

Community Conversation on Housing: Summary

Thank you for joining us and being interested in our Community Conversation on Housing!

The Community Conversation on Housing was a citywide event hosted by the DC Office of Planning (OP) and DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to share information about the *Housing Framework for Equity and Growth*, report on the results from a resident survey examining the current distribution of affordable housing in the District, and explore the connection between health and housing.

This document highlights information about the event, summarizes feedback from the community members who participated, and shares next steps for the initiative.

Where was it: Ron Brown College Preparatory High School in Ward 7

When was it: Saturday, September 21 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Who attended: Roughly 100 community members from all 8 wards and surrounding jurisdictions



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Event Overview

The Community Conversation on Housing was a two hour event structured to share information about the District's goal to build 36,000 new residential units by 2025, with 12,000 of those units affordable to low-income households, and facilitate conversation from the community on our approach. The agenda for the event is below:

- 1:00pm - 1:10pm | Introduction to the Community Conversation on Housing
 - Andrew Trueblood, Director of the DC Office of Planning
 - Don Edwards, Lead Facilitator from Justice and Sustainability Associates
- 1:10pm - 1:35pm | Panel: Affordable Housing and the Connection to Equity and Health
 - Polly Donaldson, Director of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt, Director of the DC Department of Health
 - Andrew Trueblood, Director of the DC Office of Planning
- 1:35pm - 2:00pm | Small Group Discussion: Reflection on Panel Presentation
- 2:00pm- 2:10pm | Findings From Our Resident Survey on the Current Distribution of Affordable Housing
 - Andrew Trueblood, Director of the DC Office of Planning
- 2:10pm- 2:45pm | Small Group Discussion: Reflection on Housing Survey Findings
- 2:45pm- 2:55pm | Conclusion and Where We Go From Here
 - Polly Donaldson, Director of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Don Edwards, Lead Facilitator from Justice and Sustainability Associates

