

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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PUBLIC HEARING  
FY 2016-2020 CONSOLIDATED PLAN ANNUAL ACTION  
PLAN

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WEDNESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 4, 2015

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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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Welcome and Opening Remarks	
Polly Donaldson, Director. . . . .	3
Opening Statement	
Jennifer Skow. . . . .	4
Testimony of Witnesses	
Scott Sanders, Joseph's House. . . . .	.10
Miranda Paris. . . . .	.17
Yvette Kidd. . . . .	.18
Walda Yon, Executive Director, Latino Economic Development Corporation . . . . .	.20
Philip Kennedy, Tenant Organizing Program Manager, Latino Economic Development Center . . . . .	.23
F.R. Coles . . . . .	.28
Roy Houseman . . . . .	.28
Bernetta Coles . . . . .	.33
Eugene Puryear, Justice First. . . . .	.37
Connie Moore . . . . .	.42
Maxine Nightingale . . . . .	.48
Paralee Massey Armstrong . . . . .	.51
Gwen Gilmore . . . . .	.54
John Cheeks, Executive Director, PASS. . . . .	.55
Deborah Hall . . . . .	.57
Adjourn. . . . .	.61

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

6:17 p.m.

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

1 local resources as well. The plan touches on  
2 housing, homelessness, special needs housing, and  
3 non-housing community development activities.

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

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

16 Jennifer?

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

21 I want to take a moment to briefly  
22 describe the four federal resources available as

1 well as an overview of our process.

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

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

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

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

22           And then the final resource, the

1 Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS,  
2 HOPWA Program, makes grants to local communities,  
3 states, and nonprofit organizations for projects  
4 that benefit low-income persons living with  
5 HIV/AIDS and their families.

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

15 And we also launched an online survey.  
16 Some of you have already taken it tonight where  
17 we're asking folks to note issue areas important  
18 to them. All of this, in addition to tonight's  
19 hearing provides DHCD the perspectives from a  
20 wide range of stakeholders in the District before  
21 the Agency begins drafting the document and  
22 policy priorities.

1                   Moving on to today's hearing, for  
2 anybody who has not signed up to testify, but  
3 would like to, please see Abe over here at this  
4 table to sign up. He'll take down your name and  
5 we'll call you after we have called up all the  
6 witnesses who have signed up thus far.

7                   For residents and organizations who do  
8 wish to speak tonight or are not in attendance,  
9 but would like to submit testimony as part of our  
10 last public hearing, they can submit written  
11 comments to the record. These individuals can do  
12 so by mail or email by close of business,  
13 Wednesday, November 18th. Written statements  
14 should be mailed to our offices to Director Polly  
15 Donaldson with Five Year Consolidated Plan  
16 Comments in the subject line. Residents may also  
17 email comments. Please direct those electronic  
18 testimony to dhcd.events@dc.gov with a subject  
19 line of Five Year Consolidation Plan Comments.  
20 All of this information is printed on a handout  
21 at the sign-in table.

22                   Also at the sign-in table are a few

1       copies of our previous Consolidated Plan is you  
2       wanted to see what this kind of a document looks  
3       like. Please don't take this document outside of  
4       the room, but feel free to peruse it during the  
5       hearing and afterwards as you want.

6                   DIRECTOR DONALDSON: It's also on our  
7       website.

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

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

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

20                   Just so you know in terms of process  
21       and I know I'll be talking about this a little  
22       bit later, the Draft Plan will be available for



1 further public comment and as part of the public  
2 record that we hope will be early in 2016 or  
3 actually maybe towards spring of 2016. But there  
4 will be additional opportunities. This is not  
5 your last opportunity to offer comment or  
6 thoughts, but we really need to hear your  
7 thoughts in order to shape the plan and the  
8 document. It is meant to be reflective of the  
9 community's needs and of the community's desires  
10 of how to address those needs. So I want to  
11 start off with that as a premise.

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

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

1 House.

2 Thank you. Hi.

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

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

16 As I mentioned, I'm with Joseph's  
17 House. We provide housing and nurturing care for  
18 homeless men and women with advanced and in-stage  
19 HIV disease, as well as terminal cancer. And  
20 we've received HOPWA funding from 1996 through  
21 September of this past year and now we receive  
22 D.C. appropriated funds for our housing services.

