjoy.

We support the Office of Planning's recommendations for higher density and increased affordable housing in Ward 3 corridors. In fact, we and WIN are asking for a **higher proportion** of deeply affordable and affordable new homes – 1/3 for people with incomes 0-30% of AMI, 1/3 for incomes 30-60% of AMI, and 1/3 for incomes higher than 60% of AMI. We have made this demand to the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development in connection with Reservation 13/Hill East and any future development of the RFK stadium site. WIN and WIN Ward 3 congregations will continue to press this ratio as the Comp Plan process moves forward.

The Comp Plan revisions are not perfect, but they are a first step to address long-standing racial inequities in high-opportunity neighborhoods like ours in Ward 3. We urge the Council to act on the Comp Plan without delay.

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Council of the District of Columbia, Committee of the Whole  
Hearing on B23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020

Testimony of Nancy MacWood, ANC 3C09

November 12, 2020

I am Nancy MacWood, an ANC commissioner from Cleveland Park. I am stunned by the Mayor and Office of Planning's attempts to use the Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle to upend the stability of this community.

Despite the fact that our area is adding scattered infill development and that the majority of the land is residential where no change is anticipated, the Office of Planning has included the Cathedral Heights, McLean Gardens, and parts of the Cleveland Park historic district neighborhoods into the future planning analysis area for the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown Metro Station Areas. The area element states that the focus area terminates at Van Ness Street. The most northern part of McLean Gardens is more than ½ mile from the nearest metro station, and the other neighborhoods are farther away. Yet, these neighborhood conservation areas are part of a planning effort to change the density and intensity of use or introduce major use groups not currently permitted into this area. There is no population growth, the city has a surplus of new, expensive housing, more is being built right here, our planned city has an intentional variety of housing types, so why would OP want to risk the stability of an area that is one of the few places with family-sized housing, the 3<sup>rd</sup> most children of any ward, almost equal homeownership and rentals, and an inventory of detached, attached, garden apartments, and small to large apartment buildings – many affordable due to rent control? I urge the Council to reject it.

The Council should also reject the proposed future planning analysis area that includes all of Connecticut Avenue from Macomb St. to the Maryland border. What is this all about? Is the District no longer interested in unique neighborhoods with different scales and architecture? Is historic preservation no longer valued? What is the Office of Planning's vision? Is it intent on reshaping our neighborhoods?

The Office of Planning has also changed the designation of the Connecticut Avenue commercial area in Cleveland Park from Neighborhood Serving Area to a Main Street Area. The former designation describes the small town, neighborhood serving character of the area. The Office of Planning followed this change on the policy map with a proposed change from low density commercial to high density residential on the Future Land Use Map. This extraordinary proposal would permit the Zoning Commission to zone for matter of right buildings up to 100 feet with an additional 20-foot penthouse.

I can't find any other low density area where this dramatic change is proposed. No other metro station area is proposed to jump three density levels, in fact, I can't find any that would increase more than one level. The only metro station area outside of downtown where high density is proposed is at Ward 5's Rhode Island Metro Station, which is surrounded by industrial land, and is already designated for medium density.

What is going on? All the proposed changes are aimed at benefitting market rate housing developers who will build more of the expensive housing that low income and often middle income residents cannot afford and that drive up property assessments and taxes for local businesses and homeowners.

The neighborhood sees the inequities around the city and the threats to rent control housing that adds immeasurably to the affordability of Cleveland Park. We have sought greater percentages of affordable housing at our infill developments without success. We would welcome Comprehensive Plan policies that flip the incentives to favor affordable housing but that isn't what is being proposed. Please reject these map proposals.





## Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5C07

Government of the District of Columbia

2914 25<sup>th</sup> Street NE

Washington, DC 20018-2510

November 9, 2020

### Statement of Testimony

**To:** The Chairman and Council of the District of Columbia  
Via Secretary of the Council  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020 (B23-736)

Members of the Council, fellow participants, and observers,

We have a new President-Elect, new and returning members of the Council, new and returning ANC commissioners, as well as, other elected officials. I offer my congratulations to all.

I believe, today is a good day to be in the District of Columbia, and City of Washington, despite the ongoing public health emergency.

Before us, today, is the matter of the modifications to the Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia, beyond the framework adopted in April 2020. The Executive (EOM) and the Office of Planning within, offer this Comprehensive Plan, in their words, as a “high-level guide for future growth and development, used to inform public decision-making including more detailed planning efforts, zoning regulations and capital budgeting”. To that end, I applaud the effort undertaken, and the voluminous results produced therefrom.

However, I am unable fully embrace the work in total at this time. I hold that while well intentioned, its messaging glosses over deficiencies remaining within, which threaten in the longer term the very communities, these amendments propose to cure. ANC’s were engaged during the process as were many community advocates, but pushback and we know better wafted in the air too often. Director Trueblood did an outstanding effort staying on message for the Executive because he truly demonstrated he believes in the work, and conveyed an openness for discussion. I say again, he stayed on message.

However, for the average resident, their comprehension of the plan remains unwaveringly personal. Most see the work is a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, many feel it needs “everyday refinements”, thereby creating a vision comprehensible to every person. It must comfortably address those impacted by its outcomes, to be fully accepted. There it falls short, creating an unnecessary tension relating to its implementation going forward.

Now, for the council, its acceptance should demand; the plan answers the following questions;

1. What does this mean to me?
2. Does it clearly demonstrate everyday long-term benefits, meaning, how life will get better for the community and myself, or will it run-over ultimately displacing me.
3. Will “equitable” mean unimpeded access to amenities, mobility, fair wage employment, and enjoyment where I am?
4. Will it bring affordability to where I am and for whom?
5. Will the march of progress and sustainability run over me, or allow me age in place free from threat?

While it has taken some time to reach our current place in this process, I am increasingly uncomfortable with the urgency the Executive demands that the council pass this legislation before the end of 2020. This purportedly will allow the Office of Planning and other agencies to move forward to implement plans using this guide for our building our futures within what they promote as a vibrant, equitable, sustainable city. Regardless, I find myself asking what underlies the Executives urgency. What is the real agenda?

Maybe wrongly, I have come to realize that, I believe, the underlying the “Five Themes” promoted, the overarching goal is to build a framework for a vibrant, equitable, sustainable City-State, Douglass Commonwealth. While it will may stand to improve the general circumstances of the present District of Columbia. However, the benefits accruing to the District of Columbia appear as incidental in the march toward a sustainable statehood.

I implore the Council to insure that building an equitable “Five Themed”, existence, does not mean trampling over those who remained enduring throughout the turbulence, and are the bedrock foundations of the city’s resiliency. For them, the Comprehensive plan appears a little indifferent, as we sprawl to the eastern line adjusting regulations easing the crawl.

Many years ago, a fellow resident, in a more affluent part of the city, once told me the he believed the city could not survive the pull of the poor without building a more sustainable tax base, drawn from higher wage earners. I bristled as this suggestion. Time has proven that the evolving District unevenly prevails. That is not to say that getting here was an easy walk in the park.

