

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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2016-2020 FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE
2016 PROPOSED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT HEARING

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WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 19, 2015

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The Needs Assessment Hearing convened
in the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library,
901 G Street NW, Washington, D.C., at 6:00 p.m.,
Polly Donaldson, Director, presiding.

PRESENT

POLLY DONALDSON, Director

ALLISON LADD, Chief of Staff

VONDA ORDERS, Chief Program Officer

JENNIFER SKOW

C O N T E N T S

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 6:09 p.m.

3 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: All right. Good
4 evening, everyone.

5 My name is Polly Donaldson. I am
6 Director of the Department of Housing and
7 Community Development, and I'd like to welcome
8 you all here to the Martin Luther King Jr.
9 Library here in the District of Columbia.

10 This is our second public hearing,
11 DHCD's second public hearing on the development
12 of the Consolidated Plan, which is our five-year
13 vision for local programming and for spending of
14 four federal grant programs, including the
15 Community Development Block Grant, known as CDBG;
16 the Home Investment Partnerships, or the Home
17 Program; the Emergency Solutions Grant, known as
18 the ESG Program; and the Housing Opportunities
19 for Persons with AIDS, known as the HOPWA
20 Program.

21 As the steward of these federal funds,
22 DHCD is charged with developing a policy strategy

1 for how we spend those resources every five
2 years.

3 For me, this plan will not only be a
4 federal requirement, but a map, a roadmap for
5 DHCD's work ahead promoting the administration's
6 comprehensive vision of an affordable, livable,
7 growing Washington D.C.

8 In order for us to create this guiding
9 document, our process requires extensive data
10 collection and analysis to paint a picture about
11 market trends in the District, and it also
12 requires community engagement to hear your
13 stories and testimony about how you think we
14 should spend these funds.

15 We want the plan to be an accurate
16 representation of the city's needs, and your
17 voice will serve as the basis for our policy,
18 goals, and decision-making.

19 Now I am going to turn it over to
20 Jennifer Skow, who is the DHCD staffer who is
21 managing the Consolidated Plan process, and
22 she'll share a few more details with you about

1 tonight's hearing.

2 Jennifer?

3 MS. SKOW: Hi. My name is Jennifer
4 Skow. I recently joined DHCD, and I am
5 coordinating the fiscal year 2016 through 2020
6 Consolidated Plan for DHCD.

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

10 The first resource, Community
11 Development Block Grant, CDBG Program funds,
12 local activities that revitalize neighborhoods,
13 promote economic development, and improve
14 community facilities, infrastructure, and
15 services in low- to moderate-income communities.

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

20 The second resource, the Home
21 Investment Partnerships Program, supports
22 building, buying, and/or rehabilitating

1 affordable housing for rent or homeownership or
2 providing direct rental assistance to low-income
3 residents.

4 The third resource, the Emergency
5 Solutions Grant, ESG Program, provides funding
6 for programs and services supporting homeless
7 individuals and families.

8 And the final resource, Housing
9 Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, makes grants
10 to local communities, states, and nonprofit
11 organizations for projects that benefit low-
12 income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their
13 families.

14 Now, I'd like to spend a couple of
15 minutes discussing the process.

16 The informal ward-by-ward check-ins
17 which drew hundreds of community members over the
18 last few months provided a strong foundation for
19 community dialogue with DHCD, but tonight's
20 hearings -- tonight's needs assessment hearings
21 is a second opportunity in a series of formal
22 community meetings to testify about your

1 community's needs for inclusion into the fiscal
2 year 2016 through 2020 Consolidated Plan before
3 DHCD begins drafting the document and policy
4 priorities.

5 For community members who wish to view
6 our current Consolidated Plan for fiscal years
7 2011 through 2015, we have printed hard copies
8 located at the sign-in table, and it's also
9 available on DHCD's website for your review.

10 We have made some amendments to our
11 Citizen Participation Plan as well. That is a
12 document that informs how DHCD will engage with
13 the public throughout the consolidating planning
14 process before adopting this plan. DHCD has made
15 this document available on our website and in
16 hard copy at the sign-in table for public
17 commenting. Residents will have until September
18 12th to provide any feedback to DHCD about how we
19 will engage with residents during this
20 consolidated planning process and how the
21 community can play a part in shaping priorities.

22 Moving on to today's hearing, for

1 anyone wishing to testify who hasn't already
2 signed in, please see Abe over here at this table
3 to sign in. You can do so at any point.

4 And what we will do is go through the
5 list of witnesses who have already requested to
6 testify first, and then we'll start with the new
7 list that Abe will manage over at this table.

8 For residents and organizations who do
9 not wish to speak tonight or are not in
10 attendance but would like to submit testimony as
11 part of our first round of public hearings, they
12 can submit written comment for the record. These
13 individuals can do so by mail or email by close
14 of business Friday, August 21st, 2015.

