

Who Decides?

At last Monday's hearing, Chair Anthony Hood posed a question to a witness that went unanswered. It's a question my neighbors and I have also wondered about:

Why is this case before the Zoning Commission when there isn't even an RFP or project on the table, while in other cases, communities are given the opportunity to weigh in on an RFP/project *before* it goes to the Commission?

"Who decides that?" he asked.

Likewise, there are other inconsistencies relevant to this case that are puzzling.

Take, for example, Station U & O, a brand new 110--unit development on public land in Shaw. Out of 110 units, 98% are affordable. Only 2 are market rate.

How are we able to deliver majority affordable units there but not here? Who decides?

In the release (see pg 2), the Mayor states:

"We are proud that this project was part of the 'OurRFP' process. What that means is that we engaged the community early and often, and we were able to incorporate the community's feedback and vision into the RFP itself."

Acting Deputy Mayor Nina Albert:

"It was only right that we included community engagement early on"

Why was "early and often" right for that community but not for ours? Who decides?

"Maximizing District-owned land, particularly property near a Metro station and neighborhood amenities...is an important opportunity...and I look forward to working with the community...to continue building affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods."

17&U is also District-owned land in a high-opportunity neighborhood. Yet the process has been very different - the community has been virtually excluded and, as an expert witness testified on Monday, there is no ironclad guarantee of any affordable housing.

Who decides?

Executive Office of the Mayor

Mayor Bowser Cuts Ribbon on Affordable Housing at Station U & O



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[Ask the Mayor](#)



[Muriel Bowser](#)

Mayor

Thursday, January 18, 2024

New Development at Parcel 42 Brings 108 Affordable Homes and Ground Floor Retail Space to Shaw Neighborhood

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) were joined by Dante Partners, the DC Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA), Amazon Housing Equity Fund, and community members to cut the ribbon on Station U & O, a mixed-use development built on the site historically known as Parcel 42. The development features a 98% affordable apartment building with 108 units of affordable housing, two market rate units, and a ground floor retail space located at 7th Street NW and Rhode Island Avenue in the Shaw neighborhood.

“Today, we get to deliver 110 new homes right across from a beautiful library, across from the Metro, close to retail and restaurants, blocks away from U Street and Howard, and close to fantastic DC Public Schools. Even better is that 108 of the 110 homes are designated affordable,” said Mayor Bowser. “We are proud that this project was part of the ‘OurRFP’ Process. What that means is that we engaged the community early and often, and we were able to incorporate the community’s feedback and vision into the RFP itself. And today, we get to deliver a project that we know residents are excited about.”

Station U & O includes studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, with a majority of the units reserved for families making up to 60% Median Family Income (MFI). Residents will also have access to a fitness center, lounges, coworking spaces, a penthouse clubroom with beautiful views of the city, five central laundry rooms, and ground-floor retail. The Parcel 42 project is DC’s first “Our RFP” affordable housing project located in Ward 2. The “Our RFP” process incorporates the community’s perspective and priorities through early public engagement in the request for proposals process.

“Maximizing District-owned land, particularly property near a Metro station and neighborhood amenities like the Shaw Library, is an important opportunity,” said Acting Deputy Mayor Nina Albert. “It was only right that we included community engagement early on, and through that process, secured 108 units of affordable housing in Shaw, and I look forward to working with the community and development partners to continue building affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods to ensure DC remains a livable city for long-time residents.”

For decades, the DC community has advocated to make use of the vacant 17,010 square-foot area of land known as Parcel 42. In 1968, the existing development at Parcel 42 was destroyed during the riots that broke out after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. The parcel of land sat vacant from 1968 until 2007 when the Fenty Administration acquired the land and began redevelopment efforts. The District broke ground on mixed-use building in February 2022, and Station U & O is now the first development of the project to be delivered under the Bowser Administration. The development of Station O & U is made possible through land sold by DMPED and a \$24.58 million low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) investment from DC Housing Finance Authority. The entire project completion date for Parcel 42 is Spring 2024.

“Parcel 42 has been gestating for over two decades and has finally come forth as an amazing example of beautiful, affordable, and healthy housing. Set at the gateway of the Shaw Arts District, Station U&O will stand as an example of a creative public private partnership that maximizes the utilization of public land for the public benefit,” said Christopher E. Donald, Executive Director/CEO, DCHFA. “Rising prices in the Shaw neighborhood have made it too expensive for some long-time residents. Station U&O will ensure that some of the residents have an opportunity to remain in the neighborhood with reasonable housing costs. I am ecstatic that this project has delivered and look forward to seeing the families move into the new development.”