1 I also serve as a mayoral appointee on the Ryan  
2 White Planning Council of D.C.

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

19 And if you're not familiar, a  
20 suppressed viral load is important, obviously for  
21 the health of the individual, but it's really  
22 important to the community as well because when a

1 person's viral load is suppressed, it's basically  
2 impossible or very unlikely that they can  
3 transmit HIV. So by getting the community viral  
4 load down, we lower the HIV transmission rates.

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

20 According to the DHCDOH data, people  
21 living with HIV who receive housing assistance  
22 through HOPWA are much more likely than any

1 other group to be engaged in medical care and  
2 they're much more likely to achieve viral load  
3 suppression than other groups of people living  
4 with HIV in D.C. So it's something that HOPWA  
5 can really be proud of.

6 Of those who are diagnosed between  
7 2009 and 2013, so that pool of people, 62 percent  
8 were engaged in medical care in 2014. Compare  
9 that to HOPWA in the same year, 93 percent of  
10 people who have HOPWA services were engaged in  
11 medical care. So 31 percent are more likely to  
12 be in medical care if you're getting AIDS housing  
13 support, already ahead of the 2020 goal. So  
14 that's a pretty astounding place to be.

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

1 percent.

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

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

15 The bad news, as you probably know, is  
16 that D.C.'s annual HOPWA award is going down.  
17 Since 2011, the HOPWA award has decreased by 21  
18 percent; 21 percent at a time when the number of  
19 diagnosed people living with HIV in the District  
20 is increasing by about 500 people a year. And  
21 the award is decreasing primarily because we're  
22 doing a great job of keeping people more well.

1           The formula that HUD uses for awarding  
2 HOPWA dollars is based on full-blown AIDS cases,  
3 not all diagnosed HIV cases. So in comparison to  
4 a lot of their places, we're keeping people well.  
5 They're not progressing to AIDS. So with HOPWA  
6 being flat funded by the feds, we're doing a  
7 better job, so we have less, fewer numbers, so  
8 we're getting less money. And so ironically, the  
9 very progress we're making in reducing AIDS  
10 diagnosis is now threatening one of the core  
11 elements in helping people stay well which is our  
12 HOPWA mandate. And we need more housing, not  
13 less as I know you can appreciate.

14           Of the more than 6,600 D.C. residents  
15 who get services through Ryan White, 1 out of  
16 every 3 were not in stable, permanent housing in  
17 2004 according to DOH. So in a state of more  
18 than 16,000 people living with HIV, there are a  
19 1,000 who have safe, affordable, stable housing.  
20 And the HOPWA program services about 500.

21           We strongly believe that the District  
22 must have a bigger portfolio of AIDS housing

1 initiatives in order to meet our goal and the  
2 mayor's goal of 90-90-90-50.

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

21 Many struggle with stigma and shame of  
22 HIV still. They struggle with mental illness,



1 substance abuse, poverty, illiteracy,  
2 incarceration. And to meet the 90-90-90-50 goal,  
3 to maintain those levels for years to come, we  
4 have to keep those residents engaged in care and  
5 adhere to their meds for 10, 20, or 30 years.

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

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

17 Miranda Paris, who is a resident here.  
18 Hi.

19 MS. PARIS: Hello, how are you?

20 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Great. Good  
21 evening.

22 MS. PARIS: I'll be brief. Some

1 persons such as myself with mental health issues  
2 have a hard time getting and obtaining  
3 employment. So therefore, it is harder to afford  
4 a market-rate unit. Providing a subsidy to  
5 mental health agencies to assist single, low-  
6 income families such as myself and many others,  
7 would relieve stress, provide a home for families  
8 to build memories, create bonds, and achieve.  
9 Thank you.

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

13 MS. PARIS: Thank you.

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

16 I'd like to now ask Yvette Kidd to me  
17 forward.

18 MS. KIDD: Hi.

19 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Hi, how are you?

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

22 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: There it is.

1 Okay. Great.

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

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

19 I'm a Washingtonian. I do not want to  
20 be forced out of the Washington, D.C. area, so  
21 what do I do because it's very stressful and it's  
22 sad and they're building all of these places all

1 over the place and you can't afford anything. So  
2 I need help.

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

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

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

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

21 One of LEDC's components is being a  
22 HUD certified housing agency. We are, in large

1 part, funded by the DHCD, Department of Housing  
2 and Community Development to provide training and  
3 counseling in the areas of financial literacy,  
4 first time home buyer and foreclosure prevention.