15 Written statements should be mailed to
16 our offices, and make them to Director Polly
17 Donaldson with "Five Year Consolidated Plan
18 Comments" in the subject line.

19 Residents may also email comments, and
20 please direct those electronic testimony to
21 dhcd.events@dc.gov, with a subject line "Five
22 Year Consolidated Plan Comments."

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

3 At this moment, I'd like to transition
4 back to Director Donaldson to begin the hearing.
5 I just want to thank you all for coming tonight.
6 I look forward to hearing your contributions this
7 evening and in the months ahead.

8 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you,
9 Jennifer. I appreciate that very much.

10 I also want to introduce my colleagues
11 here up on the -- the podium: Allison Ladd is
12 Chief of Staff at the Department of Housing and
13 Community Development, and Vonda Orders is the
14 Chief Program Officer and oversees all of the HUD
15 programs that were just described by Jennifer.

16 So we are here to hear the testimony
17 of our witnesses, and I'll begin by calling up
18 the first witness on the list, Marla Bilonick,
19 who is Executive Director of the Latino Economic
20 Development Corporation. I wasn't sure if I saw
21 her.

22 We will also call later if she appears

1 as well.

2 Great. Well then I will move to our
3 second witness, who is Buwa Binitie with Dante's
4 Partners, and I believe he is here. Yes, he is.
5 Hello.

6 And congratulations -- yes -- also, I
7 understand you've just been elected Chair of the
8 Board of the Housing Finance Agency for the
9 District, so that will be -- congratulations to
10 you on that.

11 You have five minutes. All witnesses
12 will have five minutes for their testimony, and
13 Abe will be holding up signs for -- for the --
14 with the time limit, okay? Thank you.

15 MR. BINITIE: First of all, hello?
16 Yes.

17 First of all, I'd like to thank you
18 very much for the audience, Director Donaldson,
19 but more importantly, give thanks to all of your
20 great staff that you have at DHCD. I am
21 commending you all for all the great work that
22 you're doing in serving folks of moderate means.

1 And you know, I am here today. My
2 name is Buwa Binitie, the Managing Principle of
3 Dante's Partners.

4 As many of you know, my firm
5 specializes in the development and financing of
6 luxury, affordable, and world-class housing
7 throughout the District, and for nearly a decade,
8 my team and I have worked tirelessly to create
9 high-quality housing opportunities for hard-
10 working individuals and families as well as
11 seniors here in the District.

12 I am here today to provide comments
13 regarding the 2016 to 2020 Five Year Consolidated
14 Plan for the District of Columbia and offer
15 recommendations for improvements that DHCD can
16 implement such that firms such as Dante's
17 Partners can continue to create affordable
18 housing opportunities in the District.

19 Many of these comments speak
20 specifically to the recent NOFA that was issued
21 in late July and to restrictions and limitations
22 that I along with my peers and other development

1 companies have noted and feel create arduous
2 barriers to the production of affordable and
3 world-class housing.

4 The first recommendation that I would
5 like to put on record is some sort of preference
6 points similar to those for nonprofits. However,
7 for SB-led development teams in the District as a
8 way to encourage and further production and
9 capacity of affordable housing by both nonprofit
10 and for-profit developers, particularly small
11 local businesses that contribute to DC's tax
12 bases, and the allocation of preference points
13 should benefit both sides in order to create a
14 balanced playing field or -- or be eliminated
15 altogether.

16 The second preference point that we
17 would like to see incorporated is special
18 accommodations made for newly constructed senior
19 housing developments, and this can either be done
20 by setting aside dollars or tax credits
21 allocations specifically for senior housing
22 deals.

1 While the industry recognizes the need
2 for the production of affordable housing units to
3 meet very low income levels, there is equally a
4 need for higher-income housing options in the 60
5 percent of AMI range, especially when we are
6 looking in Ward 7 and 8 areas where the community
7 is clearly speaking to diversity in -- in the
8 community.

9 Regrettably, not allowing 60 percent
10 of AMI housing further exacerbates the gap, which
11 I feel is not a good leverage of -- of District
12 dollars.

13 And to quickly summarize, because I
14 know time is against me and everyone knows I like
15 to talk a lot, so --

16 PARTICIPANT: You're fine on time.

17 MR. BINITIE: -- to summarize, I think
18 the other major point that I would like to raise
19 is in addition to production of housing units,
20 there is a need for community development
21 facilities as well in the District of Columbia
22 that we strongly implore DHCD to allocate

1 dedicated funds for non-housing community
2 development facilities as well in the District of
3 Columbia.

4 The other points and recommendations
5 are here for you to browse, but I just wanted to
6 again thank you for the audience, and hopefully,
7 we'll see some of these items incorporated going
8 forward.

9 Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very
11 much for your testimony. Appreciate it very
12 much.