Further, I recently had the opportunity to listen to prior Directors of Planning on their thoughts of the proposed plan, the evolution of over twenty years, and the future the 2020 plan forecasts for our city. No panelist disputed the need to rectify the inequities occurring in earlier plans, nor their root causes. They embrace the opportunities to enliven Washington. However, they did point to two glaring needs, the plan insufficiently addresses. They are; 1) the needs of the physical infrastructure to support proposed land use, and 2) the lack of incorporation of robust transportation guidance. Given the need to draw wage earners to in-city employment hubs, the plan falls woefully short, in emphasizing the need for mobility and accessibility, beyond the metro. Buses still seem as some undesirable nuisance, relegated to moving the less affluent. I remind the council that when the Circulator was free that affluent packed them, abandoning them when the \$1 fare resumed. Circulators do no reach areas of Upper Northeast, and regular bus service is difficult and indefensibly unreliable. Here is where the Comprehensive Plan could step up its guidance in land use and policy.

To its detriment, the plan obfuscates a pertinent issue, with potentially dire consequences. It proposes higher density near transit hubs, but offers little in guidance of fulfilling physical infrastructure needs long neglected, and only addressed in relationship to PUD’s or small area development plans which OP severely limits, citing the lack of resources to expand.

Additionally, No Zoning is to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, I believe the edict reads. Thus, the Comprehensive plan guides future land use and policy through its incorporated maps. However, zoning revisions refer back to the Comprehensive Plan. In practice, zoning and zoning adjustment regulations act to constrict and limit dissent and objection to development, nearly giving carte blanche to developers, speculators, and investors. After all, the Executive set lofty goals of 35K homes by 2025. Developers read this, and acted upon it as a clear message to build as 'my right' even when lacking such. This is in clear evidence in the 1000 blocks of Bryant Street NE, and Rhode Island Avenue NE., as well as in other parts of Upper Northeast. Disappointingly, too often ignored is little known historical significance considerations, and development reach extends beyond the core.

One unfortunate casualty is the 3,000 plus amendments appear cast aside as bellicose intrusions interfering with the development of "the Plan". To mitigate unfavorable optics, a crosswalk evolved which provided backward referral of proposal to "like" inclusion it came proposing that such outlying amendments are better suited for implementation rather than in a broader generalized plan document. Incorporated were those consistent with the plan under development, and thus, the discarded will die perceived as unimportant or as irrelevant. The castaways were important impactful statements from community elements demanding acknowledgement of where they see their needs accommodated relating to any plans for the city, regardless its future form.

Again, while making some accommodation, this Comprehensive Plan as presented too often ignores historical significance in land uses outside those well recognized. This occurs, as the developing staff is too unfamiliar with areas it proposes generalized policy and land use goals. This cascades into the regulations [the implementations] regarding Board of Zoning adjustments which demand being more expansive in consideration of impacts. Requiring Office of Planning reports in such matters be more in depth. Require the building permit review process consider not only the project at hand, but also those immediately and nearby affected before approval.

I urge the council, as I expect it will, to give judicious review and consideration, to this Comprehensive Plan before its adoption. Please require that all planning, zoning, and budgetary considerations provide and well document, the cost of and expenditures toward, Resiliency, Sustainability, Equity, Affordability, and Transportation,

Jeremiah Montague, Jr.  
Commissioner ANC-5C07  
202-670-8543  
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**From:** [Montague Jr., Jeremiah \(SMD 5C07\)](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\); cow@dc-council.us](#)  
**Cc:** [Montague Jr., Jeremiah \(SMD 5C07\); ANC 5C Office \(ANC 5C\)](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony, B23-736, ANC 5C07 Jeremiah Montague Jr  
**Date:** Monday, November 9, 2020 1:06:31 PM  
**Attachments:** [2020-11-09 - ANC-5C07\\_JMontagueJr\\_CompPlanTestimony.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Chairman, and members of the Council,

Please find attached a copy of my written testimony relating to B23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020. I have already registered to provide live testimony and received acknowledgement. I could not find a way to attach this to that registration.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Jeremiah Montague, Jr.  
Vice-Chair, Treasurer ANC 5C  
Commissioner ANC 5C07



Jeremiah Montague, Jr  
Commissioner ANC-5C07  
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For the latest information on the District Government's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

Public Testimony of  
Martin R. Welles, Esq.

# Comprehensive Plan

November 12, 2020  
Virtual Zoom Call

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

**Prepared: November 11, 2020**

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Council.

My name is Martin Welles and I am a parent of 3 children who attend Hardy Middle School and Wilson High School. My children have also attended Amidon-Bowen Elementary School and Appletree Charter School. I am an active volunteer and have served on the Jefferson Middle School SIT (school modernization team), Amidon-Bowen and Payne Elementary LSAT teams, and on the Board of Directors of Hardy PTO as Vice-President Civic Engagement, the Board of Directors of Capital Community Partners as Treasurer, and on the Board of Directors of Capitol Hill Little League as Treasurer. I am now the President *Pro Tem* for the newly formed Ward 2 Education Council.

### **DPR Oversight of DCPS Fields**

**805.12 Action PROS-1.2.C: Park Spaces on District Properties Encourage shared-use agreements for green spaces owned by District government and DCPS so that these areas are available and accessible to residents for recreational purposes. 805.12**

DPR has failed to demonstrate proper stewardship of our public parks by entering into long-term, multi-year leases with Private entities. For example, DPR entered into a 55-year lease with a private corporation for Brentwood Hamilton field granting that private corporation priority access from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. every day for up to 55 years. (Attachment A) Then, this summer DPR announced that they are renovating Brentwood Hamilton Field by installing Bermuda grass. Since one corporation has literally all of the day light hours on the field, why is DPR spending resources renovating that field, when there are other fields available to all residents that are in dire need of repair?

Section 805.12 will take fields away from DCPS student athletes and auction them off to the highest bidder or entities which can persuade DPR to enter into multi-year leases. In another

case of mis-management, DPR entered into a 999-year lease for property in Ward 8. DPR is unable to manage the fields in their own inventory, and yet they claim that they will be able to manage DCPS fields. DCPS is the best steward of their fields and should decide whether “community use” agreements work for their schools.

Furthermore, DPR is only looking for shared-use agreements from DCPS fields, but not Charter School Corporations. When I spoke with a representative from DPR as to why this piece of the comprehensive plan did not include shared-use agreements for Charter School Corporations, the answer was that they “didn’t know what assets charter schools had.” Admitting to incompetence is not reassuring. If DPR wants to exercise “shared-use” agreements, they should identify the available inventory at various Charter School businesses and make those spaces available to the community. If we are going to go down this “shared-use” arrangement, DPR should be prohibited from entering into multi-year leases, existing leases should be rescinded, and DCPS should have priority access to its fields from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day.

#### **804.5 Figure 8.1: DPR-Managed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Amenities 804.5**

Dog Parks – Why does DPR have so few dog parks? According to figure 8.1 there are only 13 dog parks in the entire District of Columbia. That’s less than 2 per Ward. Because there are a lack of dog parks, dog owners use athletic fields – and try getting a park ranger to remove a dog from a park. Part of the problem stems from the rules and regulations in place from the Department of Health to build a dog park. The “rule book” is nearly an inch thick of printed paper. Dog parks must be 5,000 square feet and have a space for large and small dogs – Why? Dog parks must have multiple layers of soil, sand and charcoal to absorb urine and a water

source. The rule book on dog parks is thrown at anyone who attempts to advocate for a dog park as a deterrent. More dog parks – less restrictions.

