

WARD 3 DEMOCRATS

TESTIMONY REGARDING ZONING COMMISSION CASE #25-09 DC OFFICE OF ZONING ON DECEMBER 1, 2025

Good Afternoon, Chairperson Hood and members of the Zoning Commission.

My name is Deirdre Brown, and I am testifying today as a Ward 3 resident and on behalf of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee, which formally adopted a resolution opposing the current rezoning proposal for the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue corridors unless strengthened to deliver meaningful affordable housing. The resolution is enclosed.

Ward 3 is the only planning area in the District that has not met Mayor Bowser's affordable housing production goals. Residents were told that upzoning these avenues, especially under IZ+, would finally correct this imbalance. Unfortunately, the current rezoning proposal does not do that.

First, the proposal stops the IZ+ "ladder" at 125 percent. Under IZ+, each additional increment of density is supposed to come with a higher affordable housing set-aside. That is the entire logic and promise of IZ+. Capping the ladder early leaves significant affordable housing on the table and undermines public expectations. If developers are being granted more density, the corresponding affordability requirements must apply to all of that density, not just some of it.

Second, affordability must be truly accessible to the families who need it. The proposal leans heavily on 60 percent of MFI, but many Black households in D.C. have incomes closer to 36 percent MFI. A unit priced at 60 percent MFI is not affordable to the very families the District says it wants to include in high-opportunity neighborhoods like Ward 3. To advance racial and economic equity, we need a tiered affordability structure, from 30 to 60 percent MFI, so low and extremely low income households can actually qualify for the new housing this rezoning will produce.

Third, Ward 3 cannot meet its equity goals without family sized affordable units, particularly along Wisconsin Avenue. That means two and three bedroom units intentionally set aside at affordable levels. Without them, families with children will remain shut out.

Collectively, these changes are not radical; they are aligned with what the public was told IZ+ would deliver. And they are necessary if the District intends this rezoning to produce real progress rather than simply taller market rate buildings.

In closing, I urge the Commission to strengthen this case so it advances racial equity, economic inclusion, and long-promised affordability, not just density for density's sake. Do not miss this once-in-a-decade opportunity to correct the long-standing housing imbalance in Ward 3.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to a fair and equitable District.

Sincerely,
Deirdre P. Brown, J.D.
Chair, Ward 3 Democratic Committee

WARD 3 DEMOCRATS

Resolution On Proposed Rezoning Plans for the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue Corridors

Submitted by Deirdre Brown

PASSED BY THE WARD 3 DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE ON NOVEMBER 17, 2025

WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning plans for the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue corridors represent a once-in-a-decade opportunity to advance housing equity and affordability in Ward 3; and

WHEREAS, Ward 3 remains the only sector in the District that has not met the Mayor's affordable housing production goals; and

WHEREAS, residents were previously assured that redevelopment along these corridors would deliver substantial amounts of affordable housing through the Inclusionary Zoning Plus (IZ+) program, raising community expectations for equitable outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rezoning plans fall short of addressing the affordable housing need in two significant ways, both in quantity and in true affordability; and

WHEREAS, on the matter of quantity, t, stopping the IZ+ "laddered" increase at 125%; and

