DISTRIBUTION OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC HEARING
FY 2016-2020 CONSOLIDATED PLAN ANNUAL ACTION
PLAN

WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 4, 2015

The hearing convened in the Greater
Washington Urban League Center, 2091 14th Street
NW, Washington, D.C., at 6:30 p.m., Polly
Donaldson, Director, presiding.

PRESENT

POLLY DONALDSON, Director
WALDA YON, Executive Director, Latino Economic
Development Corporation
SCOTT SANDERS, Deputy Director, Joseph's House
PHILIP KENNEDY, Affordable Housing Manager,
Latino Economic Development Corporation

ALSO PRESENT

MIRANDA PARIS, Resident
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DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Good evening.

Hi, I'm Polly Donaldson. I'm the Director of the Housing and Community Development here in the District of Columbia. I want to welcome you tonight. We're very honored to be able to be hosted by the Greater Washington Urban League that works closely with us on several of our key programs such as the Home Purchase Assistance Program, Housing Counseling Services, and other programs as well. So we're very happy to be here with the Greater Washington Urban League.

This is our third and final public hearing on the development of DHCD's Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan is designed to help states and local jurisdictions assess market conditions and their affordable housing and community development needs through data analysis, citizen participation, and ending up making data-driven, place-based investment decisions for our federal resources and for our
The plan touches on housing, homelessness, special needs housing, and non-housing community development activities.

DHCD is charged with developing a policy strategy for how we spend our federal resources which is updated and will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, every five years. For me, this plan will be a map for DHCD's work ahead promoting the administration's comprehensive vision of an affordable, livable, growing D.C.

Now I'm going to turn it over to Jennifer Skow for a moment. She is the staff member who is leading the team, putting together the plan.

Jennifer?

MS. SKOW: Hi. My name is Jennifer Skow and I recently joined DHCD and I am coordinating the Fiscal Year 2016 through 2020 Consolidated Plan for DHCD.

I want to take a moment to briefly describe the four federal resources available as
well as an overview of our process.

The first resource, the Community Development Block Grant program funds local activities that revitalize neighborhoods, promote economic development, and improve community facilities, infrastructure, and services in low- to moderate-income communities.

CDBG funds are our most flexible federal resource and can be used for both housing projects and non-housing community development activities.

The second resource, the Home Investment Partnerships program, supports building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or home ownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income residents.

The third resource, the Emergency Solutions Grant Program provides funding for programs and services for homeless individuals and families.

And then the final resource, the
Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS, HOPWA Program, makes grants to local communities, states, and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Now I'm going to spend a couple of minutes discussing the process. We started community engagement over the summer with informal check-ins at locations in every ward. We held two public hearings in August where 24 people testified or provided written comments. And last week, we held a public forum where residents could vote on key topics important to them to provide managers with feedback.

And we also launched an online survey. Some of you have already taken it tonight where we're asking folks to note issue areas important to them. All of this, in addition to tonight's hearing provides DHCD the perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders in the District before the Agency begins drafting the document and policy priorities.
Moving on to today's hearing, for anybody who has not signed up to testify, but would like to, please see Abe over here at this table to sign up. He'll take down your name and we'll call you after we have called up all the witnesses who have signed up thus far.

For residents and organizations who do wish to speak tonight or are not in attendance, but would like to submit testimony as part of our last public hearing, they can submit written comments to the record. These individuals can do so by mail or email by close of business, Wednesday, November 18th. Written statements should be mailed to our offices to Director Polly Donaldson with Five Year Consolidated Plan Comments in the subject line. Residents may also email comments. Please direct those electronic testimony to dhcd.events@dc.gov with a subject line of Five Year Consolidation Plan Comments.

All of this information is printed on a handout at the sign-in table.

Also at the sign-in table are a few
copies of our previous Consolidated Plan is you
wanted to see what this kind of a document looks
like. Please don't take this document outside of
the room, but feel free to peruse it during the
hearing and afterwards as you want.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: It's also on our
website.

MS. SKOW: It's also on the website
for review if you wanted to look at it at home.

At this moment, I'd like to turn it
back to Director Donaldson to begin the hearing.
Thank you all for joining us tonight. And I look
forward to hearing your contributions this
evening.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you,
Jennifer. You've done a terrific job on this.
It's been a long haul over a short period of time
and very soon the real fun begins, the actual
drafting of the plan.

Just so you know in terms of process
and I know I'll be talking about this a little
bit later, the Draft Plan will be available for
further public comment and as part of the public
record that we hope will be early in 2016 or
actually maybe towards spring of 2016. But there
will be additional opportunities. This is not
your last opportunity to offer comment or
thoughts, but we really need to hear your
thoughts in order to shape the plan and the
document. It is meant to be reflective of the
community's needs and of the community's desires
of how to address those needs. So I want to
start off with that as a premise.

We have a series of witnesses tonight.
I'm going to call you up one by one to our table.
But I do ask that you first of all use the mic,
give your name and your affiliation, if any, and
use the mic because we are recording this for
public record.

And first, I want to call up Walda
Yan, the Executive Director of the Latino
Economic Development Corporation. Okay, I'll
come back if that person -- second then, let me
call Scott Sanders, Deputy Director of Joseph's
Thank you. Hi.

