

Zoning Commission members,

Thank you for your time. My name is Jennifer Hosler and I am providing testimony as a Ward 5 resident and a pastor of Washington City Church of the Brethren, a Christian church in Ward 6. I am also a doctoral candidate in Human Services Psychology and a ONE DC volunteer. My testimony tonight focuses on the number of affordable units and the bedroom sizes in the proposed redevelopment.

From 2002 to 2013, the District lost half its number of low-cost housing units; over the same time, moderately-priced units also decreased (Rivers, 2015).¹ Meanwhile, family homelessness is increasing and, last year, there were almost 1500 homeless families and more than 2700 homeless children (Kids Count Data Center, 2016).²

I am grateful for Mid-City's commitment to continue with Section 8. However, considering the diminishing number of affordably-priced units and DC's rising family homelessness, I believe that it is *unjust* for Mid-City Financial to reduce the number of affordably-priced units from 535 to 373 units. Currently, the unsubsidized units are available below the average market rate. Brookland Manor has been and is a place for families, many of whom are low-income, African-American residents.

With rising family homelessness and a proposed three-fold increase in density, Mid-City has the ethical obligation *to do more for families in the District of Columbia*. Additionally, the District of Columbia has an obligation to require developers to do more. I understand that Brookland Manor was part of the late Eugene Ford, Sr.'s vision of meeting the housing needs of the District of Columbia—not the needs of the wealthy, the most privileged, but the needs of *regular families*. As proposed, the current plan is detrimental to families in the District of Columbia because it reduces both family-sized units (4 and 5 bedrooms) and affordably-priced units. Mid-City has testified before this Zoning Commission that no developers are building 4 and 5 bedrooms and therefore, they argued, it is reasonable to also not build them. This is not an ethical argument considering the number of DC homeless families. The market is not catering to families, but to young, urban, middle-class professionals without children, like me.

It is up to ethically-minded developers to build housing that does not exclude or prioritize my life over the lives of low-income African-American families. I urge Mid-City to live up a vision of a just, diverse, and inclusive District of Columbia. Zoning Commission members, I urge you to work for a just, diverse, and inclusive District of Columbia and require Mid-City to keep the current bedroom sizes and to guarantee 535 affordably-priced units.

Jennifer Hosler, MA
Minister in the Church of the Brethren
PhD Candidate, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

¹ According to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, the number of units went from 58,000 units to 33,000 units. Moderately priced units also diminished over that time, from 28,000 to 20,000 (Rivers, 2015).

² In the District of Columbia for the year 2016, there were 1,491 homeless families, which included 2,722 children (Kids Count Data Center, 2016).

References

- Kids Count Data Center (2016). Number of homeless - persons, children and families. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/4833-number-of-homeless--persons-children-and-families#detailed/3/any/false/870,573,869,36,868/988,1006,1007,1008/11208>
- Rivers, W. (2015). Going, going, gone: DC's vanishing affordable housing. DC Fiscal Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Going-Going-Gone-Rent-Burden-Final-3-6-15format-v2-3-10-15.pdf>