### **Jefferson Field**

In what I will characterize as an overzealous desire to plant trees at any open space, DPR has allowed trees to be planted on Jefferson Field which will be in place 100 years from now and the branches and roots of which will extend into the field of play, causing tripping hazards and disruption to the field of play. To its credit, DPR admitted more than a year ago that the trees were in the wrong place and they would be removed or cut down. However, DPR is now trying to save the trees and transplant them somewhere else. Transplanted trees do not always survive, so it seems the better course of action would be to remove them and plant some new trees in a different location.

### **Multiplex**

The new Fields at RFK have been a wonderful addition to the play spaces available to District of Columbia and Maryland residents. I include Maryland residents because it seems that most of the cars in the parking lot have Maryland tags. Nevertheless, Maryland has the PG County Sports and Learning Complex which has indoor track, swimming, gymnastics, fitness and basketball venues. Virginia has the St. James Complex at Springfield, VA. It combines expansive turf fields, two ice rinks, an Olympic-size swimming pool, gleaming hardwood courts and more, all under one roof of 450,000 square feet.

DC needs an indoor complex of equal or greater stature to PG County and No. VA. There is the perfect space near the Fields at RFK – stretching from Benning Road, NE to C Street, NE. DPR could easily fit 6 indoor turf fields, 12 basketball courts, an indoor track, hockey rinks,



swimming pools, childrens’ zone and health center. An indoor facility could be used year-round and provide a place for all residents to use. Revenue could also be generated from club sports and non-residents. The comprehensive plan must account for a multiplex.

Sincerely,

Martin R. Welles, Esq.

Parent of 3 Children at Hardy MS and Wilson HS  
President *Pro Tem* Ward 2 Ed. Council  
Vice President, Hardy Middle School PTA  
Member, Student Assignment and Boundary Committee  
Member, Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Cabinet  
Board of Directors, NSCP – Treasurer  
Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Little League - Treasurer

LL.M. Georgetown University Law Center – Taxation  
LL.M. George Washington Law School *with Highest Honors* – Litigation  
J.D. Loyola New Orleans – International Law  
M.A. Loyola New Orleans – Communications  
B.A. Viterbo University  
A.A. University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

## Appendix A

DPR Property	Ward	Partner	Type of Agreement	Year Executed	Status	Relationship
Fort Dupont	7	Friends of Fort Dupont	DGS Ground Lease and DPR MOA	2013	Dec 31, 2023 or three 10 year renewal options	Site Manager
Ryan Zimmerman Field	6	Washington Nationals/UA	DPR Sponsorship Agreement (MOA)	2015	2025 Expires with one year options in DPR's discretion	Priority Hours to Capitol Hill LL (15 hours per week)
Kipp Brentwood/Hamilton	5	KIPP	DGS Ground Lease	2014	2044 with one 25 year option	Priority to KIPP 8-7 PM
Kipp Trinidad	5	KIPP	DGS Ground Lease	2013	2043 with one 25 year option	Priority to KIPP For Field 8-5 PM
Kipp Bundy Field (O St. NW)	6	KIPP	DGS Ground Lease	2011	2021 with two 5 year options (parties?)	Priority to KIPP For Field 8-7 PM
Bryce Harper Field	4	Washington Nationals/UA	DPR Sponsorship Agreement	2018	Expires 2028 with one year options in DPR's discretion	Priority Hours to Cap. City LL
Deanwood	7	Kiddie University	DGS License Agreement	2019	2024 with ten one year options	Daycare User
Arthur Capper	6	TOTH	DGS License Agreement	2018 executed 2019 one year extension	Annually	Daycare User
Chevy Chase	3	Northwest LL	DPR Sponsorship Agreement	2019	Annually	Site Maintenance
WTEF NorthEast	4	WTEF	DGS Ground Lease and DPR MOA	2009	Expires 2049 with two 15 year options	Site Manager
Jelleff	2	Maret	DGS Easement	2009	Expires 2020/June 2029 Option Executed	Priority Hours to Maret (15 hours per week)
Capitol Riverfront	6	Capitol Riverfront BID	DPR Grant Agreement	2018	Annual renewal no options	Park Manager
Franklin Park	2	Downtown BID	DPR Sponsorship Agreement (MOA)	2019	10 year renewal with 4 options	Park Manager
THEARC	8	Building Bridges, Inc.	DGS Lease	2001	Expires July, 3000	Site Manager

# Comments of the Citizens Association of Georgetown on Bill 23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020

November 9, 2020

The Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG), which represents over 1200 residents of Georgetown, has the following comments on the proposed amendments to the Historic Preservation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Georgetown is a National Landmark Historic District and a DC Historic District. For almost 100 years CAG has sought to protect and preserve the historic architecture of Georgetown as an historic resource that is part of the cultural heritage of the District of Columbia and the Nation. Visitors to DC want to see the historic port town that gave rise to the Nation's Capital and the residents appreciate it as a pleasant place to live. For CAG historic preservation is an ongoing effort to preserve our architectural history. We are therefore concerned with certain portions of the proposed amendments that seek to elevate development over historic preservation and threaten historic integrity not only of Georgetown but all DC Historic Districts.

## 1000.12

.

Delete "Preservation standards should be reasonable and flexible enough in their application to accommodate different circumstances and community needs."

And add:

"Preservation standards should be consistent with generally recognized standards for the rehabilitation of historic structures to preserve the characteristics unique to each part of Washington, DC."

Explanation: Preservation standards should be applied in a consistent manner. Trendy "public goals" of the moment should not be allowed to override preservation of our cultural heritage.

## 1007.10 Policy HP-1.5.4: Voluntary Preservation

Delete "to the rights of property owners and the interests of affected communities"

and substitute

"to the views of property owners and the affected communities." in Sect.1007.10:

"Engage property owners and communities in designation efforts, and encourage voluntary preservation. Seek consensus on designations when possible, and apply designation criteria with sensitivity ~~to the rights of property owners and the interests of affected communities~~ to the views of property owners and the affected communities."

Explanation: The criteria are objective and should be applied objectively, taking into account the views expressed by property owners and affected communities as to the applicability of the criteria.

#### 1009.1

Delete “enhancement” and substitute “rehabilitation: in section 10009.1 which states:

“Preservation protections help to ensure that building renovations and new development respect the architectural character of historic landmarks and districts. Because the District’s preservation law specifically encourages ~~enhancement~~ rehabilitation of historic properties and adapting them for current use, preservation review procedures also promote high-quality new construction that improves the condition and setting of historic properties and neighborhoods.

Explanation: Rehabilitation not “enhancement” is what the law encourages.

#### 1011.10

Delete “respectful of” and retain “preserves” in Section 1011.10:

“Preserving the Natural Escarpment Protect Preserve views of and from the natural escarpment around central Washington, DC. Work with government and landholders to encourage new development at Saint St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, the Armed Forces Retirement Home, McMillan Reservoir, and similar large sites in a manner that is harmonious with the natural topography and preserves ~~respectful of~~ important vistas over the District.”

Explanation: Preserves is the correct standard. Respectful is a vague term designed to weaken protection of important vistas.

#### 1014 Review of Rehabilitation and New Construction

##### 1014.1

Delete “At the same time, more work needs to be done to ensure that these requirements do not unduly burden property owners, especially resident homeowners.” In Sect 1014.1:

“Historic properties have generated record levels of rehabilitation and construction activity in Washington, DC in recent years, and this trend is expected to continue. Whether these projects are modest home improvements reviewed by HPO as a day-to-day customer service, major development projects involving extensive HPRB review (see text box), requests to certify work for tax credits, or monumental new federal buildings, all involve the application of similar preservation and design principles. These principles recognize that historic environments need to grow and evolve as cities constantly

change. They also recognize that solutions need to be practical and affordable, and the review process responsive and efficient. ~~At the same time, more work needs to be done to ensure that these requirements do not unduly burden property owners, especially resident homeowners.~~ Better access to more specific design guidelines for common home alterations, identifying a range of appropriate treatments, would improve the management of this process.

