

## **APPENDIX – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REFERENCES**

### **Introduction**

**§ 104.8:** As noted above, Small Area Plans are not part of the Comprehensive Plan. As specified in the DC Code, Small Area Plans supplement the Comprehensive Small Area Plans supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for areas ranging in size from a few city blocks to entire neighborhoods or corridors. In the past, Small Area Plans have been prepared for places in Washington, DC where District action was necessary to manage growth, promote revitalization, or achieve other long-range planning goals. Examples include Southwest, Mid-City East, and Walter Reed.

### **Framework Element**

**§ 203.12:** The 2006 Plan accurately predicted household size falling through 2010, and then stabilizing. According to the US Census, the percentage of older residents is expected to increase as “baby-boomers” retire, and the percentage of foreign-born residents, particularly those of Hispanic origin, is expected to rise. The District is expected to continue to be a magnet for the region’s young professionals and empty nesters. Its ability to attract and retain young households and families with children rests largely on improving the quality of public education and addressing basic issues like crime, provision of services, inventory of family-sized housing stock, and housing affordability.

**§ 206.1:** The rising cost of housing is one of the most pressing and critical issues facing the District and the region. To achieve our goal of an inclusive city, we must meet the challenge of providing housing for a variety of household types, including families, the elderly, and the homeless; housing for owners and renters; housing for existing and new residents; workforce housing; and housing affordable at all income levels. Tied in with housing cost issues are deeper concerns about displacement, the impacts of gentrification, and long-term competitiveness.

**§ 206.2:** In the District, market rate housing costs have steadily climbed as demand has increased with population growth. Since the economic recovery began in 2010 through 2017, the median sales price of single-family homes and condominiums have increased 7.3 and 2.8 percent per year, respectively. Average rents have increased 3.8 percent per year. Cost increases are driven by several factors, including: the strong and growing economy; migration into the city; increasing length of residency; growth of high paying jobs; increasing educational attainment levels among newer residents (which correlates to income); and an increase in higher-income families having and raising children in the District. These factors have produced particularly strong demand for housing near Metro stations and for family housing with three or more bedrooms.

**§ 206.4:** For many lower income households, increasing housing costs have become difficult to afford, in part because their income growth has not kept pace with increased costs. Most lower income residents are financially burdened by housing costs, which can lead to displacement from their neighborhood, or even the District. In addition, housing insecurity has negative impacts on household health, school performance, job access, and other indicators of wellbeing. Residents of color are a majority of lower-income households in the District and, therefore, face a disproportionate share of the problems caused by housing insecurity and displacement.

**§ 206.6:** Rising housing costs and decreasing availability of affordable housing are causing more households to be severely burdened, which means their housing costs consume more than 50 percent of household income. In 2017, more than 42,800 households were severely burdened by rental housing costs, while another 32,600 rental households were burdened by housing costs consuming 30 to 50

percent of their income. These households must reduce expenditures on other necessities, such as food and health care. Further, households that are severely burdened by housing costs must often choose between a home that is in a desirable location – close to their community, jobs and/or services – and a home that is more affordable.

**§ 224.9:** Specific public benefits are determined through each PUD application and should respond to critical issues facing the District as identified in the Comprehensive Plan and through the PUD process itself. In light of the acute need to preserve and build affordable housing, described in Section 206, and to prevent displacement of on-site residents, the following should be considered as high-priority public benefits in the evaluation of residential PUDs:

- The production of new affordable housing units above and beyond existing legal requirements or a net increase in the number of affordable units that exist on-site;
- The preservation of housing units made affordable through subsidy, covenant, or rent control, or replacement of such units at the same affordability level and similar household size;
- The minimizing of unnecessary off-site relocation through the construction of new units before the demolition of existing occupied units; and
- The right of existing residents of a redevelopment site to return to new on-site units at affordability levels similar to or greater than existing units.

**§ 225.4:** Neighborhood Conservation areas have little vacant or underutilized land. They are generally residential in character. Maintenance of existing land uses and community character is anticipated over the next 20 years. Where change occurs, it will typically be modest in scale and will consist primarily of infill housing, public facilities, and institutional uses. Major changes in density over current (2017) conditions are not expected but some new development and reuse opportunities are anticipated, and these can support conservation of neighborhood character where guided by Comprehensive Plan policies and the Future Land Use Map. Neighborhood Conservation Areas that are designated “PDR” on the Future Land Use Map are expected to be retained with the mix of industrial, office, and retail uses they have historically provided.