13 Next I would like to call up Ron
14 Swanda, who is a volunteer advocate for seniors
15 in Washington, D.C.

16 MR. SWANDA: Director Donaldson,
17 hello, and your staff. I am going to try to be
18 brief and quick.

19 First of all, let me start by saying
20 that I am -- my name is Ron Swanda. I am a
21 volunteer advocate for seniors in D.C., as you
22 said, and in that regard, I am on the Executive

1 Council for AARP in D.C. I am also a member of
2 the D.C. Commission on Aging. And my remarks
3 today I think reflect well what those
4 organizations both support.

5 First of all, my remarks are going to
6 be surrounding mainly by the Age-Friendly D.C.
7 Plan, which I know you're familiar with. I want
8 it to be on the record that the Commission on
9 Aging and AARP in D.C. support strongly the
10 elements of that plan that would go to housing.
11 They support lots of other things, too.

12 And I want to note that there are many
13 elements that are not necessarily directly
14 related to housing required for DHCD to become a
15 partner with other government organizations to
16 foster a good environment.

17 First of all, AARP D.C. is especially
18 ready to commit resources, energy, knowledge, to
19 two things that are already in the plan. That
20 doesn't mean they don't support everything in the
21 plan, especially the housing plan, but the two
22 things are the inclusionary zoning recommendation

1 in the Age-Friendly Plan, which talks about
2 buying back inclusionary zoning housing. I know
3 that's a very complex issue, but AARP is ready to
4 stand and try to get that accomplished.

5 We are also very interested in the
6 SFRRP and the Housing Improvement -- Housing for
7 Handicap-Accessible Improvement Program, HAIP,
8 and again, willing to pledge its resources and
9 energy for others.

10 The D.C. Commission on Aging is
11 commissioned by the Mayor to advise the Mayor and
12 City Council and the public about issues related
13 to seniors. That is chaired by Commissioner
14 Romain Thomas. I am the vice chair of that
15 organization.

16 I can tell you that the entire Age-
17 Friendly D.C. Plan has been constantly reviewed,
18 and we have been involved in developing that
19 entire plan, and we are especially pleased with
20 the hard work that went into development of the
21 sections of domain, as they call it, on housing.
22 It's really well done, and I think most of it

1 will get achieved sometime soon, I hope.

2 One thing that is probably not in that
3 plan that probably should be is to do a housing
4 needs assessment, and I think that would be good
5 if it was in the plan, but whether it's in the
6 plan or not, it needs to happen.

7 We need to have a projection of how
8 many people we're going to have living in the
9 District of Columbia, how many will need
10 affordable housing, and right now that is very
11 hard to come across. There are elements here,
12 there, and everywhere.

13 And finally, I want to say that senior
14 housing is especially critical because it
15 requires services. If you have a senior housing
16 that is affordable without services, it is
17 probably not going to be very useful.

18 And that is especially critical for
19 people with HIV and AIDS, the HOPWA program. The
20 reason is people who don't have a place to live
21 that's stable often go off their medications, and
22 with the HIV and AIDS, we all know that if

1 they're not on medications, they can still pass
2 that disease around to other people in the city.

3 So there is not only an interest in
4 keeping people in houses, there's a public health
5 interest in having that program be robust.

6 And I think some of the
7 recommendations that were made to the Age-
8 Friendly D.C. Task Force that did not necessarily
9 end up in the plan might be a good, useful place
10 to start.

11 Finally, I want to note that
12 unfortunately, D.C. in a federal study was found
13 to have the highest proportion of people over the
14 age of 65 who are disabled who live alone.

15 I'll say that again: people over the
16 age of 65 who live alone and are disabled, we're
17 the highest in the country.

18 I think that is unacceptable, and that
19 leads to social isolation, which I think is
20 especially severe in the -- in the D.C.
21 community, and especially severe in the LGBT
22 community because they are also ostracized

1 otherwise.

2 So that concludes my testimony. Thank
3 you.

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

6 Thank you. Do you have a written
7 version to submit?

8 (No audible response.)

9 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Okay, not to
10 worry. Great.

11 Next witness is Elizabeth Falcon, who
12 is Director of Housing Advocacy at the Coalition
13 for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development.

14 MS. FALCON: Hi. Thank you.

15 Good evening, Director Donaldson and
16 members of the Department of Housing and
17 Community Development, and thank you for the
18 opportunity to testify.

19 My name is Elizabeth Falcon, and I'm
20 the Director of Housing Advocacy at the Coalition
21 for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development.

22 The more than 140 members of the

1 Coalition fund, finance, produce, preserve, and
2 provide affordable housing and related services
3 as well as neighborhood-based economic
4 development in the District of Columbia.

5 In addition, we run the Housing For
6 All campaign, through which we engage over 400
7 members to advocate for issues around housing
8 affordability in the District.