Explanation: The deleted sentence contains a vague suggestion that generally accepted preservation and design principles are unduly burdensome for which there is no evidence. It is the review process itself that could be improved, as the rest of the section suggests.

#### 1014.4

Delete “basic” in the following sentence as unclear and confusing:

Compatibility does not require matching or copying the attributes of historic buildings, but rather means that additions and new construction should achieve harmony with the historic surroundings through ~~basic~~ good design and close attention to the characteristics and design principles of the historic environment. Good contemporary architecture can fit within this context; in fact, it is necessary in an evolving and dynamic District city and is welcomed as an expression of our contemporary times.

#### 1014.11 Preserving Historic Building Integrity

Delete “treatments like facadism” in the following sentence in Sect 1041.11:

~~“Discourage treatments like facadism or~~ relocation of historic buildings, or relocation of historic buildings, allowing only when there is no feasible alternative for preservation is feasible, and only after a finding that the treatment is necessary in the public interest. “

Explanation: Facadism is a pejorative term to describe the construction of a tall building immediately behind an existing historic structure. It is never an appropriate design so suggesting it should be “discouraged” is inadequate.

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Testimony  
of  
Jean Stewart  
before the  
DC Council Committee of the Whole regarding Bill B23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan  
Amendment Act of 2020”

Thank you Chairman Mendelson and Council Members for the opportunity to testify in opposition to the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. My name is Jean Stewart, and I have been a resident of Ward 1 for over 50 years. I have seen my neighborhood, Adams-Morgan, gentrify rapidly, with so much of the vibrancy that attracted me to Adams-Morgan in the first place being lost as so many of my Black, Latinx, and multinational neighbors have been displaced. Increasing density has not produced more affordable housing; in fact it has resulted in a luxury hotel and unaffordable apartments, generally too small to house families, and more upscale businesses. As a retiree on a largely fixed income, I wouldn't still be here if I weren't fortunate enough to live in a rent-controlled apartment. I see this same pattern across DC, where all those big construction cranes mean more high-priced small apartments and businesses directed to the privileged, e.g. the Wharf, Navy Yard. Rapid gentrification is spreading to Wards 7 and 8, with the likelihood of similar displacement of many historic Black communities. Even though I'm White, I have over all these years enjoyed and valued living in a city with so many richly varied communities, and having neighbors and friends of every race and ethnicity. It breaks my heart to see this cultural and social diversity trampled by deep-pocket developers and their advocates still arguing that more density brings more affordability when experience shows how wrong that is.

The OP amendments to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan are designed to hasten growing displacement and inequity. The proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) include increasing density on 6% of city-owned land but make no provision for affordability other than the limited number of Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) units, many of which remain out of reach of lower and even middle income residents. There is nothing in the proposed changes to the Comp. Plan that will further racial equity and build the housing the city needs. The Mayor's goals of 36,000 units of new housing, with 12,000 being affordable, will not be realized for at least another 5 years, when the needs for housing for our more vulnerable citizens are now. DC faces a tsunami of evictions of renters once the temporary moratorium on rent increases is lifted. Many of our public housing residents have already been displaced, with many more facing rebuilding of public housing projects in ways that will not accommodate families, nor allow rights of return, and will likely include market-rate units as part of rewards to developers.

Further, these amendments were developed around projections of rapidly increasing population in DC. It should be noted that even before the pandemic, many of the high-cost new units remain vacant. The proposed amendments do not address the ongoing vacancy rate, and do not include smart planning to accommodate the recent increase in vacancies due to the pandemic. Re. current and future vacancy rates, how many of the newer DC residents, many of whom are young and in the early stages of their careers, can continue to pay the elevated costs of living here? How many want to start families, but see little or no accommodations to those needs? They may have moved in, but many will likely move out. Assuming ever-increasing population growth is not intelligent planning.

I am also deeply disappointed that the Office of Planning decided to reject all of our requests for clear and directive language, choosing instead to replace mandatory language such as “shall”, “require” and “must” with vague, fuzzy terms such as “encourage” and “should”. One example

is in Section 500.2 of the Housing Element that strikes out “Ensuring” and replaces it with “Promoting”, to say “Promoting housing affordability across all incomes and household sizes.” There is no accountability with such gauzy terms, including when Council Committees hold performance oversight reviews: what kind of performance can be evaluated by “promoting” or “encouraging”? This change of language, calling the Comp Plan just a “guide”, is designed to prevent concerned residents to appeal developments approved by the unelected Zoning Commission, thus further opening the door to still more of the inequitable development we’ve seen over the last 20 years. The Zoning Commission will be fully empowered on housing decisions, leaving no voice for we who live here, and who are the ones affected by these decisions.

I urge the Council to incorporate strong language into the Comp Plan that prevents displacement, protects public housing, expands rent control, expands low income housing and subsidies, and promotes community-led equitable development.

11-12-2020

Daniel del Pielago

Empower DC

Organizing Director

Good morning Councilmembers,

My name is Daniel del Pielago and I am an organizer with Empower DC, part of my work has been focused in supporting the Barry Farm Tenants and Allies Association from the Barry Farm neighborhood. For years now, Barry Farm residents have been promised a redevelopment that will improve their quality of life. Because of this promise, the better part of the neighborhood has been demolished and all the resident have been displaced all over the city. To date, residents do not know when they'll return, to what they'll return to and if they have the actual right to return.

Recently we have learned that the Office of Planning has introduced a plan with the Zoning commission to create the Barry Farm Zone, an action that would circumvent the PUD process and further disengage Barry Farm residents and their neighbors.

Now we see the proposed changes in the comp plan re-write which put Barry Farm residents in a further predicament. First, the plan makes quite a few accommodations for the New Communities Initiative, which for 15+ years now has not delivered anything but the displacement of long-time Barry Farm residents. For that matter NCI, has not created or held on to much needed public housing which can be seen in what's currently happening at Park Morton. Why is planning for the future of the city still making accommodations for a failed redevelopment program.

One for One replacement should not be a goal but a requirement, we need to hold on to all of the public housing units we have and not lose anymore. In any of these redevelopments, displaced residents need and actionable right of return, as it stands now, residents don't know if they will be able to return if and when a redevelopment happens.

We feel that the revitalization of Barry Farm must include:

- additional opportunities for deeply affordable housing on the site, by prioritizing the creation of additional public housing and subsidized units, limited equity cooperatives and utilization of community land trust to preserve housing affordability
- new amenities such as community facilities, parks, subsidized child development centers, incubation of resident-owned businesses, and improved access to the Anacostia River and Anacostia Metro Station.
- honoring the significant history of the Barry Farm community and it's many residents who have contributed to DC's culture through academia, sports, music and the struggle for the liberation of African Americans through placement of historic markers, installations, memorials, exhibits, or through other means

- Lessening the adverse impact of rising rents and gentrification in the surrounding area by maintaining traditional public housing, subsidized via Federal or local subsidy, on publicly owned and controlled land in perpetuity, with no market rate or luxury housing units permitted
- respecting the self-governance and leadership of subsidized tenants by recognizing and supporting resident-led organizations and initiatives, respecting resident input and influence over decision making, and ensuring that no two-tiered system of residency rights and responsibilities is created whereby subsidized tenants are treated differently or have lesser access to amenities than their nonsubsidized counterparts.