**§ 225.5:** The guiding philosophy in Neighborhood Conservation Areas is to conserve and enhance established neighborhoods, but not preclude development, particularly to address city-wide housing needs. Limited development and redevelopment opportunities do exist within these areas. The diversity of land uses and building types in these areas should be maintained and new development, redevelopment, and alterations should be compatible with the existing scale, natural features, and character of each area. Densities in Neighborhood Conservation Areas are guided by the Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan policies. Approaches to managing context-sensitive growth in Neighborhood Conservation Areas may vary based on neighborhood socio-economic and development characteristics. In areas with access to opportunities, services, and amenities, more levels of housing affordability should be accommodated. Areas facing housing insecurity (see Section 206.4) and displacement should emphasize preserving affordable housing and enhancing neighborhood services, amenities, and access to opportunities.

**§ 227.6:** Moderate Density Residential: This designation is used to define neighborhoods generally, but not exclusively, suited for row houses as well as low-rise garden apartment complexes. The designation also applies to areas characterized by a mix of single-family homes, two- to four-unit buildings, row houses, and low-rise apartment buildings. In some neighborhoods with this designation, there may also be

existing multi-story apartments, many built decades ago when the areas were zoned for more dense uses (or were not zoned at all). Density in Moderate Density Residential areas is typically calculated either as the number of dwelling units per minimum lot area, or as a FAR up to 1.8, although greater density may be possible when complying with Inclusionary Zoning or when approved through a Planned Unit Development. The R-3, RF, and RA-2 Zone Districts are consistent with the Moderate Density Residential category, and other zones may also apply.

### **Land Use Element**

**Policy LU-1.5.1: Infill Development (§ 308.6):** Encourage infill development on vacant land within Washington, DC, particularly in areas where there are vacant lots that create gaps in the urban fabric and detract from the character of a commercial or residential street. Such development should reflect high-quality design, complement the established character of the area and should not create sharp changes in the physical development pattern.

**Policy LU-2.1.3: Conserving, Enhancing, and Revitalizing Neighborhoods (§ 310.10):** Recognize the importance of balancing goals to increase the housing supply, including affordable units, and expand neighborhood commerce with parallel goals to preserve historic resources, advance environmental and sustainability goals, and further Fair Housing. The overarching goal to create vibrant neighborhoods in all parts of the District requires an emphasis on conserving units and character in some neighborhoods and revitalization in others, including inclusive and integrated growth and meeting communities and public facility needs. All neighborhoods have a role to play in helping to meet broader District-wide needs, such as affordable housing, public facilities, and more.

**Policy LU-2.1.7: Row House Neighborhood Character (§ 310.14):** Respect the character of row house neighborhoods by ensuring that infill development is compatible with existing design patterns and maintains or expands the number of family-sized units. Upward and outward extension of row houses that compromise their design should be discouraged.

**Policy LU-2.1.8: Explore Approaches to Additional Density in Low- and Moderate-Density Neighborhoods (§ 310.15):** Notwithstanding Policy LU-2.1.5, explore approaches, including rezoning, to accommodate a modest increase in density and more diverse housing types in low-density and moderate-density neighborhoods where it would result in the appropriate production of additional housing and particularly affordable housing. Build upon the guidance of the April 2020 Single Family Housing Report to diversify the cost of housing available in high-opportunity, high-cost low- and moderate-density neighborhoods, especially near transit. However, neighborhood planning and engagement is a condition predicate to any proposals. Infill and new development shall be compatible with the design character of existing neighborhoods. Minimize demolition of housing in good condition.

### **Housing Element**

**§ 500.4:** However, as Washington, DC remains attractive to and retains higher-income households, rising demand and competition has and will put upward pressure on rents and a greater number of lower-income households will experience greater pressure from rising housing costs, leading to residents leaving or bearing a housing burden. Thus, greater public action is needed to fulfill the vision of an inclusive District.

**§ 500.15:** As prices have risen, the percentage of residents able to comfortably afford the median priced home or apartment has dropped. In 2001, 34 percent of the District's for-sale housing would have been affordable to a family supported by a full-time schoolteacher. By 2004, that figure had dropped to just 16

percent. By 2017, the percentage of homes in the District that a full-time schoolteacher could afford had partially recovered to 19 percent. This was due to a variety of factors, including higher wages, decreasing interest rates, the drop in values after 2007, and the increasing availability of condominiums that are less expensive than single-family homes. Nevertheless, the tightening availability of moderately priced housing is hindering the District's ability to retain and attract moderate- income households.