9 CNHED and our members consider
10 ourselves valuable partners to DHCD in supporting
11 the effective use of federal and local funds to
12 meet our shared goals of creating and preserving
13 opportunities for affordable housing and economic
14 development and revitalizing underserved
15 communities in the District.

16 CNHED looks forward to working with
17 DHCD to improve outcomes for providers and
18 residents. These are our recommendations for the
19 2016-2020 Five Year Consolidated Plan for the
20 District of Columbia.

21 I will submit additional materials
22 electronically.

1 Set clear expectations for use of
2 federal and local funds: CNHED members are active
3 partners with DHCD to further local and national
4 goals of providing high-quality affordable
5 housing, effective services for renters and home
6 buyers, and technical assistance to start-up and
7 existing small and microbusinesses in our
8 community.

9 Transparency and efficiency in the use
10 of federal and local funds is critical for
11 organizations to partner with DHCD effectively.
12 DHCD should provide clear expectations regarding
13 eligible and preferred uses of federal and local
14 funds to facilitate consistency in the field and
15 allow partners to plan accordingly.

16 In addition, DHCD should solicit and
17 incorporate feedback from the public, including
18 developers and community-based organizations,
19 before and after making changes to ensure that
20 they work for everyone.

21 CNHED believes in a continuum -- that
22 a continuum of housing is needed to meet the wide

1 variety of housing needs in our city and
2 encourages DHCD to continue to invest in support
3 of housing, permanent support of housing,
4 affordable rental housing, co-ops, and ownership
5 opportunities.

6 We applaud the increased transparency
7 and ease in accessing DHCD's pipelines of
8 affordable housing developments through the
9 development of an online portal.

10 The District has some of the best
11 tools in the nation to create and preserve
12 affordability. We encourage DHCD to improve the
13 tools in our toolkit through the creation of the
14 new Acquisition Loan Program and the
15 implementation of regulations for the District
16 Opportunity to Purchase Act.

17 DHCD should move to efficiently
18 finalize these processes while ensuring that
19 clear opportunities for feedback are made
20 available.

21 DHCD and the affordable housing
22 community are facing a new federal mandate with

1 the HUD rule on affirmatively furthering fair
2 housing.

3 DHCD should clearly articulate to
4 housing providers and other partners how this
5 rule will impact DHCD investments and policies
6 going forward.

7 Ensure timely execution of contracts
8 and payments to community-based organizations:
9 many organizations who contract with DHCD have
10 delayed payments of contracts at the beginning of
11 the District's fiscal year. These delays force
12 providers, many of which are nonprofits, to
13 engage in short-term borrowing, which puts an
14 undue burden on the organizations and threatens
15 their financial stability.

16 DHCD should ensure timely payments of
17 all federal and local contracts with providers.

18 The Community Development Block Grant
19 Program provides a wide variety of opportunities
20 for the District Government to serve the local
21 community.

22 Currently, DHCD does not allow the use

1 of CDBG funds to build the capacity of small
2 businesses providing -- of small business
3 technical assistance providers.

4 We encourage DHCD to reconsider and
5 allow these federal funds to be used to
6 strengthen and standardize the delivery of
7 existing technical assistance service providing
8 community to meet the shared goals of the Agency
9 and the field.

10 Create and implement a preservation
11 plan: the District of Columbia recognizes that to
12 maintain an increased affordable housing options
13 for residents, it must preserve existing
14 affordable housing in addition to creating more
15 affordable units.

16 Thus, DHCD should strive to preserve
17 wherever possible and practicable the
18 availability and sustainability of its existing
19 affordable housing stock. We encourage DHCD and
20 the District Government as a whole to set goals
21 that preserve existing District and federally
22 subsidized housing, including public housing;

1 prevent the displacements of residents; and other
2 goals.

3 Improve tools to allow District
4 residents to transition to homeownership: CNHED
5 and our members are pleased to partner with DHCD
6 to support opportunities for District residents
7 to transition to homeownership. We encourage
8 DHCD to move quickly to improve the Home Purchase
9 Assistance Program and to more efficiently serve
10 new home buyers and increase funding available.

11 In addition, we see a great
12 opportunity to develop new homeowners among the
13 residents currently renting in Wards 7 and 8 who
14 risk displacement if costs rise by continuing the
15 East of the River Homeownership Campaign.

16 Continue to strengthen interagency
17 cooperation: CNHED applauds the improvements DHCD
18 has made to coordinate among District agencies.
19 The consolidated request for proposals and notice
20 of funding availability have streamlined
21 processes and expectations for the development of
22 support of housing.

1 We appreciate the ambition of the many
2 District agencies participating in the
3 Interagency Council on Homelessness and the
4 development of an aggressive strategic plan which
5 includes District-wide goals to meet the needs of
6 D.C.'s homeless residents.

7 We recognized DHCD's critical role in
8 supporting the production of affordable housing
9 and permanent support of housing to meet these
10 goals.