5 We thank you for the support and look  
6 forward to continuing with the good work and  
7 services that the community needs and deserves.

8 We would like to recommend for the 2016-2020  
9 fiscal year Consolidated Plan the following:

10 support credit counseling and home ownership  
11 program; continue to work with D.C. residents  
12 preparing them for a better financial health and  
13 home ownership opportunities.

14 We have now more than 100 clients who  
15 are mortgage ready to be able to become first  
16 time home buyers, but as you know, a good number  
17 of them are moving out of D.C. due to a lack of  
18 affordable properties to buy or to rent in D.C.

19 For example, home buyers have difficulty in  
20 finding homes that fit their household needs and  
21 income. We suggest making a priority during the  
22 coming years that use our federal funds for Home

1 Purchase Assistance Program or HPAP and  
2 development dollars available for affordable home  
3 ownership developments.

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

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

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

1 report planning. Thank you.

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

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

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

21 We are also grateful for the continued  
22 opportunities we have to engage in conversation

1 with DHCD leadership. Tonight, I will highlight  
2 three major areas where DHCD can build on its  
3 existing commitments.

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

16 These recommendations are fully  
17 outlined in the document that we shared with  
18 John, but broadly they fall into four categories:  
19 improving the process for reviewing and project  
20 feasibility, leveraging private financing,  
21 reaching deeper affordability levels and ensuring  
22 long-term success post-purchase.



1           As we often tell tenants, getting a  
2           TOPA offer of sale is both an opportunity and a  
3           threat. DHCD's support is crucial in many stages  
4           of the process to ensure that there is a true  
5           opportunity for tenants.

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

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

1 homelessness.

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

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

17 And then finally, continue to enforce  
18 and leverage affordability restrictions that are  
19 already in place. The District has made huge  
20 financial commitments to producing and preserving  
21 affordable housing in the past. In some cases,  
22 DHCD owns land or holds covenants on properties

1 that developers would like to use for larger  
2 projects. DHCD should consider on a case-by-case  
3 basis how it can leverage those tools to expand  
4 affordability. For example, DHCD could allow a  
5 developer to buy District-owned land for part of  
6 a large project if there are any affordability  
7 requirements.

8 Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

9 I am encouraged by this administration's repeated  
10 focus on the importance of affordable housing.

11 We've seen a huge commitment in areas like \$100  
12 million for the Housing Production Trust Fund.

13 And I know you share the goal that many of us  
14 have of using that commitment to the best extent  
15 possible. Thanks.

16 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you very  
17 much. Thank you for your testimony. Appreciate  
18 it very much. I'd like to now call F.R. Cole.

19 And if you came in after we started the hearing,  
20 if you would like to testify, but haven't signed  
21 up, please come to the table here next door to  
22 sign up with Abe. He will get you on the list

1 and I will call you in the order in which you  
2 signed up. Thank you.

3 Ms. Cole.

4 MS. F.R. COLES: Thank you so very  
5 much, Ms. Donaldson. And I do appreciate it.  
6 Basically, I wanted to somehow if we could look a  
7 little bit more closely to the issue of credit.  
8 With everyone that I have been working with  
9 regarding this issue of affordable housing, that  
10 has been the number one issue, getting access to  
11 the capital.

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

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

21 MR. HOUSEMAN: Hello. My name is Roy  
22 Houseman. I live in the Adams Morgan

1 neighborhood. And I wanted to come speak with  
2 you all a little bit today in regards to  
3 affordable housing and some of the concerns that  
4 I see in our neighborhood and also in the  
5 Petworth neighborhood as well.

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

11 And looking at the review of the  
12 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluated Report  
13 here from 2014, this last year's report, there  
14 was a number of items that I find interesting and  
15 important to note for everyone to recognize is  
16 that when you're talking about the home sale  
17 price in the District of Columbia of \$502,000 per  
18 home, it becomes really difficult for individuals  
19 making the median income to even afford a house.  
20 How the District of Columbia government works  
21 with and utilizes the properties that it has  
22 currently and encourages affordable housing, I

1 believe needs to be reinvigorated a bit.