MR. SANDERS: Good evening. I'm Scott Sanders of Joseph's House. Thanks for this chance to testify. I didn't realize you were going to be here, Director Donaldson, so I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to you about these issues.

So I'm here to testify specifically on AIDS housing and the housing opportunities for people with AIDS, the HOPWA Program and the role of HOPWA and D.C.'s response to AIDS and homelessness in general, and actually the very pressing need for additional new dedicated housing funds for men and women living with HIV.

As I mentioned, I'm with Joseph's House. We provide housing and nurturing care for homeless men and women with advanced and in-stage HIV disease, as well as terminal cancer. And we've received HOPWA funding from 1996 through September of this past year and now we receive D.C. appropriated funds for our housing services.
I also serve as a mayoral appointee on the Ryan White Planning Council of D.C.

At the release of the annual D.C. HIV, STD, Hepatitis and TB report in June, Mayor Bowser said and I'm going to quote her here, "My administration is committed to drastically reducing the incidents of HIV in the District of Columbia. And we are equally committed to making sure those who are diagnosed with HIV receive the best care in the nation. We're setting a bold goal of 90-90-90-50 by 2020, meaning 90 percent of D.C. residents with HIV will know their status. And two points here that are really important, 90 percent of persons living with HIV will be in treatment. And 90 percent of persons with HIV will achieve viral load suppression. And the District will see a 50 percent decrease in new HIV cases.

And if you're not familiar, a suppressed viral load is important, obviously for the health of the individual, but it's really important to the community as well because when a
person's viral load is suppressed, it's basically impossible or very unlikely that they can transmit HIV. So by getting the community viral load down, we lower the HIV transmission rates.

So Mayor Bowser's 90-90-90-50 goals are goals we all support. And in order to reach those goals, we believe the Bowser administration and the city must invest significantly increased funds and not just HOPWA dollars in housing for people living with HIV and funds that must not commit the expense or detriment of any other housing or social program. And underlying this is recent data that came from the D.C. Department of Health which shows how much of an impact the local AIDS housing services funded through HOPWA are already having on the goals the mayor outlined. I think it's so important for you to know this because to know what HOPWA is already doing in the city is incredible.

According to the DHCDOH data, people living with HIV who receive housing assistance through HOPWA are much more likely than any
other group to be engaged in medical care and they're much more likely to achieve viral load suppression than other groups of people living with HIV in D.C. So it's something that HOPWA can really be proud of.

Of those who are diagnosed between 2009 and 2013, so that pool of people, 62 percent were engaged in medical care in 2014. Compare that to HOPWA in the same year, 93 percent of people who have HOPWA services were engaged in medical care. So 31 percent are more likely to be in medical care if you're getting AIDS housing support, already ahead of the 2020 goal. So that's a pretty astounding place to be.

And the numbers for viral suppression are equally compelling. Only 47 percent of those diagnosed between 2009 and 2013 were virtually suppressed during 2014. They're only halfway to the goal, the mayor's goal. On the other hand 74 percent of those who get HOPWA services were virtually suppressed in 2014. So just 16 points away from the mayor's declared goal of 90
percent.

And interestingly, the rate of viral suppression of those in the HOPWA program is even higher, 11 points higher than those who are enrolled in Ryan White, which is a medical program. So HOPWA really is key to getting people in care and keeping them in care and getting them on medications.

Actually, this data is compelling, but it's really not surprising. There's years and years of research going back showing that safe, stable housing and improved HIV health-related outcomes are closely associated. And that's the really good news.

The bad news, as you probably know, is that D.C.'s annual HOPWA award is going down. Since 2011, the HOPWA award has decreased by 21 percent; 21 percent at a time when the number of diagnosed people living with HIV in the District is increasing by about 500 people a year. And the award is decreasing primarily because we're doing a great job of keeping people more well.
The formula that HUD uses for awarding HOPWA dollars is based on full-blown AIDS cases, not all diagnosed HIV cases. So in comparison to a lot of their places, we're keeping people well. They're not progressing to AIDS. So with HOPWA being flat funded by the feds, we're doing a better job, so we have less, fewer numbers, so we're getting less money. And so ironically, the very progress we're making in reducing AIDS diagnosis is now threatening one of the core elements in helping people stay well which is our HOPWA mandate. And we need more housing, not less as I know you can appreciate.

Of the more than 6,600 D.C. residents who get services through Ryan White, 1 out of every 3 were not in stable, permanent housing in 2004 according to DOH. So in a state of more than 16,000 people living with HIV, there are a 1,000 who have safe, affordable, stable housing. And the HOPWA program services about 500.

We strongly believe that the District must have a bigger portfolio of AIDS housing.
initiatives in order to meet our goal and the mayor's goal of 90-90-90-50.

Right now, the DCDOH housing program focuses on a broad continuum of housing, but it's very limited resources for helping folks facilitate work force development, employment opportunities, getting folks who are 55 and older into senior older, getting folks who need help, support in the existing support of housing. So they're navigating people into care and into housing. And we believe that we have to go beyond navigating people into existing and limited support of housing. And we have to invest robustly in transitional and permanent supportive housing, specifically for people living with HIV. We need that housing for men and women who face tremendous life challenges, many men and women who will never be able to enter the work force or will need a lot more support to do it.

