

GOVERNMENT OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

+ + + + +

ZONING COMMISSION

+ + + + +

PUBLIC ROUNDTABLE ON RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS TOOL

+ + + + +

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 22, 2022

+ + + + +

The Public Roundtable of Case No. 22-RT1 by the District of Columbia Zoning Commission convened via Videoconference, pursuant to notice at 4:00 p.m. EDT, Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairperson
ROBERT MILLER, Vice Chairman
PETER G. MAY, Commissioner
JOSEPH S. IMAMURA, Commissioner

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON S. SCHELLIN, Secretary
PAUL YOUNG, Zoning Data Specialist

OFFICE OF ZONING LEGAL DIVISION:

HILLARY LOVICK, Esquire

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OAG)

ALEXANDRA CAIN, Assistant Attorney General
LILY BULLITT, Assistant Attorney General

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)

MAYOR'S OFFICE ON RACIAL EQUITY

DR. AMBER HEWITT, Chief Equity Officer

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the Public Roundtable on Racial Equity Analysis Tool held on September 22, 2022.

T-A-B-L-E O-F C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

OPENING STATEMENT:	
Chairman Hood	4
MODERATOR OF PUBLIC COMMENTS:	
Sharon Schellin	8
PRESENTATION:	
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OAG):	
Alexandra Cain and Lily Bullitt	9
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY	
Dr. Amber Hewitt	18
PUBLIC COMMENTS:	
Public	21
COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS:	
Commissioners	137
CLOSING REMARKS:	
Anthony Hood	139
ADJOURN:	
Anthony Hood	141

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (4:00 p.m.)

3 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are convening
4 and broadcasting this public roundtable of the Zoning Commission
5 of the District of Columbia by video conferencing on Thursday,
6 September 22nd, 2022. My name is Anthony Hood. Joining me are
7 Vice Chair Miller, soon to join me are Commissioner Imamura and
8 Commissioner May. We're also joined by the Office of Zoning
9 staff, Ms. Sharon Schellin, as well as Mr. Paul Young who will
10 be working behind the scenes. Also our Zoning -- Office of Zoning
11 Legal Division counsel, Ms. Hillary Lovick. I'll ask all others
12 to introduce themselves at the appropriate time.

13 The purpose of this evening's roundtable is to hear
14 public feedback on the Commission's initial racial equity
15 analysis tool and the Commission's application of the tool to
16 date. This roundtable will not focus on any specific projects
17 due to the potential future hearings. Such exchange of
18 information could be considered ex parte communication, so I ask
19 you please, please stay in compliance with that.

20 The roundtable announcement is available on the Office
21 of Zoning's website. This proceeding is being recorded by a
22 court reporter and is also webcast live via Webex and YouTube
23 Live. The video will be available on the Office of Zoning's
24 website after the hearing. Accordingly, all those listening on
25 Webex or by phone will be muted during the hearing and only those

1 who have signed up to participate or testify will be unmuted at
2 the appropriate time.

3 When called, please state your name and home address
4 before providing your testimony. When you are finished speaking,
5 please mute your audio.

6 I want to thank everyone who is testifying in tonight's
7 roundtable. We are here at my suggestion, which my fellow
8 Commissioners agreed to. And I want to say this again, because
9 I think it's important. We are here at my suggestion, which my
10 colleagues, my fellow Commissioners, staff, and everybody agreed
11 to, because we are here to get constructive feedback.

12 As we stated in the announcement, we are very
13 interested in public feedback which is constructive to help us
14 move this and everything forward in the correct manner. And
15 input on your racial equity analysis tool -- I digress from my
16 statement -- and our application of it thus far. The current
17 tool is just the first iteration. This is going to be tackled,
18 improved, changed to make it really work, because -- "where the
19 rubber meets the road," as I've said previously. The current
20 tool is just the first iteration, and we intend to continue to
21 refine it. We are most interested in your ideas and your ideals
22 and suggestions about how we refine the tool and move forward.
23 We are interested in your ideals of how we refine the tool and
24 move forward.

25 I will mention that the Office of Zoning staff has been

1 in discussions with the Mayor's office on racial equity and the
2 D.C.'s Council's Office on racial equity. And based on those
3 discussions, we do intend to make two changes in the next
4 iteration of the tool.

5 First, we intend to include a community engagement and
6 outreach component in the tool to better understand and account
7 for those efforts. And second, we intend to include an active
8 link in the tool to the Office of Planning's equity crosswalk,
9 which identifies policies in the Comp Plan that advance equity.
10 Tonight -- you'll find this hard to believe, but tonight, we will
11 not respond directly to your testimony, but your insights will
12 be considered, and we will refine the tool further.

13 The following time constraints will be maintained in
14 this roundtable: Organizations five minutes, individuals three
15 minutes. The Commission intends to maintain these time limits
16 as strictly as possible in order to hear from everyone in a
17 reasonable period of time. The Commission reserves the right to
18 change the time limits for presentations, if necessary, and notes
19 that no time shall be ceded.

20 If you experience difficulty accessing Webex or with
21 your telephone call-in, then please call our OZ hotline number
22 at 202-727-0789 to sign up or to receive Webex login or call-in
23 instructions. All persons planning to testify must sign in
24 advance and will be called by name at the appropriate time.
25 If you are listening and haven't signed up and want to testify,

1 you need to call the hotline. If you wish to file written
2 testimony or additional supporting documents during the
3 hearing -- I'm probably sounding redundant, I want to make
4 clear -- then be prepared to describe and discuss it at the time
5 of your testimony and ask to file a document.

6 Okay. I have a few comments of my own. I want to
7 thank the honorable -- I've asked Councilmember McDuffie to join
8 us for this roundtable. He has other engagements. I really
9 didn't ask him until last night, which was my shortcoming on that
10 one, so I'll take the hit. But I will tell you this, I want to
11 thank Councilmember McDuffie and his colleagues. He was the
12 author of the racial equity. Before he got ready to introduce
13 it, he and I spoke about it. So this whole piece is near and
14 dear to me, and I'm sure my colleagues as well.

15 I also want to thank Mayor Bowser and her team. And I
16 also want to thank Ms. Hillary Lovick and all her team and all
17 those people she has been interacting with to make us -- at least
18 give us a start. And the staff and everybody in the Office of
19 Zoning and everybody who's worked on this, I want to thank you,
20 because I think this is "where the rubber meets the road." This
21 is not just a conversational piece. We want to get it to the
22 point where, first of all, what we put in place is legal. And
23 even more than that, what we put in place works for the residents
24 of this City.

25 And I want to thank the residents today who are going

1 to testify, who are going to help us to continue to help the City
2 to put something in place where we all can benefit and gain, and
3 we all won't leave anybody behind. So with that, those are my
4 comments.

5 I don't know. Do any of my colleagues have any opening
6 statements? And if not, we are here to listen tonight.

7 Okay. I see everybody nodding. I guess I've talked
8 enough.

9 All right. So with that, Ms. Schellin, I'm going to
10 turn over the reins of who's called and everything to you at this
11 time, if you don't mind. I want to sit back and listen, and take
12 my notes. And I don't think, I think -- it's key to the public.
13 Yesterday, in my discussions with staff, I had about two to three
14 people taking notes. And I know my colleagues will be taking
15 notes. Commissioner May is excellent with taking notes. I'm
16 going to do my best to take notes and try to do this as we go
17 along.

18 I want to thank all those who've already advanced doing
19 stuff as well, and that's DC Empower and some of the ANCs. I
20 was able to attend or listen in on one of the events. And I want
21 to thank all of them, because it takes a lot of work in bringing
22 people together. So I want to thank them and all those who have
23 worked with DC Empower and others to help us to get this going,
24 so I thank you very much. And I thank everybody.

25 So Ms. Schellin, I'm going to turn it over to you. And

1 I'm going to start taking notes. I will run the proceedings.

2 I would ask everybody be cognizant of the time. Thank
3 you.

4 Thank you, Ms. Schellin.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you. So we're going to start with
6 D.C. government agencies. And the first will be two
7 representatives from the Office of the Attorney General. If Mr.
8 Young could please bring up Alexandra Cain and Lily Bullitt. And
9 while you're at it, if you could go ahead, and after they speak,
10 the Commission will hear from Amber Hewitt, who is from, if I get
11 this right, the Office of Racial Equity. She'll follow behind
12 OAG. Thank you. They'll each have five minutes. Well, one
13 representative from OAG, I'm not sure who's going to -- oh, it
14 looks like they're together. So I believe Ms. Cain is going to
15 take that five minutes or whatever. Thank you.

16 MS. CAIN: Thank you, Ms. Schellin.

17 Commissioners. Good afternoon. Thank you for having
18 us today. I'm Alexandra Cain. I'm here with my colleague Lily
19 Bullitt on behalf of the Equitable Land Use Section of the Office
20 of the Attorney General. We appreciate the Zoning Commission
21 holding this public roundtable. We think it's an important part
22 of the process, and we're excited to participate.

23 I would ask Mr. Young if he could pull up our
24 PowerPoint, which is in the record at Exhibit 25A. It's a lot
25 of information. We're going to try and get through it as quickly

1 as possible, so we may skip over a couple things, but the full
2 thing is in the record for the Commission to review at your
3 leisure.

4 MR. YOUNG: And I need just a minute to pull that up,
5 because I didn't receive it.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: Paul, it's in the record. If you need
7 help finding that, let me know. I may be able to email it to
8 you.

9 MR. YOUNG: What exhibit was it?

10 MS. CAIN: 25A.

11 MS. SCHELLIN: Ms. Cain, in the future, if you have a
12 PowerPoint presentation, if you could email -- after you upload
13 it to the record, if you could please email it to Mr. Young, that
14 saves the time of him having to go to the record.

15 MS. CAIN: Yep. Will do.

16 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you.

17 MS. CAIN: All right. Thank you, Mr. Young. If you
18 can go to slide two, please? Okay. We can just start here.
19 That's fine.

20 So we wanted to sort of start our discussion and like,
21 in the language of the Comprehensive Plan when it comes to racial
22 equity. As the Commission is aware, the Comprehensive Plan does
23 charge the Zoning Commission with preparing and implementing
24 tools to analyze all zoning actions through a racial equity lens.
25 In terms of what that involves, the Comprehensive Plan does

1 provide these sort of four guiding principles, including the
2 requirement to disaggregate data and analyze that data based on
3 race.

4 Next slide, please.

5 So in coming up with our recommendations, OAG wanted
6 to base them in those sort of four points. And the result is a
7 sort of three-pronged plan that you see here. And I'm going to
8 quickly run through the different elements of that in the coming
9 slides.

10 So next slide, please.

11 So the first, the Identification of Past and Current
12 Systemic Racial Inequities, we see being broken down to two sort
13 of subcategories: one, Data and Analysis; and two, a Narrative
14 that puts that data into a larger context. So the data you see
15 here is all available through the U.S. Census, so publicly
16 available. It's here for illustrative purposes. We do not
17 believe that this is the, you know, final breakdown of everything
18 that might be needed. But sort of generally, we believe that
19 the data should be disaggregated by race, should be shown at the
20 census tract and district level, it should show change over time,
21 and it should be displayed graphically for ease of understanding.

22 Next slide.

23 So we're going to run you through a couple of the graphs
24 that we have pulled together based on data that comes from a
25 Council land disposition, so not a zoning case, either past or

1 present. So as you can see here, on sort of the importance of
2 showing data in different ways, so you can see the percentage of
3 the population, both as a percentage in the census tract as a
4 whole, and also the change over time. So seeing the dramatic
5 decrease in the black population, while the white population is
6 increasing at the same time.

7 Next slide, please.

8 So here, I just wanted to put this in context and the
9 importance of providing District-wide data in addition to census
10 tract level data so that the census tract is understood within
11 the broader context of the District.

12 Next slide, please.

13 And here, we see those same sort of data points again
14 broken down by race. So showing medium household income at both
15 the census tract and the District level, so you're able to see
16 how it's changing in the census tract versus as a district as a
17 whole.

18 Next slide, please. And this one, I think we're going
19 to skip over. So next slide.

20 So here you can see how the census tract is a high rent
21 area. It is almost double what the median gross rent in the
22 District as a whole is. And then to the graph to the right, you
23 can see how that has impacts in terms of race, in terms of how
24 black households in the census tract are more likely to be
25 significantly rent burdened than white families.

1 Next slide, please.

2 And this is just sort of the result of that where you
3 see the decreasing native Washingtonian population, you know,
4 reflecting displacement pressures within that census tract.

5 Next slide, please.

6 So the other component of this first part is the
7 narrative section. So this uses policy areas laid out in the
8 Comprehensive Plan, as well as asking for additional details
9 about the historical patterns affecting the census tract. So any
10 history of urban renewal programs, highway construction,
11 redlining, as well as any information that might be helpful for
12 understanding changes within the census tract or specific
13 information relative to the zoning action.

14 Next slide, please.

15 So part two gets to the impacts of the specific zoning
16 actions. So this is looking at whether those impacts will have
17 any disparate impact on any particular racial group. It also
18 involves a discussion of any outreach that has been done by the
19 applicant or the petitioner.

20 Next slide, please.

21 So this comes from a Council Office of Racial Equity
22 REA on a land disposition. We just thought it was an interesting
23 example of how the specific effects of a project can be
24 documented. So this shows the affordability of the proposed
25 units in the project for both black and white families based on

1 median family income. So you can see 100 percent of the units
2 would be affordable to white families, but only 18 percent or
3 those, you know, top boxes highlighted in blue would be affordable
4 for black families.

5 Next slide please.

6 And then finally, are the Equitable Development
7 Measures. So this is looking at what measures are being proposed
8 by the applicant to help reduce systemic racial inequities and
9 promote equitable development outcomes. And again, we see this
10 as having a community outreach component in it.

11 Next slide, please.

12 And finally, in our recommended procedure for this, we
13 feel that this could easily be built onto the existing zoning
14 practice of having submissions from the applicant or petitioner
15 at the Office of Planning and then of course by the Zoning
16 Commission in the final order or Notice of Final Rule Making.

17 Next slide, please.

18 And at this point, if I may, I would like to turn it
19 over to my colleague Ms. Bullitt. She's done the lion's share
20 of the work on the Displacement Risk Indicators and Maps which
21 we feel is another really critical component of the Commission's
22 understanding of the Racial Equity Analysis Tool.

23 MS. BULLITT: Thank you, Alex. And Good afternoon.
24 So in our research of other jurisdictions' approaches to racial
25 equity and zoning, we found that many cities are measuring the --

1 and visualizing the risk of displacement.

2 Next slide, please.

3 Preventing displacement is a priority in the Comp Plan.

4 And the Comp Plan defines displacement as a physical, economic
5 and cultural displacement.

6 Next slide.

7 The Comp Plan specifically calls for a racial equity
8 analysis that collects, disaggregate, and monitor data about
9 displacement.

10 Next slide, please.

11 So first up, we have Seattle. In 2016, when they were
12 amending their Comprehensive Plan, they created the Displacement
13 Risk Index and the Access to Opportunity Index. By overlaying
14 these two indices, they were able to identify and categorize
15 neighborhoods based on their displacement risk and access to
16 opportunity, and then determine how growth may benefit or burden
17 those neighborhoods.

18 Next slide, please.

19 They based their indicators on these factors, but I'll
20 let you take a look at that later. This is in the record.

21 Next slide, please.

22 New York also has an Interactive Displacement Risk Map.

23 Next slide, please.

24 So when you click on one of those neighborhoods, it
25 displays the factors that contribute to displacement risk.

1 Next slide, please.

2 And the Displacement Risk Map in New York is a component
3 of a larger tool, New York's Equitable Development Data Tool,
4 which provides data at the neighborhood level on demographics,
5 economics, housing affordability, and production as well as
6 access to opportunity.

7 Next slide, please.

8 So these are some of the factors that it shows in that
9 census index.

10 This is Boston's Displacement Risk Map.

11 Next slide, please.

12 And the indicators that it's based on.

13 Next slide, please.

14 And in Boston's zoning process, applicants are required
15 to consult both the displacement risk map and this related
16 community profile tool. So the community profile tool generates
17 a report based on census data based on the proposed project site.
18 The report includes census data and analysis, which the applicant
19 then uses to fill out questions in their application on equity
20 and impact. And this is how they record -- incorporate it into
21 their zoning process.

22 Next slide please. These next three slides you can run
23 through. It's just examples of the data that is provided through
24 this tool. Yeah. One more slide, please.

25 So OAG recommends the creation of a data

1 displacement -- of a displacement risk map for the District,
2 which is to be incorporated into the racial equity analysis, and
3 that the displacement rate -- risk map and the census data be
4 incorporated into the zoning map so that it is accessible to the
5 public, and it streamlines the REA process for applicants.

6 MS. CAIN: Next slide, please.

7 That concludes our testimony. We would respectfully
8 request that the Commission leave the record open for at least
9 another 48 hours to allow the submission of any additional
10 testimony and comments. We would also request that the Commission
11 ask the Office of Planning to prepare a text amendment that
12 formalizes the REA tool and process. We think that's a really
13 critical component to ensure consistent and uniform application
14 of REAs across the board and also make sure that it's clear that
15 the Zoning Commission is meeting the requirements of the
16 Comprehensive Plan.

17 We'd also ask the Commission to ask the Office of
18 Planning to develop a displacement risk map tool for eventual
19 incorporation into the REA process along the lines of what my
20 colleague has described.

21 With that, we conclude our testimony, and we thank the
22 Commission for their time today.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Schellin, I'm going to let you
24 drive the train. So I'm just going to keep -- I'm going to stay
25 muted, and I'm going to take notes.

1 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay.

2 So Ms. Hewitt, you can go ahead. Unmute yourself.

3 MS. HEWITT: Yeah. Good afternoon. I'd like to thank
4 Chairman Hood and the Zoning Commission and Office of Zoning
5 staff for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

6 My name is Dr. Amber Hewitt, and I was appointed by
7 Mayor Bowser to serve as the District's first Chief Equity Officer
8 and the Director of the Mayor's Office of Racial Equity, also
9 known as ORE. In this role, my team is responsible for
10 establishing the framework for all District government agencies
11 to apply racial equity principles through the creation of just
12 policies, programs and practices.

13 We recognize the best approach to achieve true racial
14 equity is to work directly with District residents. And to that
15 end, we want residents to be equal shareholders in D.C.'s growth.
16 Residents' lived experiences must be a central part of our vision
17 of racial equity for the District.

18 I think it's important that we pause to understand the
19 definition of racial equity. It is both a process and an outcome.
20 As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when one's race or
21 ethnicity no longer predicts opportunities, outcomes, or the
22 distribution of resources for District residents.

23 As a process, we apply a racial equity lens when those
24 most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully
25 involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional

1 policies and practices that directly impact their lives.

2 In its simplest form, a racial equity lens or tool is
3 a set of questions asked in decision-making processes to include
4 the lived experiences and voices of individuals who have been
5 impacted by structural racism. We use a racial equity lens to
6 help identify and prevent barriers to equitable outcomes. A
7 racial equity lens cannot dictate what choices you make, but it
8 can help the user to make more informed inclusive decisions.

9 District government's racial equity tool, developed by
10 the Office of Racial Equity, includes a focus on disaggregated
11 data by race and ethnicity, stakeholder engagement, weighing both
12 benefits and burdens, and setting appropriate metrics to evaluate
13 outcomes. The Office of Planning Office, Office of Zoning and
14 Zoning Commission have expressed their commitment to promoting
15 racial equity, which stems from Mayor Bowser's commitment for a
16 more racially equitable D.C.

17 The Office of Racial Equity is encouraged by the work
18 of the Zoning Commission in their development of the racial equity
19 tool to be applied to zoning actions. My team has had ongoing
20 collaboration with the Office of Zoning after the first draft of
21 the tool was released, and has provided trainings on racial equity
22 tools and best practices, one of which is prioritizing meaningful
23 community engagement. I like to thank Chairman Hood for
24 incorporating our feedback on this critical component.

25 ORE is familiar with the various types of zoning

1 actions and the limitations of the Zoning Commission, and our
2 team is committed to continued collaboration and will provide
3 additional feedback on the tool as it is refined and further
4 developed. Thank you.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. We're ready for the next panel.

6 So Mr. --

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I guess we are, Ms. Schellin.