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

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

21           When you're looking at housing prices  
22 in the \$500,000 range, that's at the median. And

1 I guarantee you the Petworth area and the Adams  
2 Morgan neighborhood are definitely in that price  
3 range.

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

12 Columbia Street, for example, you have  
13 where the Full 14 is on Columbia Street, there's  
14 about four or five vacant properties. Obviously,  
15 there's going to be some sort of development in  
16 the future, but it's difficult to know and/or be  
17 aware of how that's going to be done. Is there  
18 an ability or an opportunity to create affordable  
19 housing within those developments? Just as a  
20 resident's perspective, it's really difficult to  
21 see and find the methodologies on how the city is  
22 developing its affordable housing properties.

1                   That would be my final constructive  
2 criticism for the agency was finding out about  
3 this forum was okay. I found it at Quality  
4 Coffee.

5                   DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Where?

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

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



1 your time.

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

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

7 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I see, yes.  
8 Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much,  
9 appreciate it.

10 Now I'd like to call up Bernetta  
11 Coles.

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

18 As a rightful subject of legislation  
19 here in the District of Columbia, I find that you  
20 have excluded that particular class to which I am  
21 a member. You state that the stakeholders,  
22 according to my understanding of a stakeholder,

1       like a gold rush, coming in and taking over a  
2       spot to the exclusion of those who were here.

3               I find that the monies appropriated  
4       for those of us who are the rightful subjects of  
5       legislation have been disregarded and therefore  
6       we are suffering far beyond what you are seeing  
7       before you, people without homes, homelessness,  
8       no jobs, children crying because their moms can't  
9       be with them throughout the day, these type of  
10      atrocities I find to be very menacing and to come  
11      out of human beings because I wouldn't want to  
12      say something that I don't have within me to  
13      state that you are this or that because I can't  
14      find that fact. But what I am finding is that  
15      which comes out of that particular entity down  
16      here in DHCD that if they're paying you all to do  
17      things and you need a job, I can understand that.  
18      But at some point, I would like you all to take  
19      the time and say oh, keep on moving forward in  
20      this atrocious activity that they have me in  
21      because I've got to pay my mortgage and I'm going  
22      to lose my house.

1                   Everybody is suffering within the  
2 plan. I just want to know where can I get a copy  
3 of this full plan that you all have complied with  
4 because I was born here. I don't miss too much  
5 of nothing going on in this city. And I haven't  
6 seen the full plan according to the rule of the  
7 plan that we're supposed to see.

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

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

21                   And I shall be forthcoming because I  
22 already wrote to my testimony on the

1 environmental or plan that you all already  
2 violated. Your pretty little book according to  
3 the EPA already told you that book don't mean  
4 nothing. It looks pretty. But if it don't  
5 comply with the EPA at human violations and you  
6 all just keep on going forward.

7 How many more minutes, baby?

8 MS. SKOW: One more minute.

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

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

20 MS. B. COLES: You're welcome.

21 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I'd now like to  
22 call up Eugene Puryear, please.

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

19 So what I would really like to see in  
20 the plan is I don't know what you call it, I  
21 don't know if it's advocacy, goals, wishes,  
22 hopes, dreams, I don't know, but something that

1 breaks down not just how you plan to use the  
2 dollars that are appropriated in the general  
3 sense, but for I think the public, I think the  
4 lawmakers, I think for advocates, something of a  
5 breakdown of what you could do in certain ways.  
6 And I think being creative and I think the  
7 problem with that is some of it is sort of  
8 outside of the purview of DHCD, but from that  
9 perspective, as those of us who are advocates, I  
10 think it's our job to take the information we get  
11 from you and apply it in a way that makes sense.

12 I mean, for example, when you look at  
13 a budget it's shocking to me that for all of the  
14 -- and I'm just going to be real with you,  
15 gentrification projects that are all running  
16 through DMPED. They're using all of this money  
17 in general obligation bonds, some of them on  
18 projects that even they say they don't even know  
19 what they're going to do. But we have affordable  
20 housing issues that we need to solve right away  
21 and it's not often that you use a general  
22 obligation bond in that kind of thing, but why

1 not?

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

9 And I think that at a certain point  
10 the question is is that individual departments I  
11 think have to start advocating in a way that  
12 makes it possible. I mean if a \$100 million is  
13 creating a thousand units a year where we need  
14 tens of thousands of unit, I can come up and I  
15 can say and I do say that every chance I get to  
16 testify and the counsel accepts it and they don't  
17 accept it and they do what they do, they don't do  
18 what they do, but if it comes from the experts  
19 inside the government like hey, this is what  
20 we're trying to do, this is what you've given us  
21 the ability to do and if you do this, that, and  
22 the third we can do even more. I think that

1 would be a very powerful way to use this planning  
2 process.

