

ANCs: Your Neighborhood's Official Voice

DC is divided into eight Wards, and within them are **40 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions** (ANC), which are non-partisan bodies made up of locally elected representatives. Commissioners are elected to two-year terms to represent each of the **296 Single Member Districts**, which consist equally of about 2,000 people.

But why are ANCs important?

ANCs are your most local form of government and serve as your neighborhood's official voice in advising the DC government and federal agencies. Though they can't make laws or regulations, they can have a lot of influence over what happens in the District.

What kind of power do they have?

ANCs advise the DC Council and executive agencies on all sorts of public policy issues – including police and safety, the District's annual budget and economic development matters such as zoning, new businesses and housing.

District agencies are required to give ANC recommendations “great weight,” which is an important tool for ANCs and residents who live in the neighborhood to amplify their voice and concerns. Also, DC law says that District agencies cannot take any action that will significantly affect a neighborhood without giving ANCs 30 days of advance notice.

There are some critiques about this hyperlocal structure, and at times, ANCs can also reflect the inequities of DC with some commissioners having less flexible work schedules to testify at Council hearings. Regardless, it's important to pay attention to what your ANC commissioners are saying – essentially on your behalf.

How do I participate in my ANC?

Each ANC operates a bit differently. You can find a comprehensive list of their meetings here: <https://anc.dc.gov/events>.

The best way to get to know your ANC is to attend a meeting or reach out to your commissioner. You can find your ANC commissioner's phone number and email address at <https://anc.dc.gov/>.

Decoding Your ANC SMD

Knowing your Single Member District (SMD) can be very valuable. You can decode your district by breaking it into Ward, Subdivision, Single Member District.

For example:
8A05 = Ward 8, ANC A, and SMD 05

Find yours at
<http://bit.ly/whatsmyanc>

Find Your Advisory Neighborhood Commission

<https://anc.dc.gov/>

Ward 1

1A - Columbia Heights, Park View, Pleasant Plains
1B - U Street, Cardozo, Howard University, Pleasant Plains, LeDroit Park, Shaw
1C - Adams Morgan, Kalorama Heights, Lanier Heights, Western U Street
1D - Mount Pleasant

Ward 2

2A - Foggy Bottom, West End
2B - Dupont Circle
2C - Chinatown, Penn Quarter
2D - Kalorama, Sheridan
2E - Burleith, Georgetown, Hillandale
2F - Logan Circle

Ward 3

3B - Cathedral Heights, Glover Park
3C - Cathedral Heights, Cleveland Park, Massachusetts Heights, McLean Gardens, Woodley Park
3D - American University, Foxhall, Kent, The Palisades, Spring Valley, Wesley Heights
3E - American University Park, Friendship Heights, Tenleytown
3F - Forest Hills, North Cleveland Park, Tenleytown, Wakefield
3/4G - Chevy Chase

Ward 4

4A - Brightwood, Colonial Village, Crestwood, Shepherd Park, Sixteenth Street Heights
4B - Brightwood, Lamond-Riggs, Manor Park, Riggs Park, South Manor Park, Takoma, Fort Stevens Ridge
4C - Columbia Heights, Petworth, Sixteenth Street Heights
4D - Petworth, Brightwood Park

Ward 5

5A - North Michigan Park, Michigan Park, Fort Totten, Pleasant Hills, Fort Totten Park,

parts of Catholic University and other Catholic Institutions, parts of Riggs Park
5B - Brookland, University Heights, parts of Woodridge, parts of Queens Chapel, parts of Michigan Park
5C - Langdon, Fort Lincoln, Brentwood, Arboretum, Gateway, Mt. Olivet Cemetery
5D - Carver Langston, Trinidad, Gallaudet University, Ivy City, Capital City Market
5E - Bloomingdale, Edgewood, Eckington, Truxton Circle, Glenwood/St. Mary's Cemeteries, McMillan Sand Filtration Site

Ward 6

6A - North Lincoln Park, Rosedale, H St. corridor (eastern half)
6B - Barney Circle, Capitol Hill (southern half), Eastern Market
6C - Near Northeast, NoMa, Union Station, H St. corridor (western half)
6D - Carrollsburg, Fort McNair, Navy Yard, Near Southwest/Southeast, Waterfront
6E - LeDroit Park

Ward 7

7B - Fairfax Village, Hillcrest, Penn Branch, Randle Highlands
7C - Burrville, Deanwood, Grant Park, Lincoln Heights
7D - Eastland Gardens, Kenilworth, Kingman Park, Mayfair, River Terrace
7E - Benning Heights, Capitol View, Fort Davis, Marshall Heights
7F - Fort Dupont, Greenway,

Ward 8

8A - Anacostia, Fairlawn, Fort Stanton, Hilldale
8B - Garfield Heights, Knox Hill, Shipley Terrace
8C - Barry Farm, Bolling Air Force Base, Congress Heights, St. Elizabeths Hospital
8D - Bellevue, Far Southwest
8E - Congress Heights, Valley Green, Washington Highlands

Development Terms and Definitions

Letter of Intent (LOI) – A document outlining one or more agreements between two or more parties before the agreements are finalized (ex: term sheet or MOU). Usually common with real property leases and joint venture agreements.

Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) – A signed contract by community groups and a real estate developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities to the local community or neighborhood.

Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) – A contract between a developer and the city that involves the sale or long term lease of government owned land.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) – Is a type of building development and also a regulatory process. As a building development, it is a designed grouping of both varied and compatible land uses, such as housing, recreation, commercial centers, and industrial parks, all within one contained development or subdivision.

Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) – Is an independent, quasi-judicial body. It is empowered to grant relief from the strict application of the zoning regulations (variances), approve certain uses of land (special exceptions), and hear appeals of actions taken by the Zoning Administrator of DCRA. The Board has five members (three Mayoral appointees, a rotating member of the DC Zoning Commission, and a designated rep of the National Capital Planning Commission).

Variations – A deviation from the set of rules a municipality applies to land use and land development, typically a zoning ordinance, building code or municipal code. There are two types: area variations (a request to deviate from an area requirement) and use variations (allows the property owner to use his property in a way that deviates from local zoning standards (ex. A dentist office in a residential neighborhood)).

Special Exception – is a conditioned, permitted use in a particular zone district, that is, the use is permitted provided certain specific criteria are met to ensure certain negative impacts will not occur.

Codified – Terms / Amendments written into an agreement

Surplus Property – Property retained by the government, but is not currently being utilized and can thus be disposed of to private entities (Privatization).

Map Amendment – DC has a Zone Map. <http://maps.dcoz.dc.gov/>

There are three ways to amend this map: Application for a map amendment (to zone previously zoned land or rezoned already zoned land by application or petition), Application for a map amendment related to a PUD (by application only). Petition for amendment to create a new zone (to zone either previously unzoned land or to rezone already zoned land, where the zone is considered to be grounded in public interest).

Land Contracts – A form of seller financing. It is similar to a mortgage but, rather than borrowing money from a bank to buy real estate, the buyer makes payments to the real estate owner, or seller until the purchase is paid in full.

High Density, Medium & Moderate Density, and Low Density – High density is described as being equal to blocks of flats. Medium density is a described as residential developments that are at higher density level that of moderate and lower density . Low density is described single family, detached housing. <http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Gateway/RuleHome.aspx?RuleNumber=10-A225>

Area Median Income (AMI) – listed as \$109,200 in 2015. Includes 20 nearby cities and counties: PG County, Montgomery County, Alexandria and Fairfax Counties, etc. <https://dhcd.dc.gov/service/rent-and-income-program-limits>

Great Weight – Because ANC’s provide means to the government for DC residents to provide input through representative bodies composed of members of the community, to make this input effective, DC agencies are required to give “great weight” to ANC opinions before taking action that effects residents of a single member district (SMD).

ANC “GREAT WEIGHT” Highlights

For the ANC “Great Weight Law, visit this site >>

<http://tinyurl.com/dc-anc-law>

::: Important highlighted citations :::

(B) In all cases the government entity is required to articulate its decision in writing. **The written rationale of the decision shall articulate with particularity and precision the reasons why the Commission does or does not offer persuasive advice under the circumstances.** In so doing, the government entity must articulate specific findings and conclusions with respect to each issue and concern raised by the Commission. Further, the government entity is required to support its position on the record.

(g) The Commission **shall not** have the power to initiate a legal action in the courts of the District of Columbia or in the federal courts, *provided that this limitation does not apply to or prohibit any Commissioner from bringing suit as a citizen.*

(h) (1) **Each Commission may initiate its own proposal for District government action.** The District government entity to which the proposal is made shall acknowledge the proposal in writing to the initiating Commission within 10 days of receipt of the proposal and shall issue a status report to the initiating Commission within 60 days of receipt.

(4) The Office of Zoning shall ensure that each affected Commission, the Commissioner representing the affected single member district, the affected ward Councilmember, and the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions is provided notice of applications, public hearings, proposed actions, and actions on all zoning cases. The notice *may be* provided by electronic or first-class mail; provided, that the notice to the affected Commission **shall be by first-class mail unless the affected Commission agrees in writing to receive electronic mail notifications.**

For any questions about legal cases, ANC actions, and ways to engage DC agencies using great weight, please contact DC for Reasonable Development.

www.dc4reason.org

202-810-2768

www.facebook.com/dc4reality

Real Estate Deals, Zoning & Planning

There are several areas where good progressive planning for the people can happen: In DC law and legislation acts, during real estate deals both public and private, and during area planning for your neighborhood, among others.

