Department of Housing and Community Development Ward 5 Check-In Meeting
May 14, 2015

Dunbar High School
101 N Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

This report details key information regarding the May 14, 2015 Check-In Meeting for Ward 5. The DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) hosted this event.

Event Overview

Starting April 8, 2015, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) held eight community Check-In events throughout the District of Columbia. These public events were intended to update residents, business owners, and community stakeholders on DHCD's current and future projects, and attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts and concerns with DHCD. There were eight sessions, one in each ward. This report concerns the event in Ward 5, which was the fourth for this series.

The DHCD team promoted this event in several ways, including flyers, posters, social media, and postal mailings. DHCD Director Polly Donaldson gave remarks detailing interagency collaboration, new DHCD initiatives, and general agency updates. DCHD staff briefed attendees on current and future projects in their community. Participants then engaged in facilitated discussions on specific issue areas. Multiple representatives from DHCD were present to provide context, present on their particular program areas or areas of responsibility, answer questions, and connect with community leaders.

Participant survey results can be found in Appendix A. The scribes' records and raw conversation notes can be found in Appendix B. Audience feedback notes in the Discussion Analysis section are edited for clarity, but generally follow the trajectory of emerging themes from the conversation.

Discussion Analysis

Following an informational session with DHCD leadership and staff, event attendees gathered in small groups to discuss issues facing their community. The groups generated significant feedback on the issues they saw in Ward 5 and the solutions they believe DHCD should pursue. Three themes emerged between discussion groups: affordability, development and public engagement, and livability. These themes are reflected in the following summary.

Affordability

Concerns about affordability and preserving affordable housing units was a prevalent discussion theme among event participants. Attendees asked several questions about the programs that maintain affordable housing in the District, including Inclusionary Zoning (IZ), Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs), rent control, and affordable housing covenants. Participants also asked about the effectiveness of affordable housing programs and whether the District can ever be truly "affordable" for all residents.

Audience Feedback
- What is the definition of "affordable"?
- Brookland's development has used the IZ program, but it has not really yielded much.
- Brookland Manor – 500 units of affordable housing could change based on developers' will/wishes. What can DHCD do to help?
- Is affordable housing in the city even possible? In particular, can you even buy a single family home that isn't IZ?

- What are the ground rules of rent control?
- What are the housing programs/options for special needs populations?
- Housing Production Trust Fund: What's the public involvement? What's the upfront involvement? How does it work?
- What's the plan for preserving affordable units?

Development and Public Engagement

Participants raised questions about the process of converting industrial-use land and developing previously unused land into commercial and residential development. There were questions raised about making specific development projects competitive. Several participants expressed the desire for additional opportunities to engage in the community decision-making process, including learning about development projects before they are brought to the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC).

Audience Feedback
- What has the District Government done to develop previously industrial-use land?
- How to make new land competitive for developers? How does the District decide what to develop?
- There's not enough opportunity for community input from ANCs, civic organizations, or individuals on the front end of development.
- ANC input should be available early, before public hearings. We need to have the public engaged in this process.

Livability

The third theme that emerged was the quality-of-life for Ward 5 residents. Concerns were expressed about traffic congestion and retaining community and art space. How can a community retain its appeal when more and more people move into the area?

Audience Feedback
- What is missing in schools: arts and arts space. Is there a way to connect affordable housing and arts space? We need to provide for different aspects of the community.
- Traffic congestion hurts residents and their health.
- Are there any prevention tactics for people who buy and flip homes?
- How can we utilize spaces for community building (e.g. arts, collaboration, mixed use)?

Action Items

DHCD will employ feedback from residents and stakeholders to guide its policy priority areas and communication procedures to better serve the community through a dialogue and process that benefits everyone in the District. There were several lessons learned from this event that could serve upcoming events and future work with DC residents:

1. As with previous events, participants at this event had numerous questions about programs that protect and create affordable housing units. DHCD could include additional information about these programs in its presentations, with particular emphasis on the Inclusionary Zoning program and the impact of Mayor Muriel Bowser's additional funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund.

2. DHCD could provide participants at future meetings and events with information about how development decisions are made in the District. Participants had several questions about the decision-making process and how the public could get involved.

Appendix A: Survey Results

Participants were surveyed about their priorities and how they heard about the event. Those results are below.