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

15 Or on the flip side of that coin, I  
16 think there's so many other areas that are under  
17 served in the sense of how they're used. I mean,  
18 for example, someone mentioned vacants earlier.  
19 Obviously, you have a process to buy and to put  
20 vacants that are out there, but it was  
21 interesting, I was talking to your staff who is  
22 very knowledgeable about this issue. I found



1 that you are, in fact, by statute, limited in  
2 terms of the use of eminent domain to only buy  
3 unimproved land which is unbelievable to me.

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

13 So I think having a section of the  
14 report that speaks to these -- you may call them  
15 aspirational needs, but I think helps leverage --  
16 not leverage -- but reframe the conversation in a  
17 way that makes sense. Because when I looked at  
18 the last plan, all I could see is this all looks  
19 really great, but at the end of the day it's all  
20 going to be a band-aid. Even if they do  
21 everything they say in here with the federal  
22 resources and local resources combined, there's

1 no way that they can even come close to meeting  
2 the need and then people saying oh, well, the  
3 city didn't do anything to meet the need. So I  
4 think it's important to point this out in the  
5 front end so that that can be used and leveraged  
6 by people like myself and I think the people  
7 here, the residents, to then go to the Council  
8 and say well, look, this is what your own  
9 government is telling you you need and you refuse  
10 to meet it. And I think it's an important way to  
11 hold our elected officials responsible on all the  
12 affordable housing promises they make.

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

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

19 Now I'd like to call Connie Moore.

20 MS. MOORE: Give me a second. Thank  
21 you. Good evening. Thanks for giving me a  
22 moment to testify.

1                   DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Turn it around.

2                   Other end.

3                   MS. MOORE: Other end?

4                   DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Yes.

5                   MS. MOORE: Thank you. Thank you for

6                   letting me testify this evening. My name is

7                   Connie Moore. I am a native Washingtonian. I

8                   lived in Ward 8 three times. I lived in Ward 5

9                   once. I graduated from a high school in Ward 5.

10                  My thing is I worked since I was 16

11                  years old under Marion Barry's Summer Youth

12                  Program. I'm now officially working three jobs,

13                  part-time, full-time, and PRN.

14                  Affording housing is my concern

15                  because I was raised by a single mother that took

16                  care of me all her life, took care of me all my

17                  life. I have two senior parents. My father is

18                  older than my mother. My question is my father

19                  is in an affordable housing complex. My mom

20                  isn't. Now my mom has to come back and take care

21                  of me because of the simple fact that I'm of age.

22                  I have an element that they can't find a cure for

1 which is diabetes. And diabetes has mainly taken  
2 over me, but I can still maintain work. But I'm  
3 on the verge, like the young lady said, on the  
4 verge of getting evicted, on the verge of can't  
5 afford food.

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

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

22 So what should I do? Go without gas

1 and electric and food just to have a place to  
2 stay? That's just like having a person whose  
3 homeless with a place to stay.

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

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

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

22 This is the first time I ever

1 testified in front of anything, anything. And I  
2 live in a beautiful ward. I live in a beautiful  
3 ward, Ward 8. And we've been suffering for  
4 years. Ward 5 has been suffering for years.  
5 Nannie Helen Burroughs just got a new library.  
6 We just got in Ward 8 a new library. But look  
7 how long the years took to get this, this, and  
8 this.

9 My little sister knows late day for  
10 anything in the District of Columbia is what day?  
11 Wednesday. I know that. Because I took her to  
12 the library, 18th and Good Hope Road. And we did  
13 homework many a day. I am a graduate of McKinley  
14 Senior High School. I work on Columbia Road. I  
15 work in -- we just built a new Walmart down on H  
16 and New Jersey. You just bought one of my jobs.  
17 I can't afford to go and live in that new -- over  
18 top of that Walmart that you just built. You  
19 just built another Walmart on South Dakota Avenue  
20 that just opened up October 23rd, 26th, it hasn't  
21 even been a month. I just went through and went  
22 inside and it's beautiful. But can I afford to

1 live upon the street? No.

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

7 Barack Obama just gave Social Security  
8 \$20 extra and then Uncle Sam is going to tax  
9 that. Gave them \$19, what, last year? They  
10 taxed that. So how is my mother and father  
11 supposed to survive? I got one parent that  
12 works. One parent that doesn't. My mom still  
13 works. My dad doesn't. He don't get his Social  
14 Security until when? Next year. But I'm still  
15 trying to help them. So now they have to turn  
16 and help me. I am their only child. Their only.  
17 And their only child -- I've been hospitalized a  
18 couple of times. And I was almost evicted a  
19 couple times under William C. Smith.

