



July 15, 2020

Written statement re: Extended IZ Hearing

Submitted by Coy McKinney on behalf of SW DC Action

We believe the proposed plans for Expanded IZ is a good first step in creating more affordable housing in the city. Unfortunately, the affordable housing crisis is so dire that 20% does not go far enough.

For too long, Black and Brown citizens have been negatively impacted by lopsided policies and rules that have provided very little in terms of equity or justice. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How To Be An Antiracist*, writes, "Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups." In DC, the results are in, and it is clear that the city's housing policies are producing racial inequity.

Tens of thousands of Black Washingtonians have already been displaced from the city, and many more are struggling to remain due to ever-increasing median rent values. As residents of Southwest, we have witnessed these results first-hand. It is especially disheartening to see these results unfold in Southwest, since it was the location of the first major case of urban renewal (also referred to as "negro removal" by James Baldwin), and how clearly residents stated they valued socioeconomic diversity. The community, through the Southwest Neighborhood Plan, expressed that we wanted our area to be "an exemplary model of equity and inclusion," and that new housing should "offer varied products, especially units sized for families." Instead, since 2000, the median income of the neighborhood has increased 117%, the White population has more than doubled, the Black population has decreased 37%, and according to the Office of Planning, "most of the new residential buildings have primarily consisted of market rate one-bedroom units . . ."¹ If the city government believes Black lives matter, then surely their access to affordable housing must also matter.

Simply put, the way housing is produced must change and be rooted in antiracism. The status-quo is that the overwhelming majority of units must be market-rate (unaffordable). It is clear who this harms most, therefore, this practice must be flipped. We believe the proper ratio should be: one-third market-rate, one-third work-force, and one-third deeply affordable.

¹ DC Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 19.

Structuring developments at these ratios promotes socioeconomic diversity while also producing far more affordable units.

The bedroom configuration must also be addressed in the new regulations well. Developers have overwhelmingly built studio and one-bedroom units. Since its inception, Inclusionary Zoning has only produced 92 three-bedroom units and 22 four-bedroom units. This makes it difficult for non-affluent families to remain in the city, and deters people from starting families in the city. This is neither sustainable, nor equitable.

IZ Units (by Bedroom Count & Affordability Level)							
Income Set Aside	<i>empty</i>	30% AMI	50% AMI	60% AMI	80% AMI	Other MFI	Totals
Bedrooms	Number of Units						
<i>(empty)</i>	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
0	-	12	168	194	320	-	694
1	1	10	166	186	449	1	813
2	1	8	146	164	312	-	631
3	-	-	39	11	42	-	92
4	-	-	8	3	11	-	22
Totals (23 groups)	4	30	527	559	1134	1	2255

captured from DHCD website on July 14, 2020²

Expanded IZ and requiring more three-bedroom units are just a few of a host of policies that must work in harmony with other initiatives to create and preserve affordable housing immediately and permanently in the city. Community land trusts and limited equity cooperatives must also be part of the DC government's larger plans towards significantly addressing the affordable housing crisis.

Thank you for your time and consideration in addressing this very important matter.

Coy McKinney
SW DC Action

[SW Action](#) is a group of SW residents who organize and advocate for a more equitable, anti-racist, and environmentally sustainable neighborhood.

² Website: <https://octo.quickbase.com/db/bi9iqv4v7>