While some increase in density will be required to meet the one-for-one replacement requirement, densities must remain in the moderate to medium range with ample green and open space.

In closing, planning must center the experience of those directly affected and not the whims of developers.

**From:** [ruth.hamilton](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** Revised Testimony for Thursday  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2020 12:52:56 PM  
**Attachments:** [Revised Testimony for Comp Plan Hearing.docx.doc](#)

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To whom it may concern:

Please replace my previously submitted testimony with this version.

Thank you.

Honorable Councilmembers,

I am Rev. Ruth Hamilton, 25-year Co-Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian in SW DC, better known as the Jazz & Blues Church. During my husband's and my tenure, our church has become more multicultural, with over 50% of people of color and a diverse economic range. We are a good representation of SW today. (Proposed Comp Plan 1903.35) Moreover, Westminster has served the SW neighborhood as more than just a church, serving as the facility hosting many community, government, and art uses.

I do not pretend to have studied every amendment under consideration. I am here solely to encourage your full support of those amendments related to the SW Neighborhood. We applaud the Office of Planning for the diligent efforts they have made over the years to ensure that the community is heard.

Besides a small green space area, Westminster is the only lot in the square where Westminster is located. It is zoned RF-3, a moderate density, but it is surrounded by much higher density lots and uses. Because of Westminster's needs and the SW neighborhood's needs, the SW community-supported and recommended that the Westminster site's moderate density be increased to medium density and allow for constructing new housing, senior and affordable housing, in a mixed-use and vibrant town center.

Already, this Council has approved the SW community's desires by first approving in 2015 the SW Small Area Plan. This Council recently approved the Comprehensive Plan Framework, further encompassing the changes now sought in the Comprehensive Plan you are now considering.

Our building is challenged with the need for major capital improvements. Our land is our church's largest asset and one we need to put to higher and better use.

Out of necessity, in 2015, Westminster sought and selected a development team to help it create a plan that would 1) save the church and 2) help Westminster further its community ministry. Our plan will result in a new larger community serving church building, 99 market-rate residences, and 123 senior affordable apartments for those earning under 60% AML. (PolicyAW-2.5.4: An Equitable and Inclusive Southwest Neighborhood, 1914.7)

In these sessions, you may hear that churches are gentrifying SW, but the fact is our churches are bringing in more residents onto land that formerly had no residents. We are securing our vital spiritual institutions' fiscal future and, in many cases, such as ours, bringing a massive quantity of affordable housing to our neighborhood. Our new facility will also allow us to increase our work of preserving jazz and blues for our city. We will also include art and recording studios as we understand that equitable, affordable access to the arts is critical for the continued diversity in SW and the District. Westminster will be able to continue to serve the SW community by providing a facility to host community, government, and art programs. (Policy AW-2.5.8: Southwest Arts and Culture, 1914.11)

Passing the new Comprehensive Plan is so important for our neighborhoods and District's agencies to move forward with a unified vision. I know the amendments related to SW are rooted in our community's voice, and I assume amendments addressing other matters are equally rooted in broad community engagement. There will never be a perfect plan, but this is a good one. Westminster's effort to build affordable housing will move more easily with your passage of it. Thank you.

Rev. Ruth W. Hamilton

Rev. Ruth W. Hamilton  
Co-Pastor, Westminster DC  
202-641-8221 cell

RE: Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Geraldine McClain. I am a long-time resident of DC Ward 6 and am representing Concerned Residents & Friends for Better Air Quality & Environmental Justice for Buzzard Point Residents & the Old Southwest Community.

I am here to share our concerns about the Comp Plan amendments, to prevent injustices that our community is currently experiencing.

For over a decade we have had non-stop construction. I feel like a prisoner in my own home. I wake up to the sound of hammers banging, power drills and sautering irons. I can't open my windows because of clouds of dust and engine exhaust fumes from idling construction vehicles. Sometimes it smells like something is burning. Traffic is horrific with the construction vehicles and the normal everyday traffic. After the workers go home, I open my window and turn on my air filter machine and the indicator goes directly to red. This indicates air pollution. When I look out my window, I look straight at a high rise under construction blocking out the skyline. Rodents are running through our yards because of the digging of the ground. Parking is impossible. If we leave to go anywhere when we come back we can't even find a space to unload our groceries. The construction workers come to work early to commandeer the residential parking spaces. High rise buildings and hotel projects are a constant, with our homes being sandwiched in between.

Through this process, some families have been forced out of their homes. The community is feeling suffocated and disenfranchised.

Whenever plans are made, we as a community are the last to be notified. Developers and the city ask our opinion. They give the impression that residents have a choice. But in reality the project is already a done deal when it is presented to the neighborhood. They make presentations of proposed projects, and the neighborhood rejects them, but they get approved anyway. We have no say in these projects but we are the people that are affected.

The Comprehensive Plan needs to address these kinds of injustices. Our group will be submitting written comments with additional concerns and specific recommendations on

environmental justice and affordable housing through the public comment period. I will now read some concerns, as prepared by our group.

- Environmental justice should be integrated throughout the entire planning process, and not as a separate issue.
- Current EMF and toxic industrial facility hazards need to be addressed.
- The Housing Element fails to acknowledge that tens of thousands of Black residents have been displaced. We need stronger language to directly say to the Zoning Commission that equity should be as equally valued as land use.
- We support zero displacement of public and subsidized housing residents, including those in Greenleaf. If the District can give away so much public land and tax subsidies to developers, then it can invest in providing affordability for the Greenleaf redevelopment.
- Residents have ongoing concerns about the city's low level of engagement and lack of transparency with respect to redevelopment. The approval process has to be more responsive to community concerns.
- In the last few months, we have protested, organized, and marched because Black Lives Matter. We feel that there is nothing in these amendments that would fundamentally change the course of events that is displacing Black residents in SW.
- We need stronger language saying that use of public land should produce overwhelmingly affordable housing. We need churches to be dissuaded from redevelopment to only produce overwhelmingly expensive market housing.
- We would like for you to consider NOT changing land use maps in SW without public input. Changes should be responsive to community needs, such as hospitals, school, gas stations and amenities that make communities livable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



**Re:** Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”

Greetings, Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Committee. I am a chemistry professor at Trinity Washington University. My name is Shizuka Hsieh, and I am here to represent a group of academics from universities in the area in the fields of Air Quality and Public Health. After I signed up to testify, others from the larger Environmental Health community have joined the group. We include faculty at Georgetown, the George Washington University, Howard and the University of Maryland. The full list of academic experts will be in the amended written testimony that we will submit before December 3. Today I speak to the section on Reducing Air Pollution (E-54.1). Our written testimony will include comments on the entire Comprehensive Plan Environmental Protection Element.

**DC should strive for air quality guidelines that are more protective of human health.** Section 602.22 about air quality monitoring focuses solely on detecting exceedences of federal standards. Yet states such as California often follow stricter standards. Federal standards are only as good as the administration; for example, this year it failed to adopt stricter particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) standards (NAAQS). The PM<sub>10</sub> level acceptable in the US is three times higher than WHO (World Health Organization) guidelines and more than three times higher than European Union standards. DC should not limit itself to federal standards and instead be at the forefront by adopting air quality standards consistent with other parts of the world.

