



**Department of Housing and Community Development
Ward 7 Check-In Meeting
April 14, 2015**

**Marshall Heights Community Development Organization
3939 Benning Rd NE
Washington, DC 20019**

This report details key information regarding the April 14, 2015 Check-In Meeting for Ward 7. 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 7, which was the second in 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 detailing interagency collaboration, new DHCD initiatives, and general agency updates. DHCD 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, event attendees broke into small groups to discuss issues facing their community. The groups generated significant feedback on the issues they saw in Ward 7 and the solutions they believe DHCD should pursue. Three themes emerged between discussion groups: housing affordability, questions about the decision-making process, and policy engagement.

Housing Affordability

Ward 7 has significant public and assisted housing properties, and event participants expressed concern about the future of affordable housing in the Ward. Attendees indicated confusion about accessing affordable housing programs as well as discontent with new development that seems to target wealthy renters and homebuyers to the exclusion of others.

Audience Feedback:

- Housing the homeless should be the first priority, and that should be accompanied by supportive services.
- We are concerned about residents being priced out of their homes.
- What happens to the families living at DC General if it's closed?
- Housing stock made available through DHCD is not sufficient. Why only make apartments available for rent? Why not single-family homes?
- Concentration of poverty in one area hurts people.

Questions About the Decision-Making Process

Another theme that emerged was confusion about the District Government's process for determining development and affordable housing policies. Attendees had many questions about how decisions are made and asked several questions about how the District Government works with developers.

Audience Feedback:

- We need a Ward 7 task force to weigh in on community development and affordable housing decisions.
- What does DHCD consider when it develops mixed-income and affordable housing units? What is expected of developers? What's expected of homeowners associations?
- How will the \$100 million allocated by Mayor Bowser to the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) be spent?

Policy Engagement

Residents had several substantive questions about housing and income support policies. This indicates significant engagement with District services but also demonstrates the need for additional communication and engagement with recipients of these services.

Audience Feedback:

- There were several questions about the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) and the Healthy Homes program. Are those programs connected?
- Certain programs take too long to access or have burdensome eligibility requirements, both of which prevent people from getting the help they need.

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. A major concern of participants at this event was protecting long-time residents who may be forced out of their homes by increased rents or property taxes. DHCD should include information in its presentations about District programs that protect seniors and long-time residents, such as the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), property tax relief, and other assistance programs.
2. DHCD could include information in its presentations about plans for creating and protecting affordable housing units. Several questions were asked about this process, and participants expressed concern about the impact of the closure of the DC General shelter closing on affordable housing demand. DHCD could also include specific information about the impact



of Mayor Muriel Bowser’s commitment of an additional \$50 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF).



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	6	24%
Familiar	2	8%
Somewhat Familiar	10	40%
Not Familiar	7	28%

Note: 78 percent of respondents were not familiar or only somewhat familiar with DHCD's services and programs, similar to the results from the Ward 8 meeting. 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	1,6,4,1,5,1,6,1,3,5,6,1,5,4,5,5,1,2	3.44
Access to storefront façade improvement and small business technical assistance	1,6,3,6,6,5,6,2,5,6,2,4,6,6,2,6,4,1	4.28
Access to first-time home-buyer incentives	1,1,1,3,4,6,5,4,3,2,3,3,2,3,4,5,2,1,1	2.84
Housing that accommodates the needs of the elderly	1,1,1,3,2,4,3,1,4,3,1,5,3,2,3,6,6,2	2.83
Access to affordable housing for purchase (single-family and multi-family)	1,1,1,3,1,1,5,1,4,4,2,1,1,3,4,3,1,2	2.17
Access to affordable rental housing	1,1,1,3,5,6,1,2,2,6,4,6,1,4,6,2,6,1	3.22

How do you prefer to hear about news, events, and other opportunities from DHCD?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Postal Mail	4	10%
E-mail	19	46%
DHCD's Website	3	7%
In-person meetings	8	20%
Social media	7	17%



How did you hear about the community meeting?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Email	14	56%
A friend or relative	3	12%
Social media	2	8%
Flyer or poster	0	0%
Other	6	24%

What is your preferred social media network?		
Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Facebook	6	40%
Twitter	4	27%
Instagram	3	20%
Other	2	13%

Appendix B: Notes

The information below is a compilation of scribe and facilitator raw notes from each small-group discussion, organized by the 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

- Can you explain the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA)?
- I am interested in Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs). How do I get access to these units? The process is confusing and everywhere I turn, I have no idea how to obtain one even though I qualify. The ADUs are not affordable.
- What are the details regarding the article in the Washington Post about the single-family rehab program?¹
- What are the details on the Healthy Homes program?
- Why are homeowners associations (HOAs) not managed or overseen by the District?

Community Development

- Issues with Park 7. Starts as an affordable housing project and then turned south. There needs to be a task force for and by Ward 7 residents that focuses on these issues.
- How do we let developers take properties and then develop them at levels above normal incomes?

Housing Development

- When developing properties, does DHCD take into consideration the mix of income in that area? Bringing in development of affordable housing units at certain area median income (AMI) levels does not do anything for economic development. Developers simply use the funds to get the development done without taking into account the quality of the community.
- Is any of the \$100 million in Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) funding going to those on waiting lists for rental supplements and housing?

¹ This article can be found at www.washingtonpost.com/local/red-tape-in-districts-home-rehab-program-leaves-seniors-in-limbo/2015/04/12/638e588c-de0f-11e4-be40-566e2653afe5_story.html



- What exactly are the names and sizes of the projects in Ward 7?
- I am homeless and have been waiting on the list since 2004. Why am I still waiting?
- Concerns were raised of residents being priced out of their neighborhoods.
- DC General was brought up and concerns regarding the developers and if homeless families would be displaced.
- What are the details regarding the program to help seniors? There are too many requirements and the application seems way too stringent.
- Why are there are only rental apartments available through DHCD? Why not single-family homes?

Tenants

- Can you explain the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA)?