20 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: I thank you very  
21 much, Ms. Moore. We appreciate your testimony  
22 very, very much.

1 MS. MOORE: Thank you.

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

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

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

17 And I'm going to especially shed light  
18 on the word grant so that people can gather their  
19 financial sense of stability because the jobs  
20 aren't out there the way that it is told  
21 listening to this, in my area, in my community.  
22 There is blight and problems.



1           Another area of concern with all the  
2 building that they are doing in Washington, D.C.  
3 I have not seen, nor has it been brought to light  
4 housing, whether it is rental property, property  
5 for purchase, for those individuals with  
6 disabilities. That list is long and growing in  
7 Ward 7. And it's not handicap accessible. I  
8 think I see one of my associates back there.

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

19           And then the other concern from  
20 constituents and my phone rings day and night,  
21 Director, and I felt compelled to speak to these  
22 individuals because they're within. They don't

1 make enough money for a new home or apartment and  
2 they make too much on that fixed income every  
3 month, so they're between a rock and a hard  
4 place.

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

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

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

20           DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Thank you, Ms.  
21 Nightingale for your testimony. Thank you very  
22 much.

1 I'd now like to call up Paralee Massie  
2 Armstrong. And friend.

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

5 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Oh, Lea.

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

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

1 family members.

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

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

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

22 For the Federal Government who helps

1 people commute to work because these people don't  
2 even have an option to live in the city, you  
3 wouldn't have to give them commuter benefits, you  
4 know. They could live five blocks from their job  
5 instead of giving \$130 a month. You could only  
6 give me \$60.

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

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

17 Now I'd like to ask is there anybody  
18 else who would like to testify at this time?  
19 Please step forward and sign up with Abe and then  
20 I will call your names. Thank you. I'd first  
21 like to call Ms. Gwen Gilmore, please. Good  
22 evening.

1 MS. GILMORE: I'd like to make note of  
2 a housing program.

3 DIRECTOR DONALDSON: Speak right into  
4 the mic.

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

16 So like the young woman was saying,  
17 she still paid only that 33 percent, but she was  
18 able to live in affordable housing or a house  
19 that she felt that she could manage on her  
20 income. It was called the Tenant Assistance  
21 Program. I don't know why it was discontinued.  
22 But it helped me. It helped me a lot while I was

1 raising my daughter. That's what I wanted to --  
2 and I'm also a resident of Ward 7, so I'm here to  
3 support Ward 7 ANC. Thank you.

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

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

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

21 And it's a shame of the rent  
22 disparities, the job -- lacking of jobs, just

1 people being removed such as Barry Farms, such as  
2 Lincoln Heights, such as many other communities  
3 that I've been speaking to people and they're  
4 very frustrated and knowing that any day it could  
5 happen.

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

11 I just have to ask is there anyone in  
12 this room that would be okay with reparations?  
13 If I say you had to vote for it, in reparations,  
14 you would have housing, you would have job  
15 security, veterans. You would have 48 months of  
16 deferred payments on your mortgage note. You  
17 would have the lowest interest rate. Your credit  
18 would not matter being a descendant of an  
19 American slave. And D.C. has 300 years of it.  
20 We must enforce this because we're going to have  
21 a problem with our national security. We're  
22 going to have a problem with all kinds of other



1 issues. So I know that you are very much aware.

2 I can only speak for the people who I  
3 run into. This isn't a political speech. This  
4 is just a speech that I am introducing myself.  
5 You will hear about the D.C. Reparations Act  
6 coming up by the end of the month. Okay? Thank  
7 you.

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

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

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

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

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

1 now. Thank you.

2 MS. HALL: My name is Deborah Hall.  
3 I live in Ward 4. But I want to talk about Ward  
4 7 and 8. Ward 7 and 8 seems to be having the  
5 most despair in the city. One thing of crime and  
6 a lot of the crime is due to the lack of  
7 employment, lack of resources, knowing that any  
8 minute that certain areas could be gone. And  
9 when you put that kind of stress on people, what  
10 do you think you're going to get? You're not  
11 going to have happy people. You're going to get  
12 the crime that you're getting in that ward. And  
13 a lot of the crime that you see on the media  
14 anyway, I don't believe all of it anyway, okay?  
15 There's no gun manufacturers in Ward 7 or 8.  
16 There are no drugs manufactured in Ward 7 and 8.  
17 So a lot of it is slanted anyway. But I'll get  
18 into that at another time. But we need to see is  
19 a way for people to be able to afford to live in  
20 the city that I know a lot of people love.