Many air pollutants from industry and traffic deposit *within several hundred meters of their sources*, putting those in proximity at highest risk. These include particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and black carbon (BC), all of which are harmful to human health. **The air quality section needs to address local pollution hot spots that pose health hazards.**

DC's improvement in overall air quality has been remarkable. But not all neighborhoods feel that their air quality has improved. These neighborhoods are not represented when the **monitors that are used to determine the District's air quality are not positioned to capture areas with the worst air quality.** Residents suffer localized truck engine emissions because of zoning that places bus parking, trash transfer stations and other heavy vehicle traffic in their midst. Other sources in DC include concrete batching plants and industrial facilities located in neighborhoods.

An initial reading of the air quality section located only two places (620.12 on Development and 620.13 on Stationary Boilers) that address neighborhood-level sources. Section 620.2 states that “Emissions from local smokestacks and other stationary sources are fairly limited...” and focuses on motor vehicle emissions as the major source of air pollution in DC. Similarly, Section 621 focuses on traffic as the major source of two pollutant precursors of ozone, without addressing the substantial contribution (49% for NO<sub>x</sub> and 69% for VOCs) that comes from neighborhood-level sources. **Sections 620.2 and 621 should be expanded to address (1) industry and (2) localized truck engine emissions that impact neighborhoods.** Section 620.12 should include engine idling and diesel emissions that come with development and construction.

**Sections about neighborhood-level emissions sources should include monitoring.** Specific monitoring requirements are needed for mitigating “possible adverse impacts”

(620.12) and “achieving compliance” (620.13). Real-time monitoring alerts facility operators about incidents of high pollution so that mitigation measures can be taken in a timely manner. Publically-available fenceline data inform residents whether compliance is being achieved. Neither mitigation nor compliance can be ensured without monitoring that helps polluters achieve emissions reductions. It is not advisable to strike out language requiring monitoring, as appears in section 620.13.

**Education can be expanded to respond to resident concerns.** Section 620.17 on Air Quality Education is one place where local pollution hot spots can be addressed, by specifying how innovative technological outreach can be used to address disparities in air quality. Innovations include local monitoring networks with data available to residents in real time. Making alerts and data available to residents is one way to make education meaningful to them and to provide opportunities for residents to use air quality information to protect their own health.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [Benjamin Bergmann](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Thursday Hearing on Comp. Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, November 12, 2020 12:46:02 AM

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Hello,

Apologies for sending this late. Below is my written testimony that I plan to give at the Thursday hearing.

Best,  
Ben Bergmann

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Good Afternoon,

My name is Ben Bergmann. I live in the Wesley Heights-area in Ward 3 and was elected two weeks ago to serve as an ANC Commissioner on ANC3D. Like many other Washingtonians concerned about rising demand for affordable housing, I am testifying today in support of the Office of Planning's amendments to the District's Comprehensive Plan. More generally, I would like to underscore my support, which I believed to be shared by many in my community, for policies and investments aimed at encouraging development of additional housing of all types in Ward 3.

For the past several months, as I campaigned for ANC Commissioner, I have talked with many of my neighbors about the need for more housing, including more affordable housing, in Ward 3. Residents in my community repeatedly affirmed that they wanted to see the District embrace smart growth policies and investments aimed at making our community more livable, dynamic, and affordable for all different kinds of people.

DC is a diverse, vibrant, and wonderful place to call home. We should all be happy about and welcome continued growth of the District's population in the years to come. But it is essential that the Council and other stakeholders, including ANC Commissioners, citizen associations, and individual homeowners, grapple with the fact that we need development. In fact, we need a lot of it. The tendency, particularly in neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park to balk at projects—or the potential for projects—that might mildly densify an area must stop. It is my hope that amending the Comprehensive Plan with the proposed amendments will be an important step towards reducing the obstructionism and absolutism that can often define the conversation around development, re-orienting the focus away from whether a project should be delayed or blocked towards how the community can maximize benefits or improve a proposed project for everyone, including future residents.

I would just close with something that I discussed repeatedly with voters over the past few months: neighborhoods are living things. They change—and they must change. Failure to streamline the development process, incentivize affordable housing, or promote densification near metro stops and along major thoroughways will not “preserve” neighborhoods. It will simply price out more and more Washingtonians, leading to less diverse and dynamic communities.

I strongly urge the Council to pass the proposed amendments and take other steps to ensure

that the District can grow in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Thank you.

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Best,

Ben Bergmann  
(352) 562-5957

Yale Law School '16  
Duke University '11  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/benjamin-bergmann/>

Testimony from Tracy Hadden Loh

Ward 3 resident

Re: Bill 23-736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020

Greetings to the honorable members of this council, and thank you for taking the time to hear from folks today regarding this important bill. I am making the time myself to testify because it is personally very important to me the city adopt an amended comprehensive plan that will support the construction of more housing, especially in Ward 3 where I reside.

I was born in the 20015 zip code, and I attended Lafayette Elementary School, Alice Deal Junior High, and I am a proud graduate of Wilson High School. While I left the city to attend college and graduate school, and supported a New York career move for my husband in recent years, I moved back to my old neighborhood in the fall of 2019.

I wanted to move back to this exact neighborhood for two reasons: first, I have young children, and I rely on my parents to help care for them for financial, cultural, and emotional reasons. Second, my parents are in the 70s, and as they age I would like to be very close by to take care of them. With the current pandemic situation, I feel blessed and validated every day in prioritizing these issues – I was 100% right to give up other things in order to make this proximity happen.

But it shouldn't have taken quite so much sacrifice and been so hard. I am married and I have two children, and with our budget we had to be looking at three bedrooms or less, with a budget of \$3,000/mo. When I started looking for an apartment in September of 2019, there were exactly four two-bedroom units for rent in the neighborhood, and only ONE three-bedroom unit. That was the total inventory we had to choose from.

One three bedroom unit is not a choice.

I'm a flexible and resourceful person. But this is beyond ridiculous. The totally artificial scarcity of rental housing in 20015 and 20016 is inexcusable, and the city must adopt a comprehensive plan that will structurally reform the regulatory environment that has created these conditions.

Furthermore, such reform should not take decades. Children are being born and growing up while this Comprehensive Plan amendment process dawdles. I urge the Council to add language to the bill text to create better procedures to update this document and keep it – and our city – alive.

Moshe Pasternak  
Regarding B23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020  
November, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to share this written testimony regarding B23-736, Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020. My name is Moshe (Mo) Pasternak and I am the commissioner-elect in ANC 2B04.

I ran, and won, on a platform promoting “Mo’ Housing” in Dupont Circle. In the entirety of ANC 2B, there are only 34 Affordable Housing Units. This is quite simply unacceptable and the Comprehensive Plan should promote increased construction of affordable housing with a particular focus on areas where there is currently a shortage.

The DC Fiscal Policy Institute helps explain the connection between higher density and expanded access to affordable housing:

“Because the financing for construction of affordable housing often requires a higher number of units in a multi-family configuration, changing Comp Plan zoning districts from lower to slightly higher density can help create affordable housing opportunities in expensive, high-opportunity neighborhoods that are traditionally restricted to two-story construction.”

