



**Department of Housing and Community Development
Ward 6 Check-In Meeting
April 30, 2015**

**Southeast Neighborhood Library
403 7th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003**

This report details key information regarding the April 30, 2015 Check-In Meeting for Ward 6. 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 6, which was the third event of the series.

The DHCD team promoted this event in several ways, including flyers, posters, social media, and postal mailings. DHCD Director Polly Donaldson gave remarks to detail interagency collaboration, new DHCD initiatives, and general agency updates. DHCD staff briefed attendees on current and future projects in their community. District of Columbia Council Member Charles Allen (Ward 6) spoke about the economic and geographic importance of Ward 6 and the development happening in the ward. Participants were then invited to share their thoughts on “Community Development,” “Homeownership,” and “Tenants” in small groups. Multiple representatives from DHCD were present at the meeting 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 6 and the solutions they believe DHCD should pursue. Two main themes emerged between discussion groups: housing affordability and inclusiveness and livability. These themes are reflected in the following summary.

Housing Affordability

A common theme was concern about the affordability of housing and whether the District would remain accessible for residents of all incomes. Attendees expressed concern about the limited supply of affordable housing units and long waiting lists. Participants perceived new development as targeting wealthy residents while excluding low-income residents, and they expressed concern over this. Questions were also raised about the impact of Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and whether IZ exemptions in the downtown area allowed developers to exclude low-income tenants.

Audience Feedback:

- What's the timeline for spending the additional funds in the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF)? When will low-income residents benefit from the additional funds?
- What are the options to help someone who is stuck on the waiting list for an affordable housing unit?
- Does DHCD administer all of DC's affordable housing vouchers?
- What are the specifics of the low-income tax credit and how that can be applied to help low-income tenants and homebuyers?
- What is the process for homeowners who want to resell their affordable homes?
- Is the Area Median Income (AMI) level for the District set too high? Right now it's based on the Baltimore-Washington area median income – would it make sense to have to apply solely to District income levels?
- What's the impact of Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) on affordable housing? Do IZ exemptions, particularly in the downtown area, hurt the supply of affordable housing units?
- Is the District's 8-10% IZ requirement enough?
- How are AMI restrictions enforced?
- Questions about the HPTF and why the infusion of additional funds is needed.

Inclusiveness and Livability

Another theme that emerged was the nature of DC's communities and neighborhoods and the impact development will have. Participants asked questions about density and neighborhood amenities, such as recreation centers.

Audience Feedback

- How do you preserve neighborhood diversity?
- How can we keep seniors in their houses?
- We shouldn't cluster low-income people into one particular neighborhood. It hurts the neighborhood, and it hurts those people.

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. Quality-of-life and neighborhood character issues were a major concern at this event, and DHCD could include information about these issues at future events and presentations. Although some of these issues may be outside of DHCD's authority, they are on the community's mind. DHCD could provide participants with contact information for city



agencies that work on these issues, including traffic, youth programs, and commercial development.

2. DHCD could include additional information about the Inclusionary Zoning program and the Housing Production Trust Fund in its presentations. Participants had numerous questions about these programs and their impact on affordable housing supply in the District. Of particular interest to participants were exemptions to Inclusionary Zoning requirements and the effect on neighborhoods in Ward 6.

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	2	15%
Familiar	0	0%
Somewhat Familiar	7	54%
Not Familiar	4	31%

Note: 85 percent of respondents were not familiar or only somewhat familiar with DHCD's services and programs, similar to 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	5, 1, 1, 2, 1, 6, 1, 3	2.5
Access to storefront façade improvement and small business technical assistance	6, 6, 2, 4, 2, 5, 3, 4	4
Access to first-time home-buyer incentives	4, 4, 3, 5, 4, 4, 2, 6, 4	4
Housing that accommodates the needs of the elderly	2, 2, 5, 2, 2, 6, 3, 6, 2, 3	3.3
Access to affordable housing for purchase (single-family and multi-family)	3, 3, 4, 5, 1, 5, 2, 1, 4, 5, 1	3.0
Access to affordable rental housing	1, 5, 6, 1, 3, 3, 1, 5, 1, 2	2.8

How do you prefer to hear about news, events, and other opportunities from DHCD?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Postal Mail	3	14%
E-mail	7	33.3%
DHCD's Website	4	19%
In-person meetings	5	23.7%
Social media	2	10%

How did you hear about the community meeting?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Email	3	21.4%
A friend or relative	5	36%
Social media	1	7%
Flyer or poster	2	14.2%
Other	1 - <i>Informer</i> newspaper 1 - Community newspaper 1 – Was at the library and came downstairs	21.4%

What is your preferred social media network?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Facebook	3	25%
Twitter	5	41.6%
Instagram	3	25%
Other	1	8.4%

Appendix B: Notes

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

Home Ownership

- There was concern about the timeliness of processing single-family projects. In particular, how quickly the District Government responds to emergency needs and the needs of citizens with special needs.
- Affordable housing and making homeownership affordable should be the District's top priorities.
- Increase in Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) funding levels.
- Process of applying to programs: we need a new application form.
- Praise from an attendee about DHCD's single-family program, as she purchased a home through that program.

Community Development

- What do we mean by development? Is it only what was in the video [shown at that evening's event]?
- Discussion of the video shown at the event:
 - Don't like it. It wasn't representative of DC residents.
 - Not all DC residents are about getting rich.
 - How we represent development needs to reflect all people, including low-income people.
- Grants for community building/support needed.
- We need parks, schools, and institutions. We don't need fast food and loud music.
- Eastern Branch Boys and Girls Club – turn it back into a Boys and Girls Club.
- The RFP for the Eastern Branch Boys and Girls Club only allowed for 100 low-income units and there was only one bidder. Where is the funding coming from?
- Make sure we take a comprehensive view of “community” and “development.”



- Need much better planning, not just at the city level but also at these sites.
- Development is not all about density.
- Development needs to be about building community.
- Zoning changes need to take into account the needs of low-income people. This includes parking for cars, parks, etc.
- McMillan Park: It's a tradeoff between density for community. "Density rules" in DC today, and that hurts community.

Tenants

- CSX rail: There needs to be better communication with residents.
 - CSX is not doing the repairs they should be doing or have committed to do.
 - There are concerns about safety precautions taken by CSX.
- Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs): There are so many sub-chapters and requirements, it's not clear to the public what they are eligible for, so people don't take advantage of this program.