21 I'm not originally from Washington,  
22 D.C. But I have friends that have lived here all

1 their life, third, fourth, fifth generation. And  
2 for them to have to put themselves in an  
3 environment where you say they have to leave a  
4 city that they love to have affordable housing is  
5 unfair.

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

22 So D.C. needs to do something to hold

1 on to these residents that have worked hard, that  
2 have built this city. When you look at the  
3 planning of who built this city, brick by brick,  
4 it won't look like anybody of you guys on this  
5 board right here, I can tell you that.

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

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

1 and can work with you on that.

2 I thank you all for your  
3 contributions. We will be compiling all of the  
4 comments from the survey, meetings and hearings  
5 and we hope to release the plan for public  
6 comment in early 2016 which again will be another  
7 opportunity for your input, your feedback in  
8 terms of the overall Consolidated Plan for DHCD.  
9 Thank you all again and have a good evening.  
10 Please take the survey. Thank you.

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

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20  
21  
22

<b>A</b>	
<b>\$1,000</b> 44:19	11:6 12:7 23:17
<b>\$100</b> 27:11 39:12	<b>administration's</b> 4:10 27:9
<b>\$130</b> 53:5	<b>advanced</b> 10:18
<b>\$19</b> 47:9	<b>advocacy</b> 37:21
<b>\$20</b> 47:8	<b>advocate</b> 17:10
<b>\$30s</b> 30:14	<b>advocates</b> 38:4,9
<b>\$39</b> 30:5	<b>advocating</b> 39:11 45:15
<b>\$500,000</b> 30:22	<b>affiliation</b> 9:15
<b>\$502,000</b> 29:17	<b>afford</b> 18:3 19:9,14 20:1 29:19 44:5 46:17,22 49:11 51:9 52:18 58:19
<b>\$60</b> 53:6	<b>affordability</b> 24:21 26:18 27:4,6 31:9 51:12
<b>\$80,000</b> 22:6	<b>affordable</b> 1:16 3:18 4:11 5:15 15:19 19:17 21:18 22:2,14,16,19 23:9,12,19 25:9 26:21 27:10 28:9 29:3,8,22 30:6 31:9,18,22 38:19 39:6 42:12 43:19 52:15 53:9 54:18 59:4
<b>\$865</b> 44:20 47:3	<b>Affording</b> 43:14
<b>abandoned</b> 48:11 48:15	<b>afternoon</b> 24:7
<b>Abe</b> 7:3 27:22 53:19	<b>age</b> 43:21
<b>ability</b> 31:18 39:21	<b>agencies</b> 18:5 41:9
<b>able</b> 3:7 16:18 21:15 26:15 32:15 32:16 50:16 54:18 58:19	<b>agency</b> 6:21 20:22 30:19 32:2
<b>above-entitled</b> 61:11	<b>ago</b> 19:7 54:6
<b>abuse</b> 17:1	<b>aha</b> 59:19
<b>accept</b> 39:17	<b>ahead</b> 4:9 13:13
<b>accepts</b> 39:16	<b>AIDS</b> 6:1 10:10,11 10:12 12:15 13:12 15:2,5,9,22
<b>access</b> 28:10	<b>ain't</b> 35:19
<b>accessible</b> 32:18 49:7	<b>allow</b> 27:4
<b>achieve</b> 11:16 13:2 18:8	<b>allowed</b> 35:17
<b>Act</b> 25:7 55:15 57:5	<b>amazing</b> 32:21
<b>action</b> 1:4 25:19 26:11	<b>American</b> 55:20 56:19
<b>activities</b> 4:3 5:4,11	<b>amount</b> 22:6