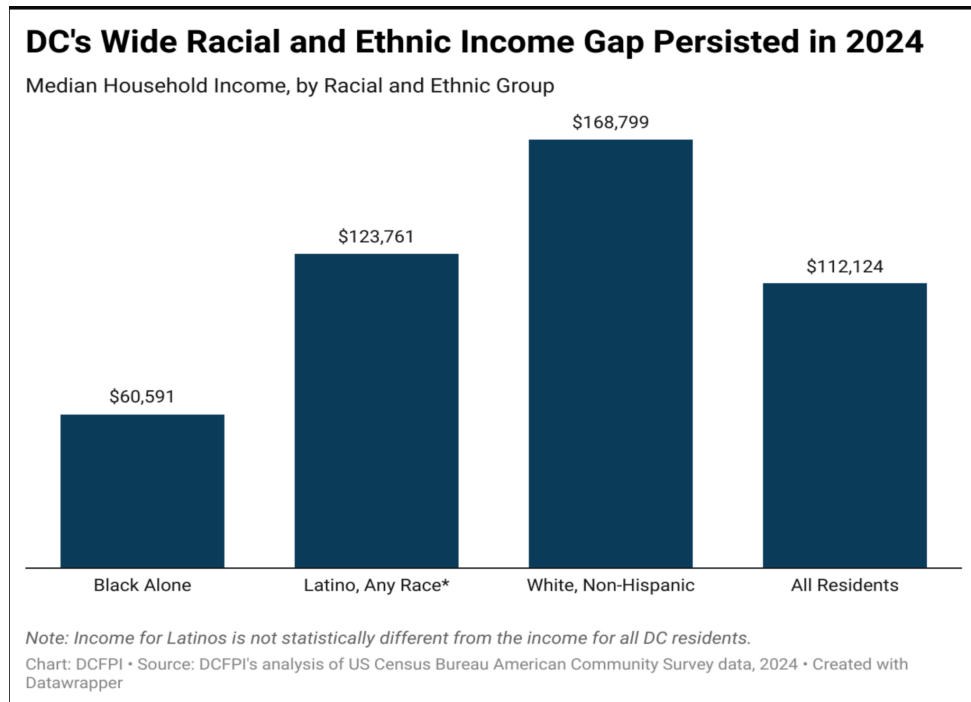
WHEREAS, the current IZ+ ladder, which pairs each 25% increase in density with a 2% increase in the affordable housing set aside, should continue beyond 125% for the full density increase being offered; and

WHEREAS, on the matter of true affordability and equity, the current income threshold of 60% Median Family Income (MFI) disproportionately excludes Black households from qualifying for IZ units, given that the median income for Black households in D.C. remains roughly one-third (36%) ¹of the overall citywide MFI; and

WHEREAS, according to 2024 data, the D.C. MFI was \$168,799, while the median income for Black households was approximately \$60,591, highlighting a persistent racial income gap that limits equitable access to "affordable" units under the current framework² (See Chart) and

¹ DC Fiscal Policy Institute. (2024). *Inequality remained extreme in 2024 as DC backslid on poverty*. Washington, DC. <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/inequality-remained-extreme-in-2024-as-dc-backslid-on-poverty/>

² *Id.*



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WHEREAS, other non-profit organizations are in support of the recommendations or similar recommendations contained in this resolution;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ward 3 Democratic Committee opposes the proposed rezoning plans for the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue corridors until they are modified to provide a meaningful amount of affordable housing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ward 3 Democratic Committee calls on the Zoning Commission to:

1. Continue the existing IZ+ ladder formula for incremental density increases so that it applies to all awarded density, extending the sliding scale of required affordable housing set-aside percentages to the full extent of the final density changes; and
2. Establish a tiered affordability structure that extends from 30% to 60% of MFI and includes measures to ensure equitable access for Black households and other underrepresented residents whose average incomes fall below current eligibility thresholds. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there is an implementation of the Office of Planning Development Framework for Wisconsin Avenue by requiring family-sized units. This can be

³ DC Fiscal Policy Institute. (2024). *Inequality remained extreme in 2024 as DC backslid on poverty*. Washington, DC. <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/inequality-remained-extreme-in-2024-as-dc-backslid-on-poverty/>

accomplished by requiring a percentage of affordable housing gross floor area (e.g., 30%) to be set aside for family-sized units (3+ bedrooms).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ward 3 Democratic Committee urges the Zoning Commission to use this rezoning process to make measurable progress toward racial and economic equity in Ward 3, consistent with the District's broader housing and social justice goals.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Chair of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee and their designees be authorized to transmit, testify to, publicize, and otherwise carry out this resolution.

Sponsored by: Deirdre Brown