Many struggle with stigma and shame of HIV still. They struggle with mental illness,
substance abuse, poverty, illiteracy, incarceration. And to meet the 90-90-90-50 goal, to maintain those levels for years to come, we have to keep those residents engaged in care and adhere to their meds for 10, 20, or 30 years.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Sanders, very much. Appreciate your testimony. If you wouldn't mind, I'd love to have a copy of it as well. Thank you for being a fierce advocate for HIV/AIDS community.

I want to see is Walda Yon here as of yet? Okay, then we will go to our next witness, Philip Kennedy, also from the Latino Economic Development Corporation I didn't see him here, so we'll call them back up if they come a little bit later.

Miranda Paris, who is a resident here.

Hi.

MS. PARIS: Hello, how are you?

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Great. Good evening.

MS. PARIS: I'll be brief. Some
persons such as myself with mental health issues have a hard time getting and obtaining employment. So therefore, it is harder to afford a market-rate unit. Providing a subsidy to mental health agencies to assist single, low-income families such as myself and many others, would relieve stress, provide a home for families to build memories, create bonds, and achieve. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you. We appreciate your comments very much. And we will take them into consideration.

MS. PARIS: Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you so much for coming here tonight.

I'd like to now ask Yvette Kidd to move forward.

MS. KIDD: Hi.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Hi, how are you?

MS. KIDD: How are you? Can you hear me? Is that on?

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: There it is.
Okay. Great.

MS. KIDD: I am an older, single older woman, no children. I retired from doing hair because I injured myself and I am in mental health. And subsequently, I go there and there is no help. I've been there for a year and I actually got evicted from my home three years ago from a new building on Martin Luther King Avenue because I couldn't afford it, but I took it anyway because I could find anything else. And it was the cheapest thing that I could find.

So I moved back with my dad which is the worst thing ever and I have been looking for a place and there's nowhere for me to afford. I don't have kids. I'm not disabled, if you will. I'm not a senior. And I have called many places that say they're affordable housing and the list is long or it's closed or no one is open.

I'm a Washingtonian. I do not want to be forced out of the Washington, D.C. area, so what do I do because it's very stressful and it's sad and they're building all of these places all...
over the place and you can't afford anything. So
I need help.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very
much. Thank you for your input.

I wanted to say that -- are you here?
Yes. We're going to go back to the beginning of
the witness list. And also is Philip Kennedy
here? There you are. Okay, great. Please, come
on up and there's a microphone and please
introduce yourself and we're just doing one at a
time at the table. So thank you.

And if we could ask folks to limit
their testimony to five minutes, if you could,
please. Thank you.

MS. YON: Good evening, Director
Donaldson, members of the Department of Housing
and Community Development. Thank you for this
opportunity to testify. My name is Walda Yon and
I'm Executive Director, Latino Economic
Development Corporation or LEDC.

One of LEDC's components is being a
HUD certified housing agency. We are, in large
part, funded by the DHCD, Department of Housing and Community Development to provide training and counseling in the areas of financial literacy, first time home buyer and foreclosure prevention.

We thank you for the support and look forward to continuing with the good work and services that the community needs and deserves. We would like to recommend for the 2016-2020 fiscal year Consolidated Plan the following:
support credit counseling and home ownership program; continue to work with D.C. residents preparing them for a better financial health and home ownership opportunities.

We have now more than 100 clients who are mortgage ready to be able to become first time home buyers, but as you know, a good number of them are moving out of D.C. due to a lack of affordable properties to buy or to rent in D.C. For example, home buyers have difficulty in finding homes that fit their household needs and income. We suggest making a priority during the coming years that use our federal funds for Home
Purchase Assistance Program or HPAP and development dollars available for affordable home ownership developments.

Thank you for the Department convening to including the HPAP program, raising the maximum amount to $80,000. This change once it takes place, will bring more opportunities to low- to moderate-income first time home buyers. We also look forward to working with DHCD to improve these programs. The other recommendation is support for the first time home buyers to work with DHCD to improve these programs.

The other recommendation is supporting first time home buyers, identifying affordable home ownership development facilities in D.C. It is imperative today to develop affordable opportunities for first time home buyers and please explore any and all possibilities of vacant properties or land to be affordable housing. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you so much for your testimony. We will include that in our
report planning. Thank you.

Philip Kennedy. I wanted to call you up, please? Thank you.

MR. KENNEDY: Hi, good evening. My name is Philip Kennedy. I am the Tenant Organizing Program Manager at the Latino Economic Development Center. And I'm also the co-chair of LEDC's Support for Tenant Purchase Working Group.

LEDC's Affordable Housing Preservation Program works with tenants to prevent displacement and preserve housing that is affordable to low and moderate income District residents. We are supportive in this work by the District's long-standing commitment to tenant rights and protections and through funding by DHCD for our organizing work. Particularly with the new administration, LEDC has been encouraged to seek commitment to use and expand the District's existing tools to preserve affordable housing.

We are also grateful for the continued opportunities we have to engage in conversation
with DHCD leadership. Tonight, I will highlight three major areas where DHCD can build on its existing commitments.

First is consider the tenant purchase -- Tenant Purchase Working Group's recommendations for strengthening tenant purchase. Earlier, this afternoon, we had the privilege of talking to John about this in more details, so I'm just going to cover it briefly. We have experts in our working group in every area of organizing, financing, and development process. Collectively, we put together a list of recommendations for ways that DHCD can better serve tenants associations that are going through this process.