**§ 500.18:** Rents have also risen, making it more difficult for many to afford to live in the District. Between 2006 and 2017, at 3.4 percent per year, rents in Washington, DC rose faster than the MFI of the region, which grew by only 1.8 percent per year. Much of the increase in rents was due to new amenity-rich buildings that attracted higher income households to the District. However, even rents in buildings built prior to 2006 rose at a rate of 2.7 percent per year. As a result, between 2006 and 2017, nearly 18,300 fewer affordable units were available to households earning equal to or less than 60 percent of the MFI (See Figure 5.10b Change in Supply of Rental Units by Affordability). There are many reasons in addition to rising rents for the overall reduction in the number of lower cost units, including demolition of older buildings and conversion to condominiums.

**§ 500.19:** The rising costs have continued a crisis of affordability, particularly for the District's lowest-income residents. Over 20 percent (56,700) of all households in 2017 were severely burdened by housing costs, and another 16 percent (44,600) of households were burdened. Residents must set aside a growing share of their earnings for housing and utilities, leaving less disposable income for health care, transportation, food, other basic needs, and the ability to set aside savings to prepare for the future. The greatest share of burdened and severely burdened households are the 39,500 rental households earning less than 30 percent of the MFI. The market has also become more segmented, with dwindling housing choices for working families and the middle class in general. Expanded housing options for lower- and middle-income households have become limited, and the opportunity for many residents to build individual wealth through homeownership has become more difficult. Racial representation differs across income groups, and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by increasing housing costs and diminishing supply of affordable options. The District's Black and Hispanic households experience higher levels of rent burden that increase the likelihood of displacement.

**§ 501.1:** The overarching goal for housing is to provide a safe, decent, healthy, and affordable housing supply for current and future residents in all of Washington, DC's neighborhoods by maintaining and developing housing for all incomes and household types. The overall goal for the District of Columbia is that a minimum of one third of all housing produced should be affordable to lower-income households. The short-term goal is to produce 36,000 residential units, 12,000 of which are affordable, between 2019 and 2025.

**Policy H-1.1.2: Production Incentives (§ 503.4):** Provide suitable regulatory, tax, and financing incentives to meet housing production goals, prioritizing affordable housing production in support of the targets in Policy H-1.2.2. These incentives should continue to include zoning regulations that permit greater building area for commercial projects that include housing than for those that do not, and relaxation of height and density limits near transit. Strongly encourage incentives and strategies that result in the production of more deeply affordable housing, such as the use of income averaging across a range of affordable housing income levels.

**Policy H-1.1.3: Balanced Growth (§ 503.5):** Strongly encourage the development of new housing, including affordable housing, on surplus, vacant, and underused land in all parts of Washington, DC. Ensure that a sufficient supply of land is planned and zoned to enable the District to meet its long-term

housing needs, including the need for low- and moderate- density single-family homes, as well as the need for higher-density housing.

**Policy H-1.1.9: Housing for Families (§ 503.11):** Encourage and prioritize the development of family-sized units and/or family-sized housing options which generally have three or more bedrooms, in areas proximate to transit, employment centers, schools, public facilities, and recreation to ensure that the District's most well-resourced locations remain accessible to families, particularly in areas that received increased residential density as a result of underlying changes to the Future Land Use Map. Family-sized units and/or family-sized housing options include housing typologies that can accommodate households of three or more persons and may include a variety of housing types including townhomes, fourplexes and multi-family buildings. To address the mismatch between meeting the needs of larger households and the financial feasibility of developing family-sized housing, support family-sized housing options through production incentives and requirements that address market rate challenges for private development that may include zoning, subsidies or tax strategies, or direct subsidy and regulatory requirements for publicly owned sites.

**§ 504.4:** Economic forecasts suggest that many of the jobs that will be created in the District during the next 10 years will not provide the compensation needed to pay for housing in Washington, DC. Occupations that pay the lowest third of wages are expected to represent 45 percent of the job growth. For example, some of the District's fastest growing occupations are expected to be home health and personal care aides, which pay an annual wage of \$ 29,000. For a single wage earner, this would qualify them for the deepest level of subsidy to rent a one- bedroom apartment, with almost no chance to purchase a condominium or single- family home. Even a two-income household with such salaries would be unable to afford market-rate homeownership. As the gap widens, there may be several consequences. Residents may work unreasonably long hours or multiple jobs, double up in overcrowded apartments and houses, live in unsafe or substandard housing, or give up living in the District altogether, enduring long commutes into Washington, DC each day. Black and Hispanic residents are more heavily represented in these job categories and earn lower incomes, as noted earlier. This points to worsening racial inequality in housing access and affordability, displacing residents who would otherwise choose to remain in the District.

