

**DC CITY COUNCIL PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING  
MARCH 18, 2021**

*My name is Beth Wagner and I'm a member of the Brookland Manor Coalition.*

**I'm testifying asking you to reject MidCity's proposal to upFLUM the land at Brookland Manor.** The existing PUD already upzones the parcels, so we are concerned because there is no practical purpose for upFLUMing other than potentially extinguishing the existing PUD to build matter-of-right. I also urge you to reject widespread upFLUMing in general as it gives away valuable air rights and eliminates community input for nothing in exchange.

In general, the Mayor's plan to give away an enormous amount of air rights without a codified and meaningful exchange in permanently affordable housing is a highway to accelerated displacement, full stop. **Our meager 8-10% of IZ units has, on an annual basis, produced fewer affordable units per year than are currently being destroyed at Brookland Manor by one publicly funded project.** New York's IZ standard is significantly higher (25-30%) and Austin's [Affordability Unlocked](#) program **codifies 50% of new units as affordable in exchange for density.** DC's reputation as a progressive city is a fig leaf for extremely regressive housing policy, even compared to other examples in the American context.

OP can pretend as if demand is driving prices up, but you, Chairman Mendelson, know that the growing number of vacancies and the stubbornly high rates are both symptoms of the speculative real-estate market designed to insulate luxury development from its consequences. I heard you got arrested protesting for the community. I guess that was a long time ago, but you can still do the right thing here.

Everyone wants to put Brookland Manor in the past, but families are still living there. This will keep happening over and over and over until you change the paradigm of housing in DC. This is up to you.

*Best,  
Beth Wagner*

Additional points:

- Map changes to higher density categories (proposed largely by profit-seeking developers) create matter-of-right development and, in turn, undermine the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, especially the opportunity PUD processes offer to exchange valuable density for valuable benefits to the city and its residents, like affordable housing, quality jobs, and infrastructure improvements. Brookland Manor has a PUD and there is a concern that the proposed upFLUMing will allow developer MidCity to renege on the existing PUD and develop higher density by-right. Proposed changes greatly limit the input and leverage of communities to generate community benefit agreements and win more affordable housing in future development projects.
- MidCity has shown that it cannot be trusted, including by hiring private security to harass and abuse residents.
  - MidCity filed [dozens of predatory evictions](#) over fees as low as \$25 after the redevelopment plan was proposed. Private security guards were hired to [harass us](#) and create cause to [evict us](#) by citing us for 'infractions' such as leaning on fences or

standing in the grass. Our common spaces, including the swimming pool and the playground, were fenced off.

- Overnight, Brookland Manor became a [gated community](#) meant to make life here uncomfortable.
- A mother whose son, an honor roll student, died by suicide was [evicted while she was grieving](#) for “criminal activity.”
- Matter-of-right development eliminates the opportunity for ANCs and residents like the Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Residents Association to have a legitimate voice in development decisions that affect them and their neighborhoods. We need to prevent any more displacement-through-!
- Further more, the Comp Plan is racist – if passed as proposed by the Office of Planning, the Comp Plan will do nothing to address racial equity. The displacement of DC’s Black residents and communities like Brookland Manor will continue.
- The proposed Comp Plan changes have not been examined together for city-wide or site-specific implications. There has been very little community process associated with specific changes.
- The Office of Planning must work with community stakeholders to develop racially equitable Small Area Plans before they approve Map changes that could significantly affect neighborhoods. Impacted communities like Brookland Manor need to have an avenue to initiate a planning process, outside of fighting for money in the budget

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*"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace." - Jimi Hendrix*