I am urging you to pass the Office of Planning’s amendments before the end of the calendar year. Increased density will help confront climate change by reducing car dependency. However, density alone is insufficient if it does not promote equity. As you consider other amendments, I hope you will evaluate them on the basis of creating more housing in wealthier, whiter areas, especially those West of Rock Creek Park.

Lastly, I would encourage you to add language to improve the regularity of updates to the Comprehensive Plan. We should not have such a long gap between iterations.

There are many advocates, such as Alex Baca, who are better versed in the details than I am, and I urge you to listen to those experts who are fighting for greater density. I am submitting this testimony and highlighting my electoral success to help elucidate the *broad support* for increased housing density. Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [April Gaines-Jernigan](#)  
**To:** [Committee of the Whole \(Council\)](#)  
**Cc:** [April Gaines-Jernigan](#)  
**Subject:** Witness List for Thursday/Friday Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan (B23-736)  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2020 8:01:31 PM

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Hello Mr. Cash,

Attached is the Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's statement to the counsel. My verbal presentation at the hearing is an abbreviated version of this statement and is 2 minutes 30 seconds long. Let me know if you need any additional information

**Testimony of April Gaines-Jernigan**

**Before The Committee of the Whole**

**Public Hearing on Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

**Thursday, November 12, 2020**

**Zoom Hearing**

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson, members of the Council and Council Staff. My name is April Gaines-Jernigan and I am President of the Xi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a long-term DC resident. I appear today to express Xi Omega Chapter's strong support for Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”.

Xi Omega was founded in 1923, and has provided almost one hundred years of significant community service to the residents of the District of Columbia. The Chapter has operated our headquarters, the Xi Omega Center, at 4411 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW since 1981. With membership in our Chapter totaling more than 500, Xi Omega cares for the Washington, DC community through our successful programs and activities provided to the neighborhood and District residents.

Our Chapter is trying to redevelop our underutilized one story storefront property in order to expand our mission and the services that we provide to the community and low-income, underserved District residents. As such, I am testifying today to urge the Council to act favorably in approving the Office of Planning's amendments to the Comp Plan and specifically to request that the Future Land Use Map designation for the Xi Omega headquarter property be modified from Low Density Commercial to Mixed-use Moderate Density Commercial/Medium Density Residential in order to facilitate the redevelopment of our property into a new mixed-use senior affordable housing and Xi Omega Center.. This amendment is critical for our Chapter to be able to implement our redevelopment plans to ensure our long-term viability and ability to continue and expand our programs and community service in the Central 14<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor neighborhood and the District as a whole.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I would be happy to answer any

questions that you may have.



**Derrek Niec-Williams**

Executive Director  
Campus Planning, Architecture, and Development  
Howard University  
2244 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 223  
Washington, DC 20059

**Comprehensive Plan Hearing (B23-736)**

Testimony before the Committee of the Whole  
City Council of the District of Columbia  
November 12, 2020  
(Witness # 113)

My name is Derrek Niec-Williams. I currently serve as Executive Director for Campus Planning, Architecture, and Development at my beloved alma mater – Howard University – a private, congressionally chartered institution of higher education which has called the District of Columbia its home since its birth here 153 years ago.

I am here today, on behalf of Howard, to offer testimony in support of the Office of Planning's proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the University's Central, East, and West Campuses, and to applaud the District for its ongoing management of this crucial, and herculean planning effort.

My specific comments are twofold, and are targeted at items 2353.1 and 2353.2, which are germane to Howard University's West Campus – 19 acres of private property located at 2900 Van Ness Street, NW which is currently home to the University's Law and Divinity programs. While many know us best for our Central Campus in Shaw, our institutional presence at the former Dunbarton College in Van Ness has endured for decades, and will continue to contribute to the character of the neighborhood and the District as a whole for decades to come.

First, we believe that the proposed GPM and FLUM amendments will benefit the neighborhood and the District of Columbia in general by retaining institutional use of the campus while also supporting new residential development within a safe, stable neighborhood that is located in close proximity to transit and neighborhood serving amenities. The opportunity for residential development on the campus has the potential to substantially assist the District in meeting the continuing demand for additional housing, particularly the growing demand for affordable housing.

In the proposed configuration, future development at the campus with institutional and/or residential uses can be achieved while also providing appropriate buffering on the north side of the campus along Rock Creek Park and Soapstone Valley Creek in order to advance the protection

of these important natural resources, an interest shared by the University, the District Government, and its citizens alike.

Given the size of the campus, proximity to transit and other amenities, the high density residential and commercial adjacencies to the west, the park buffer to the north, and the proposal to provide a low density residential buffer along the south, any impacts of the proposed GPM and FLUM amendments will be minimal, or capable of being mitigated.

Second, it is our firm belief that any potential impacts related to the physical development of the West Campus are most appropriately identified, addressed, and mitigated through the underlying West Campus Master Plan. In my experience, nationally, the District of Columbia has one of the best regulatory processes set in place regarding educational campus master plans. The Zoning Commission process ensures community input and engagement on future campus development plans, requires follow-up hearings for further processing of new construction, all while maintaining provisions for as-needed amendments and modifications.

The Office of Planning's proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan will provide the University with the ability to move Howard Forward. It will provide us the flexibility to creatively approach our long-term campus master plan for the West Campus, while addressing a citywide need for increased housing.

[END OF TESTIMONY]



Testimony of Stephanie Liotta-Atkinson, MidCity Financial Corporation

Before the Committee of the Whole

Chairman Phil Mendelson, Chair

Public Hearing

on

**Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

Virtual Hearing

November 12, 2020 | 10 am

Good morning Chair Mendelson, members of the Committee, and staff. My name is Stephanie Liotta-Atkinson, and I am Executive Vice President of MidCity Financial Corporation. MidCity owns and develops multifamily housing in the Mid-Atlantic region, including 1,200 apartment units in DC. A substantial portion of our portfolio is affordable housing. We also have three active development projects in the city that will ultimately deliver over 2,100 units of housing – a significant portion of which are affordable units. From this perspective, I want to provide the Committee with feedback on the Comprehensive Plan’s housing chapter and the Future Land Use Map.

I would first like to commend the Office of Planning and the Mayor’s Office for the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan and the legislation that the process culminated in. The Comprehensive Plan as submitted satisfies many important priorities, and it was formulated with an unprecedented amount of public feedback.

With respect to the Housing Chapter, it is important to note that it is very costly and difficult to develop housing in the District. This, in turn, makes the District one of the most expensive jurisdictions to buy or rent housing. The Comprehensive Plan can help the market meet housing demand and increase affordability by encouraging production incentives and reducing regulatory burdens.

Subsection 503.4 of the Housing Chapter addresses production incentives. I recommend that that section be amended to include a specific list of discretionary incentives and relief measures that agencies can rely upon in the review and permitting process to make housing production easier and less costly, which will in turn increase supply and affordability. In Subsection 503.4, you might consider adding text that states:

“The following and other incentives may be appropriate to facilitate development: flexibility with zoning requirements including height, density, lot occupancy and setbacks, entitlement and regulatory relief, permissive design review, reduction or elimination of parking requirements, expedited entitlement review and permitting tracks, fee waivers, tax credits and abatements, and other financing tools.”

Language of this nature would encourage the use of a broad array of tools to make development more efficient in meeting housing production goals and giving agencies more flexibility to facilitate housing production.