8 And let me just thank everyone. I'll try not to do a
9 lot of talking because I want to do -- more listening. I'm
10 listening to hear, not listening to speak. But I want to thank
11 everybody. If I don't thank you right away, I want to thank
12 everybody who's testifying. Let me do that now.

13 Okay. Thank you, Ms. Schellin.

14 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Chairman Hood, how many would you
15 like to come up at a time? Four?

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I was going to -- I was going to
17 leave some people up, but I'm going to ask, like, Ms. Hewitt and
18 others, if the time is available, not to go far as I would like
19 for them to listen too. We may have to call them back up, and I
20 have some others that I'm thinking about. But for right now, I
21 think, whatever the load -- will the load take four or five? Or
22 what won't confuse -- whatever won't confuse Paul and yourself.

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I'll leave it to you all. Okay.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Since you're not going to ask questions,

1 once they testify, Mr. Young can go ahead and take them down
2 after they testify.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: We may at the end -- because we want
4 to hear from the residents -- we may at the end ask for a few to
5 come back. But we'll --

6 MS. SCHELLIN: I know Ms. Hewitt has to leave at 5:00 --

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

8 MS. SCHELLIN: -- for another appointment.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. That's good.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: So we'll go through it as quickly as we
11 can.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

13 MS. SCHELLIN: Brenda Richardson. I don't see her.

14 Chris Williams. Parisa Norouzi, I did see her.
15 Renee Bowser. Carol Aten. And let's go with Jayme Epstein.
16 That gives us five. We'll start there. Chris Williams was first.

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Hi. Can you hear me okay?

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. I will begin. My name is
20 Chris Williams. I live at 201 I Street Southwest in the 20024
21 Zip code. I've been before the Zoning Commission many times,
22 imploring this body to stop structural racism that derive from
23 racist legacies, such as urban renewal, redlining, and wholesale
24 removal. The Zoning Commission has been directly responsible for
25 unprecedented displacement among black residents. It has

1 approved projects over the objections of affected residents and
2 ANCs. We have presented volumes of data to you about ongoing
3 harm that you systematically ignored. Your approvals have
4 injured people, especially black people, in profound ways.

5 The Superior Court recently recognized the harm that
6 I've personally experienced in Southwest due to massive
7 redevelopment. As we discuss changes, we should not let you
8 proceed without a full public accounting of the scale and scope
9 of the damages for which you are directly responsible.

10 There are several points that I would like to make.
11 First, after the development of the racial equity tool, it must
12 be adopted as a text amendment. The law, as written, does not
13 require that you have a single racial equity tool. You could,
14 theoretically, adopt multiple tools based on different decisions.
15 But if you adopt a single racial equity tool as a text amendment,
16 that is much more binding in the long-term for the Zoning
17 Commission. This is important because the community does not
18 trust the Zoning Commission. After all, it has not looked after
19 the public welfare for at least the past 15 years.

20 Chairman Mendelson recently said on a call with Empower
21 DC, that a racial equity tool must acknowledge race. The
22 one-pager that is available to the public does not appear to put
23 much importance on race, much less the deep chasms of racial
24 health and wealth inequity in the District.

25 As you may be aware, the median white household income

1 in Washington, D.C. is at least twice, if not three times greater
2 than the median black household income. When we think about area
3 median income, we must think about the difference, the vast
4 difference in racial wealth inequity. There's also racial
5 inequity in health.

6 Another part of the tool will be to really consider the
7 parts of the District where you have done the most damage. I
8 live in Southwest Washington, D.C., and we are the epicenter of
9 gentrification in the District, as well as the epicenter of
10 gentrification in this country. We are seeing increased cost of
11 living, increasing rents, but we don't receive more amenities,
12 and we experience cultural and economic marginalization.

13 When the Zoning Commission has negotiated community
14 benefits agreements, those have largely flowed to benefit those
15 on the Waterfront side, rather than the side of Southwest
16 containing the greatest concentration of African Americans and
17 low-income Americans.

18 Your policies are catalyzing immense change and
19 Southwest beyond the particular decisions that you make in a
20 given case. What we are seeing is that low-income housing is
21 under pressure to redevelop. This is not just public housing in
22 Southwest. My own building is under pressure to redevelop, and
23 it's caused us to have greater expenses, in terms of a legal case
24 that is ongoing.

25 So when you look at and think about racial equity, you

1 must account for the entire environment and the long-term
2 consequences. Continuing to concentrate developments in parts
3 of the City, like Southwest, while other parts of the City go
4 without any redevelopment. And here I am specifically thinking
5 of Capitol Hill, that is a historic district, Georgetown and
6 other parts that are part of our legacy of redlining.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Williams? Mr. Williams, thank
8 you.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Your time is up. And I will ask
11 everybody -- I know Mr. Williams is the first, well, one of the
12 first. I would ask that everybody to look at the clock, because
13 I want to make sure that in a reasonable hour that I hear from
14 everyone. We have a few people who want to testify, and I want
15 to make sure we are respectful to everyone. And also want to
16 just say, and I will -- I'm trying not to say much. I'm looking
17 tonight, the idea when I -- when we had this or when I had this
18 with my colleagues for us to get solutions to help us. You know,
19 I could go back and look at the history. And I'm not being
20 defensive. I'm just saying I need solutions so this stuff works,
21 not just a conversational piece, not just something -- I want to
22 make -- I want to see results. I want to see the -- yeah, the
23 data and all that's fine, but I want to get it to the people who
24 most need it, and the people who are -- have been disenfranchised
25 for years. Let's get it there. We can throw potshots and all,

1 but I'm going to ask everyone to please help me and help the
2 Commission to help us get there. That's what this is all about.
3 That's what it's all about. So help us with solutions and
4 resolutions. So I'll leave it at that. So, I'm sorry, Ms.
5 Schellin. I'm going to do my best not to say a whole lot.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: Sure. Parisa, you're next. You have
7 five minutes.

8 MS. NOROUZI: Great. Can you -- I don't know if you
9 can see me. So can you hear me?

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: We can't hear you. I can hear you
11 now.

12 MS. NOROUZI: You can hear me now?

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

14 MS. NOROUZI: Okay. Great. And do you see me? I
15 don't see myself, so I don't know.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: We can see you.

17 MS. NOROUZI: Okay. Oh, there I go. Okay. I see
18 that. Okay. My name is Parisa Norouzi. I'm the co-founder and
19 Executive Director of Empower DC, which is a citywide, grassroots
20 organization working to advance equitable development,
21 environmental justice, and racial equity since 2003. I reside
22 at 232 Quackenbos Street, Northwest 20011.

23 I'm here today to -- first let me say, Chairman Hood,
24 I do appreciate your leadership in calling for this roundtable.
25 I think this is exactly the kind of forums that we need to be

1 having. I hope we can expand this and maybe do some more
2 grassroots forums in the community as well, as you move into your
3 next steps to really flesh out this tool and work towards
4 implementation.

5 I want to ask also, if you could keep the record open
6 for maybe two weeks to allow folks, including myself, who did not
7 get the written statement in on time to submit things for the
8 record. As well, I would urge you to consider creation of a task
9 force or a committee that could include community
10 representatives, folks from relevant D.C. agencies, maybe even
11 practitioners from around the country, to help shape this tool.

12 And thank you for acknowledging in your opening that
13 this will ultimately become a legal requirement. And so we look
14 forward to that being translated into, I suppose, a zoning text
15 amendment.

16 I -- there's, you know, some really great language in
17 the Comprehensive Plan that I think it is very instructive to go
18 back and to look at that language and helps guide us. But what
19 I really want to focus on is the meaningful community engagement.
20 And I do want to thank Amber Hewitt for emphasizing that as well.
21 And it doesn't mean that I, you know, less -- have less interest
22 in the data or the mapping. I think all of that is important.
23 But I do think that the qualitative data, which you only get from
24 community engagement, is a piece that, you know, cannot be
25 minimized.

1 And Chairman Hood, you've, you know, expressed that you
2 really do want to see this have real results for people. I think
3 the first step of that is through really giving people an
4 opportunity to be part of this process.

5 So I do want to just reference a couple of things in
6 the Comp Plan when it talks about -- first, let me say, you know,
7 right now, I -- and I think we all recognize this, but in case
8 it's not recognized, the zoning process as a whole is
9 inaccessible. And, you know, in addition to mandating the
10 engagement within the racial equity tool, we really do need to
11 look at the process as a whole; issues of notice, standing and
12 accessibility, digital exclusion, language access, other factors
13 that would create barriers for people to meaningfully
14 participate. We really do need to do everything that we can, as
15 you said, Chairman, to level the playing field, and there's still
16 some work to be done.

17 A lot of emphasis has been placed on the ANC as the
18 community's voice. But you know, just, you know, we do need to
19 recognize the ANCs, it is still a major -- even with an active
20 ANC, you're typically going up against high-paid zoning attorneys
21 representing the developer's side. So it's still quite an
22 imbalance and representation within these proceedings. And most
23 ANCs are relatively new, don't have a lot of background in zoning,
24 and so it is a bit unfair to expect them to be able to navigate
25 this process without additional assistance.

1 The Comp Plan is very clear that meaningful involvement
2 is a key aspect of racial equity. I'm going to reference a couple
3 of quotes here. It says that "we apply a racial equity lens when
4 those most impacted by structural racism are meaningfully
5 involved in the creation and implementation of the policies and
6 practices." And it references equitable development, which is
7 really our goal. And it talks about equitable development is a
8 participatory approach for meeting the needs of underserved
9 communities, that it builds the capacity of vulnerable,
10 marginalized, and low-income communities to fully and
11 substantively participate in the decision-making process.

12 And so, that's the standard that we really need to be
13 thinking of, with regard to racial equity; how are we building
14 the capacity of impacted communities to be meaningfully involved
15 in decision making.

16 I also think that the definitions of environmental
17 justice are really instructive here. The definition from EPA
18 emphasizes fair treatment and meaningful involvement. And with
19 regard to meaningful involvement, it states that, one,
20 potentially affected community members have should have an
21 appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a
22 proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
23 two, the public's contribution can influence the agency's
24 decision. So that's a key piece, the meaningful involvement.
25 They should have the opportunity to influence the decision.

1 Three, that the concerns of all participants involved will be
2 considered in the decision-making process; and four, the decision
3 makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those
4 potentially affected.

5 So that's a very active standard, right? It's not
6 passive. We can't just post a notice in the, you know, in the
7 D.C. Register, or have an email go out and expect that that will
8 facilitate meaningful community involvement. And as a community
9 organizer, I do recognize that this is a labor-intensive process;
10 however, we know this to be true, that an inequitable process
11 cannot lead to an equitable outcome, that that work must be done
12 to win the trust and level the playing field prior to engagement,
13 really, which it's vital work, and it can't be minimized.

14 You really can't do effective community engagement if
15 you don't know the community. And so we do have to think about,
16 you know, who are -- where is the effective -- who should be
17 doing the engagement and who should be helping to design the
18 engagement plan. Meaningful relationships are built over time.
19 It can't just be at the last minute when a decision is being
20 made. It can't be, you know, something where people are asked
21 to sign on to something that they don't fully have the opportunity
22 to understand. Engagement should be ongoing, and the -- continue
23 after decisions are made, so that includes the community and
24 implementation and enforcement.

25 Community members hold expertise and knowledge, and the

1 applicants should first and foremost be looking to learn from
2 impacted residents. The engagement process must be transparent
3 and information must be accessible. Too often, we're forced to
4 fight for the information that is critical to our ability to
5 participate. I'm sorry. I'm -- am I out of time, or can I
6 continue a little bit?

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Well, let me say -- you're out of
8 time. But let me say this Ms. --

9 MS. NOROUZI: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I believe that -- I agree with you.
11 I was thinking in the lines of the work -- I don't know if we'd
12 call it a workgroup task force. I haven't talked to my
13 colleagues, but I appreciate you bringing that up. I think I
14 know from the work I've seen you do and others, if I get the task
15 force, I have to present it to my colleagues and figure out how
16 it's going to work. I would like for you -- you're one of the
17 people that I've already targeted to be involved in, because, as
18 you mentioned, you're a community organization. So you, Mr.
19 Theresa, and I'm also looking at some -- I want to balance it.
20 I want it to be balanced. So that's one of the things I'm looking
21 at.

22 And again, let me just say this. I'm not saying this
23 because -- I've watched your work over the years. And I'm not
24 sucking up to nobody, because I don't do that. But what I am
25 saying is, I'm watching your work, and I don't think we're that

1 far apart. It's about organization. I appreciate the work that
2 you all have done. If you could stick around, I may bring you
3 back up later. I don't know if you can listen to the -- I know
4 people are busy and have a lot of other things to do. But if
5 not, I plan on having some more of these, if my colleagues would
6 agree, because I want this to work.

7 And do we have your statement, or do -- you've also
8 asked --

9 MS. NOROUZI: No. I need to submit it. I do have a
10 couple more, you know, sort of sort of detailed recommendations
11 for what that engagement could look like. So I can submit that
12 if you will leave the record open.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yeah, if you could submit that, and
14 we will leave the record open. You all -- OAG said 48 hours,
15 you said two weeks. We -- to me, this is not a formality of
16 support, undeclared, opponent or proponent. To me, it's about
17 getting information. You know, because there's some things in
18 the tools, some things that are being said, some things done that
19 I don't support, and I want to be quiet. I'm trying to be quiet.
20 So the goal is -- so Ms. Norouzi, I appreciate all your work.
21 Stay tuned. Please submit that. And also, we thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 And colleagues, let me say, if you have any questions,
24 colleagues of any of them, just ask. We're here to hear and
25 listen.

1 But I do notice this, and thank you, Parisa and all
2 those from DC Empower.

3 Ms. Aten has been held up on the screen for a while.
4 Is she coming? Are we going to hear from her soon?

5 (No audible response.)

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. So let's do that. Any
7 questions so far?

8 (No audible response.)

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. No questions.

10 And we'll be looking for your statement.

11 So Ms. Aten --

12 When is Ms. Aten coming on? She's been up.

13 MS. SCHELLIN: She is coming up. Let's see, Renee
14 Bowser was next.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

16 MS. SCHELLIN: She's actually next, Renee Bowser.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. BOWSER: Can you hear me? I can't see. I can't
19 see myself. Oh, let me see. Let me put start video. Good
20 afternoon. I cannot see the time, so before you start my time,
21 is it possible to see the clock? I don't see any clock.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Is there any way she can see the
23 clock? If not --

24 MS. SCHELLIN: If you -- up at the top of your screen,
25 do you see where it says "layout" on the right-hand side? Upper

1 right?

2 MS. BOWSER: I don't see -- no, I don't see anything
3 that says layout.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Well, since you are -- so you have three
5 minutes as an SMD Commissioner. So we can give you a one-minute
6 warning. I'll do that.

7 MS. BOWSER: Okay. I'm going to also try to, before
8 you start, put the timer up, because I have no -- I just can't
9 measure the time when I'm talking.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. I'll give you one-minute warning.

11 MS. BOWSER: Just a second. Just a -- okay. I'll
12 start.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Schellin, can you do that with
14 everybody from now on? And then I'll be quiet. Can you do that
15 with everybody?

16 MS. SCHELLIN: Sure.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

18 MS. BOWSER: Okay. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair
19 Hood and other members and staff of the Zoning Commission. My
20 name is Renee Bowser, and I'm an ANC Commissioner and ANC-4D
21 Chair, testifying in my individual capacity today. I work for
22 D.C. Statehood, D.C. Democratic State Committeewoman, and a
23 member of Empower DC.

24 I won't -- I'll just try to summarize my testimony,
25 because even if I read it, it will be more than three pages.

1 What got me about this tool is that it suggests in part one, but
2 does not require discussion of the Citywide Elements and the Area
3 Elements in any case submission. And the Zoning Commission
4 offered no definition of what constitutes racial equity or racial
5 equity analysis. And it even failed to even list in its listing
6 of elements of the Comp Plan. It failed to list the Framework
7 Element and the Implementation Element where you find the most
8 discussion of what racial is, a racial equity analysis and racial
9 equity tool. And so the bottom line is that there are no
10 mandates.

11 And the same thing with part two of the tool. It asks
12 only two broad questions that may be included in people's zoning
13 submissions. So it makes -- it has no mandates, says nothing
14 about talking to the community, and therefore how could it be an
15 effective action to change the trajectory of Washington, D.C.,
16 which is, since I've been here in '83, just a racist displacement
17 of black and brown people.

18 But the Comp Plan, as opposed to the Zoning Commission
19 tool presented to date, required nothing of developers and
20 requiring no consultation to community, the Comp Plan does
21 require real data and analysis as part of the agency's policies
22 and investments.

23 And the Implementation Element says equity is important
24 to achieving positive outcomes with District communities. And
25 so you got to consult the communities. And I cite that in my

1 footnotes. It requires --

2 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

3 MS. BOWSER: One minute? Okay.

4 The Zoning Commission must, in order to comply with
5 Comp Plan mandates, broaden its understanding of what constitutes
6 a racial equity analysis and devise a tool that works to reverse
7 systemic racism and structural inequity in D.C.'s development
8 system. The racial equity analysis tool must be applied to every
9 zoning decision. For example, in Seattle, Seattle requires using
10 equity that will heavily weigh the potential to improve race and
11 equity and close racial disparities in an area as the basis for
12 even selecting development and planning projects, as opposed to
13 what we do in D.C. A developer wants to do something with the
14 project, and we -- then we -- I put my time. Sorry for that.

15 Seattle is saying look at all these things as a basis
16 for even selecting where the development and planning projects,
17 where the District is going to put its money. Don't do it the
18 other way around why it's driven by developers. We have to talk
19 to the people, look at the statistics to know what has been done.
20 And I can see it in my community here in Petworth, where black
21 people are being driven out. We can't counter that or redress
22 that, or have restitution for people going forward --

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Time.

24 MS. BOWSER: -- unless we really are serious about the
25 racial equity process and tool. I mean, the Seattle has like

1 200 pages about how to specifically implement these policies. We
2 don't.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Bowser.

4 Ms. Schellin, I think I'm going to take it from here.
5 I appreciate -- you just call the names.

6 Thank you, Ms. Bowser.

7 Let's go to the next person, Ms. Schellin.

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Ms. Aten?

9 MS. ATEN: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is
10 Carol Aten. I live in Ward 3, where we have a deplorable history
11 of redlining and restrictive covenants and a significant lack of
12 both affordable housing and racial and economic diversity.

13 Washington, D.C. has a lot of bad history to make up
14 for when it comes to racial equity, including even recent history.
15 The new requirement for the Zoning Commission and other D.C.
16 agencies to consider their decisions through a racial equity lens
17 has the potential to break the "business as usual" inequity-
18 perpetuating results that have long occurred. However, in order
19 for the Zoning Commission to play its part in remedying the past
20 wrongs and address inappropriate racial disparities, it will need
21 to be informed and act intentionally with an activist posture.

22 Frankly, the questions that were submitted for public
23 review don't come close to providing the information that the
24 Zoning Commission would need to make appropriate decisions, let
25 alone include any mechanisms to address identified problems such

1 as displacement. I think the following items must be included
2 in the approach taken by the Commission. And obviously, some
3 work would need to happen through the Office of Planning to
4 provide some information and expertise.

5 First of all, it's not the developer's responsibility
6 to look through a racial equity lens, it's the Zoning
7 Commission's. And the Zoning Commission must accept that
8 responsibility, and include a process for evaluating racial
9 equity and possible actions they should order in their
10 regulations and include those in text amendments.

11 Second, they need to have the data to do that. You all
12 need to have the data to do that. It's time for the Zoning
13 Commission to ask developers to provide information to help
14 inform your decisions, but the Commission must be responsible for
15 doing the necessary analysis, and will need the necessary data
16 to do that.

17 Importantly, the third thing is that the Zoning
18 Commission needs to be able to take action and identify specific
19 remedies, potentially to be used on a voluntary basis by
20 developers. But if not, to be able to order direct remedial
21 actions.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

23 MS. ATEN: This is something -- thank you. This is
24 something that has not happened to a great extent before.

25 And lastly, I think it's important to monitor outcomes.

1 This has not come up very often. But I think it's important to
2 see that what is being done is working, or if it's not working,
3 what needs to be changed or improved. There's been some
4 discussion about how to measure racial equity. And when some of
5 those things are developed, we need to be able to measure against
6 those with what's being done.