**§ 504.7:** More deeply affordable housing production and preservation is needed to advance racial equity in housing because of the racial income gap. As shown in Figure 5.8, the proposed allocation of new affordable units should be 40 percent available to extremely low-income households, and 30 percent allocated each for low- and very low-income households. These targets would prioritize production and preservation of housing affordable to more of the District's residents of color. Achieving these targets requires actions from the public, non-profit, and private sector. Statutory and regulatory measures, including zoning, are necessary but not sufficient to produce very- low- and extremely-low-income rental housing and ownership opportunities for a range of households. Budgetary decisions at the federal and District levels are also essential to enable the continued operation of quality housing for these income levels. Resource choices also must be made between new housing production and preserving or restoring affordable housing stock. And, while the District has set ambitious goals to increase both market rate and affordable housing production, affordable housing production is lagging, requiring renewed assessment of how to effectively allocate and use limited resources. To advance racial equity in housing, an effective allocation of resources is needed for housing preservation and production targeted to very-low and extremely-low-income households.

**Policy H-1.2.2: Production Targets (§ 504.9):** Consistent with the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, work toward a goal that one-third of the new housing built in Washington, DC from 2018 to 2030, or approximately 20,000 units, should be affordable to persons earning 80 percent or less of the area-wide

MFI. In aggregate, the supply of affordable units shall serve low-income households in proportions roughly equivalent to the proportions shown in Figure 5.8: 30 percent at 60 to 80 percent MFI, 30 percent at 30 to 60 percent MFI, and 40 percent at below 30 percent MFI. Set future housing production targets for market rate and affordable housing based on where gaps in supply by income occur and to reflect District goals. These targets shall acknowledge and address racial income disparities, including racially adjusted MFIs, in the District, use racially disaggregated data, and evaluate actual production of market rate and affordable housing at moderate, low, very-low, and extremely-low income levels.

**Policy H-1.2.9: Advancing Diversity and Equity of Planning Areas (§ 504.17):** Proactively plan and facilitate affordable housing opportunities and make targeted investments that increase demographic diversity and equity across Washington, DC. Achieve a minimum of 15 percent affordable units within each Planning Area by 2050. Provide protected classes (see H-3.2 Housing Access) with a fair opportunity to live in a choice of homes and neighborhoods, including their current homes and neighborhoods.

**Policy H-1.3.1: Housing for Larger Households (§ 505.8):** Increase the supply of larger family-sized housing units for both ownership and rental by encouraging new and retaining existing single-family homes, duplexes, row houses, and three- and four-bedroom market rate and affordable apartments across Washington, DC. The effort should focus on both affordability of the units and the unit and building design features that support families, as well as the opportunity to locate near neighborhood amenities, such as parks, transit, schools, and retail.

**Policy H-2.2.3: Tax Relief (§ 511.5):** Maintain and simplify tax relief measures for homeowners, especially older adults and those with low incomes, faced with rising assessments and property taxes by using common income definitions and progressive relief according to need. These measures should reduce the pressure on long-term residents, especially low-income owners, to sell their homes and move out of the District.

**§ 512.1:** Homeownership gives individuals a stake in the community and a chance to share in its growing prosperity. It can help foster civic pride and engagement, improve family stability, and enhance support for local schools and services. Importantly, homeownership provides a long-term asset to build long-term personal wealth. Affordable homeownership programs provide families with the benefits of value appreciation of their homes, one of the most important tangential benefits of owning instead of renting. For these reasons, the District has had a long-standing policy of helping its residents become homeowners and promoting the construction of new owner-occupied housing in Washington, DC.

