

September 22, 2022  
Office of Zoning Commission  
Public Roundtable

Good evening, Zoning Commission and witnesses!

My name is Sebrena Rhodes and I'm an ANC Commissioner representing SMD 5D01 and a community organizer with Empower DC.

First, I would like to start out by stating, to achieve the outcome of evaluating development decisions, programs and activities that center and account for the needs of residents of color, we MUST use the "Racial Equity Lens" to identify and consider past and current racial and systemic inequities-to identify who benefits OR/AND is burdened from a decision.

Requirements to promote equitable development outcomes –

\*Meaningful Community Engagement should be required early in the process – postcards, doorhangers, social media and news articles are not enough. Listening sessions, detailed notes, in/virtual meetings with engaging conversation and diverse participation should be at the table to help restore their communities.

\*Racial Equity Analysis MUST be done for all zoning decisions.

\*The entire zoning process MUST be made accessible to impacted residents in clear language and definitions.

\*Do the research on what other cities are doing to prevent displacement and intense gentrification.

\*Use our grassroots organizations to help build these tools and models.

\*Make sure communities of the district that were REDLINED are not having the same pattern repeated, utilize the residents, ANCs, community organizations, grassroots organizations, and churches with planning and preventing a repeat from history.

Using these elements should help direct the creation of Small Area Plans and planning throughout the city with the objective to revitalize, conserve and preserve, not to displace, disinvest, or neglect.

Let's not make the development of expensive housing, diluting the power of the working-class community and push/price residents out of neighborhoods a thing.

Finally, our communities should be sustainable and developed in a way to minimize displacement and decrease sacrifice zones, polluting industries, and toxins. Developers should be required to use a tool to identify past inequities and identify whether the demographics of a community has changed from 10-20 year ago. The question "what changed and why" should be explained in full with metrics showing investment/disinvestment, kinds and levels of development, environmental impacts caused by industrial land uses, available and affordable housing, resources and recreation, accessible transportation, mortality rates, and ADA accessibility.