7 We are all (belatedly) feeling our way in addressing
8 something that is a long-standing problem. The recent amendments
9 to the Comp Plan have created an impetus. We must rise to this
10 challenge. We're not alone; other jurisdictions have been
11 getting and grappling with these issues too, and they're being
12 much more aggressive than we are at the moment. Washington, D.C.
13 should not be following their lead but should be the leader.

14 Thank you very much for initiating this conversation
15 through this roundtable. And, as I have indicated beyond, the
16 results are crucial to the future of the city, and I appreciate
17 the opportunity to comment. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

19 Next.

20 MS. SCHELLIN: Next. You won't be able to see him, but
21 Jayme Epstein. We can only unmute. No video. Okay.

22 MS. EPSTEIN: Thank you. Can you hear me?

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

24 MS. EPSTEIN: Oh, good. Sorry, the video isn't working.
25 Good afternoon. My name is Jayme Epstein, and I live at 2743

1 Woodley place in the Woodley Park neighborhood of Ward 3. And
2 I'm a member of Ward 3 Housing Justice, a grassroots group that
3 advocates for deeply affordable housing in Ward 3 and of Empower
4 DC.

5 I appreciate the opportunity to testify today regarding
6 the Zoning Commission's proposed racial equity tool. I'm fully
7 in support of all efforts to use a racial equity lens in zoning
8 decisions and celebrate that advancement in the Comprehensive
9 Plan. I want to live in a neighborhood that reflects the full
10 diversity of the City's residents, both racially and
11 economically, and where the historic exclusion of people of color
12 is no longer perpetuated. I look forward to sharing the high
13 opportunity neighborhood in which I live with neighbors of all
14 racial and economic backgrounds who choose to live here. And I
15 know that that will simply not be the result of the racial equity
16 tool this Commission has proposed.

17 The tool the Zoning Commission has proposed is woefully
18 inadequate. It lacks the necessary substance to affect
19 meaningful change and equitable development outcomes, and it does
20 not meet Comprehensive Plan requirements.

21 I strongly support the recommendations of Empower DC,
22 especially those that I have listed in my written testimony,
23 which I submitted. In addition, I urge you to adopt a tool that
24 will consider not only the current risk of displacing black
25 residents, but will also take into account the historic context

1 that has made areas west of Rock Creek Park disproportionately
2 white and wealthy; repair the harm of past policies and actions
3 and advance racial equity; develop mapping and narrative tools
4 to research and document a community's specific history of racism
5 in housing and land use before taking further steps to develop
6 policy or plans, and both --

7 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

8 MS. EPSTEIN: And both acknowledge this history and
9 take actions that are informed by this research to dismantle
10 systemic racism and barriers to fair housing and community equity
11 across the City. To that end, I also urge you to consider
12 implementing tools similar to those used by the city of Seattle,
13 Washington, that measure both the displacement risk of a project
14 the displacement index, and the level of opportunity in the
15 neighborhood, the access to opportunity index, in order to ensure
16 equitable access to all neighborhoods.

17 In closing, I urge you to adopt a tool that includes
18 all of the recommendations of Empower DC and that ensures that
19 your decisions will increase the ability of all residents of D.C.
20 to thrive in housing they can afford in every ward of the City.
21 The tools should be made mandatory through a zoning text
22 amendment, and there must be accountability and reporting of
23 outcomes. You have the opportunity to use this moment to begin
24 to reverse the consequences of the shameful history of housing
25 discrimination, exclusion and displacement in the District.

1 Please use all of the tools available to you to ensure that your
2 decisions truly advance racial equity in our City. Thank you.

3 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Our next panel, Cheryl Cort,
4 Deirdre Brown, Alma Gates, Laura Richards, and Nancy MacWood.
5 And -- one, two, three -- all but Laura Richards have five
6 minutes.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let me just say before Ms. Cort
8 starts. I also have her name, if my colleagues agree, and we
9 have this task force, once we put it together, Ms. Cort. So I'm
10 just putting that out there. Thank you.

11 MS. CORT: Thank you.

12 Chairman Hood, members of the Commission. I'm in my
13 8-year-old's bedroom. I don't have a special dedicated office.

14 I'm Cheryl Cort with the Coalition for Smarter Growth.
15 We're the leading non-profit in the D.C. region, based in the
16 District of Columbia dedicated and making the case for smart
17 growth. Our mission is to promote walkable, inclusive, and
18 transit-oriented communities and the land use and transportation
19 policies and investments needed to make those communities thrive.

20 We're pleased to offer our comments on the work of the
21 Zoning Commission in order to implement the directive from the
22 updated Comprehensive Plan that requires that all zoning actions
23 be viewed through a racial equity lens. This approach is one of
24 the important advances of the Comprehensive Plan. We have
25 discussed the Zoning Commission's proposals with our partners in

1 the Housing Priorities Coalition which work together to win a
2 Comprehensive Plan to guide us to a more equitable, affordable
3 and sustainable District.

4 We -- I submitted testimony that restates the really
5 helpful guidance from the Implementation Element that I've seen
6 cited many other times. So I won't go through that. But I wanted
7 to just share with you some of our observations on, you know,
8 we've already started working with the framework on a racial
9 equity lens, as proposed in the Comprehensive Plan and by the
10 Zoning Commission when considering specific planned unit
11 developments that we've submitted testimony on and testified for.

12 And also wanted to note that we've already started to
13 benefit from the newly completed planning efforts, such as the
14 Chevy Chase Small Area Plan. This plan provided a brief
15 historical context and racially disaggregated data which
16 demonstrated clear inequity by race and acknowledgement of the
17 legacy of racial discrimination, especially -- specifically
18 against African Americans in Chevy Chase, and the District. This
19 context will be helpful as -- when the Commission considers
20 future zoning actions in this area.

21 We'd like to highlight some of our comments based on
22 part two of the racial equity analysis tool under the themes that
23 you proposed. And so, I'll just briefly talk about some of these
24 themes. So the first one is direct displacement. We -- working
25 with our partners, we have provided some additional questions as

1 a way to frame how you might want to approach this. First of
2 all, how is -- how does this action avoid displacement is the
3 first question, and then describe the demographics, race in
4 common, other characteristics of affected residents. What is
5 the -- if there is a relocation program, what is it, and how does
6 it -- what best practices models does it follow? How is -- does
7 the relocation program specifically address the needs of black
8 and other people of color, the specific needs of residents; and
9 is there a right of return guaranteed; how are relocation costs
10 covered; is this temporary or permanent displacement?

11 I will also just note that on the question of direct
12 displacement, we also suggested examining how inaction can also
13 result in direct displacement, as affordable housing proposals
14 are often delayed or derailed through the appeals process and in
15 other ways that they are contested.

16 Regarding housing, we suggest more details in terms of
17 examining the kinds of things you want from an applicant to
18 describe in terms of the housing component. The -- how the action
19 addresses the housing needs for households at specific income
20 levels: 30, 40, 50, 60 percent median family income; what are
21 the current and projected household size and age-related housing
22 needs and proposed housing types for the project; is the
23 affordable housing rental or ownership; how does the housing --
24 the new housing address the needs in the local neighborhood and/or
25 on a on a wide scale?

1 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

2 MS. CORT: And then, let's see, how are -- how's rental
3 housing management in -- providing high quality of living for all
4 the residents and providing supports for those who need
5 additional supports; and how are we ensuring that in
6 homeownership cases that homeowners are successful?

7 Addressing historic exclusion. How would proposed new
8 housing address historic racial and other exclusion practices?
9 Because in fact, we have many neighborhoods where people of color,
10 African Americans were either disallowed from living in that
11 community or were actually literally pushed out in a -- over time
12 and no longer have much of a footprint in these communities. I
13 think Chevy Chase documented that in the Chevy Chase Small Area
14 Plan.

15 In terms of transportation equity, we just wanted to
16 note that low-income residents and residents of color are less
17 likely to own their own personal vehicle and less able to take
18 advantage of a parking-only transportation benefit. So we asked
19 how we can look at more equitable transportation subsidies; is
20 it just -- is the project just subsidizing vehicle storage, or
21 is there an equivalent subsidy offered to residents who don't own
22 a personal vehicle?

23 And more broadly, on transportation equity --

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Cort?

25 MS. CORT: Yes?

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: If you can just give us your closing
2 thought?

3 MS. CORT: Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And we'll hear from you more at a
5 later time, I'm sure.

6 MS. CORT: Great. Okay. Well, you know, we appreciate
7 being part of this evolving process, and how we can incorporate
8 this into all our land use decisions. And we're excited about
9 the opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions and map out the
10 relationship between the zoning decisions by the Zoning
11 Commission and other agencies, and higher-level planning and
12 analyses. So I'll just leave it at that. So we're excited to
13 be part of this process. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

15 Next?

16 MS. SCHELLIN: That's Deirdre Brown. Ms. Brown, you
17 need to unmute.

18 MS. BROWN: There we go. All right. Good afternoon.
19 My name is Deirdre Brown. I'm a third generation native
20 Washingtonian, an affordable housing advocate, a Ward 3 resident,
21 and a small business owner.

22 I've been in the real estate industry as a Realtor and
23 a title company owner for over two decades. Like many of us,
24 I've watched the gentrification and displacement, as well as lack
25 of affordability in the District grow to the levels that we see

1 today.

2 I'm speaking today on behalf of the Northwest
3 Opportunity Partners Community Development Corporation in
4 opposition to the Zoning Commission's draft of the racial equity
5 tool.

6 The D.C. Comprehensive Plan requires racial equity
7 analysis within D.C. Planning and Zoning by evaluating all zoning
8 actions through a racial equity lens. The Zoning Commission's
9 draft the racial equity tool, as it stands today, is insufficient
10 as a process for evaluating all actions through a racial equity
11 lens. It does not meet the Comprehensive Plan requirements due
12 to its lack of substance and as drafted will not lead to the
13 meaningful change in equitable development outcomes that we need.

14 The racial equity tool, as drafted, evaluates four
15 topics: direct displacement, housing, physical and access to
16 opportunity. The corresponding questions for each topic area are
17 too vague to be effective. Our suggestions are, at the very
18 least, that the following four items be included in the racial
19 equity tool. The first being to identify and consider past and
20 current systemic racial inequalities by developing data tools
21 that track and measure process -- progress towards closing the
22 racial wealth gap and housing affordability based on the context
23 of the median income for Black and Brown families in target areas.

24 By documenting historic community level inequities, we
25 can better predict the impact of proposed projects and address

1 the inequities during the planning stages of any new project.
2 Number two, clearly and distinctly identify who
3 benefits or is burdened from a decision. A tool must be created
4 to assess displacement risk with specific questions that are used
5 to guide the assessment. Factors to consider when evaluating
6 high displacement risk projects should be indicators such as
7 race, income, level of education, percentage of renters and
8 housing cost burdens. The evaluation of displacement risk must
9 include surrounding areas, not just the direct displacement site.
10 In addition, applicants that have projects in a displacement risk
11 area must demonstrate the steps have -- what steps have been
12 taken to address displacement and advance equity before coming
13 to the Zoning Commission for approval. This information will be
14 provided by mandating that a racial equity and social justice
15 impact statement is submitted by the applicant.

16 Number three. Once a baseline is established, there
17 needs to be a way of tracking the effectiveness of intervention --
18 interventions and measure the progress towards the goal of racial
19 equality. This can be achieved through data analysis, as well
20 as community review and feedback.

21 And finally, it is imperative that any racial equity
22 analysis that is implemented be codified through a zoning text
23 amendment and conducted for all zoning decisions, not just
24 contested cases. Thank you for your time.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay next is Alma Gates.

1 MS. GATES: Chairman Hood, and members of the
2 Commission. I am Alma Gates presenting on behalf of Neighbors
3 for a Livable Community.

4 Equity, a term with many meanings and definitions, is
5 often used interchangeably with the term equality, but equity
6 cannot be achieved until barriers are resolved. It's critical
7 to remember that social systems aren't naturally inequitable.
8 They've been intentionally designed to reward specific
9 demographics for so long, that the system's outcome may appear
10 unintentional, but are actually rooted in discriminatory
11 practices and beliefs that create barriers.

12 Neighbors for a Livable Community has worked tirelessly
13 to ensure institutions in their surrounding neighborhoods exists
14 equitably and in concert with the Comprehensive Plan. In keeping
15 with directives in the Plan, the Zoning Commission has provided
16 an evaluation tool to be viewed through a racial equity lens.
17 The tool needs accountability measures, which must be
18 intentional, concise, and enforceable. For too long
19 accountability has been the responsibility of the Zoning
20 Administrator, who lacks qualified staff to enforce the zoning
21 regulations.

22 It's unrealistic to believe accountability measures
23 will be handled differently by the Zoning Administrator's staff
24 when it comes to racial equity issues. If the ZC is serious
25 about ensuring an equity lens is employed in the review of zoning

1 applications, as opposed to more rhetoric, ZC will request that
2 the Offices of Planning provide a planning analysis outlining the
3 racial equity impact of all setdown reports and zoning
4 application reports and to draft and track the measures of
5 accountability for each case coming before the Commission.

6 NLC thanks the Zoning Commission for the opportunity
7 to present its opinions and suggestions at this roundtable. The
8 roundtable is a good beginning, and the public will benefit
9 further from an opportunity to review what is being proposed
10 prior to complication in the zoning regs. NLC strongly encourages
11 the Zoning Commission to require OP to implement a planning
12 analysis and to draft accountability measures based on an equity
13 lens for all cases coming before the Commission.

14 NLC is aware of that inequity exists within the public
15 schools of the District of Columbia. At a recent at-large
16 candidates hearing, one panelist mentioned that school choices
17 across the river is not -- school choice across the river is not
18 an option for parents living east of the river, because they are
19 considered out of bounds for admittance to schools West of the
20 river. Education is one of the most blatant examples the City
21 has of inequality and inequity. Why are schools east of the
22 river not on par with their counterparts across the river? How
23 can this inequity be corrected?

24 The Zoning Commission has an opportunity to propose the
25 developers not bound by IZ, adopt a school and work directly with

1 the school to help remove barriers, deliver goods and needed
2 services to ensure teachers and students have the resources they
3 need to succeed. If education is one of the most important tools
4 for success, that needs to be treated equitably. What can the
5 Commission do to create additional pathways for success --

6 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

7 MS. GATES: -- through zoning? First Source is an
8 example of a zoning requirement which has been treated as
9 rhetoric. Developers must be required to hire and train unskilled
10 D.C. workers through an apprentice program. Apprenticeships will
11 broaden the workforce, provide the tools for success, and ensure
12 a more equitable approach to hiring is available to those in need
13 of work in the District.

14 In closing, NLC believes direction from the
15 Comprehensive Plan must be implemented equitably. The Plan does
16 not discriminate, but at the present time does not provide the
17 kind of direction necessary for the successful implementation of
18 equitable accountability. Now is the time for the Zoning
19 Commission to use the equity lens to ensure its decisions are not
20 only equitable, but address equity and success through the
21 implementation of a planning, analysis, and accountability
22 measures. Thank you.

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Ms. Richards has three minutes.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let's make sure all these statements
25 that we -- they are in the record. If they're not in the record

1 yet, Ms. Schellin, I want to make sure we get all the statements
2 in record. Thank you.

3 MS. RICHARDS: Good afternoon, Chairman Hood and
4 members of the Commission. For decades, the District has allowed,
5 even encouraged, development that maintains and hardens historic
6 patterns of racial and economic segregation. Therefore, an
7 effective equity policy must interrupt these adverse consequences
8 and lead to development being welcomed, rather than feared as a
9 predator. As a threshold step, the equity standards must be
10 included in the zoning regulations as mandatory requirements,
11 which you've already agreed to do.

12 These standards cannot be soft-edged, impressionistic
13 evaluation of the project, and instead must rely on measurable
14 standards and statistical analysis. The standards must address
15 how a project impacts the surrounding community. Housing and
16 demographic data should be localized to D.C. and to the extent
17 possible to the neighborhood at issue. The Office of Planning
18 should be charged with making the data user-friendly to
19 individual D.C. citizens. The standards must take into account
20 displacement takes many forms. Small businesses can be
21 displaced, a culture can be displaced. The introduction of
22 meaningful amounts of affordable housing into affluent
23 non-diverse neighborhoods can be unwelcoming, and prevent
24 inclusion of newcomers. The standards must address this
25 circumstance as well. Steps could include preservation of

1 existing homeownership, including tax relief beyond the current
2 annual cap to long-time owners faced with ballooning assessments.
3 Any household being displaced must be rehoused before
4 construction starts into temporary or permanent housing. There
5 should be a guaranteed right of return or at least return on a
6 first line -- in line basis for displaced households --

7 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

8 MS. RICHARDS: -- with no disqualification for credit
9 or similar issues. If a formerly occupied vacant building is
10 slated for redevelopment, the applicant must show that the
11 landowner did not engage in de facto eviction of tenants by
12 failing to maintain the property. The District's First Source
13 program is broken. The Commission should impose requirements
14 beyond those of the First Source law. The best effort standard
15 for compliance must be abandoned and replaced with mandatory
16 requirements.

17 This roundtable begins an evolving process of revising
18 long-standing structural inequalities. While the Zoning
19 Commission cannot do this alone, its authority is considerable
20 and must be exercised vigorously. And I should add that I am
21 testifying on behalf of the Committee of 100. So I really have
22 another two minutes, but I will simply conclude with what I said.
23 And I think you - the Commission's on the right track, but it's
24 really got to step up to the plate more than has been the case
25 in the past.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Schellin, let's give
2 Ms. Richards her other two minutes, please. Thank you.

3 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Richards, you want to continue?

5 MS. SCHELLIN: That's fine. She just registered as
6 herself, so that's fine. That's why I said three minutes.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Let's give her the other two
8 minutes.

9 MS. RICHARDS: Yeah, I have.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Let's give her the two
11 minutes.

12 Go ahead, Ms. Richards. Keep going.

13 MS. RICHARDS: Okay. I just want to emphasize the
14 importance of employment opportunities as part of the
15 development. Often development is welcomed because people see
16 more jobs coming in. And that's not the case for African
17 Americans. We are so tired of seeing construction sites go up,
18 including in our neighborhood, and all we see are, like, Hispanics
19 -- workers for the most part. And there's sort of one a -- of
20 the developer's favorite ways of, you know, non-complying with
21 First Source is to funnel would-be employees into "soft skills"
22 training. And I really think that, like, soft skills is, you
23 know, just become an avoidance mechanism.

24 Another favorite mechanism is to -- gosh what do
25 they -- they put them into these temporary jobs that are

1 tax-based -- taxpayer supported, and when those jobs end, you
2 know, they're out of luck. So I think that a big step in making
3 these developments welcomed would be to make sure there's some
4 participation in the long run for the people who live in the
5 neighborhood. So the District seems to have some real impetus
6 behind it this time. That's not been the case in the past. I
7 hope that there is significant you know, communal will to really
8 seriously address these problems. That's it.

9 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Thank you. Last, Nancy.

10 MS. MACWOOD: Thank you for the opportunity to testify
11 at the roundtable on racial equity. I am testifying on behalf
12 of Ward 3, Housing Justice, which is dedicated to creating more
13 affordable, including deeply affordable housing in Ward 3.

14 The Zoning Commission is asking for advice on creating
15 a tool that links racial equity to both process and outcomes.
16 That is the right approach. But we urge the Zoning Commission
17 to require more information for applicants, as it joins every
18 branch of government in meaningfully ending racial injustice.

19 The Zoning Commission requested, in part, for advice
20 on how to make its evaluation of racial equity more substantive.
21 We suggest that the tool used by applicants and the Office of
22 Planning must be more specific and detailed to provide you with
23 the information and context you need for a deeper dive into the
24 link between racial equity and zoning. You must understand what
25 opportunities or burdens people of color are facing to prevent

1 zoning decision's exacerbating racial divisions.

2 The second question mentioned in the roundtable
3 announcement is how to better identify potential positive impacts
4 and negative outcomes of a zoning action. The D.C. Comprehensive
5 Plan which has elevated racial equity in our City to both an
6 emergency and an essential shared value, provides relevant
7 information. The desired outcome is no division between people
8 of color and white people -- life outcomes no longer predicted
9 by skin color.