11 In addition, stronger coordination
12 will be needed to effectively preserve affordable
13 housing. In the area of small business support,
14 CNHED strongly encourages DHCD to work
15 collaboratively with other DC agencies that
16 interface with small businesses such as the
17 Department of Small and Local Business
18 Development, DSLBD, and DMPED's Great Streets
19 Initiative.

20 Interagency coordination is
21 desperately needed to ensure small businesses
22 have access to resources and services available.

1 Thank you for the opportunity to
2 testify.

3 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very
4 much, thank you.

5 And now I would like to call up George
6 Jones, who is the Chief Executive Officer of
7 Bread for the City.

8 Mr. Jones, welcome.

9 MR. JONES: Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. JONES: Thank you, Director
13 Donaldson and DHCD staff, for allowing me to
14 testify again.

15 As I've mentioned in the past, Bread
16 for the City is a nonprofit that provides food,
17 clothing, medical, legal, and social services to
18 residents living with low incomes here in
19 Washington, D.C. We have been doing that for
20 over 40 years. We have a center here in
21 Northwest D.C. and a center over on Good Hope
22 Road in Southeast D.C.

1 And I don't have a lot to add to my
2 previous testimony. I want to reiterate sort of,
3 and I have now for the record written, what are
4 the two major recommendations from Bread for the
5 City listed in my -- my testimony.

6 I did want to give a little bit of
7 context for the sort of housing recommendation
8 and the CDBG recommendations, at least from the
9 Bread for the City perspective.

10 A couple of things I just wanted to
11 point out, and then some of this I am sure that
12 you -- you and the panel there understand, but I
13 think it's important to understand the context
14 under which this next five year strategic
15 planning process sort of is taking place.

16 In a lot of ways, D.C. is a very
17 different place than it was in 1970, when Bread
18 for the City was originally founded, in the mid-
19 70s.

20 And, you know, there's always been
21 haves and have-nots in Washington, D.C., but it's
22 arguable that the extreme is greater than it's

1 ever been, at least over the last 40 years.

2 I was talking to a -- a volunteer the
3 other day, and he talked about the fact that some
4 of his friends here in D.C. complained in a -- in
5 almost a braggadocio way that they were paying
6 \$4,000 a month for rent here in Washington, D.C.,
7 and it's sort of almost a badge of honor.

8 Well, the people who come through
9 Bread for the City every day, and we see probably
10 2,000 households every month in this facility in
11 Northwest alone, struggle to pay even \$700 for
12 rent in Washington, D.C.

13 Not only that, they struggle to find
14 housing that they can pay \$700 a month for rent.
15 These are people whose average household income
16 is about \$7,000 a year.

17 So we've got these extremes. It's
18 playing itself out in Washington, D.C., and it is
19 in that context that Bread for the City's first
20 recommendation is that not only do we applaud the
21 DHCD and the District in focusing on the need for
22 affordable housing, but we -- we really sort of

1 encourage DHCD and the administration to really
2 prioritize affordable housing at the 30 percent
3 of median income or less.

4 I mean, certainly for the people that
5 we serve, the thousands that we serve every
6 month, it is that type of housing, it is that --
7 that quality of housing at that income level
8 that's really sorely needed.

9 Secondly, and then in a related
10 matter, one of the reasons that -- one of the
11 things that Bread for the City does almost on a
12 daily basis is direct people not only to sort of
13 housing resources but to the other resources that
14 really are kind of a part of the fabric that
15 allows somebody to stay housed and to be -- to
16 live in a sort of dignified way, and that is to
17 make sure people have access to health care, to
18 make sure they have access to food they need, to
19 make sure they have access to clothing, to legal
20 services.

21 That is what Bread provides, this
22 holistic net of services, actually largely in a

1 way that is designed to help people who are
2 struggling to stay in their houses stay stable,
3 to sort of supplement the incomes or the lack of
4 incomes that they have.

5 So we really encourage -- one of the
6 things that Bread is looking to do, and I know
7 other groups are doing, is developing facilities
8 that can provide some of those support services.
9 Bread is looking to build a new facility in
10 Southeast D.C., a 25,000-square-foot facility
11 that we're hoping to build in the next two years
12 to replace the 9,000-square-foot facility we have
13 right now.

14 And not only would that facility
15 continue to provide food, clothing, medical --
16 food, clothing, legal services, social services,
17 but we're looking to add not only a medical
18 practice, but a dental care and wellness space
19 along with expanding our pre-employment services.

20 And I say all that stuff, I sort of
21 take time to sort of emphasize those various
22 elements that we provide in our centers to say

1 that there is this comprehensive array of things
2 that people can access when there are facilities
3 available and when organizations like Bread for
4 the City are supported by DHCD.