These recommendations are fully outlined in the document that we shared with John, but broadly they fall into four categories: improving the process for reviewing and project feasibility, leveraging private financing, reaching deeper affordability levels and ensuring long-term success post-purchase.
As we often tell tenants, getting a TOPA offer of sale is both an opportunity and a threat. DHCD's support is crucial in many stages of the process to ensure that there is a true opportunity for tenants.

The second is fully implementing the District Opportunity to Purchase Act. DOPA represents an under utilized tool for the preservation of affordable housing. In most cases, organizers from LEDC or HCS can successfully work with tenants to register a tenants association and navigate the DOPA. However, sometimes extraordinary circumstances make this process difficult or impossible. Particularly, LEDC has been involved with several buildings recently where tenants' mental illnesses and other factors make organizing a tenants association difficult or impossible.

The criteria for DOPA action should include those buildings that serve these vulnerable populations and are often those who have experienced or are likely to experience
homelessness.

As a manager of tenant organizers, I know that organizers can play a vital role in the DOPA process. DHCD should establish a process of communicating directly with organizers to determine which building meets the criteria I mentioned earlier. Organizers have the knowledge and experience to make recommendations about which buildings should be priorities.

LEDC and other members of the working group are hopeful for swift action on DOPA regulations. During this process, we would like to be in communication with DHCD as much as is helpful and we are also drafting a fuller list of recommendations that we hope we will be able to communicate within the next couple of weeks.

And then finally, continue to enforce and leverage affordability restrictions that are already in place. The District has made huge financial commitments to producing and preserving affordable housing in the past. In some cases, DHCD owns land or holds covenants on properties
that developers would like to use for larger projects. DHCD should consider on a case-by-case basis how it can leverage those tools to expand affordability. For example, DHCD could allow a developer to buy District-owned land for part of a large project if there are any affordability requirements.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

I am encouraged by this administration's repeated focus on the importance of affordable housing. We've seen a huge commitment in areas like $100 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund. And I know you share the goal that many of us have of using that commitment to the best extent possible. Thanks.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony. Appreciate it very much. I'd like to now call F.R. Cole. And if you came in after we started the hearing, if you would like to testify, but haven't signed up, please come to the table here next door to sign up with Abe. He will get you on the list
and I will call you in the order in which you
signed up. Thank you.

Ms. Cole.

MS. F.R. COLES: Thank you so very
much, Ms. Donaldson. And I do appreciate it.

Basically, I wanted to somehow if we could look a
little bit more closely to the issue of credit.

With everyone that I have been working with
regarding this issue of affordable housing, that
has been the number one issue, getting access to
the capital.

People are working. While they may be
working, you know, mid- to low-range annual
income jobs, the main issue has been their
credit. So if you all would be so kind as to
look at that piece and relaxing it, it would be
greatly appreciated. Thank you so very much.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very
much for your testimony. Appreciate it. Now I'd
like to call Roy Houseman.

MR. HOUSEMAN: Hello. My name is Roy
Houseman. I live in the Adams Morgan
neighborhood. And I wanted to come speak with you all a little bit today in regards to affordable housing and some of the concerns that I see in our neighborhood and also in the Petworth neighborhood as well.

Particularly, there's a number of items that I -- as a former elected official in Montana, we ran into affordable housing issues. All are unique, but they're very different here obviously.

And looking at the review of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluated Report here from 2014, this last year's report, there was a number of items that I find interesting and important to note for everyone to recognize is that when you're talking about the home sale price in the District of Columbia of $502,000 per home, it becomes really difficult for individuals making the median income to even afford a house.

How the District of Columbia government works with and utilizes the properties that it has currently and encourages affordable housing, I
believe needs to be reinvigorated a bit.

You look at on Quincy Street, for
example, D.C. owns property on probably the 500
block and it's sitting vacant next to another
vacant lot. And you have a $39 million overall
affordable housing budget through the various
development grants that you have. It's important
that the city utilize those funds in the maximum
way possible and encourage development of vacant
or on existing properties.

When I look at the performance
metrics, last year you're looking at 39 houses
that were developed, single family houses in the
low $30s, if I recall correctly. When we're
talking about houses being developed in the 30
range, every piece of property counts. So I
guess one key point there for us, for me, is to
see the D.C. government work more cooperatively
with your agency to develop the properties that
are sitting on idle land.

When you're looking at housing prices
in the $500,000 range, that's at the median. And
I guarantee you the Petworth area and the Adams Morgan neighborhood are definitely in that price range.

That goes along into more in the Adams Morgan neighborhood. If you look at the development that is going on between the new hotel that is being developed, there is no real place there for -- there hasn't been a lot of discussion about the affordability or affordable housing for the projects that are related over in our area.

Columbia Street, for example, you have where the Full 14 is on Columbia Street, there's about four or five vacant properties. Obviously, there's going to be some sort of development in the future, but it's difficult to know and/or be aware of how that's going to be done. Is there an ability or an opportunity to create affordable housing within those developments? Just as a resident's perspective, it's really difficult to see and find the methodologies on how the city is developing its affordable housing properties.
That would be my final constructive criticism for the agency was finding out about this forum was okay. I found it at Quality Coffee.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Where?