10 To get there, the Implementation Element says you need
11 to identify past and current racial inequities so you know what
12 the needs of residents of color are. In a zoning context, that
13 means applicants must use data disaggregated by race, which the
14 Office of Planning has, to show how income, jobs, healthcare, and
15 housing are different or the same in the area where they seek
16 benefits or relief from zoning regulations. Information about
17 the goals of an application or if there are featured public space
18 improvements will not help you to address structural racism.

19 We looked at a PUD, map amendment, and a modification
20 of a PUD filed after the release of the Zoning Commission racial
21 equity tool to get a sense of how applicants use the tool. In
22 every case, applicants said there would be no displacement
23 because zoning had not permitted housing previously. They did
24 not go a step further and discuss the demographics of the area,
25 what the income levels are, what the unemployment rate is, or any

1 other factors that would be relevant to determining how a
2 development proposal or allowing more buildable density could
3 impact an area from a racial perspective.

4 The intention of a zoning racial equity analysis, we
5 believe, is to shine a light on the potential for loss of culture,
6 loss of small and local businesses, displacement due to property
7 tax increases, and loss of jobs. With that information, the
8 Zoning Commission can work with applicants and stakeholders to
9 change emphasis, add conditions, and require mitigations or
10 interventions to ensure that racial outcomes are positive.

11 Affordable housing was barely mentioned in these
12 statements. The map amendment submission said that a development
13 proposal could result in a project that would offer housing,
14 including affordable housing, but not a word about the cost of
15 housing in the area, and whether is -- there is a need for
16 affordable housing.

17 The other two submissions noted that they would comply
18 with Inclusionary Zoning requirements and one said they would
19 make sure that some people at 50 percent MFI could live in the
20 development. But there was no information on how much rent people
21 of color who live in the area could afford to pay, or whether
22 the area is so predominantly white, that a greater percentage of
23 affordable units is really the public benefit that is needed.
24 Amazingly, people of color were never mentioned in any of the
25 statements.

1 It appears that the Zoning Commission is taking a very
2 narrow approach to how applicants can show consistency --

3 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

4 MS. RICHARDS: -- with the Comprehensive Plan policies
5 on racial equity. We urge you to examine the robust racial equity
6 requirements for land use and development processes adopted by
7 Boston and New York City. Our neighbor, Montgomery County, has
8 also some interesting approaches that D.C. might consider. The
9 goal is not to scrutinize the Comprehensive Plan to figure out
10 how little applicants must do, but to figure out how through text
11 amendments, the Zoning Commission can add process to help it
12 incorporate racial equity into all its actions. Thank you for
13 your time and attention.

14 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Next panel. Chris Otten, Tanya
15 Golash-Boza, William Jordan, Lauri Winter, and Coy McKinney.

16 Mr. Jordan and Ms. Winter are registered with
17 organizations, so they will get five minutes. The others are
18 registered as individuals.

19 Mr. Jordan?

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Mr. Jordan, I think your
21 name was called first. You may begin.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Actually, Chris Otten was first.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Oh, Chris Otten. Okay.

24 Mr. Otten, you may begin. I don't see him.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: He was on. Maybe he's just -- oh, did

1 --

2 MR. OTTEN: Hello?

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. There he is now.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay, Mr. Otten, go ahead.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right.

6 MR. OTTEN: Yeah, I thought I signed up with D.C. for
7 Reasonable Development, so I don't know. All right. It sounds
8 like I'm only getting three minutes instead of five.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You have five minutes, Mr. Otten.
10 You may begin.

11 MR. OTTEN: Okay, thank you. I'm appearing before the
12 committee of folks who love me the most in this City. Look, my
13 friends, you know, I've lived in the city for 22 years. And I
14 have a lot of friends who are not in the City anymore,
15 particularly people of color, my black friends. A lot of my
16 friends are gone. They can't keep up with the rents. They can't
17 keep up with -- they're not getting the jobs. And, you know,
18 this is all -- we're talking about racial equity; it the hot
19 buzzword now. And I'm seeing some of the stuff happening, right.
20 So there's applications funneling through the Zoning Commission
21 right now that you're approving, even though we don't have a tool
22 in place yet, and that scares me, because that means continuing
23 the status quo.

24 Sixty thousand black folks have been made gone from
25 D.C. over the last 20 years of the real estate boom. Sixty

1 thousand. If that doesn't cause pause, which it sounds like it's
2 finally doing, then I don't know what will. So to this pause,
3 and I'm hoping you guys can stop the applications and approvals
4 until a tool, a real tool is ready. This one-page PDF, that's
5 kind of a joke, right? I know it's led to this conversation,
6 but we got folks who are being harmed directly by these projects.

7 Union Market, six thousand new units at Union Market
8 that you approved, 20 PUDs over 40 acres. I counted, there's 10
9 affordable family size units that were brokered by the Office of
10 Planning and Zoning Commission with the developers and giving
11 away all those air rights, ten. Not 10 percent, ten two-plus
12 bedroom affordable units. That's the harm, right? And so we're
13 trying to move away from that.

14 I think, if we want to take this seriously, I want to
15 see the Office of Planning look at jurisdictional -- how other
16 cities are doing this right. Because, you know, you can talk
17 with us all day, but I want to see the Office of Planning step
18 up and actually, you know, look at how other cities are doing
19 this. New York has a great -- has a whole protocol set up.
20 Oregon -- Portland, Oregon; San Francisco. I mean, there's a lot
21 of places that are trying to do this now and have been for a few
22 years.

23 But I've -- what I've seen here is, like Holland and
24 Knight, re-define racial equity as racial equality. That's
25 unacceptable, right? Because racial equality doesn't happen

1 unless there's racial equity. Repairing the harms of the past,
2 repairing the displacement pressures of the past, that's how we
3 get to a racial equality. So we need racial equity first.
4 They're not the same thing.

5 I just want to give an example because, you know, I've
6 been castigated for challenging projects at the Zoning Commission
7 that displace my friends and neighbors. One of those was the
8 Adams Morgan Hotel, or on my block where I live. And my neighbors
9 and I organized, and we said -- if you put a luxury hotel here
10 to the Office of Planning and to the Zoning Commission -- we said
11 if you put a luxury hotel here, the existing natural occurring
12 affordable housing will be displaced. We wound up settling, and
13 we won a settlement package out of that of, well, ultimately two
14 million dollars. Of that, we've only been paid a million. We
15 bought one building with that to save 30 units for permanently
16 affordable housing. That was what we had to do in our fight,
17 because nobody at the Zoning Commission listened. Nobody at the
18 Office of Planning believed if you drop a luxury hotel on a block,
19 it's going to displace people. Well, 30 people get to stay here
20 on my block, the 30 people across the --

21 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

22 MR. OTTEN: -- street don't. So just real quick, the
23 property appraisers, the appraisal values of the land goes up
24 with each one of these developments. In this case, the two
25 buildings we wanted to buy went from appraised at 1.2 million to

1 6 million by the time the hotel was built. This is real. This
2 is what these projects you approve do to neighborhoods. We're
3 asking for the tool to be in place with the help of everybody on
4 this call -- and you, as the Zoning Commission, and Chair Hood,
5 I appreciate it -- that we try to get this in place sooner than
6 later, because the applications are piling on right now. And I
7 appreciate your time. Thank you.

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Next, Ms. Boza.

9 MS. BOZA: Hi. Good afternoon. Can you all hear me?
10 Hello? Can you hear me?

11 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

12 MS. BOZA: Okay, great.

13 Hi. My name is Dr. Tanya Golash-Boza. Address 5325
14 16th Street, Northwest Washington, D.C. 20011. I was born and
15 raised in that area, and I am a sociology professor. So basically
16 my job -- my day job involves analyzing the extent to which racial
17 equity has been not realized in Petworth -- in the broader
18 Petworth neighborhood where I grew up.

19 So I want to talk to you all today about one aspect of
20 the racial equity tool, because my colleagues have already shared
21 many different other aspects of it.

22 So the Comp Plan specifies that we need to take into
23 account historical trauma and racism. So you all might think,
24 well, you know, we're the Zoning Commission, how can we take into
25 account historical trauma and racism? You know, we're looking

1 forward, how can we even account for everything that happened?
2 What I want to point out to you is that the fact that in the
3 Washington Metropolitan Area, white people have 81 times the
4 wealth of black people. That's not just an accident, and that
5 actually happened because of local and federal policies.

6 So if local and federal policies created the racial
7 wealth gap -- and if you'd like more information on that, I'd be
8 happy to provide you with that, I'm not going to take up your
9 time here -- but all -- the point I want to drive home is that
10 if we created this racial wealth gap with local and government
11 policies, then we also can undo it with policies. So we have to
12 think bigger, right? We're not going to get to racial equity as
13 defined in the Comp Plan through small measures. Like, it's
14 simply not going to happen.

15 And let me just give you a little more context about
16 Petworth. So the Petworth neighborhood was 100 percent, 99
17 percent white, and then -- because of policies that condoned
18 racial covenants in that neighborhood. And then another policy
19 came out that said, you know what, those covenants are not legal
20 anymore, so now African Americans can move into that
21 neighborhood, and they did when I guess --

22 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

23 MS. GOLASH-BOZA: Yeah. Then policies made it possible
24 for white people to move out to the suburbs, but policies
25 prevented black people from moving out to the suburbs. So that's

1 the basis of the racial wealth gap. And we go back to the
2 neighborhood of Petworth, if you think about the fact that, as
3 black people were moving into Petworth in the 1950s and '60s and
4 purchasing homes, right, these were people that were on their way
5 towards the American dream, but then local policies subsequently
6 proceeded to defund the schools, and then later fund a war on
7 drugs that led to massive displacement.

8 So what we want to keep in mind is that Petworth was a
9 stronghold of the black middle class, but government policies
10 dispossessed them. So when we think about racial equity moving
11 forward, we have to think about how can we not just stop that
12 dispossession, but how can we recreate and reestablish a strong
13 black middle class, because that's the only way that we're going
14 to move anywhere towards diminishing the wealth gap.

15 So any future plan to achieve racial equity in the City
16 has to take into account the history of disinvestment in black
17 neighborhoods and carceral investment in black neighborhoods. It
18 is impossible to achieve racial equity without taking into
19 account and providing redress for this pernicious history. Thank
20 you.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Mr. Jordan?

22 MR. JORDAN: Good evening. Good afternoon. My name's
23 William Jordan. I'm a resident of Columbia Heights, have been
24 here for almost 30, 40 years, 35 years. I'm testifying today --
25 almost didn't testify, because I've been so disappointed in my

1 interaction with how the Commission has treated this dynamic of
2 racial equity, and the willingness to really dive in and
3 understand the dynamics that have played out in this City.

4 I'll start with Columbia Heights, but I really want to
5 reference a couple of cases.

6 First is 07-02, which was the Donatelli case, Highland
7 Park, in Columbia Heights. As an ANC Commissioner, I came before
8 this Commission not really understanding fully the process, but
9 I raise to this Commission that the City partnered with Donatelli
10 had created -- used the PUD process to get out --

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Jordan? Mr. Jordan?

12 MR. JORDAN: Yes?

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let me just say this. I have been
14 instructed by counsel to stop you. And what I would ask -- you
15 obviously missed my opening statement. So I would ask you to,
16 again, to be geared towards not what's been done, not what you
17 disagree with, because there are probably people that disagree
18 with whatever any of us do, but I would ask you to respond to
19 the tool, how we can improve and how we can perfect it, in that
20 order. Thank -- or in that manner to that -- or to that point.
21 And I greatly appreciate you following the opening statement.

22 MR. JORDAN: Okay. Yeah. I -- sorry, I missed the
23 opening statement. However, I will not go specifics. But the
24 purpose of the tool, the reason I was bringing up this case, is
25 the purpose of the tool would -- for me, with -- the tool must

1 be able to see what happened in the past, what's happened
2 recently, and evaluate that moving forward. So if I can't talk
3 about past cases, if I can't talk about recent cases, right, and
4 how that has impacted the people that I know, then it's almost
5 -- then that is the opposite of what a racial equity tool needs
6 to do. And so that would be my comment to you all is -- as well
7 as my work with Park Morton, similar, is that the whole purpose
8 of the racial equity to is to make visible the people, the
9 communities, and how projects in the past have impacted, because
10 we are -- we have said that these projects, greater density,
11 transit-oriented development, and all of these things have made
12 this community better. But if you look at Ward 1, if you look
13 at what's happening with Park Morton, the opposite is being shown,
14 that these things are not. So a tool should be able to pull
15 these things out.

16 So the problem I have with the tool, and what the tool
17 needs to be able to fix is to address what was -- what you just
18 cut me off from being able to do. I think that is the entire
19 purpose of a equality tool is to be able to tell the story, my
20 story, the story of Park Morton, the story of other people in my
21 neighborhood, the story of how the City investment has impacted.
22 So in my case, I wasn't displaced, but my children have been
23 because of those policies have created the types of units and the
24 type of an environment, that my children who have gone to school,
25 done all the things that we've asked them to do, has not created

1 the kind of community that we need, that would welcome them.

2 So I will end, since I can't really say what I want to
3 say, is to say that that's the fundamental flaw -- is that we
4 have to be willing to dig into these things, and the tool should
5 guide us through this process. And that's how we move forward
6 is to have the strength of character to go back and look at these
7 cases, look at the impact; look at the current cases, look at
8 the impact; and look at what people are now saying is, in many
9 of these cases, community benefit or community improvements, when
10 all the evidence say these have not been community improvements
11 if you look from a racial equity lens.

12 So I will just submit my other comments in written
13 form. But again, I'll end. If we don't dig through the thing
14 that I'm saying we need to dig through, then the tool can't work.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay, thank you.

17 Call the next person, Ms. Schellin.

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Lauri Winter.

19 MS. WINTER: Hello. My name is Lauri Winter. I live
20 at 5035 12th Street Northeast in North Michigan Park. I am
21 actually speaking today on behalf of the Washington, D.C. team
22 of the United Church of Christ Potomac Association Justice and
23 Witness Action Network.

24 This team is comprised of representatives from the
25 United Church of Christ congregations located in Washington, D.C.

1 As a community of faith, we are motivated by the call to address
2 the needs of the least of these and require justice on their
3 behalf.

4 We welcome the opportunity to speak to the proposed
5 Zoning Commission racial equity tool. The generic questions
6 proposed in the current tool do not reflect the requirements for
7 racial equity as explained in the Comprehensive Plan.

8 The criteria to manifest racial equity in our
9 residential spaces must be applied not only by the Zoning
10 Commission, but also by the Office of Planning and linked to the
11 Department of Housing and Community Development programming and
12 other concerned agencies in the City accountable for housing
13 equity.

14 Our basic reference is from the Government Alliance on
15 Race and Equity, an alliance of government entities that has
16 its -- as its mission to achieve racial equity within their
17 jurisdictions. It is our understanding that D.C. is a member of
18 this organization. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity
19 states that a racial -- that racial equity tools provide a
20 structure for institutionalizing the consideration of racial
21 equity. They do so by proactively seeking to eliminate racial
22 inequities and advance equity; they identify clear goals and
23 objectives and measurable outcomes.

24 This -- these tools engage communities in the decision-
25 making process, as Empower DC has wonderfully described. These

1 tools -- or this tool must identify who will benefit or who will
2 be burdened by the given decision. It examines the potentially
3 unintended consequences and develop strategies to advance racial
4 equity and mitigate the unintended negative consequences. And
5 this tool must also contribute to developing mechanisms for
6 successful implementation and evaluation of impact.

7 Black and Brown residents in this City are
8 disproportionately located in the most impoverished neighborhoods
9 and areas. The tool needs to facilitate the correction of this
10 mismatch between income status and housing availability and other
11 opportunities available, as has been stated through the examples
12 from, for example, Washington State, Seattle, and Seattle and
13 Washington. Boston has an interesting part of their racial equity
14 process, in that they provide a list of interventions to
15 applicants, and they are required to implement -- proactively
16 implement one or more of these interventions to address
17 displacement and advance racial equity prior to coming to the
18 Zoning Commission for approval.

19 It is our assertion that measure measurable goals need
20 to be established for the City as a whole and also segmented in
21 a manner that would address specific actions in given
22 neighborhoods. For example, some neighborhoods need to increase
23 the number of affordable units in what -- and another
24 neighborhood may need protection from displacement for existing
25 residents. We also feel that --

1 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

2 MS. WINTER: Did you say one minute?

3 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

4 MS. WINTER: Okay. As Empower DC has also -- has
5 already described, the importance of community engagement, I
6 won't go into that so much. The identification of impact of the
7 decision is so important. Consider displacement risk, the
8 displacement risk of those who live within at least a mile of a
9 given development proposal due to the increase in tax rates.
10 Consider the loss of community service organizations as their
11 rents go up due to tax rates and market pressures. Consider the
12 impact on the sense of community, which is maintained by informal
13 norms that have -- that protect the safety of a neighborhood.
14 Destruction of the community fabric of norms contributes to
15 community violence. As everyone has spoken about the necessity
16 for data, both quantitative and qualitative, both for goal-
17 setting and particularly to measure progress, and accountability.

18 We believe the process for applying a racial equity
19 lens to decisions needs to be done thoughtfully. As noted in
20 the statements above, there are other jurisdictions that have
21 developed strategies to meaningfully address the issue of racial
22 justice, each with their strengths and weaknesses. In addition
23 to this roundtable, the Commission must thoughtfully create a
24 meaningful racial equity tool and a transparent process by which
25 proposals and plans are developed and evaluated.

1 The analysis using this tool must be made mandatory
2 through a zoning text amendment, and there must be accountability
3 and reporting to achieve racial equity in Washington, D.C. Thank
4 you.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Mr. McKinney?

6 MR. MCKINNEY: Can you hear me?

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes, we hear you.

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

9 MR. MCKINNEY: Okay. Yeah. So my name is Coy McKinney.
10 I've lived in Southwest since 2010. I'm happy that the Zoning
11 Commission is looking into developing a racial equity tool. I
12 hope that the tool must not give cover to the faulty and unjust
13 belief that trickle down housing is a path that leads to justice.
14 To be clear, what I mean by trickle down housing is the practice
15 of building expensive housing and hoping that sometime in the
16 undetermined future prices will drop and become affordable to
17 those who need it most or have been intentionally and historically
18 underserved. To me, that approach is neither justice nor
19 practical.

20 Studies and observations of my neighborhood in
21 Southwest show this to be false. Southwest is part of the
22 planning area that has produced the largest number of units in
23 the City, yet has seen its black population decrease over 20
24 percent over the last two decades, while the white population has
25 increased 157 percent over the same time period. The new market

1 rate units have been priced beyond the means of average Black and
2 Brown families, and thus they cannot afford to stay in the
3 neighborhood despite a glut of units coming online.

4 The tool must take a much broader view of the
5 displacement. I have read and heard applicant after applicant
6 claim that their project, usually with 8 percent affordability,
7 will not displace anyone because there was no building there
8 before. As the stats for Southwest show, there are various forms
9 of displacement that extend past just physical that should be
10 taken into consideration.

11 The Zoning Commission tool must acknowledge that the
12 housing market is segmented, meaning expensively-priced units may
13 only lower other expensively-priced units, and will either raise
14 or do nothing to already affordable units. I have submitted to
15 the record an article in a study that showed this. The tool must
16 take into consideration the median income of racial groups and
17 the price of new market rate units, as well as the band developers
18 use for the AMI targets. The Zoning Commission should require
19 developers to use the lower band of the AMI and not the higher.

20 The tool should also encourage applicants to use proven
21 models, like limited equity housing co-ops and community land
22 trust, and not only provide long-term home ownership
23 opportunities but power and voice to residents and tenants. The
24 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments recommended that
25 75 percent of new units should be priced for individuals to the

1 low and moderate incomes. That's far from the 8 percent currently
2 on the books or what IZ Plus requires. I hope this roundtable
3 can be the start of the realization of equitable housing in D.C.
4 Thank you.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you. The next panel:
6 Andrea Rosen, Marlon Brown, Rosena Desta, LaToya Thomas, and
7 Jamila White.

