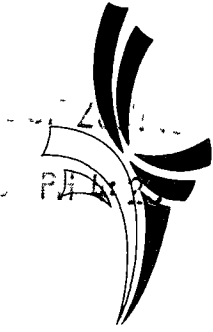


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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Testimony on ZC 04-33G (zcsubmissions@dc.gov)
Inclusionary Zoning Amendments, Subtitle C, General Rules, Chapter 10
August 31, 2015**

On behalf of the Social Action and Awareness Commission (SAAC) of First Congregational United Church of Christ (First Church)¹, we call on the Zoning Commission to make Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) more inclusive.

First Church has a long history of engagement with people who are homeless, both as a service provider and as a sponsor of programs housed at our church. Our downtown location has made us keenly aware of the city's lack of housing and supportive services for those most in need. In the 1980s we founded the Dinner Program for Homeless Women (now ThriveDC) and gave leadership to the movement for a "living downtown." From its inception we have participated in the Washington Interfaith Network's advocacy for housing and jobs; and we are currently sponsoring a family in rapid rehousing through the One Congregation One Family program. Every day, people come to our church seeking help. Pathways to Housing's field office, located in our church, has been an invaluable ally in helping people with both their immediate and long-term needs.

Some of our members volunteer in the after-school tutoring program of Shaw Community Ministry (SCM), a United Church of Christ-sponsored program at 11th and R Streets, NW. Up and down the streets of Shaw, new "luxury" housing is displacing formerly affordable housing at a rapid pace, usually

¹ Founded in 1865 as the first integrated church in Washington, DC, First Church is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. In 1867, members of the congregation including Oliver O Howard played a large role in the founding of Howard University.

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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CASE NO. 04-33G
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO. 11

through smaller projects that do not trigger the IZ requirement. It is heartbreaking that most of the SCM staff cannot afford to live in the neighborhood whose children they serve; and that first and second graders feature gentrification in very poignant skits at SCM performances. Few can ever hope to stay and partake in the up-scale benefits others now enjoy. *Something is terribly wrong with this picture.*

A First Church SAAC priority is adequate housing for low-income families with children. Toward that end, we have actively supported both the Mayor's increased funding for subsidized housing and replacing DC General with more suitable housing for its residents. But in this city of rapid gentrification, sharply escalating rents and skyrocketing real estate prices, housing options are vanishing even for many people with full-time employment. As the gaps between rich, middle income, and poor people widen, it is urgent that everyone, including private developers, step up to the plate and contribute more to address the housing crisis in our city.

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is one housing tool that benefits primarily the middle-income work force – teachers, firefighters, non-profit staff, hourly wage earners, etc. Developers receive a public subsidy in the form of “bonus density” along with other incentives enabling them to build more units of market-rate housing in exchange for building more units of less-than-market-rate housing. But many small luxury projects with fewer than 10 units – such as those in Shaw and other neighborhoods around the city – are not subject to IZ requirements.

As massive new housing goes up in DC, we need to assess honestly the social consequences of rapid growth and change. Are we attaining the highest standards of *top-quality new mixed-income communities* with adequate public parks and playgrounds, community centers, schools, churches and stores? Or, are we just building “*product*,” as one developer put it? What is our collective responsibility to conserve our neighborhoods and their distinctive cultures and character? How can we shift thinking toward *community development instead of merely real estate development*? In the attachment below we suggest measures to broaden IZ requirements and pose questions to guide future policy as the city continues to experience rapid change.

Public support of housing-for-all is strong. In 2015, DC taxpayers supported a substantial increase in funding to step up production of subsidized housing.

New, highly qualified leaders at the Department of Housing and Community Development promise a break from business as usual so that our city can finally address the long-standing lack of housing that is sapping human dignity and hope.

It is time for private developers to do more to build diverse, mixed-income communities in Washington, DC. Profit is necessary and important, but their obligation to the city that makes their development so profitable is even more important.

We call on the Zoning Commission to make Inclusionary Zoning more inclusive. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



Meg Maguire
(On behalf of Social Action and Awareness
Commission of First Congregational UCC)



Rev. Dr. Sidney D. Fowler
Senior Minister



Lucille Dickinson, Moderator



Mike Zawada, Chair, SAAC



James Ross, Social Action Community
Organizer

ATTACHMENT: Policy Recommendations and Questions
Testimony by First Congregational United Church of Christ on ZC 04-33G
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How can IZ better deliver the mixed-income communities intended? We believe that Inclusionary Zoning can and must become more inclusive. We look forward to the final recommendations by the Office of Planning (OP) that address how this can best be achieved. Below we suggest principles to guide OP's study and the Zoning Commission's decisions.

I. Broaden IZ requirements:

- Increase the proportion of qualifying households that are low-income by lowering the top tier income threshold.
- Increase the number of IZ units produced for substantially lower income levels.
- Cap the amount that occupants of IZ units must pay at 25% of their income.
- Strongly encourage developers to provide larger IZ units for family housing. (Most housing units built today are 1-2 bedrooms, hardly adequate for growing and/or extended families.)
- Require that all new or substantially renovated residential or mixed-use buildings in both the original Downtown Development District and the expanded Downtown provide IZ units. (As a downtown church, we are particularly concerned that, even as the expanded boundaries will triple the size of downtown (to include everything from Foggy Bottom to NOMA), most development projects will be exempt from IZ and will not be required to provide any "affordable" housing, leaving developers free to build only luxury housing. We seriously question the need for any additional bonus density for developers: Virtually all parking requirements for new development would be removed under the draft zoning changes constituting a huge public subsidy for which there should be some exaction in the form of workforce and lower income housing.)
- Reduce any incentives for displacement and demolition of existing housing by measures such as
 - Requiring IZ to apply to smaller projects

- **Requiring one-for-one replacement of housing units at the same rental or purchase rate of those demolished without any additional density bonus.**

II. Answer questions that are fundamental to sound policy.

DC's record on IZ has been very disappointing to date, but, with more units in the pipeline, the public will soon be able to determine if DC's IZ efforts are achieving the diverse, mixed-income communities the public has long been promised. However, many questions have not been answered about IZ's relationship to private market forces that may be driving eviction and displacement of families, and encouraging teardowns or conversions of affordable family housing to create huge housing developments that foster little sense of community. How can the Zoning Commission and other city agencies make sound policy when so little is understood about for-profit developers' contributions to the housing crisis in DC?

We urge the city to support a robust research agenda that would address issues such as the following:

- **How many housing units — especially those large enough for families and for single occupancy dwellers — are developers tearing down to make room for new developments? Where is this occurring? Who is being displaced? Where are displaced families finding housing? How can the IZ mandate be strengthened to meet the need for family housing so that people can live here throughout their lives?**
- **What would be the effect if the city required developers to replace all units torn down with units of the same size and affordability? Why should developers be given any density bonuses for tearing down existing housing?**
- **What would be the effect on development of smaller projects if, instead of requiring IZ at and above 10 units, this requirement went into effect for any development over 4 units?**
- **Who actually benefits from IZ housing by race, age, occupation, income, and education? Is IZ achieving its goals of mixed-income development and economic diversity?**