MR. HOUSEMAN: Quality Coffee on 7th Street. But getting the materials to actually kind of review your Consolidated Plan from your announcement was a little bit more difficult to look at -- you're looking at a five-year renewal plan and on your two-pager indicated just go to the website to review the previous five-year plan. But I spent at least a good 30, 45 minutes trying to find (a) your previous plan for the last 5 years and then (b) once I was able to find out one of your annual reports, I was able to call up the previous. So making that more accessible for people who are interested in it would be extremely helpful.

So I appreciate everything you guys do. You guys do amazing work and you have a lot of heavy issues to deal with. And thank you for
your time.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Houseman. I appreciate your comments very much. Is that written testimony you wanted to share?

MR. HOUSEMAN: No, this is your Consolidated Plan.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I see, yes.

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much, appreciate it.

Now I'd like to call up Bernetta Coles.

MS. B. COLES: Yes, good evening. My name is Bernetta Coles. I'm a rightful subject of legislation here in the District of Columbia. In my fact-finding, I find that this particular entity violates every contract between HUD and DHCD as it was purported to be carried out.

As a rightful subject of legislation here in the District of Columbia, I find that you have excluded that particular class to which I am a member. You state that the stakeholders, according to my understanding of a stakeholder,
like a gold rush, coming in and taking over a
spot to the exclusion of those who were here.
I find that the monies appropriated
for those of us who are the rightful subjects of
legislation have been disregarded and therefore
we are suffering far beyond what you are seeing
before you, people without homes, homelessness,
no jobs, children crying because their moms can't
be with them throughout the day, these type of
atrocities I find to be very menacing and to come
out of human beings because I wouldn't want to
say something that I don't have within me to
state that you are this or that because I can't
find that fact. But what I am finding is that
which comes out of that particular entity down
here in DHCD that if they're paying you all to do
things and you need a job, I can understand that.
But at some point, I would like you all to take
the time and say oh, keep on moving forward in
this atrocious activity that they have me in
because I've got to pay my mortgage and I'm going
to lose my house.
Everybody is suffering within the plan. I just want to know where can I get a copy of this full plan that you all have complied with because I was born here. I don't miss too much of nothing going on in this city. And I haven't seen the full plan according to the rule of the plan that we're supposed to see.

You all have really dodged around and kept this activity going on with a meeting here, a meeting there and that's not how it was written to be complied with so we've been hoodwinked. And these people don't know what I know.

And I want you to know that God has me and that I shall be coming to deal with you all accordingly because you all have caused us to suffer here. Just by chance that God knows, he has allowed me my 67 years to live here and people wondering how do you do so? And you all thought I was going to die, but ain't nothing sick about me.

And I shall be forthcoming because I already wrote to my testimony on the
environmental or plan that you all already violated. Your pretty little book according to the EPA already told you that book don't mean nothing. It looks pretty. But if it don't comply with the EPA at human violations and you all just keep on going forward.

How many more minutes, baby?

MS. SKOW: One more minute.

MS. B. COLES: I hope that through my endeavors that the plan in which I have -- my name is Bernetta Coles and I shall be forthcoming in this city and believe me, my stuff is tight. And I'd like to see if you're not complicit in it, then you don't go to jail. But if you're complicit in it, I want to see you go. Thank you all, very much.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very much, Ms. Coles. Appreciate your testimony very much.

MS. B. COLES: You're welcome.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I'd now like to call up Eugene Puryear, please.
MR. PURYEAR: Thank you very much. So for the record, my name is Eugene Puryear. I'm with the organization Justice First. And I really appreciate the opportunity to come here and testify. And I really just want to speak to one particular issue and how the plan is structured. From my perspective, when you look at the overall issue with one name problem, when looking at the last plan, my first thought was well, this all seems relatively unobjectionable. But the fact of the matter is is we know that federal funds, I think best case, will stay the same, will probably decrease and we know that the problem that we're facing is so significant, having lost 30,000 units since 2002. But at the same time, we're not even producing a fraction of what's necessary to keep up with the new market rate units that are coming online.

So what I would really like to see in the plan is I don't know what you call it, I don't know if it's advocacy, goals, wishes, hopes, dreams, I don't know, but something that
breaks down not just how you plan to use the
dollars that are appropriated in the general
sense, but for I think the public, I think the
lawmakers, I think for advocates, something of a
breakdown of what you could do in certain ways.
And I think being creative and I think the
problem with that is some of it is sort of
outside of the purview of DHCD, but from that
perspective, as those of us who are advocates, I
think it's our job to take the information we get
from you and apply it in a way that makes sense.
I mean, for example, when you look at
a budget it's shocking to me that for all of the
-- and I'm just going to be real with you,
gentrification projects that are all running
through DMPED. They're using all of this money
in general obligation bonds, some of them on
projects that even they say they don't even know
what they're going to do. But we have affordable
housing issues that we need to solve right away
and it's not often that you use a general
obligation bond in that kind of thing, but why
not?

I think we have to start asking questions like this and why it is that we have all these different things that are all affecting it? I mean why is one department dealing with affordable housing and yet another department is pushing for developments that are displacing people? It just doesn't make any sense.