8 MS. ROSEN: Should I go ahead?

9 MS. SCHELLIN: So Andrea Rosen is the --

10 MS. ROSEN: Thank you.

11 MS. SCHELLIN: Go ahead.

12 MS. ROSEN: Okay. I'm Andrea Rosen. I live at 3266
13 Worthington Street.

14 MS. SCHELLIN: I'm sorry. Can you wait one second,
15 Ms. Rosen, so we can restart the clock?

16 MS. ROSEN: Okay.

17 MS. SCHELLIN: Five minutes for Ms. Rosen, please.

18 MS. ROSEN: I'm --

19 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Now.

20 MS. ROSEN: I'm Andrea Rosen. I live at 3266
21 Worthington Street, Northwest in Ward 4.

22 Today, I represent D.C. for Democracy's Affordable
23 Housing Group. D.C. for D is an all-volunteer grassroots
24 organization with over 800 members. Thank you for this
25 opportunity to provide feedback on the Zoning Commission's draft

1 Racial Equity Analysis Tool.

2 The draft tool displays a familiarity with equity
3 issues but falls well short of the Comp Plan's mandates, which
4 other witnesses have cited and I won't repeat here.

5 Development driven by developers is not equitable
6 development, yet the draft tool is so minimal that it gives
7 applicants the latitude to use it in a seemingly responsive
8 fashion without ever doing the heavy lifting to overcome
9 inequity.

10 For example, the draft tool is simplistic in limiting
11 its consideration of displacement to "quote direct displacement"
12 from a development site, although applicants have successfully
13 used this argument before the Zoning Commission. Other
14 jurisdictions in the U.S. doing racial equity work recognize that
15 displacement arises from a complicated, interlocking set of
16 factors. Some governments consider areas within a quarter mile
17 of the project site in evaluating displacement risk. Our own
18 Office of Tax and Revenue recognizes the effect of large new
19 market-rate projects on surrounding areas in its policy of
20 raising land assessments within at least a half mile radius,
21 sometimes wider, which raises property taxes, exerts pressure to
22 maximize the zoning envelope, and in turn, disperses current
23 residents.

24 We urge the Zoning Commission and the Office of
25 Planning to examine the extensive racial equity tools developed

1 by New York City; Boston; Chicago; Seattle; King County,
2 Washington; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Louisville,
3 Kentucky. In the meantime, here are our overarching
4 recommendations. Number one, substantive -- substantively
5 involve vulnerable marginalized low-income residents and the
6 future of their neighborhoods from the very beginning until
7 construction is complete.

8 Two, require racial equity analysis for all zoning
9 decisions, not just contested cases, including map and text
10 amendments. Map amendments are powerful drivers of change, and
11 they can be used to sidestep community involvement.

12 Three, standards for the Zoning Commission's racial
13 equity analysis must be codified through a zoning text amendment.
14 And I understand that Chairman Hood has already said that, so
15 thank you.

16 Four, the D.C. Office of Planning must develop data-
17 rich profiles of local areas. Seattle has developed a
18 displacement risk index that uses indicators like income,
19 education, percentage of renters, percentage of housing-cost
20 burdened households, to identify areas that are high risk for
21 displacement. It has also developed an access to opportunity
22 index that includes such indicators as high performing schools,
23 number of jobs within a two-mile radius, access to fresh produce.

24 Number five, require land use applicants to identify
25 how proposed projects will advance racial equity goals and/or

1 exacerbate displacement. Boston requires a full sum accounting
2 of how our project will further goals of desegregation and
3 inclusivity, a review of potential racial and economic changes
4 in the area where the project is proposed, and an analysis of
5 the proposal's potential effect on rents in the area, to ensure
6 that long-term Residents will not be priced out.

7 The Boston planning agency itself must use something
8 called the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Assessment Tool
9 to project effects of a project on residents and businesses before
10 development plans are approved.

11 Six, require applicants for land use permissions in
12 high displacement risk areas to propose upfront and later
13 implement interventions to mitigate displacement and advance
14 housing equity. Boston has a set list of interventions that
15 applicants must use.

16 Number seven, track metrics from the baseline data
17 referred to in my first point to measure progress. This is
18 consistent with the Comp Plan call for OP to issue progress
19 reports every four years that include monitoring data, activity,
20 and impact information that is disaggregated by age, gender,
21 race, and income levels; to assess whether goals around
22 inclusivity, racial equity, and resilience are met; and whether
23 commitments in the Framework Element are fulfilled. And finally,
24 develop accountability compliance mechanisms. Again, we thank
25 the Zoning Commission for developing --

1 MS. SCHELLIN: I'm sorry. I forgot to call the one
2 minute, but your time is up.

3 MS. ROSEN: Oh. Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Marlon Brown?

5 MR. BROWN: Hello everyone. And thank you for allowing
6 me to speak today. I am Marlon Brown. I live at 49 67th Street,
7 Northeast in D.C. I'm a new transplant from Seattle, Washington.
8 I am a racial equity consultant. And so basically, what I do in
9 a nutshell, is I teach organizations and businesses how to be
10 anti-racist. I have -- I am a product of Seattle's race and
11 social justice initiative. I was trained by the City of Seattle
12 to facilitate this work; toolkits and such, have the
13 conversations, develop ways of being accountable, et cetera. You
14 name it, I do it.

15 And I just want to add, as an expert in this realm of
16 developing these racial equity tools, and subsequently
17 implementing those tools and practices, that the tool alone is
18 not enough. The Commission and subsequent organizations and
19 support -- Commissions and supports to housing and addressing
20 housing situations and organizations in the City need to
21 understand racism and how to answer what the practice of racism.
22 And it's one thing to just have a tool and check a box, go through
23 a process, it's another to actually create a space that actively
24 works to interrupt racism.

25 To really address all that what has been shared by the

1 previous speakers, in order to do that, folks have to have
2 language, folks have to have an understanding that we're
3 operating in a system of racism. And it's not necessarily
4 personal, but we just really have to address what's happening;
5 this history of racism in this country, we're operating with
6 those things, and how do we work to really interrupt that. So
7 in addition to the tool, and the tool needs to be developed to
8 have the outcomes that everyone has been pleading for in -- so
9 far, we have to build the environment to allow such conversations
10 and details to be addressed.

11 There's a reason why people have been complaining about
12 the housing situation in D.C., and the flight of Black and Brown
13 folks from the City based on what is new racism, just raising
14 the rates of the cost of living in a particular area. So you
15 know, being able to be able to talk about that and have the
16 language or common language to talk about those will be needed,
17 as well as the tool, you know, which is a set of questions to
18 make sure that, you know, the most impacted and the most
19 marginalized among us are being addressed when we're making
20 decisions, you know, all of those need to come into place. I
21 just wanted to add that.

22 That -- and I'll also mention part of this work is
23 building the infrastructure, building the environment of the
24 Commission to be able to facilitate the conversations that are
25 necessary to fulfill what everyone has asked the Commission.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Schellin, I want to ask
3 Mr. Brown.

4 Mr. Brown, if you can come back a moment. I want to
5 ask you a question.

6 First, do we have his statement with the example of
7 some of the questions or some of the things we should look at?

8 Did you supply a written submission or something for
9 us to look at?

10 MR. BROWN: I haven't. I kind of got word about this
11 roundtable about a week or two ago. And I just wanted to come
12 and listen.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: So I want you to know this. I do
14 want you to know that our folks have been in touch with folks in
15 Seattle. I hear people talking about Seattle, New York,
16 Montgomery County, we've been in touch with all of them. So I
17 didn't know their other parameters, but it sounds like you have
18 a wealth of knowledge, and I am very interested in tapping your
19 brain. So I don't know, if you don't mind, I don't know if you're
20 willing to give us some of those questions, or some of those
21 things you think we can do to help perfect. That's what I'm --
22 that's what we're looking for. That's what we're looking for --

23 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: -- questions that we should ask,
25 "where the rubber meets the road," and instead of talking about

1 it, apply it, and make sure it happens. That's where I'm trying
2 to get. I'm not an expert on it like you are, but that's what
3 I'm trying to go.

4 MR. BROWN: Yeah. I think it's a process. I
5 participated as a community group for Seattle Public Schools to
6 develop not only their policy, but the equity tool for their
7 decision making. And so, if you haven't gone through that process
8 that included (audio interference) -- for those voices in the
9 room, so that your tool is specific to what D.C. needs. What we
10 did in Seattle, what we did in King County, I'm a product of King
11 County. I came out of King County. I was part of the leadership
12 of racial equity in King County. So that's where I kind of cut
13 my teeth. And so you know, I've been in this kind of --

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You're kind of going in and out.

15 MR. BROWN: (Audio interference). Oh, okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You're going in and out. And that's
17 unfortunate, because I think -- I want to really hear what you
18 have to say. And I want to hear everything you said, but you
19 were going in and out, but you have the expertise. If you could
20 submit something, and make sure that our office has your email.
21 So you know, we -- I would like to tap your brain, if you don't
22 mind.

23 MR. BROWN: Yeah, I can definitely do that. Yeah, and
24 I can give me more. I'm at a hotel, so I'm trying to, you know,
25 do three things at one time. But I can absolutely do that.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And I will tell you this, Mr. Brown,
2 the Zoning Commission, a lot of people give us a lot more
3 authority than what -- we have some, but we have parameters.
4 There are some things I want to talk to my legal counsel and find
5 out how far we go. I do that quite a bit. But I would like
6 to -- I don't know. I'm sure others, hopefully, will be
7 interested as well. So thank you very much. Appreciate your
8 comments.

9 Okay, Ms. Schellin.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Ms. Desta's not on, so we'll go
11 to LaToya Thomas.

12 MS. THOMAS: Good evening. Thank you for the
13 opportunity to testify this evening. Again, my name is
14 LaToya Thomas. I am Principal and founder of Brick & Story,
15 which is a Ward 7 based consulting practice, focused on
16 intentional stakeholder engagement and creative storytelling
17 practices focused on the built environment space. Today, I am
18 here speaking on behalf of HAND, better known as the Housing
19 Association of Non-Profit Developers, through my role as their
20 Housing Indicator Tool Policy Consultant.

21 For background, HAND is a nonprofit membership
22 association comprised of over 450 organizations, including
23 nonprofit and for-profit developers, as well as architects,
24 general contractors, lenders and service providers to collaborate
25 in the production and preservation of affordable housing in the

1 capital region, which, obviously, includes D.C., Baltimore,
2 Richmond and Northern Virginia and Prince George's and Montgomery
3 Counties.

4 Through education, engagement and regional advocacy,
5 HAND builds the capacity of its diverse membership to support the
6 development of sustainable communities for individuals and
7 families at all income levels. HAND is also a member of the
8 Housing Priorities Coalition, which includes organizations like
9 the Coalition for Smarter Growth and Enterprise Community
10 Partners. And that group was formed to help guide the updates
11 to the Comprehensive Plan.

12 Beginning in 2021, HAND introduced the housing
13 indicator tool to the region as a way to track our region's
14 progress towards meeting our affordable housing production
15 targets. Aside from the annual review of production progress,
16 central to the tool is its focus on racial equity and the role
17 that housing, and more broadly, effective and thoughtful
18 development plays in creating opportunity for social and economic
19 mobility.

20 We all know the many ways in which zoning and land use
21 policies have prevented many people, particularly people of
22 color, from accessing housing, and as a result other resources
23 such as quality schools, parks, groceries, and retail. We see
24 the Zoning Commission's racial equity tool as a clear first step
25 in beginning to right many of these historic wrongs that still

1 | permeate today. HAND supports the use of the racial equity tool
2 | to achieve greater equity through future land use and development
3 | decisions.

4 | Additionally, based on our review of the tool in
5 | partnership with other organizations in the Housing Priorities
6 | Coalition, we recommend the following enhancements to ensure that
7 | the tool is truly meeting its intended purpose.

8 | Number one, be specific in the questions that are
9 | asked, and ask for detailed explanations. For example, when we
10 | look at whether or not a product is causing displacement, let's
11 | clearly define what we mean by displacement. And if we're talking
12 | about temporary or permanent relocation that's planned as part
13 | of a redevelopment, ask developers for explanations of the
14 | intended approach so we better understand how families will be
15 | affected and impacted in the short and long term.

16 | Number two, when we look at housing opportunities being
17 | created by future developments, it's important to get clarity on
18 | income mix. The District has made affordable housing a priority.
19 | And at HAND, we are deeply focused on ensuring that the production
20 | pipeline for affordable housing units, particularly for those at
21 | the low- and middle-income bands, is met as quickly as possible,
22 | since we know that is where the greatest need and uncertainty
23 | lies. How does future development address the incorporation of
24 | 30, 50 and 60 percent AMI units, for example.

25 | And third, and last but not least, the goal of new

1 development is not only to improve the existing urban fabric, but
2 also to create opportunities today that ideally create
3 opportunities for the future as well. This paradigm carries
4 through not only to housing, but also to the many other supporting
5 uses that accompany many larger scale developments such as
6 retail, green space, and art and cultural spaces, which are key
7 to ensuring high-quality civic life.

8 The racial equity tool can evaluate if proposed uses
9 create opportunities that both future and existing residents can
10 benefit from, as well as ensure that spaces that are designed
11 reflect a diverse representation of the City's population, and
12 welcome people from all walks of life to engage with them.

13 To close, we applaud the Zoning Commission for starting
14 to develop the racial equity tool. And we see this as progress
15 towards achieving the type of equitable development that so many
16 of us have been fighting for so long. We encourage you to be
17 bold in your questioning of projects that come to the Commission
18 for review and to leverage the tool to ensure that new development
19 creates equitable opportunities for all residents. And thank
20 you.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay.

22 Ms. White. Are you representing the full ANC or just
23 speaking as an individual?

24 MS. WHITE: I'm representing the Commission.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. So you'll have five minutes.

1 MS. WHITE: Thank you, everyone. Good afternoon. Thank
2 you for providing this opportunity to come in front of you all
3 and for prioritizing racial equity. I am Jamila White. I am
4 the ANC Commissioner for single-member District 8A-05. And I
5 have the pleasure of joining you all from Anacostia, what I
6 consider the heart of the city, from Freedmen's land right across
7 from Frederick Douglass house. I'm also the chair of ANC 8A.

8 Adrienne Maree Brown reminds us that we are living in
9 someone else's imagination, that the world as we know has
10 literally been created. For me and many of my neighbors, it
11 sometimes feels like a nightmare instead of someone else's
12 imagination.

13 I'm going to try to be additive and not repeat too much
14 that has been spoken, but so many of my fellow Washingtonians
15 have already described the current conditions in which we face.

16 And it's a little bit difficult for me personally to
17 reconcile because D.C., were the nation's capital, a symbol of
18 hope, of democracy, of people power, freedom. Undoubtedly, the
19 most powerful city in the world, we are here. A place that was
20 home to First Nation people and a refuge for black people that
21 has turned into a hub of black excellence, culture, and history.
22 But there's a tension here and a contradiction, when we think
23 about what true democracy looks like, because equity and equality
24 are both cradles of democracy's intent.

25 Since 1950, D.C. has been dubbed Chocolate City,

1 because of our unique black culture, and that our unique culture
2 that has been infused with the black community and black culture.
3 However, rapid gentrification over the last two decades has
4 fueled black displacement and removal. The black population has
5 decreased from 60 percent in the 2000s to around 47 percent that
6 it is today. The erasure of black D.C. has been long and ongoing.
7 And we have an opportunity to really not just right past wrongs,
8 but repair past wrongs.

9 And when we think about racial equity, the core tenets
10 and principles -- sorry, everyone -- I'm getting some work done
11 in my house. The core tenets and principles of racial equity
12 are about justice, inclusion, and belonging. And all too often,
13 my community, we don't find out about projects until after it's
14 too late, after it's been decided for. We're not at the table.
15 And yes, the ANC does have "great weight," but that's in some
16 instances.

17 And one of the opportunities that we do have is to be
18 bold and to be -- or are transformational. And that's really
19 ensuring that the community has a true seat at the table, and
20 that throughout this process there is shared power, because right
21 now, the community, we don't have the power, and the decisions
22 that happen, especially when it comes to development in our
23 communities. So this -- not only a racial equity tool, but
24 changing the process, the relationships so that communities are
25 included from the beginning and not as an afterthought or not as

1 a checkbox.

2 It's tools -- they can be implemented to make sure that
3 these happen. For instance, some folks have mentioned the CBAs
4 over and over in an earlier testimony. But we all know that most
5 Commissions are not equipped to negotiate with developers and
6 their lawyers on the CBA. There's no enforcement mechanism,
7 there's no accountability mechanism, there isn't even a real
8 tracking system. And so, we are already at -- we're already at
9 a lower advantage with the great weight that we're giving.

10 This is an opportunity to change that. This is an
11 opportunity to say we're going to share power with the
12 communities, because after all, you all are here to serve us.
13 You know? I'm here to serve us. We're here to serve us. And
14 it's about making sure the community has an equitable and
15 inclusive voice. And like someone mentioned before, I'm a small
16 business owner here in Ward 8, and I run a racial equity and
17 social justice impact organization. And we work with communities
18 on equitable development, and that takes time. And that takes
19 also getting close to the communities. And that can't be done
20 through Webex, (indiscernible), or webinars.

21 That has to be going out to the communities, meeting
22 us where we are. Those who are closest to the problem should be
23 closest to the solution that -- we know that. And that's really
24 not happening at all. So making that a core part of development
25 processes, especially in communities east of the river, where we

1 know we're getting the next wave of gentrification. I know and
2 my neighbors know that Anacostia will be, if it's not already,
3 the most gentrified part of Ward 8, and that is escalating.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: I'm sorry.

11 MS. WHITE: But there's a invisibility to it.

12 MS. SCHELLIN: I missed your one minute. Your time is
13 up.

14 MS. WHITE: Thank you. And I just ask that you center
15 community in everything you do, and thank you all for that.

16 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Our next panel. Alex Baca,
17 Eleanor Noble, Todd Ewing, Wanda Thompson. I did not see her
18 earlier. Let me just check. Yeah, I don't see her. Gina Bulett.
19 Let's see, that's one, two, three, four. Paul Johnson. Is that
20 just four? Paul. Or five? Okay. Good.

21 So Alex, you go first.

22 MS. BACA: All right. Good evening. And thank you,
23 Sharon. And thank you to the Commission for holding this hearing.

24 I submitted written comments on behalf of Greater
25 Greater Washington where I serve as the D.C. policy director, and

1 also, I'm in agreement with some of the suggestions provided by
2 the Housing Priorities Coalition. I'm going to use my evening
3 tonight to riff on some of the contents that have come up tonight,
4 just because I am going later in the evening, and I can.

5 We've talked a lot about community engagement. I
6 appreciate that this roundtable is working as designed and
7 generating discussion about that.

8 I always have a lot of questions about who the community
9 is, and who can show up or who wants to show up to talk about
10 development decisions. Well, I love talking about development
11 and zoning so much that it's my full-time job. Many people just
12 want where they live to cost less, so it'd be of higher quality,
13 or be closer to the things that they need to and want to do and
14 don't want to have to write three-minute statements to the Zoning
15 Commission about it.

16 I also don't think that they should have to do that
17 in order to access dignified, safe housing that they can afford.
18 I think often that one ANC Commissioner, which is our teeniest,
19 tiniest level of government here, represents two thousand people.
20 There is no way that anyone, even with infinite resources, could
21 accurately understand what two thousand people, the smallest
22 constituency in the District would want. But you know, one thing
23 that I think that can help a lot in terms of having meaningful
24 community engagement and input is actually having better output
25 from some of the bodies that are charged with doing this work.

1 You know, we like to think that hearing from the
2 community will result in more equitable outcomes. And I actually
3 honestly believe it will, since we don't do a great job of that
4 right now. I also just want to note that a lot of times people
5 are more motivated to show up by really negative emotions and
6 want to protect their interests. Clearly, our existing system
7 is not working well for the people who have been most impacted
8 by growth and development, and censuring them is really, really
9 critical. But I also don't think that that censuring should come
10 with a cost, and expecting people to show up is exacting a cost
11 upon them. Data will help considerably with this, and I
12 appreciate OAG's presentation on the tools in use in other
13 jurisdictions.