5 Two points I want to make as I close
6 my remarks.

7 One of the things to remember that I
8 think is important to lift up is that so often
9 the people who live at the margins, who are
10 living on low incomes, are people of color in
11 Washington, D.C.

12 Not only is there a real disparity
13 sort of economically, but there is a sort of
14 racial divide that I think is really a risky
15 thing.

16 I mean, we have seen across the
17 country incidents in Baltimore and Missouri and
18 Los Angeles, and I think underlying a lot of the
19 sort of civil unrest in those incidents isn't
20 just the sort of police shootings that sort of
21 were the headlines, but the socioeconomic
22 disparities that those communities experience.

1 And I think the District is -- it
2 still has time to sort of ward off some of that,
3 but I am not sure we have a lot of time to keep
4 from having those kinds of things play themselves
5 out in Washington, D.C.

6 The last thing I want to say is that
7 Bread for the City also has a five year plan we
8 just completed, and our plan is not only to
9 create this sort of expanded facility and
10 expanded access for folks, but to continue to
11 advocate for affordable housing for those folks
12 who fall at the -- 30 percent of the median and
13 below.

14 So thank you again for allowing me to
15 testify, and I look forward to working with you
16 in the coming years.

17 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Mr.
18 Jones, very much appreciate your testimony again
19 and the -- the detail that you've given us.
20 Thank you very much.

21 I'd like to call up now, if I could,
22 Schyla Pondexter-Moore, who is an organizer with

1 the Public Housing Campaign known as Empower D.C.

2 Good evening.

3 MS. PONDEXTER-MOORE: Good evening.

4 How are you?

5 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Great.

6 MS. PONDEXTER-MOORE: Hello everyone.

7 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you.

8 MS. PONDEXTER-MOORE: I am going to
9 make this quick.

10 Okay. My name is Schyla Pondexter-
11 Moore. I am the organizer for the Public Housing
12 Campaign at Empower D.C., and I am also a public
13 housing resident. I lived in D.C. my whole life,
14 born and raised here.

15 So in your five year plan, we need to
16 see DHCD assure that Barry Farms residents are
17 not displaced from their home and community under
18 the planned redevelopment.

19 DHCD needs to publicly or privately or
20 both put pressure on DCHA, DMPED, and the Mayor
21 to revisit the Barry Farms redevelopment plans to
22 include, one, redevelopment in place so that

1 residents are not displaced; two, ownership for
2 Barry Farms residents; and three, maintenance and
3 repairs now while families are there, because
4 they are not doing any repairs, they are forcing
5 them to live in slum conditions.

6 DHCD also needs to publish the regs to
7 DOPA, the District Opportunity to Purchase Act.

8 DHCD needs to enact DOPA to benefit
9 current Barry Farms residents and future public
10 housing residents. The District has a tool to
11 purchase Barry Farms and preserve the
12 affordability, and it needs to be enacted.

13 DHCD needs to advise HUD to not
14 approve the application DCHA has submitted to HUD
15 a few weeks ago to demolish and dispose of Barry
16 Farms until the redevelopment plans are
17 revisited, to include redevelopment in place,
18 ownership for Barry Farms residents, and
19 maintenance and repair of units now, while
20 families still live there.

21 And lastly, DHCD needs to assure that
22 the memorandum of understanding between DHCD and

1 DCHA is completed with input from public housing
2 residents that work very hard to get that
3 \$988,000 in local funding for maintenance in
4 public housing.

5 DHCD needs to assure that the funding
6 materializes and is put to immediate meaningful
7 use.

8 DHCD needs to assure the funding is
9 not reprogrammed or snatched away from us like so
10 often happens in the budget for low-income
11 people.

12 That's it. Thank you.

13 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you for
14 your testimony.

15 I think that we're now into the list
16 of those who had interest in testifying. We have
17 a revised list. Thank you.

18 And I'd like to call up Jackie Ward-
19 Richardson from the Greater Washington Urban
20 League, and I have your testimony here.

21 Again, I want to encourage anybody who
22 would like to testify, if you came in late, we

1 are very open to that. Please go sign up at the
2 table here with Abe, and he will take care of
3 making sure that you're on the -- that you're
4 next after Ms. Richardson.

5 Yes, please, thank you, good evening.

6 MS. WARD-RICHARDSON: Thank you,
7 Director Donaldson and all DHCD staff.

8 My name is Jacquelyne Ward-Richardson,
9 and I am the Senior Director of Housing and
10 Community Development for the Greater Washington
11 Urban League.

12 The League's Housing and Community
13 Development Division administers key programs
14 funded by the District of Columbia. Our largest
15 program is DHCD's Home Purchase Assistant
16 Program.

17 During our administration of the Home
18 Purchase Assistance Program, we have helped over
19 7,000 families to realize the dream of
20 homeownership.

21 In fiscal 2014, we facilitated 208
22 loans for homeownership. The total loan dollars

1 exceeded \$6.5 million.

