

**Ward 1 Candidates Forum:
Discussion of the Comprehensive Plan on Development, Housing, and Land Use in DC**

Candidate Questionnaire

Instructions: Please complete this questionnaire and return to Justin Godard (godardjm1@gmail.com) by Friday, March 23, 2018.

Name: *Jamie Sycamore*

1) In your view, should our housing policies reflect the belief that safe, affordable housing and safe, clean shelter is a right? If so, do you think those needs are best met through public housing options and/or a private market with more government controls, or do you think it is best met through a private real estate market with fewer government regulations?

Do I believe that housing policies should reflect the belief that safe, affordable housing, and safe, clean shelter is a right? Absolutely. In my view, safety has no income requirement. I believe treating people with respect, not just as a statistic, is the key to safe, clean and permanent housing which ultimately leads to a safe and stable life.

Now, the question on whether it should be supported through private or public funds depends on the needs of the community. I believe strongly in public/private partnership as long as BOTH parties are being held accountable to their obligations. Private investment is critical in revitalizing underserved areas, and promoting diversity in an already thriving community, so long as there is political will to enforce these obligations. The private sector being accountable to government, and the government accountable to the people.

1A) What policies will you pursue that reflect your beliefs while meeting the needs of the extremely low income, moderate income, and families regardless of their race, immigration and/or language spoken?

There are many policies that I would love to pursue, but I will only list a few.

-Completely redefine Affordable Housing from 60%- 80% AMI to qualify; to include those who make 20%-50% of AMI.

-Divide all new housing into three types of housing that must be mixed throughout a new build

1. Low income (30% AMI or less)
2. Affordable Housing (30%- 50% AMI)
3. Workforce Housing (50%- 70% AMI)
4. Market Rate Housing (70%- 110% AMI)

NOTE Percentage is subject to change upon review

- Increase the amount of affordable 3-5 bedroom units to provide and keep families in our communities

- Strengthen the capacity of DCRA to ensure full oversight compliance of properties

- Incentivize private landlords to provide affordable housing in their rental properties; and to provide assurance and insurance that if a lease does not work out (at no fault of the landlord), that they will still be paid by the city through funds that were provided to the department though fines collected from violators of DC Housing regulations.

- Increase rent control regulations to buildings built before 1995 (as opposed to 1975) and include buildings with only 4 units or larger.
- Insure that the those who are aging, elderly and persons with disabilities have access to affordable and accessible units so that residents have the right to age-in-place by exempting buildings from their historical status to provide ADA access.
- Ensure that once an affordable unit becomes available available, that landlords must keep this unit affordable, unless under dire circumstances. (currently, vacant units can be raised by as much as 30%) making units unaffordable.
- More oversight into hardship petitions filed by landlords (more audits and inspections of properties).
- Eliminate the extra 2% tenants pay above CPI.
- Eliminate third party contractors and create efficiency by developing a department in DC Government called the Department of Government Translation and Interpretation that focuses solely on Interpretation and translation services in American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish, Amharic (language of Ethiopia), French and other languages to ensure that all residents are not displaced due to language barriers when applying for services.

2) Do you believe the city's recent economic development strategies affected inequality and homelessness? And in what ways? What new economic development policies, if any, would you pursue to meet the needs of all residents making \$30,000 or less?

Absolutely. The problem with DC is that we are facing the same problems with the same proposed solutions, and that is just to throw money at the problem and hope it goes away. The city does not develop for a person throughout their life span, instead we develop for a specific demographic (mostly young professionals) that will be here for a maximum of 10 years. DC doesn't take into account the lifespan of an individual. Relying on a new group of young professionals decade after decade is unsustainable, and we must start providing green spaces and larger affordable homes to keep families in the city, and to continue into retirement.

As far as homelessness, DC must start thinking more strategically about its homelessness crisis. The city cannot simply force people into affordable units. We must invest in on-the-ground resources and partner with our third party providers to provide direct outreach (social workers, counselors and mental health professionals) to our homelessness population. This also includes mobile resources, such as retrofitting retired metro buses into mobile clinics, showers and laundry, to develop trust within the homelessness community to get them into affordable and stable housing and employment. Just giving money to third party providers is not enough.

3) In your view, has the city's focus on creating more market rate housing supply fueled or reduced displacement pressure on lower income people and affordable housing stock? Are the policies in the comprehensive plan that aim to reduce displacement pressure and preserve black and/or immigrant neighborhoods from gentrification sufficient to that task, or would you take additional steps to achieve these goals?

The Comprehensive Plan is vague and general. It gives no specifics on the future of the Ward or to DC as a whole, and it's that ambiguity that had led to the displacement of many long term residents. I want the Comprehensive Plan to have teeth. I don't just want affordable housing, I

want affordable and prosperous living. Affordable housing means nothing if you cannot afford to live in the area. I want to ensure that children have a place to play, parents have affordable, healthy food options (both grocery stores and restaurants), and I want to ensure that we continue to bring small business to our neighborhoods to provide to our residents to support the lifestyles we all deserve. I think under this current plan, Black, LGBTQ and Latino homes and businesses are being pushed out to make room for residents that will only be here as young professionals, and doesn't look at the long term prospects of our city and its residents. I will fight for language that is inclusive and concrete to preserving the history and legacy of our Ward.

4) In your role as councilmember, how would you use the comprehensive plan to make sure that DC is protecting its infrastructure and the environment as new development occurs?

As your next Ward 1 Council member, I will fight for green spaces in and around the Ward to ensure that families have a green and healthy place to raise their children, and to stroll around when they get old. I want to make sure that the Comprehensive Plan includes detailed plans on what to do with the space in our city, not just vague suggestions of what *might or could* be done. I want to see goal numbers for affordable housing, I want to see goal numbers on infrastructure, I want to see goal numbers on green spaces and I want to see goal numbers on transportation. We must continue to develop and grow with goal posts, not mere suggestions that are subject to opinion and political will.