14 While I'm in support of the development of a tool, I'm
15 happy to talk about, you know, what we think works and what
16 doesn't, that's in my testimony with some specific
17 recommendations to improve the tool itself.

18 I do feel like the Zoning Commission put out an outline,
19 not a draft, and is kind of asking those of us testifying tonight
20 to functionally write its draft for it. And maybe that's sort
21 of a well-intentioned desire to hear from the community before
22 doing anything. And while I get that, it doesn't feel
23 particularly equitable, to not tell the public what the Zoning
24 Commission as a body considers racially equitable zoning or what
25 it thinks is paramount in preventing displacement, or who

1 constitutes a community and who doesn't.

2 I think those are really, really important things to
3 know, not just for me, not just for my organization, but because
4 if we do want to censure people who have been most negatively
5 impacted by growth and development, they need to know where the
6 bodies of power, including the Zoning Commission, currently
7 stand. I don't know if we can get to a better future if we don't
8 know where we are currently. You know, as far as GGWash's future
9 is that, you know, there should be as a default, the aggressive
10 production of subsidized income restricted housing, particularly
11 where it has not been built mentioned in the past.

12 But ultimately, I would like to hear what the Zoning
13 Commission things would help make development more racially
14 equitable, quite frankly, more than I'd like to be testifying on
15 what my organization thinks. So I look forward to some concrete
16 stuff that's not a one-pager. I hope that my comments, I hope
17 that everybody's comments are helpful in that draft crafting, and
18 I think this is going to take a lot of work to get right. But I
19 do think it's very meaningful, and I am appreciative that the
20 requirements of the Comp Plan are being carried out, since we've
21 worked extensively on that, so thank you.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay.

23 Next is Eleanor. Good evening, and thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify here today. My name is Eleanor Noble. I
25 live at 3924 5th Street, Northwest in 20011, and I'm a research

1 analyst at the Urban Institute and a core member of the Land Use
2 Lab at Urban. So the views I express today are my own, and should
3 not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees or its
4 funders.

5 My testimony today will outline evidence and examples
6 for three key considerations for the Zoning Commission, while you
7 are finalizing this data equity tool.

8 So the first is the importance of using data to target
9 historically exclusionary neighborhoods; then how to account for
10 a lack of equitable representation in zoning decision making; and
11 finally, an overview of data collection methods to ensure an
12 equitable distribution of benefits from zoning and development.

13 So the Zoning Commission's racial equity review should
14 include an analysis of exclusivity at the regional and
15 neighborhood levels to determine these areas' responsibility for
16 providing housing for the future. Last year, over 100 civil
17 rights community organizing and affordable housing advocacy
18 organizations wrote to the Biden Administration, explaining that
19 the top priority for combating structural racism using zoning was
20 to focus zoning reforms on areas that actually exclude low-income
21 people of color in practice.

22 So project level equity and process data is really key
23 for researchers and policymakers to tell if neighborhoods are
24 accurately categorized as exclusionary and if individual
25 low-income residents of color within these exclusionary

1 neighborhoods experience displacement following a reform or
2 subsequent development. The Zoning Commission's racial equity
3 review processes should also consider analyzing the diversity of
4 public participation in zoning decision making.

5 So research has shown that in many jurisdictions,
6 particularly in historically exclusionary neighborhoods,
7 homeowners, high-income residents and white residents are more
8 likely to participate in public meetings regarding zoning.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You have one minute left, even
10 though it says two, three, you have one minute.

11 MS. NOBLE: Thanks. Yeah.

12 There's a staggering 22 percent black/white racial
13 homeownership gap, and D.C. residents of color are likely not
14 fairly engaged and represented in decision making. So in 2020,
15 the Urban Institute partnered with Alexandria, Virginia, to craft
16 a set of accessory dwelling unit regulation recommendations. We
17 briefed them on the diversity of those engaged to ensure that
18 final recommendations were not driven by unrepresentative input.
19 The Land Use Lab is also currently working on filling a large
20 research gap about sociodemographic diversity and zoning
21 Commission's and Boards of Zoning appeals across the country, so
22 look out for that later this year.

23 The Zoning Commission should also consider collecting
24 data and weighing the racial distribution of benefits from zoning
25 reforms at the individual development, neighborhood and regional

1 levels. Evidence about the beneficiaries of new development is
2 really mixed. And it depends on a variety of factors, like the
3 quality, type and size of unit built, and of course, local market
4 conditions. And folks have outlined this Seattle example. I
5 know you're connected with them, so I'll skip over that.

6 So the District can be a leader in combating racial
7 inequities in zoning --

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Please finish up. Finish your
9 closing thought, please. You're over time.

10 MS. NOBLE: Yeah, I know it. I can finish up, just
11 these three things to recommend: targeting those six
12 historically exclusionary areas, being transparent about the
13 diversity of residents engaged in zoning processes, and tracking
14 who actually benefits from development. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you. And we have your
16 submission, so thank you.

17 All right, Ms. Schellin?

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes. Next is, I'm sorry, Tod Ewing.

19 MR. EWING: Hello, and thank you. My name is Tod Ewing.
20 I live in Northeast Boundary, across the river in Washington,
21 D.C., at 5711 Eads Street, Northeast. I'm really just a neighbor
22 citizen who moved here in 2014, an intergenerational family. And
23 as I began to engage with the Civic Association and learn about
24 the neighborhood, I would listen to people come to present
25 developers. I don't know if anybody from the Zoning Commission

1 ever came. And it seemed like all of the residents here, and
2 most of them, were always angry at the people that were coming,
3 and I was always wondering why.

4 And they were always saying, well, they never listen
5 to us. And I thought, well, can that really be true? And as I
6 sat in meetings over and over and listened to people come and
7 make promises, and then see them not fulfilled, and then as I
8 walked in the neighborhood, and I saw these buildings go up, and
9 everybody said, well, we didn't even know it was rezoned. We
10 didn't even know these buildings were going up. The people that
11 came here and talk to us so that we would have a voice in this.

12 And so we'd see building after building go up. And I
13 know that this is about a race equity tool, but I think part of
14 -- part of it is going to have to be rebuilding trust, because
15 this tool somehow built in has to have some way, because there's
16 so much distrust. I know, there is over here. And I feel like
17 if we're going to be effective in any kind of a tool, how do we
18 make it user-friendly, how do we make it person-friendly, so that
19 people can regain trust with the Zoning Commission and feel like
20 there's a connection and that the Zoning Commission really does
21 care about them, and it's not lip service.

22 I know in our area right now, for example, when I say
23 we don't have a voice, I think there's some -- there's close to
24 150 units going up in a two or three block area. We are an under
25 resourced community. We don't have grocery stores. We don't

1 have jobs. We don't have mental health services. We don't have
2 recreation facilities. And so if we have 150 units going up in
3 a couple block area, what are the people going to do? Where are
4 they going to shop?

5 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

6 MR. EWING: Where are they going to recreate? And I
7 think these are things that have been brought up before in the
8 past but haven't seemed to be listened to. So I guess my point
9 is, even though this is a story, and I know you don't want stories
10 of the past, I think it's about an issue of having a tool, but
11 also having a process that's partly about rebuilding trust with
12 the community. I hope that this tool works. I'm grateful that
13 it's happening, and I just want to thank you for listening to
14 me. This may not be totally coherent, but it's more like the
15 feeling of neighbors in this neighborhood and what I think has
16 to happen with this tool. So thank you for hearing me out.

17 MS. SCHELLIN: Next is Ms. Thompson?

18 MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Good evening. I'm
19 Reverend Dr. Wanda K. Thompson, and I am a native Washingtonian.
20 I have lived in the Anacostia area now for nearly 40 years, and
21 I grew up in Ward 7 area of the City.

22 I'm here today to say that the racial equity tool is
23 currently proposed is not sufficient. I don't believe it goes
24 far enough. If it's not modified and adjusted, it's not going
25 to achieve the goals intended. And in addition, it doesn't adhere

1 to Comp Plan requirements. One of the major concerns I have --
2 and I really want to focus on this, I did submit my testimony --
3 is the need for engagement of the community.

4 I think often people say community engagement, but I
5 think the tool really needs to look at it. And just like with
6 this meeting, and many other meetings, including ANCs and civic
7 associations, residents are usually put at the tail end of the
8 process, so that in some ways we are punished and don't always
9 get to give our feedback. And so I think it's important that a
10 tool would look at how much of community input has really been
11 included in decisions that are made. Development decisions
12 should not be made without input and feedback from those affected
13 and impacted. Such engagement must be purposeful, deliberate and
14 intentional, and to that point, an analysis should be done to
15 address racial equity and all zoning decisions. This should be
16 outlined explicitly in text amendments.

17 Prevention of the displacement of residents is another
18 critical concern that I have, and who is at potential risk of
19 displacement that development should be analyzed so that
20 displacement can be prevented or mitigated. Affordability is
21 always discussed, but what is needed is deep affordability.
22 Otherwise, those at the lower end of the economic scale would not
23 be available to access or obtain housing and other opportunities.
24 And the impact of this will be that the racial wealth gap will
25 be increased, as others have talked about.

1 The demographics of the area, benefits --

2 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

3 MS. THOMPSON: -- and opportunities for the community,
4 displacement risks, real and deep housing affordability are
5 factors that should be considered, as well as housing
6 availability for families. And access to employment
7 opportunities must be part of the racial equity and development
8 tools.

9 And I hope that you will also look at the vacancy rates
10 that are in the City as well, too, with development. There are
11 many, many developments that have high vacancy rates, even though
12 the City says that we need more housing. Some of those vacant
13 units could be used to house others. And I think tools should
14 be -- the tool should also address the vacancy rate as well too.

15 And also, and I'll conclude with this, residents
16 selling their homes in different parts of the city, it's location,
17 location, location. Residents don't always get the same price
18 that you might get in more affluent areas. So that needs to be
19 part of the tool too.

20 I thank you for your consideration, and I hope you'll
21 consider all the input from community advocates. Thank you.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Gina.

23 MS. BULETT: Hello.

24 MS. SCHELLIN: We can hear you.

25 MS. BULETT: I'm muted another computer. Okay. My

1 name is Gina Bulett. I've lived in Ward 7's Northeast Boundary
2 neighborhood for the last decade. I've seen firsthand how
3 development doesn't work and repeatedly harms working class black
4 communities like ours.

5 I appreciate that you have come up with a racial equity
6 tool, and you're seeking our input, but the tool must go so much
7 further. The BZA and Zoning Commission process is not accessible
8 to regular folks. It's skewed to benefit developers and their
9 lawyers.

10 I have a very flexible schedule, but to participate in
11 BZA matters this past year, I had to cancel and reschedule work.
12 That's not feasible for many of my neighbors.

13 In addition, the tool needs to address the inequitable
14 develop -- dumping of service housing and homes into low
15 opportunity communities, whether they're defined as CBIFs, group
16 homes, rehabilitation homes, short term emergency housing. Ward
17 7, we do our part and we do the part of affluent communities,
18 like Wards 2 and 3, and we do it all with far less resources.
19 And that needs to be really scrutinized and looked at by your
20 Board.

21 Three, the tool somehow needs to analyze the housing
22 to economic development ratios and metrics in each community in
23 the District and then go about approving development in our
24 communities, particularly our low-income black communities that
25 improve those metrics. Such as in Northeast Boundary, we've been

1 promised so much economic development, but we only get housing.
2 None of the economic development process -- promises have come
3 through. We're still waiting on a grocery store.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

5 MS. BULETT: I'm sure you're well aware. But we have --
6 well before we'll ever have a grocery store here, we have two
7 large apartment buildings going in that were able to come in,
8 overshadow homes and not have any local approval.

9 You need to go back a period of at least ten years and
10 review the rate to which variances are granted against local
11 ANCs, civic associations, and the community majority input in
12 working class black communities versus those of affluent white
13 communities, and then upon analysis, create protections that
14 prioritize community voice in low-income black communities.

15 Also these approvals for affordable housing, especially
16 those of large buildings, on Comp Plan target goals. We're all
17 for affordable housing.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can you give us your closing -- can
19 you give us --

20 MS. BULETT: Everybody needs a place to live. But
21 you'll find --

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can you give us your closing
23 thought, please?

24 MS. BULETT: -- in Ward 7 that we always exceed our
25 goals.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can you give us your closing
2 thought, please?

3 MS. BULETT: But affluent communities remain
4 unaccountable for repeatedly not doing their part.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: She obviously, can't hear me.

6 Ms. Bulett, can you give us your closing thought,
7 please?

8 MS. BULETT: And then stop bad actors. This past
9 year, I watched a developer and his agent lie to neighbors, lie
10 to local officials, come and lie to you and still get approved.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Bulett?

12 MS. BULETT: Promises they made to get approved.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: (Indiscernible), give me --

14 MS. BULETT: Of course to date, they haven't followed
15 through on that.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can you all hear me?

17 MS. SCHELLIN: Ms. Bulett?

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Bulett?

19 MS. BULETT: -- our communities and get approved by the
20 Zoning Commission and BZA. And most importantly --

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Bulett?

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Can you mute her?

23 MS. BULETT: Spend more --

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yeah, let's take her down. She
25 can't hear me.

1 MS. SCHELLIN: Yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can somebody call and explain to her
3 why we did that, because her time has been up. I've been trying
4 to get her attention.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: So let's go to the next person,
7 please. Thanks.

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Ruby. Ruby Steigerwald. Yes. I'm
9 sorry. Mr. Johnson is next. I'm sorry. Then Ruby.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Johnson, can you hear me?

11 MR. JOHNSON: I can hear you very well. I can see you
12 very well. All right. How about me?

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Just making sure. Go
14 right ahead.

15 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Can you hear me okay? Is that
16 all right?

17 (No audible response.)

18 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you so much.

19 I am a Ward 4 resident in Petworth and Grant Circle in
20 Southern Ward 4. I am an ANC Commissioner as well in ANC-4C. I,
21 however, am speaking in my capacity as a resident and as a elected
22 of SMD-4C07. I'm also affiliated with Empower DC And my
23 colleagues, and I have done -- endeavored quite a bit on analyzing
24 the racial equity tool.

25 And I want to say that I appreciate you Chairman Hood

1 and your forward-looking approach. And I'd like to encourage
2 that we're very much looking forward to being a part of the effort
3 to codify the analysis tool, make it data-based and metric-based.
4 And I think that there's a broad base of expertise to draw from
5 on this call, whether it's national experts, whether it's folks
6 within the Empower DC orbit, whether it's my dynamic ANC
7 colleagues in Anacostia. I think there's a lot to draw from
8 here. And I pledge myself as well to be involved in that effort
9 to really make this meaningful, to follow the law, to have data
10 and have outcomes that consider into zoning cases to make it
11 development equitable.

12 I also like to make a point about the synthesis of
13 multi agencies within the District. There's snippets of racial
14 equity, mentions of racial equity in multiple agencies, like the
15 like DOEE, for example, and Department of Transportation, DDOT
16 There needs to be better synthesis between those agencies and
17 between OP so that the cases and decisions at the Zoning
18 Commission can be meaningful and impactful.

19 I also wanted to make a point about Advisory
20 Neighborhood Commissions. There's been -- I know we can't
21 reference particular cases, but I've had experience voting on
22 cases where racial equity was mentioned. And I think that prosaic
23 pronouncements of racial equity goals don't account for, as I
24 said, metrics. And I think that ANCs need to perhaps have some
25 sort of mandates to figure that into their analysis as well,

1 because although it's hyperlocal, and there's 2000 constituents,
2 there are a lot of filtering of projects and filtering in terms
3 of notice, and filtering in terms of just intellectual curiosity
4 and due diligence, about what are the impacts of racial equity
5 when analyzing how to vote on a case. And I've had that
6 experience on a planned unit development within my Ward that was
7 in front of my ANC as well this year. And I think it's very
8 important that ANCs uphold that duty.

9 So again, thank you, Chairman Hood, thank you to your
10 colleagues. I appreciate your deep roots in Washington, D.C.,
11 and your commitment to this issue, and the span of what you've
12 seen over your breadth of experience doing this work. And we
13 look forward to working together to make this a meaningful tool
14 to have development equitable in the District. Thank you very
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Commissioner Johnson. I
17 want you to know that I put your name down too on my list, so
18 thank you.

19 MR. JOHNSON: All right.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let's see where we go from here.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Next on this panel is Ruby.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Ms. -- Stella - who's next?
23 Steigerwald?

24 MS. STEIGERWALD: I'm Ruby Steigerwald. Yes.

25 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I'm Ruby Steigerwald. I live at

1 1925 Bunker Hill Road, Northeast, which is in Ward 5. And you
2 know, I'm just a resident, and I'm really so appreciative of all
3 the expert testimony that's been given here today. And I
4 certainly don't have anything to add, except just to be another
5 voice saying that for this tool to really make a difference, it
6 needs to have all the things that people mentioned. You know,
7 qualitative and quantitative data. It needs to be legally
8 binding. And I'm just frustrated and heartbroken by what I see
9 in the development of D.C., and we got to turn this train around.
10 And D.C., as the nation's capital, could and should be a leader
11 in the nation for really developing and creating racial equity.

12 And the last thing I want to say is that participation,
13 so when you talk about, you know, developing, I don't know, forms
14 and metrics of participation, I really agree that it can't just
15 be the ANCs. And there are a lot of organizations in D.C. that
16 can help get out the word and get people organized to be able to
17 give input into zoning actions that are coming out. And a lot
18 of those organizations were represented here today. And so I
19 just really hope that the Commission will take advantage of all
20 the experts that have been here today and really make this a tool
21 that's, you know, that you can be proud of.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you.

23 Next panel, Georgette Hagans, Sebrena Rhodes,
24 Lane Freeman. I did not see that name in the list of attendees.
25 Lydia Edwards and Nathan Fleming, Rose Knox. I did not see that

1 one either. Allison Ewing. See if that -- we get five there.

2 MR. YOUNG: There are two of those names that are on
3 but I can only unmute them.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. All right.

5 So first, Georgette, you're first.

6 MS. HAGANS: Hello. Good afternoon everyone. Can you
7 hear me?

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Yep.

9 MS. HAGANS: Wonderful. All right. My name is
10 Georgette Hagans, and I reside at 318 59th Street, Northeast in
11 Ward 7. I'm originally from Atlanta, Georgia, and have been a
12 D.C. resident for the last ten years. I currently work for the
13 federal government as an analyst with a background in political
14 science and public administration. And I work in various aspects
15 of diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

16 With respect to the Racial Equity Analysis Tool and the
17 related Comprehensive Plan that's coming -- that's forthcoming,
18 as you continue to develop the tool, please consider gathering a
19 group of experts to strategically develop this tool. As you do
20 this, define racial equity and leverage a framework that includes
21 inclusion, which is a key component for the analysis.

22 Have you conducted root cause analysis? And if so,
23 please consider the back key information and make the results
24 publicly available before leveraging the tool.

25 Have you identified and addressed why and how, for

1 example, Ward 7 and Ward 8 residents and neighborhoods have
2 resulted in the current state of deterioration with respect to
3 poverty, blight, prostitution, and crime? And make this
4 information publicly available. Have you defined key nodes of
5 concern for the tool, like attractive, affordable housing units,
6 mixed community developments, high quality job opportunities,
7 liquor stores, community facilities for children under 18, and
8 food access, and then conducted access mapping analysis to better
9 understand what all wards have? Then do a more targeted approach
10 to address the results.

11 Consider using focus groups with respect to
12 marginalized groups to collect much-needed qualitative analysis
13 and information, as all residents have varying capabilities for
14 commenting, such as the elderly, folks with disabilities, et
15 cetera. So as you do this, please, again, allow the public to
16 engage and inform your process. When I tried to find this
17 information on Google, I could not find this information.

18 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

19 MS. HAGANS: Please put this on a site where we all
20 have access to this information publicly. This tool is needed
21 urgently. Can we please set deadlines? We need deadlines for
22 completion. As I look through the Deanwood 2008 plans as compared
23 to the 2021 Comprehensive Plan, many of the goals are still the
24 same. They just roll over. So can we please have ways in which
25 we're measuring our progress, and put this information publicly

1 available so that we as citizens can track it and also inform
2 the process.

3 Are you taking the interests and needs of the citizens
4 seriously? Please, during this time, if you need to, go door to
5 door. I would love to see you all come door to door and ask us
6 for civic engagement.