I would also like to discuss the Housing Chapter’s focus on the preservation of housing. Subsection 509.1 of the bill states that: “Preservation of housing in the District-especially affordable housing-is perhaps an even higher priority than increasing housing supply...” This statement goes a step too far. Much naturally occurring affordable housing is functionally obsolete in terms of design, efficiency,

accessibility, health and safety measures, parking and other modern standards and amenities. In many cases, new development is a superior option.

Moreover, a privately owned apartment building that was utilized for 30 or 40 years as affordable housing cannot be expected to be permanently affordable beyond the expiration of affordability covenants on the property. Indeed, private owners and investors were induced to enter decades-long affordability covenants expressly with the long-term redevelopment opportunity in mind as a return on the original return-constrained investment. The Comprehensive Plan must grapple with market realities such as this. The way to do that is to prioritize the production of new mixed-income housing across the city, utilizing the city's inclusionary zoning requirements and driving down costs by allowing the flexibility I described earlier.

My final comment is on the future land use map (FLUM). I strongly support the proposed FLUM in the legislation. I do not believe the Council should amend the map as submitted. But, if you do, my recommendation would be to enhance density and flexibility around transit sites, major corridors, main streets, and sites that allow infill opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



Testimony of the District of Columbia Building Industry Association

Before the

Committee of the Whole

Chairman Phil Mendelson

Public Hearing

on

**Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

Virtual Hearing

November 12, 2020

10 am

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee, and staff. My name is Lisa Mallory, and I am Chief Executive Officer of the District of Columbia Building Industry Association (“DCBIA”). I am also a longtime resident of Ward 4. DCBIA is the leading voice of real estate development in the District of Columbia.

DCBIA appreciates the opportunity to testify on Bill 23-736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020 (“Act”). The Comprehensive Plan is a critical document that will guide development in the District for the coming decade. DCBIA believes that the Act as proposed by the Mayor is a fair planning document that helps all D.C. residents, supports economic growth, and provides decisionmakers with guidance so that multiple priorities can be addressed in a way that is more equitable and inclusive than has ever before been attempted in the District. In particular, we strongly support the proposed Future Land Use Map. The changes made reflect wise planning choices, including promoting transit-oriented development and affordable housing in areas that need it most.

As our members reviewed the Comprehensive Plan in detail, we set out to ensure that its guiding principles remained intact, while reflecting the economic realities of real estate development. We have identified areas where the Comprehensive Plan should be enhanced to ensure that the District attracts the



investment needed to continue the economic growth necessary to carry out the document's guiding principles.

In my own testimony, I want to highlight three broad themes, which can be developed and put into action through the specific recommendations of our members.

**First, the Comprehensive Plan should require the District to consider the impact of new policies on housing affordability.** There is no dispute that the District has a great need for more and affordable housing. While the Comprehensive Plan describes the challenge, it lacks a robust discussion of the drivers of housing costs. The District's regulatory environment makes developing housing more expensive than it needs to be and slows housing production. We urge the Council to address this by including in the Comprehensive Plan a requirement of an affordable housing impact statement before adopting any new statute, regulation, or policy. This will give decisionmakers the information needed to balance multiple ambitious priorities against what has been identified as an essential priority: the need for more and affordable housing.

**Second, the Comprehensive Plan should include additional focus on incentivizing and increasing supply.** The document throughout, and the Housing Element specifically, discusses at length the importance of producing affordable housing and family-sized units, as well as the cost of housing. It should also give

similar weight to incentivizing the market to meet demand for multiple types of housing at all income levels. These incentives can help overcome the high cost of producing housing in the District. Additionally, rather than prioritizing preservation over increasing supply, we think the focus should be on build-first, on-site, or non-displacement approaches to allow for construction of additional units, where appropriate, to achieve everyone's goals.

**Finally, the Comprehensive Plan should acknowledge the importance of the District continuing to remain economically competitive.** For decades, the District struggled to attract investment, but it has been successful recently due to supportive policies. This has enabled the city to weather the pandemic and launch a number of ambitious initiatives. But economic development cannot be taken for granted, especially in our competitive region and as we recover from the pandemic. The Comprehensive Plan should place greater emphasis on continuing to attract investment and grow inclusively and equitably for the benefit of all D.C. residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to continuing to engage with you, your staff, and your colleagues as the Council works toward adopting the Comprehensive Plan. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



**TESTIMONY OF PETER FARRELL, MANAGING PARTNER  
CITYINTERESTS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS LLC**

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Hearing on Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020”**

**November 12, 2020  
10 am**

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson, members of the Committee, and staff. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Bill 23-736, the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020 (“Comprehensive Plan”). My name is Peter Farrell, and I am Managing Partner of CityInterests Development Partners LLC (“CityInterests”). CityInterests is a Certified Business Enterprise real estate firm focused on mixed-use, transit-oriented development that builds thriving communities in the District’s East End neighborhoods. I am testifying today to urge the Council to include the Parkside development in Ward 7 in the Central Employment Area (“CEA”), as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

The inclusion of Parkside in the CEA, which has the strong support of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 7D, would help make Parkside more competitive for locating federal and District government offices. This in turn will bring jobs and increased foot traffic to the benefit of residents and businesses on the East End. Adding Parkside to the CEA will help ensure that the project fulfills its potential for Ward 7.

As many of you probably are aware, Ward 7 is the only ward without a federal office installation. The CEA is part of the point system that the U.S. General Services Administration uses to determine the placement of federal office leases. Its geographic boundaries are

established in Map 3.4 of the Land Use Element, as proposed by the Office of Planning (“OP”). These boundaries reach Wards 2, 5, 6, and 8. However, they do not encompass any of Ward 7. While OP’s proposal recognizes Parkside as a federal employment area, the fact that it is located outside the CEA’s boundaries puts Parkside at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting government agencies.

As OP’s proposal states, the CEA must include core federal facilities and areas of concentrated private office development. However, it also states that the CEA may include additional land necessary to support economic growth and federal expansion, and to guide economic development initiatives. Including Parkside in the CEA will directly advance the District’s economic development goals while providing Ward 7 with the tools it needs to fairly compete against other areas of the city. As the largest transit-oriented development project in the city, and the only site in Ward 7 that can contain large-scale transit-oriented federal government office needs, doesn’t it make sense to provide Parkside with the tools necessary to attract this type of economic expansion?

Parkside as currently planned provides for up to 50,000 square feet of retail (to include an urban grocer), 750,000 square feet of office space, 2,000 mixed-income (workforce and affordable) residential units for sale and for rent, a community park, a new pedestrian bridge connecting the development to the Minnesota Avenue Metro Station across D.C. 295, and a host of other amenities and benefits memorialized in a Community Benefits Agreement with our residents (e.g., we have agreed to establish a scholarship fund for our community residents). Parkside’s location, amenities, affordable and workforce housing, and its capacity to house commercial office and retail tenants, make it a prime location for federal and District government employers as the city grows.

Parkside will also include housing for all income levels in close proximity to these new jobs. Over 284 units of affordable housing have already been completed, a 191-unit workforce housing building broke ground earlier this year, and another 230 units of workforce housing will begin construction next year. These units are the direct result of the Council's investment in Parkside, including through emergency legislation and the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Support Act adopted over the past year. By ensuring that this community can be competitive for locating a large number of quality jobs, the Council can get even more value for District residents from the investments it has already made.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support for Parkside, and we urge you to include it in the CEA when it adopts the Comprehensive Plan. The future of Ward 7 will be directly affected by the decisions made here today as we strive to achieve greater economic prosperity and opportunity for all D.C. residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.