And I think that at a certain point the question is is that individual departments I think have to start advocating in a way that makes it possible. I mean if a $100 million is creating a thousand units a year where we need tens of thousands of unit, I can come up and I can say and I do say that every chance I get to testify and the counsel accepts it and they don't accept it and they do what they do, they don't do what they do, but if it comes from the experts inside the government like hey, this is what we're trying to do, this is what you've given us the ability to do and if you do this, that, and the third we can do even more. I think that
would be a very powerful way to use this planning process.

And I think just to point out different things that are out there, the gentleman mentioned DOPA which I think is a fantastic idea, but when I think about that I also think about all the people who are being constructively evicted who don't have a chance to use TOPA even. And that's really just an issue of -- from my perspective, the fact that there's no clarification on demolitions and when you get permits, you give it to them only when you evict someone, move them out to demolish the place and then you let them sit there for three years.

Or on the flip side of that coin, I think there's so many other areas that are under served in the sense of how they're used. I mean, for example, someone mentioned vacants earlier. Obviously, you have a process to buy and to put vacants that are out there, but it was interesting, I was talking to your staff who is very knowledgeable about this issue. I found
that you are, in fact, by statute, limited in
terms of the use of eminent domain to only buy
unimproved land which is unbelievable to me.

And it seems like from what they told
me it was just a District law which we could
change. And I think if the government was
hearing that from you all, locally here, it would
make a difference. I know that redevelopment
agencies work that way. I don't know why DHCD
should be forced to work that way when there's so
many things and you know them and obviously have
a process to put them out there.

So I think having a section of the
report that speaks to these -- you may call them
aspirational needs, but I think helps leverage --
not leverage -- but reframe the conversation in a
way that makes sense. Because when I looked at
the last plan, all I could see is this all looks
really great, but at the end of the day it's all
going to be a band-aid. Even if they do
everything they say in here with the federal
resources and local resources combined, there's
no way that they can even come close to meeting the need and then people saying oh, well, the city didn't do anything to meet the need. So I think it's important to point this out in the front end so that that can be used and leveraged by people like myself and I think the people here, the residents, to then go to the Council and say well, look, this is what your own government is telling you you need and you refuse to meet it. And I think it's an important way to hold our elected officials responsible on all the affordable housing promises they make.

So once again, thank you. I will also try to submit written testimony in the period and look forward to hearing what everyone else has to say.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Puryear. Appreciate your testimony.

Now I'd like to call Connie Moore.

MS. MOORE: Give me a second. Thank you. Good evening. Thanks for giving me a moment to testify.
DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Turn it around.

Other end.

MS. MOORE: Other end?

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Yes.

MS. MOORE: Thank you. Thank you for letting me testify this evening. My name is Connie Moore. I am a native Washingtonian. I lived in Ward 8 three times. I lived in Ward 5 once. I graduated from a high school in Ward 5.

My thing is I worked since I was 16 years old under Marion Barry's Summer Youth Program. I'm now officially working three jobs, part-time, full-time, and PRN.

Affording housing is my concern because I was raised by a single mother that took care of me all her life, took care of me all my life. I have two senior parents. My father is older than my mother. My question is my father is in an affordable housing complex. My mom isn't. Now my mom has to come back and take care of me because of the simple fact that I'm of age. I have an element that they can't find a cure for
which is diabetes. And diabetes has mainly taken
over me, but I can still maintain work. But I'm
on the verge, like the young lady said, on the
verge of getting evicted, on the verge of can't
afford food.

How am I supposed to -- my mom has
taught me to do this, take care of self. I don't
want to have to go back and live with mom or dad.
I can't live with dad because dad is in a housing
project that family cannot stay with him, but
only one or two nights. With my mom, I can stay
every night.

I have an element that needs to be
taken care of and addressed. My representative
for Congress is everybody knows, Eleanor Holmes
Norton. She's fighting for equal opportunity for
housing. Okay, now where I live at, for one
apartment on the Maryland line of Southern Avenue
is $1,000, everything included. Where I live on
the next side, it's $865 a month paying gas and
electric.

So what should I do? Go without gas
and electric and food just to have a place to stay? That's just like having a person whose homeless with a place to stay.

Now I have a 21-year-old little sister with a 5-year-old little boy. Now my mom needs help. I am doing all I can to help her. That means if I have to give up my place, put my things in storage, just to help her raise somebody else.

Now three times in one ward, okay, Marion Barry was my council member in my ward, Ward 8. Harry Thomas, Sr. was my council member in Ward 5. Harry Thomas, Jr. was same place. Now Vincent Orange. See the history I have?

Now I'm here, I'm kind of advocating for everybody who is working hard with the young lady who has a child that just testified in front of you. If I can help her get over, that will be my blessing. With the senior here, like I said, I'm asking I need help now. I need help now. Can I get it?

This is the first time I ever
testified in front of anything, anything. And I
live in a beautiful ward. I live in a beautiful
ward, Ward 8. And we've been suffering for
years. Ward 5 has been suffering for years.
Nannie Helen Burroughs just got a new library.
We just got in Ward 8 a new library. But look
how long the years took to get this, this, and
this.

My little sister knows late day for
anything in the District of Columbia is what day?
Wednesday. I know that. Because I took her to
the library, 18th and Good Hope Road. And we did
homework many a day. I am a graduate of McKinley
Senior High School. I work on Columbia Road. I
work in -- we just built a new Walmart down on H
and New Jersey. You just bought one of my jobs.
I can't afford to go and live in that new -- over
top of that Walmart that you just built. You
just built another Walmart on South Dakota Avenue
that just opened up October 23rd, 26th, it hasn't
even been a month. I just went through and went
inside and it's beautiful. But can I afford to
live upon the street? No.

