

## **DC Office of Planning Performance Oversight Hearing March 17, 2021**

The Office of Planning recently posted their responses to questions from the Committee of the Whole. I would like to highlight why those questions and OP's answers are part of the reason why DC is the number one US city for intense gentrification in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, OP provides the percentage of "PUDs that exceed minimum requirements for storm runoff". The Council does not ask and OP does not volunteer about furthering fair housing or racial equity. The public has delivered DC Council a clear mandate for racial justice and especially with fair housing. The Council must exercise greater oversight over the Office of Planning. OP is an unelected behemoth with too much concentrated power while too closely tied to the development cabal. It must go the way of DCRA. Break up the Office of Planning.

In a September 2019 presentation, OP Director Andrew Trueblood acknowledged OP's role to "affirmatively further fair housing". DHCD stated in its preliminary report that, "Residential developments that require city review and approval are approved without any effort to promote compliance with the Fair Housing Act". The Office of Planning wants to meet some requirements of the federal Fair Housing Act – namely opening up Ward 3 – but ignore other provisions of that Act primarily wherein it prohibits racial disparate impact.

OP has shown no evidence in its report that it is currently in compliance with the DC Comprehensive Plan to require it employees to participate in a Fair Housing Act education program. Second, OP routinely makes no mention of racial impact, fair housing, or displacement in Zoning Commission hearings.

Third, OP deprives DC Council and the public of essential information about racial trends. OP lists 10 data reports on its website for 2019-2020. Its annual Black history Month flyer gives no indication whether various statistics are downward or upward. Its "key demographic indicators" only list race as a percentage of the population but says nothing about displacement or that Black median income declined between 2007-2017.

Finally, we cannot wall off oversight of OP from discussion of the Comprehensive Plan. OP submitted more than 1,000 pages of amendments with the effect of weakening language that otherwise protected marginalized neighborhoods. The agency did not perform the required environmental assessment or provide the supporting information for its amendments, including map changes, as required by regulations. Yet, OP said in its response letter that, "There are no legislative requirements for which the agency lacks sufficient resources to fully implement." In other words, OP must be saying it deliberately ignored the law. This is why the DC Council needs to exercise greater oversight and break up the Office of Planning, as it did with DCRA. My time is up. Thank you.

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