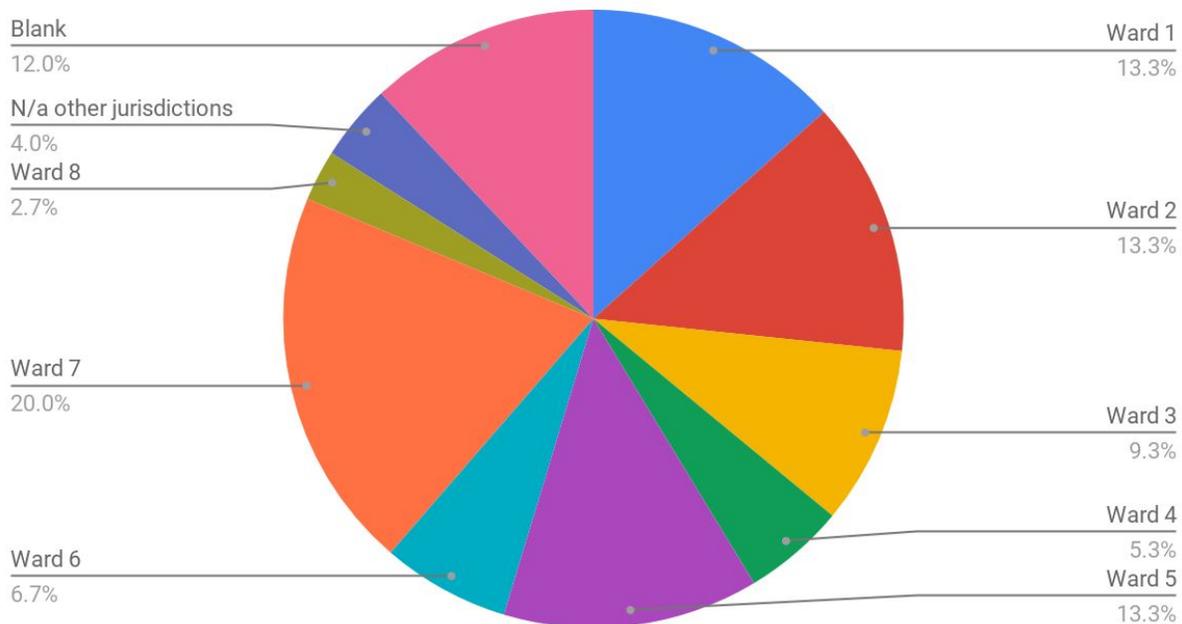


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Nearly 100 community members participated at the event in person or viewed the event's live recording. Community members participated in small group conversations facilitated by OP, DHCD, and partner agency staff. Small groups reflected on the connection between health, housing, and high opportunity areas and the results from the distribution of affordable housing survey.

Of those who attended in person, there was representation from across every Ward in the District, with the highest representation from Ward 7 (unsurprising given the location) with 20 percent of the participants; equal representation from Wards 1, 2, and 5 with 13 percent of the participants; followed by fewer participants from Ward 3, 6, 4, and 8, respectively.

Participant Ward Breakdown



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What did the panelists share?

Dr. Nesbitt, Director from DC Health, Director Polly Donaldson from the Department of Housing and Community Development, Director Andrew Trueblood from the Office of Planning discussed:

- How difficult it is to finance and develop affordable housing;
- The intersection between neighborhood opportunities, safe and stable housing, and one's health; and
- The District's approach to meet the Mayor's 2025 housing goals on an equitable basis.

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Community members were then asked to reflect on the panel discussion and consider whether or not there are neighborhoods in the District that provide residents with a higher quality of life than others. Community members discussed:

- The impact neighborhoods have on residential opportunities and how transit, grocery stores, schools, and other amenities help shape those outcomes;
- How to strengthen and expand current policies and regulations to better advance opportunities and address health;
- The importance of considering all income levels, including those most vulnerable, as we prepare for growth

What was shared in the survey presentation?

Director Andrew Trueblood shared the results from the summer survey which asked the community to weigh in on the current distribution of affordable housing. The survey was taken by over 2,700 community members. The results?

- 76 percent of respondents felt the current distribution of affordable housing was unfair

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- 80 percent of respondents felt both very strongly (61 percent) and strongly (19 percent) that the current distribution of affordable housing should change
- 6 out of 10 respondents prioritized Rock Creek West as a high priority area for more affordable housing, followed by 4 out of 10 respondents prioritizing Capitol Hill and Rock Creek East each.

Community members were then asked to reflect on the survey findings, share what they found to be the most surprising, and consider what areas in the city they would prioritize for affordable housing production. Community members discussed:

- The distribution of affordable housing and emphasized prioritizing more affordable housing near transit, job opportunities, grocery stores, and schools;
- Opportunities to address affordable housing including considering pilot programs, creating small area plans, and working with housing professionals to accelerate affordable housing production; and
- The importance of providing affordable housing opportunities to vulnerable populations, especially extremely low-income households earning less than 30 percent of the Median Family Income (MFI), seniors, and residents with disabilities.

Want to dig into the survey findings? Here is a [link](#) to our survey presentation.

Throughout the small group conversations and participant feedback, themes around housing started to emerge. These included:

- The importance of neighborhood amenities and wrap-around services for affordable housing;
- The current lack of affordable housing supply, which exacerbates financial pressure on existing households, especially those earning 30 percent or below the Median Family Income;
- The need for enhanced government coordination and financing to effectively address impediments to affordable housing development in high opportunity areas; and
- The importance of addressing public housing conditions and of ensuring extremely low-income households and households experiencing homelessness receive adequate housing support.

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Overall, what did participants think about the event?

To determine the event’s effectiveness and improve future events, we asked participants to fill out an evaluation form after the event. Overall, we received positive comments about the event from participants and gained important insight into how we can shape future events.