The cheapest place that I live in now, like I said it's $865. Parkland. The next one is Meadow Garden in Parkland. The next one is another one in Parkland. You just built a new gym over there. I keep up. I pay attention.

Barack Obama just gave Social Security $20 extra and then Uncle Sam is going to tax that. Gave them $19, what, last year? They taxed that. So how is my mother and father supposed to survive? I got one parent that works. One parent that doesn't. My mom still works. My dad doesn't. He don't get his Social Security until when? Next year. But I'm still trying to help them. So now they have to turn and help me. I am their only child. Their only. And their only child -- I've been hospitalized a couple of times. And I was almost evicted a couple times under William C. Smith.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I thank you very much, Ms. Moore. We appreciate your testimony very, very much.
MS. MOORE: Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you. Now I'd like to call up Maxine Nightingale.

MS. NIGHTINGALE: Good evening, Director Donaldson, staff, residents of the District of Columbia. I am an ANC Commissioner in Ward 7. A lot of the testimony that has been given this evening is the sentiments of many of the residents of Ward 7.

However, there are so many concerns with the houses that are blighted and abandoned properties. I certainly would like to make the recommendation that we try to find some funding that will provide grants for individuals that would like to buy those abandoned properties and fix them up at a minimum.

And I'm going to especially shed light on the word grant so that people can gather their financial sense of stability because the jobs aren't out there the way that it is told listening to this, in my area, in my community. There is blight and problems.
Another area of concern with all the building that they are doing in Washington, D.C. I have not seen, nor has it been brought to light housing, whether it is rental property, property for purchase, for those individuals with disabilities. That list is long and growing in Ward 7. And it's not handicap accessible. I think I see one of my associates back there.

And as a veteran, I have a terrible time trying to find housing, more or less, funding so that I could afford something -- just -- and it doesn't have to be exquisite. It doesn't have to be brand new. I just want a home for myself. I have a disability. I'm a veteran. I have a son with a disability and we can't find proper housing. And I'm one household of more than 14,000 that are looking and suffering day after day.

And then the other concern from constituents and my phone rings day and night, Director, and I felt compelled to speak to these individuals because they're within. They don't
make enough money for a new home or apartment and
they make too much on that fixed income every
month, so they're between a rock and a hard
place.

These are the concerns that as an ANC
Commissioner we hear day after day and remind
you, ladies and gentlemen, residents, we don't
get paid for this job. You have to have a love,
a compassion, for the city and we are their
voices.

So please, with any way that you can
find that funding so that with the suggested
programs that you do have here on this sheet, it
is my sincere desire for not only the residents
of Ward 7, but the residents of Washington, D.C.
that we will be able to implement these programs
successfully.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak
to all of you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Ms.
Nightingale for your testimony. Thank you very
much.
I'd now like to call up Paralee Massie Armstrong. And friend.

MS. ARMSTRONG: Hi. You can call me Lea.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Oh, Lea.

MS. ARMSTRONG: Yes. I just recently moved to the area in June. I got a job here. And I realized in my search even before I relocated from Florida that I could not afford an apartment here. I make decent money. I have a decent education. I have a master's degree, but I refuse to choose between affordability and safety for my daughter. I'm not going to decide whether I'm going to live in an apartment and be scared to walk her outside at night time and I'm not going to use more than 33 and a third percent of my residual income for housing.

I know a lot of people. I've read a lot of articles posted in The Washington Post about people who have to pay more than their fair share for rent. And it's just not fair, really, when you have kids or you have to take care of
family members.

I would like to live in an apartment where my grandmother can come visit me. I'm not asking for the best apartment in the world, but I want it to be nice. I want it to be in an environment for my daughter to feel safe.

I did mention 33 and a third percent for a reason because economists say that you should not use more than 33 and a third percent of your income for housing, but from what I've read here people are using 60 percent of their income just to pay for rent, not to mention gas and electric and food.

Just a holistic approach here, if you provide more affordable housing that takes a lot of the burden off of the Federal Government to help feed people. If people can use more of their own money because they can afford rent, maybe they'll have money left over to buy food and they won't have to apply for food stamps or cash assistance.

For the Federal Government who helps
people commute to work because these people don't
even have an option to live in the city, you
wouldn't have to give them commuter benefits, you
know. They could live five blocks from their job
instead of giving $130 a month. You could only
give me $60.

So I think instead of just looking at
it from a perspective of how can we help people
find affordable housing, it's how can you help
people in general, like just live meaningful
lives where they're comfortable and satisfied and
can provide something to their community. That's
it.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you so
much. I appreciate your testimony very much.
Thank you.

Now I'd like to ask is there anybody
else who would like to testify at this time?
Please step forward and sign up with Abe and then
I will call your names. Thank you. I'd first
like to call Ms. Gwen Gilmore, please. Good
evening.
MS. GILMORE: I'd like to make note of a housing program.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Speak right into the mic.

MS. GILMORE: There's a housing program available maybe 15 or less years ago. Marion Barry started it. It was called the Tenant Assistant Program. And it ran along with the Section 8 and other housing supplemental programs, but it was for working parents and working families and single parents or whomever -- it was according to your income. And it supplemented your rent so that you wouldn't spend more than 25, 30 percent of your salary and the remaining part of that was paid by this program.