7 With seven seconds less -- left, I appreciate the
8 opportunity to comment, and I look forward to hearing more about
9 how you plan to use this tool. I yield my time.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you. Ms. Hagans. I do want
11 to comment to you. I'm looking -- and do we have your written
12 submission of those points that you bought up?.

13 MS. HAGANS: No. I just got told this information.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Could you submit them?

15 MS. HAGANS: I will.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Could you submit that?

17 MS. HAGANS: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Appreciate it.

19 MS. HAGANS: Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Thank you.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Ms. Rhodes?

22 MS. RHODES: Hello Chairman Hood and everyone on this
23 call. My name is Sebrena Rhodes. I live at 1854 Central Place,
24 Northeast, Unit 2, Washington, D.C. 20002. I'm a ANC Commissioner
25 here in 5D-01, Ivy City. I'm a resident of Ivy City and a

1 Washingtonian. I'm also an organizer with Empower DC.

2 First, I don't want to go over everything that everyone
3 said about the racial equity analysis, but I would like to talk
4 about the meaningful engagement, community engagement.

5 It should be early in the process, and also, we
6 shouldn't rely on postcards and door hangers. Listening sessions
7 are great. And I know, Chairman Hood, you said early on you
8 wanted solutions. We can't come up with solutions like overnight,
9 but in person and virtual meetings, listening sessions, engaging
10 conversations, like this roundtable, instead of it being like a
11 hearing, also diverse participation. Everyone should be at the
12 table, and everyone who's interested in restoring their
13 communities.

14 We also want to continue to do the research. Some
15 cities were stated here. Whatever works, we need to look into
16 those avenues, and make sure that we follow suit.

17 We also want to use the elements of the racial equity
18 analysis to help direct the creation of Small Area Plans, such
19 as here in Ivy City, we're getting ready to start planning for
20 our Small Area Plan --

21 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

22 MS. RHODES: -- and the whole entire community will be
23 involved. We don't want to make development of expensive housing
24 and to dilute the power of the working-class community, or push
25 and price residents out of our neighborhoods. We don't want to

1 make that a thing.

2 Finally, our communities should be sustainable, and
3 developed in a way to minimize the placement, displacement, and
4 decrease sacrifice zones, polluting industries and toxins, which
5 we're going through here in Ivy City.

6 Developers should be required to use these tools to
7 identify past inequities, and identify whether demographics of a
8 community has changed from 10 or 20 years ago, like some of the
9 folks mentioned earlier.

10 Also the question, "what has changed and why" should
11 be explained in full with metrics showing investment,
12 disinvestment, kinds and levels of development, environmental
13 impacts caused by industrial land uses, available and affordable
14 housing, resources and recreation, accessible transportation,
15 mortality rates, and ADA accessibility. Thanks for allowing me
16 to speak, and you all have a good day.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Commissioner Rhodes.

18 Ms. Schellin, about how many more people do we -

19 Does any -- my colleagues need --

20 MS. SCHELLIN: Not a lot.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: -- a five-minute break?

22 MS. SCHELLIN: I'm sorry? It's --

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I was seeing if my colleagues need
24 a five-minute break. Okay. All right, we can keep going.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Yeah, it's not a whole lot more.

1 Mr. Freeman?

2 MR. FREEMAN: Good evening. I'm Lance Freeman. I'm a
3 Professor of City and Regional Planning and Sociology at the
4 University of Pennsylvania. Thank you for giving me the
5 opportunity to share some of my thoughts based on my experience
6 with New York City's racial equity ordinance, which was adopted
7 last year.

8 My brief comments will focus on the methodology behind
9 racial equity analyses. Concepts like racial equity,
10 displacement, and even affordable housing are multifaceted and
11 do not always lend themselves to easy measurement. It might,
12 therefore, be helpful for the Commission to clearly define how
13 things like displacement impacts on racial equity and even
14 affordable housing should be measured.

15 Based on my experience in New York City, here are some
16 steps that might help make the process more transparent and
17 tractable. First, make data available to facilitate the types
18 of analysis that the Commission would like to see. In New York,
19 the Departments of City Planning and Housing Preservation and
20 Development created a data portal that disaggregates demographic
21 and economic data by race at the neighborhood level.

22 You might also recall that during the Obama
23 Administration, when HUD asked localities to develop
24 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing plans, they also created a
25 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data Tool that facilitated

1 such analyses. Additional steps that you could take would be to
2 create -- make sure the portal includes census block group or
3 census tract data that's disaggregated by race from the American
4 Community Survey. The data portal could also include data on the
5 availability of affordable housing, from sources such as HUD's
6 picture of subsidized housing, the Low-Income Housing Tax -- Low
7 Income Housing Tax Credit database, and other sources that
8 would --

9 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

10 MR. FREEMAN: -- allow developers to identify
11 affordable housing in a specific study area.

12 You could also provide local employment data from the
13 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics database that's produced
14 by the Census Bureau.

15 I would also suggest you consider measuring indirect
16 displacement in addition to direct displacement. Although
17 difficult to measure, you can take into consideration the
18 availability of affordable housing, the proportion of households
19 that are renters, and recent trends in housing and demographic
20 patterns that would suggest how vulnerable the local population
21 is to indirect displacement.

22 And finally, you might ask developers to articulate
23 specifically how does their proposed development help further the
24 goals of racial equity? If you clearly articulate what those
25 goals are, you can ask developers to explain how their development

1 helps the District achieve that goal. Thank you for giving me
2 the opportunity to share my thoughts.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let's add two minutes to
4 Mr. Freeman. Mr. Freeman is from an organization. Add two
5 minutes, and you can continue, Mr. Freeman.

6 MR. FREEMAN: Oh, I don't have that much to say, because
7 I thought I only had three minutes.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: That's two more. Well, in that
9 case, I got questions for you if you finished.

10 MR. FREEMAN: Okay, sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. So you mentioned -- now what
12 organization are you with? First of all, do you reside in the
13 District of Columbia?

14 MR. FREEMAN: I do not. I did not.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. I was --

16 MR. FREEMAN: I was made aware of the -- of this
17 hearing, and you know, given my experience in New York, I thought
18 I would just share my experiences. And you know, it might be
19 helpful to you all. So that's my connection.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: So let me just tell you. The reason
21 I asked you that question is because accessibility. I want to
22 make sure I can reach back out to you and get some, you know. So
23 since you're not, I would ask that maybe, if you didn't mind,
24 helping us. And I hear people say we got to write. But there's
25 some things that -- do's and don'ts and we can and cannot on

1 this. But anyway, I need you, if you don't mind, and your time,
2 some time to kind of help us. That's kind of what I'm asking
3 for.

4 But in New York, do you -- New York has a planning
5 commission, correct?

6 MR. FREEMAN: They do.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Do you know of any other
8 jurisdiction, and I've heard this over the years, that it's kind
9 of unique like this. We have a planning office. We don't have
10 a Commission. I know people have -- there were some advocates
11 for planning office here in the City. Like, I know my friends
12 in Prince George's County, who I communicate with, they have
13 planning commissions. Do you think that that -- and I'm not
14 advocating for planning commission or not, but I'm saying do you
15 think that some of the things that I've heard you mention, that
16 that advocacy, a lot of the things that engagement happens on the
17 front end.

18 I'm hearing people say engagement, but when -- and I
19 -- in D.C., Mr. Freeman, when people come down and testify, a
20 lot of times they have been working with developers for two years,
21 or two and a half years, a year and a half before they even come
22 to the Zoning Commission. So we get -- a lot of times we get
23 what the planning office, what the ANCs, what community folks
24 have put together. And when you've been working on something as
25 a community person for two years, for me, I hate to dismantle

1 what a community has put together, because when I see it, I
2 believe that they have worked on it.

3 So I'm trying to figure out how that tool, you know,
4 everybody's talking about the Zoning Commission -- great -- but
5 how that can also be used in those discussions early on before
6 it even gets here. And I think that's one of the things D.C.
7 Empower mentioned. I can't -- I'm not going to solve it all by
8 myself. None of us are. The Commission is not going to solve
9 it all by themselves. This stuff has been going on for years.
10 But how do we get it, as some people said, on the front end?
11 Because sometimes, by the time we get this, it's two years later.

12 So I don't know if that's really a question. Maybe
13 that's me just trying to figure things out.

14 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah. Well, one of the things in New
15 York, what they did, as part of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair
16 Housing plan, they developed this Where We Live plan, which
17 outlines, you know, steps to be taken to achieve a more equitable
18 city. And so, when creating the racial equity tool, they were
19 able to use that as a framework to guide, you know, what would
20 be an equitable type of development. So for example, building
21 more affordable housing in neighborhoods that have traditionally
22 been fairly exclusionary. That's just one item.

23 And so when someone proposes something that's going to
24 require approval by the planning commission, they have to
25 articulate well, you know, we have this list of close goals in

1 the Where We Live Plan; how is this proposal consistent with
2 that? And so, you know, the plan was -- the racial equity tool
3 was only adopted last year, so it's kind of early to tell. But
4 you know, hopefully what will happen when people get together
5 developers and the types of folks you mentioned, when they get
6 together and work on these plans, they'll be the -- the front-
7 end work will have already been done as part of the process of
8 creating a sort of a goal.

9 You know, what's the -- what is an equitable city, a
10 racially equitable, Washington, D.C.? What does that look like?
11 What are the key factors that would help someone to meet that?
12 And so then when they develop their proposal, they would -- they
13 could spell out. Well, we're, you know, building more affordable
14 housing, or we're employing more residents or whatever. But so
15 I think that front-end process is really key, where you identify
16 what a racially equitable Washington, D.C. looks like.

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Is there -- you didn't submit
18 anything. Would you mind submitting some of that in writing, if
19 you don't mind?

20 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah, I can do that. So where would I
21 submit it?

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I don't know. I'm trying to figure
23 out how to connect you with us.

24 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah, well, you know, I'm on, you know,
25 if you go on --

1 MS. SCHELLIN: You can -

2 MR. FREEMAN: -- the University of Pennsylvania's
3 website, you know, you'll, you can get my address, and someone,
4 you know, you can reach out to me.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: You could just email it to ZC, like
6 Zoning Commission, Submissions with an S on the end.

7 MR. FREEMAN: Hold on. Let me get -- let me jot this
8 down. Let me jot this down.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Let him -- yeah, I want to take
10 time. Let's take time to do this. This is important.

11 MR. FREEMAN: Okay. ZC --

12 MS. SCHELLIN: Ready?

13 MR. FREEMAN: I'm sorry.

14 MS. SCHELLIN: Yeah, ZC, like Zoning Commission, the
15 letters ZC, Submissions, with an S on the end, @dc.gov.

16 MR. FREEMAN: Okay.

17 MS. SCHELLIN: You could email it there. And in your
18 subject line, if you could please put 22-RT1. That's the case
19 number --

20 MR. FREEMAN: Okay.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: -- or the roundtable number.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And Mr. Freeman, I would just ask.
23 You were getting ready to give us a website to look at?

24 MR. FREEMAN: You said was I getting ready to give you
25 a website?

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yeah, just put it on the -- when you
2 submit it. I thought you were going to give us -- tell us look
3 at --

4 MR. FREEMAN: No, no, I don't have a website.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

6 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah, I can email you information that I
7 just shared with you. And we -- I did -- we did a sort of a
8 pilot racial equity report last summer. I could -- be happy to
9 share that with you as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Great. Thank you. I would love for
11 us to have that.

12 MR. FREEMAN: Okay. Well, thanks for giving me the
13 opportunity to share my thoughts, and good luck.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you. Thank you so much.

15 MR. FREEMAN: All right.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: We appreciate it.

17 Okay, Ms. Schellin, you can continue.

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay.

19 So the next two people, we can only unmute them. And
20 the first one is going to be Lydia Edwards.

21 SENATOR EDWARDS: Hi everyone. I'm a Senator over in
22 Boston. But before I was a senator, I was a city councilor, and
23 I helped to draft and pass the nation's first Affirmatively
24 Furthering Fair Housing Zoning Amendment that essentially
25 uncapped -- includes racial equity as part of our zoning

1 requirements. So I'm going to walk you through that process. A
2 lot of the questions and concerns voiced by people, and I used
3 to actually live in D.C. -- but a lot of my -- a lot of folks in
4 D.C., I think we had those same questions and concerns when we
5 developed this process in Boston. And I'll show you what we've
6 done. And I'm happy to also send the website that actually
7 outlines that process as well.

8 So first, we adopted a zoning amendment, a text
9 amendment that borrowed heavily from the standard of
10 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, essentially saying that
11 in zoning, making it a legal standard, which is very important
12 in terms of enforcement, by the way. I know a lot of people
13 discussed that. But having it be a legal standard is something
14 that allows for people in and outside of your Zoning Commission
15 or just housing advocates to be able to hold the City accountable.
16 That text amendment essentially says that we will remove
17 obstacles to opportunity, take meaningful actions -- excuse me
18 -- to remove obstacles to opportunity borrowing from the federal
19 standard for AFFH. That's what I'm going to use when we're
20 discussing Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.

21 That then created a whole process that does the
22 following: One, developer comes in saying I want to build, I
23 don't know, a high rise somewhere in some neighborhood. Before
24 they can go any further, the City comes up with two assessment
25 tools: one, is a historic displacement tool, defining whether

1 the neighborhood itself has a history or pattern of segregation;
2 and/or two, a displacement tool, just determining if they're
3 dealing with gentrification that is at a level that they cannot
4 handle. Those reports are given to the developer. We are
5 grounded in the fact that you, if you're going to build in the
6 city of Boston, you need to be helping. You need to heal racial
7 concerns and issues, and we're making that a standard now for
8 which we're going to judge your project.

9 As we all know, and I'm sure you've heard, zoning is
10 by far the most effective tool at segregating people and undoing
11 fair housing legislation. So zoning, therefore, should be the
12 most factor tool at actually integrating our communities and
13 preventing displacement. It can be. So once we've defined what
14 the issue is, just like we do with everything else, and I'm sure
15 in D.C. you do the same thing. What's the traffic issue? What's
16 the smog issue? What's the pollution issue?

17 Then you put it on the developer's shoulders to say,
18 you cannot enhance this issue. As a matter of fact, you have to
19 come up with different things to help fix it. So they are given
20 a huge assessment toolkit, which I heard many people say that
21 they want community involvement. Well, the best way we involve
22 community was for community to come up with the assessment, self-
23 assessment toolkit for the developer to fill out. It's many
24 pages long. And in that toolkit, they're told, they're asked:
25 How many units are you building? How deeply affordable are they?

1 Were there people there before? Did you buy the building empty?
2 Did you kick them out? Are you removing the only grocery store
3 that we have? What are you doing? What are your plans?

4 And basically, they have to be totally upfront. They
5 don't get to say I just bought this and decided to figure out
6 how to make the numbers work. That's not true. And we need to
7 know this because you could be hurting us racially. We have that
8 entire assessment. And that is made public, which is also a way
9 in which you can include the community, always having this entire
10 process and reports and assessments made public as you go along.

11 So now that they've done the self-assessment, then you
12 take the self, the other part that we've included, community
13 involved in, is coming up with the ways to heal, the mitigation.
14 We came up with, I don't know how many different ways in which
15 we've decided that the best way to help our communities is going
16 to be defined by the community. And you as a developer, in order
17 for your project to even be seen by the ultimate decider of
18 whether you can go forward, you as a developer, have to pick --

19 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

20 SENATOR EDWARDS: Have to pick -- and I'm sorry, I know
21 that you went back and forth. I'm sorry. I'm going to ask for
22 more time, because I'm walking you through the process that was
23 just described by the New York person, as, in theory, that we're
24 actually doing in Boston, that I helped to (indiscernible).

25 MS. SCHELLIN: We gave you five.

1 SENATOR EDWARDS: Very well. So this is actually
2 working. We're doing it right now. And so, ultimately, the
3 community came up with many different forms of mitigation that
4 the developer has to pick, and including right of first refusal,
5 deeper affordability, putting Section 8 in their buildings,
6 having DEI coordinators as part of their developing process,
7 looking at so many different things on a daily basis, or excuse
8 me on a regular basis, that is a part of healing. They have to
9 pick some of those things. They have to, otherwise they don't
10 go forward.

11 And here's the goal, and the ultimate enforcement
12 mechanism than any zoning commission, planning commission, so on
13 and so forth, has. If they don't meet the legal standard, if
14 they don't show that they are helping to heal from the racial
15 harms that every single city, town has, their project doesn't go
16 forward. That is the power you must give to -- if you're truly
17 invested in racial diversity being part of zoning or planning,
18 then you have to say no.

19 Now, that doesn't mean that they can never meet that
20 standard. You make them come back to the drawing table, and you
21 can make them continue to go on and go forward until ultimately
22 they can go forward. The other way in which you can involve
23 community and assure that they are part of the standard is having
24 quarterly meetings, assessing the project's how they went, and
25 the entire time -- and if you go to bostonplans.org, where they

1 actually outline the history of this, the website, I know you've
2 mentioned one before, but here's -- it's bostonplans.org housing,
3 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, if you just Google that,
4 they actually go through the entire process, the history and why
5 it's important that we do it this way. But it's a package --

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Senator? Senator?

7 SENATOR EDWARDS: Yes?

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I thank you, but what I'm going to
9 ask, and I hate to put the burden of work on you, but I think
10 you -- I wrote down a few notes about the community assessment,
11 for the community upfront and mitigation. Your second -- I would
12 like, if you could, and I didn't see you -- your submission. And
13 it may be in there, and I just overlooked it, which I doubt, but
14 if you could submit something to our web address to us, kind of
15 the steps that you were outlining that Mr. Freeman was talking
16 about, I think that'd be very helpful.

17 SENATOR EDWARDS: Sure. I will submit it to the -- I'm
18 sorry, your web address?

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: What's the address again, Ms.
20 Schellin? It's ZDOCS, and what's --

21 MS. SCHELLIN: ZC, like Zoning Commission. So
22 ZCSubmissions, plural, S on the end, @dc.gov.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. I thank you so much, Senator.
24 And please submit that. And thank you for helping us through
25 this process. And we appreciate you taking the time to join us

1 down here. Thank you.

2 SENATOR EDWARDS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay, Ms. Schellin, let's call the
4 next person.

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Mr. Fleming, you've been unmuted.

6 MR. FLEMING: Yes. Does my camera not work? How can
7 I?

8 MS. SCHELLIN: That's correct. We can't -- your
9 camera's not working. So we're only able to --

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: So his camera -- I would like to see
11 Mr. Fleming. Where's Mr. Fleming? We can't get Mr. Fleming's
12 video?

13 MS. SCHELLIN: We can't. The only thing we can do is
14 unmute him. I don't know why.

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right.

16 MR. FLEMING: I guess. All right. Well --

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Go right ahead.

18 MR. FLEMING: All right. Well, thank you
19 Chairman Hood.

20 As you know, my name is Nathan Fleming, and I'm a
21 lifelong resident of the District. I currently live in Ward 7.
22 I currently am affiliated with Empower DC as a policy consultant.
23 As you know, they're an organization that works to expand the
24 political power of marginalized residents.

25 A few recommendations for OZ's equity tool. I'm not

1 going to, you know, read my entire testimony. I'm just going to
2 speak to a couple of things that I wanted to amplify.

3 One, I think, it's important to document historic and
4 segregation and inequitable practices. I think it's vital to
5 invest in the research on a community's specific history of racism
6 in housing and land use before taking steps to develop policy and
7 plans. It's important that we have a firm understanding of past
8 actions that produce our present conditions.

9 I also think it's important to develop the Displacement
10 Race Index, as other people have said. Also, it's important to
11 develop an Access to Opportunity Index. When we have this
12 neighborhood data, which identifies and categorizes areas in the
13 city, as relates to level of displacement risk and level of access
14 to opportunity, we can use those areas to help to guide equitable
15 land use practices and decisions.

16 So obviously, Seattle is an example of that. New York's
17 a great example of the importance of developing a data tool. So
18 as Mr. Freeman said, the data tool allows the public and the
19 stakeholders to access data from the City-wide, Ward-wide
20 neighborhood and census level data on issues like demographics,
21 economic security, housing affordability. And this tool can be
22 used to guide and shape land use policies.