2 The majority of our clients purchased
3 in Ward 7 and Ward 8. However, D.C. wards
4 received -- all D.C. wards received HPAP home
5 buyers.

6 Over \$4.2 million in HPAP funding,
7 however, went to Wards 7 and 8.

8 Our HPAP clients are low- to moderate-
9 income residents of the District of Columbia.
10 The average client earns approximately \$56,000
11 and purchases a home for about \$240,000.

12 The average HPAP loan was \$28,200.
13 Ward 5 had the highest average loan amount,
14 however, at \$35,100.

15 We are grateful to the D.C. Department
16 of Housing and Community Development for allowing
17 us to serve the community through this program.
18 However, in recent years, as cited above, the
19 majority of new homeowners helped through the
20 HPAP were located in Wards 7 and 8, east of the
21 river, where homes are more affordable for the
22 clients we serve.

1 We would propose that the Five Year
2 Consolidated Plan include a target program that
3 provides up to \$80,000 to higher-income HPAP
4 clients to allow them to purchase homes
5 throughout the District.

6 Recent years have been very difficult
7 for prospective home buyers. The insecurity of
8 job and housing markets has resulted in many
9 persons not taking steps towards homeownership.

10 However, the D.C. market has seen an
11 upturn in the housing market, with increasing
12 property values and qualified first-time home
13 buyers.

14 This is an excellent time for families
15 to purchase in the city. However, the
16 skyrocketing prices for home purchasing is making
17 the dream of homeownership in the District
18 unrequited for clients we serve.

19 If the District is going to be the
20 city for all residents, we need to make the dream
21 available for everyone.

22 Millions of dollars are pumped into

1 the local economy when people buy homes, and our
2 local governments receive the benefits of
3 property and transfer taxes.

4 HPAP is one of the largest programs of
5 its kind operating in the country. I believe the
6 way this structure where clients can choose their
7 lenders and realtors, speed of service delivery,
8 and single source for funds is a national model.

9 However, with the increasing age of
10 properties in the District, there is a need to
11 consider allowing HPAP recipients to purchase
12 homes with a rehabilitation loan.

13 This would alleviate some of the
14 burdens for sellers to repair property
15 deficiencies and increase the housing stock
16 available for our clients.

17 The League is proud to be DHCD's
18 provider of choice for the administration of the
19 HPAP. Additionally, we are proud to serve the
20 needs of the citizens of the District of
21 Columbia.

22 We have served the citizens of

1 greatest need for over 75 years and are grateful
2 for the opportunity to reach even more.

3 Thank you.

4 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very
5 much for your testimony this evening, thank you.

6 And I believe we have one additional
7 witness, am I right? Okay, great.

8 Yes, I'd like to call up Christine
9 Brooks-Cropper, who is President of the D.C.
10 Fashion Foundation and also a current small
11 business technical assistance provider with --
12 funded by DHCD, is that correct?

13 MS. BROOKS-CROPPER: Correct.

14 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Yes, okay, great

15 --

16 MS. BROOKS-CROPPER: Thank you, thank
17 you for having me.

18 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Welcome, good
19 evening, thank you.

20 MS. BROOKS-CROPPER: Thank you, thank
21 you.

22 And I want to start by saying I see

1 Director Lamont Lee. He has been an excellent
2 advocate of small business technical assistance,
3 a great resource, leader, institutional memory,
4 just everything, he is the best. So I want to
5 acknowledge him as well as being here.

6 I don't have any written testimony.
7 Myrna is the chair of our small business TA
8 working group with the Coalition for Nonprofit
9 Housing and Economic Development, and I was
10 hearing all the testimony was housing, housing,
11 housing. I feel I need to step up and say a
12 little something in regards to small business
13 technical assistance.

14 So one, continue to support it because
15 that is the community development aspect of D.C.
16 housing and community development is the small
17 business technical assistance providers.

18 It is about 12 of us, if I stand
19 corrected, and we are working very hard in the
20 entire city to make sure that our emerging
21 commercial corridors get revitalized; that
22 entrepreneurial training happens; that small

1 business technical assistance and development
2 happens with regards to start-ups, staying in
3 place, maintaining these businesses.

4 But more importantly, too, because we
5 all have been charged with additional technical
6 assistance requests since the Great Streets money
7 has come out, we already do our job currently
8 with regards to DHCD, but with DMPED, because
9 we're on the Great Streets list as a service
10 provider, and we're there to assist, possibly
11 maybe look at funding the current providers, a
12 little more funding, because like for myself, I
13 provide all of the small business TA for the
14 creative economy community, which I'm sure you
15 know that term is kind of going out there like
16 wildfire.

17 So that means that most of your
18 emerging corridors, as well as your main
19 corridors like H Street that you see Northwest is
20 developing like crazy, is turning into very cool
21 kids hot spots, and start-ups are coming into
22 those communities.