So like the young woman was saying, she still paid only that 33 percent, but she was able to live in affordable housing or a house that she felt that she could manage on her income. It was called the Tenant Assistance Program. I don't know why it was discontinued. But it helped me. It helped me a lot while I was
raising my daughter. That's what I wanted to --
and I'm also a resident of Ward 7, so I'm here to
support Ward 7 ANC. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you so much
for your testimony, Ms. Gilmore. I appreciate
that.

I now would like to call up Mr. John
Cheeks. Good evening.

MR. CHEEKS: Good evening. I wanted
to come here to address some major issues that
were happening in the city. My name is John
Cheeks. I'm the Executive Director of PASS. We
are a protection and a government safety
organization. I'm also a committee chairman of
the D.C. Reparations and Restitution Act that we
are currently trying to complete the initiative
that we'll be introducing to the Board of
Elections, so that we can end this housing
nightmare that most of the descendants of
American slaves who are having in this city.

And it's a shame of the rent
disparities, the job -- lacking of jobs, just
people being removed such as Barry Farms, such as Lincoln Heights, such as many other communities that I've been speaking to people and they're very frustrated and knowing that any day it could happen.

We originally had some sort of plan to convert your Housing Authority into a private corporation and remove the government from controlling the people which is a major, major problem right now.

I just have to ask is there anyone in this room that would be okay with reparations? If I say you had to vote for it, in reparations, you would have housing, you would have job security, veterans. You would have 48 months of deferred payments on your mortgage note. You would have the lowest interest rate. Your credit would not matter being a descendant of an American slave. And D.C. has 300 years of it. We must enforce this because we're going to have a problem with our national security. We're going to have a problem with all kinds of other
issues. So I know that you are very much aware.

I can only speak for the people who I run into. This isn't a political speech. This is just a speech that I am introducing myself.

You will hear about the D.C. Reparations Act coming up by the end of the month. Okay? Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr. Cheeks. Appreciate your testimony. Thank you so much.

I'll ask again if there's anyone else who would like to testify? If you've not had a chance yet or you don't have to have a prepared statement. You simply can come forward. But this is the last opportunity this evening. Could you please sign up on the sheet here, please. Thank you.

I hope I pronounce it -- Deborah, what's your last name?

MS. HALL: H-A-L-L.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Oh, Hall, H-A-L-L. Thank you. Deborah Hall is going to testify
now. Thank you.

MS. HALL: My name is Deborah Hall.

I live in Ward 4. But I want to talk about Ward 7 and 8. Ward 7 and 8 seems to be having the most despair in the city. One thing of crime and a lot of the crime is due to the lack of employment, lack of resources, knowing that any minute that certain areas could be gone. And when you put that kind of stress on people, what do you think you're going to get? You're not going to have happy people. You're going to get the crime that you're getting in that ward. And a lot of the crime that you see on the media anyway, I don't believe all of it anyway, okay? There's no gun manufacturers in Ward 7 or 8.

There are no drugs manufactured in Ward 7 and 8. So a lot of it is slanted anyway. But I'll get into that at another time. But we need to see is a way for people to be able to afford to live in the city that I know a lot of people love.

I'm not originally from Washington, D.C. But I have friends that have lived here all
their life, third, fourth, fifth generation. And for them to have to put themselves in an environment where you say they have to leave a city that they love to have affordable housing is unfair.

As we know from 1975, this city was predominantly black and now that the turn -- when you look at Florida Avenue, there's a big sign of a white lady that says she has arrived. That is the most prejudiced sign I have ever seen in a city. This sign has to be what, 14, 15 feet and on the building near the CVS, near Howard University, this blond haired, blue eyed lady says she has arrived. If that is not a mental sign that should drive a bunch of people loony because when I ride past it every day, it gets me angry. It's facing a sign towards Howard University, a predominantly black university with this blond haired lady saying aha, guess what? You guys are going to be gone. That's what the sign says mentally, you know?

So D.C. needs to do something to hold
on to these residents that have worked hard, that
have built this city. When you look at the
planning of who built this city, brick by brick,
it won't look like anybody of you guys on this
board right here, I can tell you that.

So I just wanted to say that we have
to keep these residents who want to live in the
city, give them a fair chance and a safe
environment to live. And that's what I have to
say. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Ms.
Hall, very much. Appreciate your testimony. I
want to thank you all for coming tonight. This
concludes our public meetings on the Consolidated
Plan. If you have not taken our survey yet,
please take a moment to fill it out. Jennifer
has a tablet with her and you can do it
immediately right here. It will take maybe ten
minutes, but it's really worthwhile to get your
points of view and to talk about some specific
programs like you've mentioned tonight. So I
encourage you to do that. Jennifer will be here
and can work with you on that.

I thank you all for your contributions. We will be compiling all of the comments from the survey, meetings and hearings and we hope to release the plan for public comment in early 2016 which again will be another opportunity for your input, your feedback in terms of the overall Consolidated Plan for DHCD.

Thank you all again and have a good evening.

Please take the survey. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 7:48 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing FY 2016-2020
Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan

Before: DC DHCD

Date: 11-04-15

Place: Washington, DC

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

[Signature]
Court Reporter

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