

**RESOLUTION TO STRENGTHEN THE FRAMEWORK ELEMENT  
OF THE 20-YEAR DC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Whereas the Framework Element of the DC Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) sets the broad goals and vision for the rest of the Plan, and contains DC’s two key planning maps, the Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”) and Generalized Policy Map (“GPM”), with their associated land use definitions;

Whereas the Comprehensive Plan, and its Framework Element, is the document that conveys the DC Council’s legislative guidance on city planning and development to city officials and the DC Zoning Commission;

Whereas in January 2018, the Mayor submitted legislation to the DC Council of the DC Office of Planning’s (“OP”) proposed amendments to the Framework Element of the DC Comprehensive Plan<sup>i</sup>;

Whereas on March 20, 2018 over 270 witnesses signed up to testify at the 14-hour long hearing on these proposed changes before DC Council Chair Phil Mendelson, at which numerous longtime DC residents, ANC Commissioners, Civic Association leaders, and affordable housing advocates spoke against OP’s proposed amendments;

Whereas DC is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis, plagued by rampant displacement of Black residents, communities of color, and lower income families and elders, who are mired in social inequities with deep poverty and unemployment in many neighborhoods, and the DC Comprehensive Plan can provide a roadmap to address these issues;

Whereas the Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”) has stated that the Comprehensive Plan has “no goals, objectives or policies that seek to achieve stable, racially-integrated neighborhoods,” and that “developments that require city review and approval are approved without any effort to promote compliance with the Fair Housing Act”<sup>ii</sup>;

Whereas strengthening the Comprehensive Plan, as outlined below, will further inclusivity and equity, set clear standards of future development, promote predictability and accountability toward reaching DC’s goals, and thus significantly ameliorate possible court appeals; now, therefore, be it

***Resolved, that the DC Council, to help DC fulfill its vision and commitment to inclusion and equity as we grow, adapt, and evolve into the DC of the future:***

1. Reject changes to the Future Land Use Map (“FLUM”) and Generalized Policy Map (“GPM”) and associated land use definitions, which play an important role in the zoning process. The FLUM and GPM maps represent existing development limits based on neighborhood engagement, setting predictability for residents, planners, and developers in each DC neighborhood until 2026, when the Comprehensive Plan will be rewritten. The drastic changes proposed by the Office of Planning are outside the scope of this amendment period, have not been subject to sufficient impact analysis or community input, and cannot be evaluated in isolation of the remaining Citywide and Area Elements of the Plan, which have yet to be released;
2. Strengthen and clarify the Comprehensive Plan Framework Element language by making language throughout the Plan definitive (i.e. changing the “shoulds” to “shall” and the “mays” to “must”) and removing all phrases that cause the Plan policies to become discretionary, therefore protecting residents’ ability to seek accountability and enforcement of Comprehensive Plan requirements in the courts;

3. Include and add “equity” to the Framework Element and the Plan's Guiding Principles, reflecting DC's commitment to solving its economic, social, and racial inequities. This includes emphasizing the importance of community development and non-market based strategies to address housing and other social needs and committing city resources (land, budget, etc.) to transparent and community-based planning solutions, such as publicly owned and controlled housing, community land trusts, limited equity cooperatives, and initiatives that will ensure equitable access to transportation, healthy food, health care, clean water, emergency services, and other public services;
4. Enforce the project impact assessment requirement that mandates detailed reports from relevant government agencies which are necessary for city planners and zoning officials to evaluate proposed project benefits and impacts, measure progress towards meeting DC's affordable housing goals, mitigate rising housing costs, prevent displacement, and address other project effects, in collaboration with the surrounding impacted communities and their identified social and developmental priorities, while maximizing universal accessibility for people with all types of bodies/minds, particularly people with disabilities/disabled people;
5. Require land value recapture<sup>iii</sup> whenever projects go beyond anticipated development limits, request DC Zoning Map or Future Land Use Map amendments, or are provided any public benefits and entitlements, including PUDs, variances and special exceptions, tax gifts, tax abatements, tax increment finance areas (“TIFs”), public land, or public services. Project finances must be transparent, and the value added to projects through public gifts must be recaptured in the form of deeply affordable housing ( $\leq$  30% area median income (“AMI”)), family housing (3+ bedrooms), and permanently affordable first floor retail and commercial space for local small businesses, entrepreneurs, artists, and business incubation;
6. Expand resident engagement and DC Council oversight in the Plan by holding well-advertised public roundtables in the Council Committees with relevant oversight authority for the Plan's Citywide Elements (i.e. amendments to Chapter 5 of the Plan, the Housing Element, should be reviewed by the Council's Committee on Housing), as well as roundtables about the Area Elements held in each affected Ward and neighborhood, and require a progress report on the Comprehensive Plan's policies in the Annual Performance Oversight process for DC agencies; and
7. Emphasize small area planning to assist communities facing major land use changes, as Small Area Plans promote the inclusion of impacted residents in the decision-making process and avoid the likelihood of developers approaching elected officials directly with land use change requests.

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Addressed to: DC City Council Chair ([pmendelson@dccouncil.us](mailto:pmendelson@dccouncil.us)); DC Office of Planning ([eric.shaw@dc.gov](mailto:eric.shaw@dc.gov)); DC Mayor ([eom@dc.gov](mailto:eom@dc.gov))

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<sup>i</sup> See the proposed amendments online at [tinyurl.com/comp-plan-dc](http://tinyurl.com/comp-plan-dc).

<sup>ii</sup> See the 2012 report by DHCD, “DC Analysis of Impediments submitted to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.”

<sup>iii</sup> Land Value Recapture is “the process of requiring community benefits from landowners whose land has increased in value due to government actions.” Nico Calavita & Marian Wolfe, *White Paper on the Theory, Economics, and Practice of Public Benefit Zoning*, Nov. 2014, available at <http://www.thecyberhood.net/documents/projects/whitepaper14.pdf>