For example, Anytime a new project requires any public entitlement they must be noticed to the ANC, and to come to the Commission for review and advisement requiring a “Great Weight” response. **Public entitlements are when projects and developers require active government support and assets.**

Public entitlements may include financial support like tax gifts, TIF's, abatements, or public land, and public assets, like buildings and services. Public assets and money gifts are usually given away by the Mayor and by the City Council legislatively. **dccouncil.us**

There are also entitlements that permit land uses not otherwise allowed by the law for projects to go above and beyond (not Matter-of-Right), like bigger, taller, and denser construction projects. These land use entitlements are approved by the DC Zoning Commission and DC Board of Zoning Adjustment (and later the National Capital Planning Commission). **dcoz.dc.gov**

Based on recent major Court decisions (McMillan Park & Barry Farms), the potential advisement of the community & ANC has risen to higher standards and clearer expectations. For example, ANC's can play a real role in advising and negotiating mitigation conditions in approving any public entitlements.

Mitigation conditions required before approving public entitlements can include a variety of creative ideas driven by the community after surveying real neighborhood needs and desired outcomes & protections. Developers and the city must be required to put equity into mitigating displacement pressures, environmental impacts, adverse affects on public services like the neighborhood water & utilities infrastructure, transportation systems, parking, as well on public services like overcrowding in schools, rec centers, libraries, parks, clinics, senior centers, etc. etc.

Developers can be required to provide: Much deeper and much more truly affordable housing for families (3+ bedrooms); An anti-displacement community fund to help protect those living around luxury developments who may be more vulnerable to rising housing costs; Clear and enforceable construction nuisance mitigation agreements; Funding for new schools, parks, libraries, and other public services that will come under duress as the neighborhood gets squeezed with more and more developments and people; Requirements for Solar and Wind energy systems in new projects that provide for significant clean energy use; Analysis of emergency response times that may be affected by cumulative projects, and funding for more police/fire/emergency capacity; Funding for upgrades in all public infrastructure; Significant funding for transportation upgrades as more people means more abuse of these public systems; Property tax freezes and abatements for longtime homeowners in the areas where substantial development is projected and underway; Substantial commitments to job training and hiring from the local community to build the new projects; Significant portions of the new commercial/retail space be dedicated as affordable/free space for local entrepreneurs and small biz. Etc.

DC Grassroots Planning Coalition



Development, planning and decision making must be evaluated by the following core principles:

Racial Justice - Actions must benefit, not harm, Black residents and communities of color

Stop Displacement - forced displacement, both commercial & residential, must be prevented

Economic Justice - Human needs always come before corporate interests

Environmental Justice - Protect human health and environment for “front line” communities

Public Resources for Public Needs - Stop Privatization of Public Land, public housing, public services

Equitable Access to Public Services - transit, community facilities, infrastructure must be high quality and affordable for all communities

Community Driven - The voices of rooted, impacted residents must carry the most weight

COALITION INFRASTRUCTURE

Underwriting Organization: Empower DC provides office/staff/communications/financial resources to seed the Coalition.

Steering Committee: the decision making body that drives the work, meeting once or twice a month. It consists of those individuals and organizations ready to put in the work necessary to keep the forums, communications and network alive. Steering group members each represent one voice and position equal to the rest of the members. Steering group members can contribute resources beyond those already offered by Empower DC to grow and maintain the Coalition (finances; space; access to office).

Ward Committees: committees formed at the Ward level lead and facilitate activities within and pertaining to their Wards - such as:

Reading Groups: Self-organized groups of Coalition participants categorized by Ward level and Issue-focus. Reading groups assisted/encouraged/formed by Steering Group members.

Speakers Circle: Speakers are participants ready and willing to present the principles and work of the Coalition to serve as a critical outreach arm (going to ANCs, civics, citizens, issue campaigns, orgs, etc.). Speakers verified by Steering Group.

Advocacy-teams: Coalition members organized and provided with the tools and guidance of the Steering Group members to get into the Council offices to win and defend policies that flow from our principles.

COALITION ACTIVITIES

1) Coalition Involvement: Recruit organizations and individuals to participate in the coalition. Participants sign on to the Coalition principles.

2) Monthly Forums: Continue to host monthly gatherings (currently second Saturday, 1:30-4pm at varied locations) for sharing knowledge and planning collective action. {monthly forums may include break-outs for Ward level planning}

3) Communications: Bi-monthly updates out to all participants; monthly meetings of Steering Committee members; Monthly forums; Website & Social Media; phone calls; announcements email list for sharing development/planning related meetings and notices; issuing position statements/analysis on development related issues in the city

4) Leadership Development: Train and support prospective ANCs interested in running for office in 2018, and support sitting ANCs with fighting harmful development

More Information:

FACEBOOK.COM/DCGrassrootsPlan

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**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 Planⁱ;

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”ⁱⁱ;

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 recaptureⁱⁱⁱ 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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Mover: DC Grassroots Planning Coalition (dc@grassrootsplanning.us)

Seconders: [ADD NAMES/ORGS AND PHONE NUMBERS/EMAILS]

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

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ⁱ See the proposed amendments online at tinyurl.com/comp-plan-dc.

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

ⁱⁱⁱ 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>