**§ 512.2:** An important part of ownership is access to financing and real estate opportunity. In the past, the practice of redlining (i.e., withholding home loan funds in certain neighborhoods) by certain lenders made it more difficult to secure home loans in parts of Washington, DC. This practice, along with covenants, and other land use and financing restrictions, reflected systemic racism that discriminated against groups by race, as well as ethnicity and faith, resulting in many of the gaps today in homeownership, wealth, and access to opportunity by the District's communities of color. Enforcement of fair housing practices is important not only to stop unfair lending practices but also to address affordable housing opportunities in high-cost areas, discrimination against renters, single parents, persons with HIV/AIDS, vulnerable populations, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

**§ 513.1:** Nationwide, about two-thirds of all households are homeowners. In the District, the 2000 census reported the homeownership rate was just 41 percent. After 2000, the homeownership rate slowly increased to 46 percent until 2006; then the national mortgage collapse caused sharp increases in foreclosures and many lost their homes. Homeownership has since declined and by 2017 stood at 42

percent in Washington, DC. Instability in the homeownership market and limited access to credit has caused many to select rental housing. These national factors are affecting all cities, but the District still has one of the lowest rates of homeownership in the country, well below Philadelphia (53 percent), Baltimore (45 percent), and Chicago (43 percent), although higher than the 32 percent rate in New York and the 34 percent rate in Boston. The ownership rate in the District has increased four percentage points since 1980, when 35 percent of Washington, DC's households were homeowners. Homeownership for white residents is 49 percent, but only 35 percent for Black residents and 30 percent for Latino residents.

**§ 513.2:** Home prices create a significant obstacle to increasing the homeownership rate. In September 2015, only 38 percent of the homes on the market with two or more bedrooms were affordable to the median income family, and this does not reflect the significant disparity in median income by race, with white households at \$143,150 and Black households at \$35,563. While the recent increase in the supply of condominiums has improved homeownership prospects somewhat, the options for multigenerational families continue to be limited.

**§ 513.3:** DHCD administers several programs to help residents purchase homes. These include PADD, which acquires tax-delinquent properties and bids them out to small developers who fix up the properties and sell or rent them primarily for affordable housing. It also includes the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP), which offers interest-free and low-interest loans to qualified residents for the purchase of houses, condominiums, or cooperative apartments. The District also provides grants and deferred loans to government employees who are first-time homebuyers. These programs are an important part of the District's efforts to provide moderate-income housing for its residents (see text box entitled Meeting the Need for Moderate-Income Housing).

**Policy H-3.1.1: Increasing Homeownership (§ 513.5):** Enhance community stability by promoting homeownership and creating opportunities for first-time homebuyers in the District. Provide loans, grants, and other District programs to raise the District's homeownership rate from its year 2016 figure of 39 percent to a year 2025 figure of 44 percent. These programs and opportunities should acknowledge and address the significant racial gaps and barriers to home ownership. Increased opportunities for homeownership should not be provided at the expense of the District's rental housing programs or through the displacement of low-income renters.

**Policy H-3.1.3: Asset Development Through Homeownership (§ 513.7):** Support paths to homeownership that build and sustain equity and develop assets for the transfer of intergenerational wealth, especially for low- and moderate-income households.

### **Mid-City Area Element**

**§ 2000.6:** Parts of the Mid-City Planning Area have changed rapidly during the last 10 years. Already one of the densest areas in Washington, DC, Mid-City contains approximately 19 percent of the District's new housing units, and almost 14 percent of the area's housing units are affordable. Although Mid-City is close to having a fair amount of affordable housing, the distribution of that affordable housing has been concentrated in a few neighborhoods such as Columbia Heights, Reed-Cooke, and the U Street corridor. Additionally, many of these affordable units are at risk of expiring; thus, Mid-City will be a target-rich area for investments by the administrators of the Housing Preservation Trust Fund, which is to be used to preserve affordable housing units when their covenants of affordability are expiring.

**§ 2002.7:** About one percent of the Mid-City Planning Area, or about 36 acres, consists of vacant land. Much of this land is committed to future development projects, such as the McMillan Sand Filtration Site

and the Howard Town Center. Although there are scattered vacant lots, the area is almost completely built out.

**Policy MC-1.1.5: Conservation of Row House Neighborhoods (§ 2008.6):** Recognize the value and importance of Mid-City's row house neighborhoods as an essential part of the fabric of the local community. Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations for these neighborhoods reflect the desire to retain the row house architectural pattern. Zoning and policy in Mid- City's row house neighborhoods should seek to maintain and augment the mix of large and small unit sizes and opportunities for both homeownership and renting, as exemplified by the use of English basements as separate dwelling units. See Policy LU-2.1.7 and Policy LU-2.1.9 for more guidance on alterations to row houses.