1 Those creative type of businesses,
2 whether restaurants, whether fashion boutiques,
3 whether music, TV, and film, tech companies, or
4 creative economy, are coming in. I get all of
5 those types of requests.

6 So with like for example the funding
7 that I receive, I am able to serve a good number.
8 However, I end up serving 100 or more people.

9 So not so much saying I am here to
10 advocate to get more money into my organization,
11 I am saying to advocate to get more money to
12 business providers like myself that provide
13 resources and that kind of small business TA to
14 those creative type of nonprofits or small
15 business TA providers and welcome them with open
16 eyes and open arms because I know definitely when
17 I started my fashion business program in 2010, I
18 started through the NIF grant, and if you know,
19 that was a neighborhood investment fund grand
20 through property taxes.

21 And it was business, and it was kind
22 of like a fight to get them to understand that I

1 am small business TA as well.

2 When you come into a neighborhood and
3 you get all this fabulous housing, what do you
4 want as far as to go out and go into your
5 neighborhood? You want to go to restaurants to
6 eat. You want to go shopping. That is my
7 community.

8 So at the end of the day, we are also
9 community development and small business TA
10 providers as well.

11 So I am here to state as far as I
12 understand housing and affordable housing is very
13 important because actually my husband is an
14 affordable housing developer -- he used to work
15 for D.C. Housing Finance Agency and Wesley
16 Housing Development Corporation -- but also too
17 community development in commercial corridors to
18 get -- make sure those businesses that stay --
19 that really define the community, stay there.

20 And it is organizations like myself
21 and those other small business TA providers that
22 provide that resource to those businesses to get

1 those tools to stay in that community.

2 And I will definitely say a lot of my
3 requests are not just writing a winning business
4 plan or getting capital, but most of the requests
5 are marketing.

6 Marketing is huge, and I know that
7 DHCD has a marketing department, and we need to
8 get the message out that DHCD is -- is maybe put
9 more in that you're not just housing, because
10 it's a little confusion to the community, you're
11 also community development.

12 So marketing campaigns on the part of
13 getting that message that you are community
14 development out there through DHCD, but also
15 helping the small business TA providers to
16 possibly have more marketing funding or bringing
17 in more creative marketing or marketing SBTA
18 providers to do social digital media type of
19 campaigns towards because a lot of these emerging
20 commercial corridors like Rhode Island Avenue NE
21 down near 20th Street and, you know, 3rd Street
22 over there in Blair, in Takoma Park area, those

1 are residential kind of commercial corridors that
2 people don't know about.

3 How are we going to get people over to
4 really shop and get into those emerging corridors
5 to really utilize the services that are over
6 there?

7 The only way we can really do it is
8 use those type of tools, so more money into
9 marketing as well.

10 So thank you for your time and also
11 listening to my feedback. Thank you.

12 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, thank
13 you very much for your testimony.

14 And just we want to hear from all who
15 are involved in housing and community
16 development, and so recognize that as well.

17 Are there any other additional
18 witnesses in the room who would like to testify
19 in person?

20 (No audible response.)

21 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: And if not, do
22 note, please, as Jennifer has said, you can

1 submit comments, questions -- testimony, other
2 thoughts you want to share by email, in writing,
3 by -- by regular mail --

4 MS. SKOW: By Friday, August 21st.

5 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: -- and that is by
6 this Friday, though, so we really do encourage
7 you to take what thoughts are in your head right
8 now, write them down, and give them to us. We
9 really would love to -- love to have that.

10 Obviously, all witnesses also, though,
11 we have a record of your testimony from
12 recording, so we will be able to use that
13 testimony as well.

14 I now want to turn it back to Jennifer
15 for closing remarks. Thank you.

16 MS. SKOW: Yes.

17 I -- wow. I just wanted to say thank
18 you all for those comments, and also just a
19 little bit about a key piece in our process.

20 Our plan is due to the Department of
21 Housing and Urban Development by August 16th of
22 next year, 2016, and so as a result, we are

1 planning additional opportunities to both
2 formally testify in a second round of public
3 hearings in the fall, and also informally share
4 your thoughts with us, including an online
5 engagement survey.

6 Information about all these
7 opportunities and more engagement opportunities
8 is forthcoming.

9 In the meantime, though, feel free to
10 engage with us. Contact me, contact anyone else
11 at DHCD about it, or you can also interact with
12 our social media. We have a Facebook account,
13 Instagram, Twitter, and we've also created a
14 hashtag, #dhcdconplan, C-O-N P-L-A-N.

15 And again, just thank you all for
16 coming tonight, and I look forward to hearing
17 your thoughts over the next few months. Thanks.

18 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you. Good
19 evening now. Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, the hearing went off the
21 record at 6:53 p.m.)
22

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript


In the matter of: Needs Assessment Hearing

Before: DC DHCD

Date: 08-19-15

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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