23 So I know that the Chairman really asked for, you know,
24 what are some questions that can really help us. And so I'll
25 just reserve the rest of my comments to that. In both New York

1 and Boston, as the previous experts just spoke to, they require
2 the submission of racial equity land use applications. And these
3 reports seek to assess the displacement and racial equity impacts
4 of a potential project, and then they identify goals and
5 strategies that will advance the City's racial equity housing
6 goals, and they put this burden on the applicants.

7 So for example, in New York, they require a listing of
8 the number of units by affordable unit type. So they require:
9 How many extremely low-income units were there before? How many
10 are there now? The expected rent and prices of the units and
11 the incomes that are needed to afford these new units without
12 incurring housing cost burden.

13 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

14 MR. FLEMING: Yep. And for non-residential unit uses,
15 applicants must list the projected number of jobs that are being
16 brought and the median wage levels of those jobs, and also the
17 racial and ethnic composition, and the educational attainment
18 that's required to obtain those jobs.

19 In Boston, we talked about their approach. I think
20 their affirmative Furthering Fair Housing tool, the questionnaire
21 that they've developed is something that's really important to
22 take a look at to get some specific questions that we can ask
23 here in D.C.

24 And I'll just close by speaking to the interventions.
25 I do think is important to have a list of interventions that we

1 want applicants to take.

2 In Boston, they include deepening the affordability of
3 units beyond what would otherwise be required; providing a higher
4 number of assessable units than otherwise would be required;
5 matching or exceeding the percentage of family size units in the
6 neighborhood; matching or exceeding the percentage or number of
7 voucher units; increasing the density to accommodate a greater
8 number of affordable units; and partnering with nonprofit
9 developers to assist with affordable housing production.

10 So in close, I look forward to working with the
11 Commission to create a tool that leads to equitable outcomes for
12 D.C. residents. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Mr. Fleming.

14 And colleagues, just give me give me a moment. I'm
15 trying -- thinking about how to do things. And I'm saying -- if
16 you all have any question, please chime in.

17 Mr. Fleming, if you don't mind, before you go, with all
18 your work that you've been on the Council, do you think any of
19 this - and I know the Council put the put that in the Comp Plan
20 for us to work with. But some of the things that we're trying
21 to achieve from your perspective on the Council, do you think any
22 of us would -- we would have any roadblocks with the home charter?
23 I'm just throwing that out there, because I was thinking about
24 it as you was talking.

25 MR. FLEMING: So I think that, as you recognize, there's

1 a lot that zoning can do, and there's a lot that, you know,
2 planning can do. But we're speaking about, you know, zoning and
3 to some degree planning in this context. So I think that a lot
4 of this can be done within the power and the authority that's
5 already been granted to your body. But certainly there's going
6 to be some additional things that have to come from the Council.
7 And we do understand that, you know, the restrictions that the
8 Council, has based upon the Home Rule charter.

9 And so that makes D.C. unique. We're not New York, you
10 know, we're not Boston, we're D.C. So we're unique. So I think
11 that there's a lot that can be done, but certainly, for some
12 things, we're going to need some additional legislation.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And I really appreciate that, Mr.
14 Fleming. Because I was sitting here thinking about all the
15 roadblocks they we are going to hit, as the demand, or what the
16 expectation is for us to try to do. And I'm thinking about all
17 the roadblocks. I've got to look at the Charter. I've got to
18 look at the Comp Plan. I've got to look at the Small Area Plan.
19 One group wants this, the other group wants -- so there's some
20 things that we have to work through. But I appreciate your
21 comments, and I hope you stay engaged. And if -- I don't see
22 where you submitted, but if you have time, if you can submit it,
23 I would really appreciate it.

24 MR. FLEMING: Yes, I believe I submitted written
25 testimony, but I'll make sure you guys have it.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. If we have it, then somebody
2 will direct me to it. I didn't see it. So I appreciate it. And
3 thank you for your comments.

4 All right, Ms. Schellin? I'm Sorry.

5 My colleagues got anything?

6 (No audible response.)

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Let's keep going.

8 Ms. Schellin, you're on mute, if you were saying
9 something.

10 MS. SCHELLIN: I'm sorry.

11 Ms. Ewing? You have three minutes. You can unmute
12 yourself.

13 MS. EWING: Okay. Can you hear me?

14 MS. SCHELLIN: We can.

15 MS. EWING: Okay. I'll be brief.

16 I am a resident in Ward 7, 5711, Eads Street, Northeast.
17 And one of the things that I think is so important is for the
18 Zoning Commission to work with the other agencies. Some of the
19 problems in Northeast Boundary that have been talked about with
20 as far as the unemployment, lack of a grocery store, addiction,
21 those problems really need to be worked on in an interagency type
22 of manner, and as well as housing vouchers, which it's been very
23 heartbreaking to see families that cannot get adequate houses for
24 their family. So really inter-agencies really looking at the
25 problems together.

1 Also, to emphasize that there have been buildings
2 approved and variances granted that I think have really decreased
3 the value of houses in our neighborhood. It's been heartbreaking
4 to look at homeowners that used to have a view out of their
5 windows, and now all they can see is the vinyl of the house that
6 just went up next to them. So those kinds of things, I think,
7 are so important, as well as I love the idea that one of the
8 persons talked about is having the developers really have to have
9 a plan for how they're going to improve the neighborhood, and
10 what kinds of improvements they're going to do, how are they
11 going to give back to the neighborhood? And we certainly have a
12 lot of --

13 MS. SCHELLIN: One minute.

14 MS. EWING: We certainly have a lot of concerns about
15 what's going to happen to parking in this neighborhood once all
16 of these apartments and high rises go up that are around us.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Next panel. And this appears to
19 be our last panel. Mr. Theresa -- Aristotle Theresa,
20 Michael Starnes, Brad Greenfield, and Ronald Kahn.

21 Mr. Theresa?

22 MR. THERESA: Hi.

23 MS. SCHELLIN: You can go ahead and start. You have
24 five minutes.

25 MR. THERESA: Hello. Yeah, so it's good to be here and

1 speaking with you all. I've been before this body many times.
2 You know, the Zoning Commission -- I study land use. I'm a land
3 use attorney. I know how important how land use decisions are
4 to the formation of a city. And so the Zoning Commission in D.C.
5 has held great sway over how this City has developed and you
6 know, they can accept responsibility for some positive things but
7 also some of the negative things as well.

8 I think that when you look at D.C., and you look at how
9 D.C. is developed, there's very little information about the
10 decisions that the Zoning Commission has made, in terms of like
11 how that has impacted surrounding areas. When I study other
12 cities, I look at the Bay Area, Chicago, New York, all of these
13 study -- all of these cities have extensive studies about how
14 land use decisions have impacted the surrounding area, like at
15 the census tract level, how land use decisions -- what kind of
16 type of land use decisions were made, and how it resulted, and
17 outcomes for members of the community. And in D.C., there is
18 nothing like that. I know that there are people who worked on
19 it. I've worked on it. Coy McKinney has worked on it. And
20 we've seen significant correlations between displacement and
21 certain decisions of the Zoning Commission. But you know, that
22 doesn't, you know, root out correlation not equaling causation.
23 So, you know, there's that correlation problem. And there are,
24 you know, academics and people who are able to do this stuff,
25 put together, the probability value of this just being a

1 coincidence. And I think that needs to be done in the City. And
2 I think it's really weird that it hasn't been done. And I think
3 before we roll out a racial equity tool, that that's something
4 that should be done and needs to be done.

5 You know, like I said, I practice before the Zoning
6 Commission, I've been before you all many times, have read many
7 orders. So I'm not really in the dark about the Zoning
8 Commission's positions about a lot of things.

9 I read the orders, and I'm not placing it on any of the
10 Commissioners. You know, I know that you all have legal counsel
11 and are advised to do certain things. But it seems like the
12 Commission's position is that the more housing, the better for
13 prices, right? And so I can say, if that's going to be the Zoning
14 Commission's position, that even with this racial equity tool,
15 garbage in, garbage out. You know, we need to really sit down
16 and study this City, look at the decisions that have been made,
17 figure out how it has impacted people, and go from there. And
18 until that's done, and I haven't seen it be done, then we're kind
19 of going to be flying blind and in the dark here. And that's
20 all I have to say. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Thank you.

23 Next, Michael Starnes. Actually, he was not on.

24 So Brad Greenfield.

25 MR. GREENFIELD: Thank you, Commissioner Hood, members

1 of the Zoning Commission. I represent ANC-6A. We have submitted
2 written testimony. One of the benefits of going near the end is
3 I can say a lot of dittos. A lot of the comments and thoughts
4 that we have already been raised by other presenters today. So
5 I will put a skip over that for everyone's benefit.

6 We do support and applaud the Zoning Commission for the
7 racial equity tool. It is a very good first step in addressing
8 economic inequalities. However, it needs to significantly
9 change. A lot of our thoughts align to what others have said in
10 terms of aligning with what other cities are doing, and doing a
11 more data-driven approach to analysis and determining zoning
12 decisions.

13 I would say beyond just gathering data and using data
14 and metrics in the analysis, the Zoning Commission should also
15 develop models for how different activities are likely to impact
16 (audio interference), property values, housing costs. The --
17 it's not just gathering datapoints, but developing models and
18 developing feedback mechanisms, so that as changes -- as projects
19 move forward and have impact, you can do a side-by-side comparison
20 between what a project did and what was anticipated based on the
21 model of that project. That would give -- by doing a feedback
22 mechanism, you can then adjust the model so that it's continually
23 more improving, and more accurate for the next project that uses
24 it.

25 We also believe that the tool should not just seek to

1 mitigate and minimize the impact of economic flight and racial
2 flight, but look for ways that it could be reversed or the
3 situation should be improved in areas of the city where it's
4 already occurred.

5 Our ANC-6A, a large part has been developed, and
6 there's already been black flight and racial inequities that are
7 in place. If the tool simply seeks to cement that in place and
8 not make things worse, that does not truly address the overall
9 problem.

10 The -- we also believe that D.C. needs to provide more
11 funding and build more housing on D.C. land to enable affordable
12 housing programs and to make housing more affordable for working
13 families and working the working class throughout the City.

14 We should be measuring the impact of direct
15 displacement and using that measurement, regardless of the size
16 of new developments, even smaller ones should be subjected to the
17 same standards. We should condition all zoning changes on
18 requirements that developers set aside a percentage of budgets
19 or pay special fees to be used for community's upkeep and
20 improvements. And the tool could also quantify any jobs that are
21 directly created, what types of jobs they are, and how they will
22 be made available to D.C. residents. Thank you. That concludes
23 my comments.

24 MS. SCHELLIN: Mr. Kahn?

25 MR. KAHN: Can you hear me?

1 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes. You're speaking as an individual,
2 correct?

3 MR. KAHN: Yes, I am. Thank you.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. Thank you. Three minutes.

5 MR. KAHN: Okay. My name is Ronald Kahn. I live in
6 Ward 3, ANC 3/4G, and I'm more of a process how-to person, so
7 you know my orientation. And I'm going to skip most of my
8 testimony which I've submitted, because I'm the last one anyhow,
9 and we're going to get out the door. So I'm going to cover a
10 key point or two, and that's about it.

11 The Zoning Commission processes have been identified
12 as the -- what I call the landing zone for racial equity housing
13 evaluation. And current Zoning Commission processes are more
14 endpoint, blueprint, concrete, mortar, measurable and substance
15 in process, kind of consistent also with the Comp Plan. And this
16 is a late point in the process, so adding this process, assuming
17 it can be done, would likely result in at least some noncompliance
18 evaluations to fix or retrofit.

19 This would have the potential of being quite
20 inefficient. On the surface, perhaps it looks easier to use
21 zoning as more of a funnel or a one-stop funnel at the end. This
22 tasking considerably expands the Zoning Commission mission, role,
23 expertise, and it would seem more effective, viable and doable
24 to develop and apply the racial lens to more the start or more
25 natural points where impacts are evaluated, developed, discussed,

1 formulated, and applied. A one-off topic is -- and I'm not even
2 going to add that. But that's all I have to say. So thank you
3 very much, and I really appreciate your -- Director Hood, the way
4 you've been holding this meeting. It's been very informative.
5 And I appreciate your role. That's it.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: Chairman Hood, that is the end of the
7 list of witnesses.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

9 MS. SCHELLIN: And so I will yield to you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. I -- thank you. Thank --
11 first of all, let me thank you, Ms. Schellin, for basically
12 chairing the hearing. So thank you for doing that or chairing --
13 not the -- this is not a hearing -- chairing the roundtable. I'm
14 used to doing a lot of talking and trying to get to the bottom
15 of things, and hopefully -- I know I did more than probably what
16 I should have. But I was more interested -- now, my colleagues,
17 I appreciate all of them. They were -- we all were more
18 interested in -- to hear as opposed to do a whole lot of talking.

19 I think everybody made excellent points, and I'm just
20 trying to figure out next steps. But I do know I want to keep
21 the momentum going. I appreciate the involvement. I know there
22 is a solid majority that I did not hear from. And my colleagues
23 -- I don't know -- you know, and especially when it comes to
24 something like this, you hear -- we go meetings too. We don't
25 just sit behind here and do zoning. I'm in the community myself.

1 And a lot of a certain group that I do not hear from that I've
2 tried to -- need to get engaged as well so we can balance this
3 thing. But I didn't hear from developers. I didn't hear from
4 some of the community folks who may not necessarily think that
5 all is not -- all is bad.

6 So you know, it's trying to mix and balance a whole
7 lot. And this Commission, a lot of people don't understand, we
8 have a hard job. It's not easy at times. Sometimes even we
9 don't get the outcomes in our discussions. It's give and take,
10 and it's about making -- you have a lot of competing interests,
11 as you're -- but I think it's a whole lot.

12 So next steps, I want to keep the momentum going. I
13 want to make sure that this again, works. I've heard -- my
14 colleagues and I have heard all the comments, all the suggestions.
15 So what I would like to do is -- and we had three -- and I'm
16 sure -- well, I'm going to say we actually had seven people taking
17 notes. I have about four pages of notes. I have everybody's
18 names -- highlights of what they said for the most part. And
19 I'm sure Commissioner May, who takes much better notes than I do,
20 I'm sure he has some great notes.

21 So what I would -- I'm not sure when we can compile,
22 but if not, we can use our notes. I would like to have a
23 discussion, colleagues, and I'm actually asking for your input,
24 because I'm only one vote. I would like to have a discussion
25 about what we heard tonight maybe November the 10th. That way

1 we can, hopefully, staff and everyone can capture all of the
2 comments, and we can sit down and see how we can continue, and
3 then also talk with our legal counsel.

4 So what does that sound like as far as next steps?
5 Because I have some more proposals that I need to propose to my
6 colleagues as we move on. Because I don't want this to just be
7 a roundtable, and we go back to the same old thing. That's over
8 and done with. Tired of that. So it's time now. Let's see what
9 we can do to make this work. The residents demand it, we demand
10 it, so let's make it work. So let me hear from others.

11 Commissioner May, any comments on some of that path
12 forward?

13 COMMISSIONER MAY: It's -- it was a lot to absorb
14 tonight. I don't think I have anything immediately that I want
15 to say to it. But it does seem to me that there's -- there is
16 definitely more that we should be doing with this tool than we
17 have already done. So I really appreciate hearing from everybody,
18 and I did take a lot of notes, and we will be working on this.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Great. Commissioner Imamura?

20 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just
21 want to say that I really appreciate the high level of interest
22 from the community, the passion and energy around what's a really
23 important issue for our City. So I'm ready, you know, I certainly
24 support moving forward with this, and you know, taking next steps,
25 having further discussions, you know, moving to some actionable

1 results, so -- and outcomes so.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Thank you.

3 And Vice Chair Miller?

4 VICE CHAIR MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 And thank you, Ms. Schellin, for leading us through
6 this discussion for this afternoon and evening's testimony from
7 so many very knowledgeable members of the public, both who live
8 in the District and who are familiar with other cities'
9 experiences with developing this type of data and tool to evaluate
10 land use decisions going forward.

11 The -- I read everything that was in the written
12 record. I look forward to those who want to supplement what
13 they've already submitted and those who didn't submit writing,
14 we invited as -- the Chairman invited those who did not have an
15 opportunity yet to submit written submissions to submit it to the
16 ZCsubmissions@dc.gov. I think it's there on our website,
17 dcoz.gov. Is that right? So I thank everybody for their
18 interests and those and for submitting comments.

19 We definitely -- this was just a very initial step, and
20 maybe, obviously, late in the game. But we're not reinventing a
21 wheel here, although every city has their own unique history and
22 path forward, and we want to tailor it right for the needs of
23 the residents of the District of Columbia. But I think there
24 are a lot of examples and models that we can build upon. I
25 appreciate, again, Mr. Chairman, your leadership on this is --

1 has been great, and I look forward to developing this tool in a
2 way that will work for the public, work for the residents of the
3 District of Columbia, work for the development community.

4 People want a predictable process, and -- but we want
5 an equitable process. This is what this process is all about.
6 So equitable process to get to equitable -- more equitable
7 outcomes. So thank you all.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank -- I want to thank
10 everyone. I don't want to start naming, but I'm going to thank
11 everyone. I want to thank the community, specifically the
12 community. I really appreciate it.

13 I want to thank the staff, our Office of Zoning Legal
14 Division for that impetus to really start putting this together.
15 I want to thank the leadership of Ms. Barton and Ms. Schellin
16 and our whole Office of Zoning office. I want to thank you all
17 for doing this. This does not come lightly, because I know a
18 lot of thought and work went into this. And I know this is the
19 first one. I do want to continue to have these type of
20 conversations, because I want to make this work "where the rubber
21 meets the road," for my remainder of my tenure and for as long
22 as I'm here. So I think it's important. I think this -- it's
23 long overdue. I think there are a lot of people now who've gone
24 on to get whatever reward they were getting, who've gone on and
25 fought to try to get to this point.

1 And I want to thank the Mayor and also
2 Councilman McDuffie for writing this legislation and for the
3 Council for putting it in and putting some teeth, because the --
4 under the leadership of Jeralee Crush (phonetic) years ago, we
5 talked about leveling the playing field, but we didn't have the
6 law behind us. So I want to thank everybody. And if I missed
7 you, I forgot to call your name, I thank you too.

8 And Ms. Schellin, again, thank you for chairing the
9 hearing. And I'm turning it over to you. Do you want to close
10 this out? No, no, I need to close this out.

11 MS. SCHELLIN: I wanted to ask, if I may, you talked
12 about leaving the record open for two weeks. I just want to
13 confirm that.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

15 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. So that way we can get everything
16 to the Commissioners to review prior to the November 10th meeting.
17 So all submissions would be due -- I -- instead of three o'clock,
18 I'm just going to say by midnight. That's usually our time of
19 October 6th. That will be two weeks.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. And November 10th is just
21 going to be a -- I don't know what our agenda looks like. But
22 this is going to be a public discussion, where we're going to
23 throw some things around, as we -- our path to move forward. I'm
24 sure my colleagues and I will make recommendations, things we're
25 going to do. I'm sure we will have our Offices of Legal -- Zoning

1 Legal Division conversating with us through that process. So
2 that's how I envision it. I believe that can work.

3 Anything else, Ms. Schellin?

4 MS. SCHELLIN: No, sir. That's it.

5 All right. This roundtable -- I'm going to close this
6 roundtable. Let me see. The Zoning Commission will meet again
7 -- just a second. I usually get this wrong, but I think --

8 MS. SCHELLIN: Not always.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Not always: September 29th?

10 MS. SCHELLIN: You're correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Oh, okay. Good. And we will have
12 our regular -- that will be our regular meeting, right?

13 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yeah. Okay. Okay.

15 So I want to thank everyone for their participation in
16 this roundtable. I really appreciate everyone's interest and
17 their time. Hope you all have a great evening, and we'll see --
18 we'll be back on these same platforms September 29th for our --
19 one of our meetings. Good night, everyone, and thank you so
20 much.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you.

22 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the
23 record at 7:30 p.m.)

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Roundtable on Racial Equity Analysis Tool

Before: DCZC

Date: 09-22-2022

Place: Teleconference

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Euell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" on the left and the last name "Euell" on the right, connected by a loop.

GARY EUELL

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)