How familiar are you with DHCD services and programs?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Very familiar	1	11%
Familiar	2	22%
Somewhat Familiar	5	55%
Not Familiar	1	11%

Note: 66% percent of respondents were not familiar or only somewhat familiar with DHCD's services and programs, slightly better than the results from previous meetings. There is a need for increased community engagement and education, likely throughout the city.

Most to least important priorities in your community (1=Most important; 6=Least important)		
Issue	**Responses**	**Average Ranking**
Redeveloping or restoring abandoned buildings	4,1,6,1,6,6,4	4
Access to storefront façade improvement and small business technical assistance	1,6,5,4,5,5,2	4
Access to first-time home-buyer incentives	1,4,5,4,3,3,2	3.14
Housing that accommodates the needs of the elderly	1,5,6,5,1,6,3	3.85
Access to affordable housing for purchase (single-family and multi-family)	1,5,6,5,1,6,3	3.85
Access to affordable rental housing	1,2,1,1,3,4,1	1.86

How do you prefer to hear about news, events, and other opportunities from DHCD?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Postal Mail	1	8.3%
E-mail	7	58.3%
DHCD's Website	1	8.3%
In-person meetings	1	8.3%
Social media	2	16.66%

How did you hear about the community meeting?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Email	4	37%
A friend or relative	1	9%
Social media	1	9%
Flyer or poster	2	18%
Other	3	27%

What is your preferred social media network?		
Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Responses**
Facebook	2	33%
Twitter	2	33%
Instagram	1	16.6%
Other	1	16.6%

Appendix B: Notes

The information below is a compilation of scribe and facilitator raw notes from the large and small group discussions, organized by topic. Information and format for each entry varies as scribes recorded information in different styles, and some table participants requested certain information not be recorded.

Home Ownership
- Are there any prevention tactics against people who buy and flip homes?

Community Development
- There's not enough opportunity for community input from ANCs, civic organizations, or individuals on the front end of development.

- ANC input should be available early, before public hearings. Have them engaged in this process.

- What commercial development is coming in Brentwood?

- Traffic concerns and its impact on residents. Specifically, there was concern expressed about 4th Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW and 10th Street and Rhode Island Avenue NW.

- Traffic pressure points and how it relates to desirable community. Bad traffic can hurt a community.

- How to utilize spaces for community building (e.g. arts, collaboration, mixed use)?

Housing Development
- Where is affordable housing for single-family homes in Ward 5?

- Housing Production Trust Fund: What is the public involvement? What is the upfront involvement?

- Concerns about Brookland and its development projects.

- What is the plan for preserving affordable units?

Tenants
- Build on land near Rhode Island Avenue Cemetery: What type of financing is available?

- What are the housing programs/options for special needs populations?

- Condo conversion procedures?

- What is the plan to deal with vacant properties?

- Grants for current homeowners to do repairs/improvements when they do not meet income requirements? Is there a way to get grants in exchange for special needs use or affordable housing covenants?

- What is the difference between Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and Affordable Dwelling Units (ADU) programs? Can a single family home be an IZ unit?

- Is affordable housing in the city even possible? In particular, can you even buy a single-family home that is not IZ?

- The majority of the city cannot afford limited options.

- How to make new land competitive against developers?

- Who determines how long the resale restriction applies to affordable housing covenants?

- What are the ground rules of rent control? Those should be publicized.

- Question about the March Madness event for the 16th block of North Capitol. When does this event/project drop?

- Brookland Manor – 500 units of affordable housing could change based on developers' will/wishes. What can DHCD do to help in general?

- Recent NPR/WAMU story about poor quality home-flipping.[1] Does DHCD help prevent these scams? What can we do to fight these?

- What is missing in schools: arts and arts space. Is there a way to connect affordable housing and arts space? We need to provide for different aspects of the community.

- Single-family rehab program: people applied and seniors specifically applied. However, people have had problems accessing/finding and engaging certified contractors or local contractors that would qualify. The senior symposium was asked about. What is DHCD doing to open this

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[1] WAMU. *Flipped Off: In D.C.'s Thriving Market For Renovated Homes, It's Buyer Beware.* May 2015. http://wamu.org/projects/house-flipping/#/part1

program up?

- Brookland's development has used the IZ program – a tool for affordable housing – but it hasn't really yielded much. What else can we do?

- Repurposing industrial land. What has the administration done to commit strategies and resources to move this forward?

- What is the definition of "affordable"?