The event was successful in enhancing what participants know about the Housing Framework for Equity and Growth, the District’s approach to equitable housing development, and what we learned over the summer from talking to residents. A majority of participants (69 percent) reported that they learned a lot or a good amount at the event. Nearly a quarter of participants (24 percent) reported that they learned some at the event, and 8 percent reported that they only learned a little at the event.

The event was successful in sharing helpful information about the Housing Framework for Equity and Growth. Participants overwhelmingly felt that the information received at the event was very helpful or helpful; 41 percent reported that the information was very helpful, and 46 percent reported that the information was helpful. The remaining participants (13 percent) felt that the information was neither helpful nor unhelpful.

The event’s structure of the event was widely regarded by the participants. Seven out of ten participants favored the first small group discussion focused on housing, health, and prosperity, while three out of ten participants reported that they liked the panel presentation the most. The second small group discussion that focused on the survey findings was favored by two out of ten participants,

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followed by the survey presentation that was favored by 13 percent of the participants. Note: participants could select multiple options, so the total exceeds 100 percent.

The participants are eager to participate in future Housing Framework for Equity and Growth events.

Nearly all of the participants (96 percent) reported that they were extremely likely or likely to participate in a future housing event, with 61 percent sharing that they were extremely likely and 35 percent sharing that they were likely. Only three percent (2 respondents) shared that they were neither likely nor unlikely to participate.

Overall, participants enjoyed the format of the event and would like to see future events that engage participants in similar ways.

Over two-thirds (67 percent) of participants would like future events to be structured in a similar format to the Community Conversation. About one out of five participants would like a town hall structure and/or a focus group or workshop structure. Fewer respondents (less than five percent) wanted alternative formats like online webinars, an open house, discussions with smaller groups, or discussions with results shared before the conversation.

A majority of participants learned about the event from District agency outreach while a smaller number of participants learned about the event from community organizations or neighborhood listservs.

Participants reported that they heard about the event from Mayor Bowser's Event Listserv (32 percent), DC Office of Planning (24 percent), and DC Department of Housing and Community Development (19 percent). About 10 percent of participants learned of the event through social media, and the remaining participants learned of the event from other sources like community organizations, colleagues, or professors.

What comes next?

The Community Conversation on Housing and our engagement this summer were the first steps in listening and learning from the community on how we can better address the housing system. These engagements will inform our report back to Mayor Bowser in mid-October as well as shape how we move forward with the *Housing Framework for Equity and Growth* initiative.

The Report Back to the Mayor will outline the affordable housing production goals by Planning Area and provide a more detailed breakdown of how the District should work toward 12,000 affordable housing units by 2025 in a more equitable manner.

The next steps in the *Housing Framework for Equity and Growth* will work to achieve the Mayor's 2025 housing goals in two phases: *Part II Housing Growth and Design Analysis* and *Part III Opportunities and Recommendations*.

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Finally, the District will continue working to address current housing challenges by examining barriers that prevent all residents from accessing and affording housing that supports their well-being.

This fall, the DC Department of Housing and Community Development will host a series of public hearings related to the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Draft Report, a requirement by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHCD) to examine opportunities to further fair housing in jurisdictions. The dates for the fall public hearings are below, and you can find more information on the [DHCD website](#).

- 9/28 (10 am – 2 pm) Emery Heights Community
- 10/1 (5 pm – 8:30 pm) Capitol View Library
- 10/9 (5 pm – 8:30 pm) Greater Washington Urban League
- 10/17 (5:30 – 8:30 pm) United Planning Organization

How can you stay engaged?

Did you miss the Community Conversation on Housing, but still interested in hearing the panelists and presentations, and providing OP and DHCD feedback? Head to our [website](#) to watch, and join the breakout sessions online.

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Thank you for engaging with the *Housing Framework for Equity and Growth* and learning about the Community Conversation on Housing. We look forward to continuing to listen and learn from you. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about the initiative and stay engaged on our progress.