



Dear Commissioners,

The Westminster Presbyterian Church has been a critical component of the Southwest neighborhood for over 150 years. The Church has played an integral role in bringing residents of various backgrounds and faith together in pursuit of social harmony and justice. The Church has served as a frequent gathering space for meaningful community conversations, including the discussions that led to the Southwest Neighborhood Plan (SNP), which captures so much of what is important to Southwest residents.

On behalf of SWDC Action, we write this letter in support of the proposed Westminster project at 4<sup>th</sup> and I Street SW. The Westminster project received a rating of \*84/100 based on the grading criteria that we developed to fairly assess the impact proposed developments will have on the equitable housing in SW. We have applied our grading criteria to the Westminster project and determined the following:

- **Affordability: 29/30 points**  
The Westminster project proposes to provide rental units exclusively to seniors at an affordable rate.
- **Acceptance of vouchers: 20/20 points**
- **Inclusion of 3-bedroom units which its: 0/20 points**  
The project will not include 3-bedroom units, which SWDC Action believes is important to provide adequate housing for families, and space for aides and personal assistants of people living with disabilities.
- **ADA compliance: 15/15 points**
- **Provide programs for residents for a better quality of life (health services, etc.) / includes community-serving retail: 15/15 points**
- **+5 bonus points for including senior housing.**

Although we wish the affordability was permanent and that more than just one-bedrooms were offered, SWDC Action believes that the Westminster project should be a model of the minimum requirements for future housing developments in Southwest. There have been too many projects to come online that have not aligned with the SNP, for example:

- The Cotton Annex received a -15/100 score because the project proposed only the bare minimum affordability requirement of 8% inclusionary zoning units. Douglas Jemal, founder and president of Douglas Development, is a notorious DC slumlord who is guilty of defrauding the public and has a long history of trampling on the rights and dignity of DC residents, especially Black DC residents.

- The development 5 M ST SW received a 36/100 score due to its revised 19 affordable units out of 615 total units proposed. This was only a gesture to suggest they took into account the ANC's comments and public opposition to their project.
- The proposed 45 Q St SW project received a 40/100. Out of 60 residential units, this proposed development offers just 10 inclusionary zoning units, and only contributes studio, one, and two-bedroom units toward DC's stock of IZ units, which already consists of predominantly studio and one-bedroom units.

These projects have not only gone against the SNP but have a harmful effect on the community. Projects that are overwhelmingly market-rate, priced beyond the median Black household income, do not contribute to inclusivity and equity. In fact, they do the opposite, which is why residents have seen Southwest become richer, Whiter, and more expensive. Since 2000, the median income has increased 110%, the median sales price of homes has increased 55%, the Black population's percentage points have been nearly cut in half, while the White population has more than doubled. In addition, inclusionary zoning which is a token gesture for developers to claim affordability for at least some residents remains out of reach for most D.C. Black households.

We hope the Zoning Commission and the Office of Planning will take note and judge future projects accordingly. Please accept this letter into the record as our approval of the proposed Westminster project.

Sincerely,

SWDC Action