<b>activity</b> 34:20 35:9	<b>analysis</b> 3:20
<b>actual</b> 8:18	
<b>Adams</b> 28:22 31:1 31:4	
<b>addition</b> 6:18	
<b>additional</b> 9:4 10:14	
<b>address</b> 9:10 55:10	
<b>addressed</b> 44:14	
<b>adhere</b> 17:5	
<b>Adjourn</b> 2:22	
<b>administration</b>	
	<b>ANC</b> 48:6 50:5 55:3 <b>and/or</b> 5:14 31:16 <b>angry</b> 59:17 <b>announcement</b> 32:9 <b>annual</b> 1:4 11:3 14:16 28:13 29:12 32:16 <b>anybody</b> 7:2 53:17 60:4 <b>anyway</b> 19:10 58:14,14,17 <b>apartment</b> 44:18 50:1 51:10,14 52:2,4 <b>apply</b> 38:11 52:20 <b>appointee</b> 11:1 <b>appreciate</b> 10:7 15:13 17:7 18:11 27:17 28:5,19 32:20 33:3,9 36:18 37:4 42:18 47:21 53:15 55:5 57:9 60:12 <b>appreciated</b> 28:17 <b>approach</b> 52:14 <b>appropriated</b> 10:22 34:3 38:2 <b>area</b> 19:20 24:11 31:1,11 48:21 49:1 51:7 <b>areas</b> 6:17 21:3 24:2 27:11 40:16 58:8 <b>Armstrong</b> 2:18 51:2,3,6 <b>arrived</b> 59:9,14 <b>articles</b> 51:19 <b>asking</b> 6:17 39:2 45:20 52:4 <b>aspirational</b> 41:15 <b>assess</b> 3:17 <b>assist</b> 18:5 <b>assistance</b> 3:10 5:16 12:21 22:1 52:21 54:20 <b>Assistant</b> 54:8 <b>associated</b> 14:13
	<b>associates</b> 49:8 <b>association</b> 25:12 25:18 <b>associations</b> 24:14 <b>astounding</b> 13:14 <b>atrocious</b> 34:20 <b>atrocities</b> 34:10 <b>attendance</b> 7:8 <b>attention</b> 47:6 <b>August</b> 6:10 <b>Authority</b> 56:7 <b>available</b> 4:22 8:22 22:2 54:6 <b>Avenue</b> 19:8 44:18 46:19 59:8 <b>award</b> 14:16,17,21 <b>awarding</b> 15:1 <b>aware</b> 31:17 57:1
	<b>B</b>
	<b>b</b> 32:15 33:12 36:9 36:20 <b>baby</b> 36:7 <b>back</b> 8:11 9:21 14:11 17:15 19:12 20:6 43:20 44:8 49:8 <b>bad</b> 14:15 <b>band-aid</b> 41:20 <b>Barack</b> 47:7 <b>Barry</b> 45:11 54:7 56:1 <b>Barry's</b> 43:11 <b>based</b> 15:2 <b>basically</b> 12:1 28:6 <b>basis</b> 27:3 <b>beautiful</b> 46:2,2,22 <b>beginning</b> 20:6 <b>begins</b> 6:21 8:18 <b>beings</b> 34:11 <b>believe</b> 12:7 15:21 16:11 30:1 36:12 58:14 <b>benefit</b> 6:4 <b>benefits</b> 53:3 <b>Bernetta</b> 2:14 33:10 33:13 36:11 <b>best</b> 11:10 27:14

37:12 52:4  
**better** 15:7 21:12  
 24:13  
**beyond** 16:12 34:6  
**big** 59:8  
**bigger** 15:22  
**bit** 8:22 17:16 28:7  
 29:2 30:1 32:9  
**black** 59:7,18  
**blessing** 45:19  
**blight** 48:22  
**blighted** 48:11  
**block** 5:3 30:4  
**blocks** 53:4  
**blond** 59:13,19  
**blue** 59:13  
**board** 55:17 60:5  
**bold** 11:10  
**bond** 38:22  
**bonds** 18:8 38:17  
**book** 36:2,3  
**born** 35:4  
**bought** 46:16  
**Bowser** 11:5 12:7  
**Bowser's** 12:5  
**boy** 45:5  
**brand** 49:13  
**breakdown** 38:5  
**breaks** 38:1  
**brick** 60:3,3  
**brief** 17:22  
**briefly** 4:21 24:9  
**bring** 22:7  
**broad** 16:4  
**broadly** 24:18  
**brought** 49:3  
**budget** 30:6 38:13  
**build** 18:8 24:2  
**building** 5:14 19:8  
 19:22 26:6 49:2  
 59:12  
**buildings** 25:16,20  
 26:9  
**built** 46:15,18,19  
 47:5 60:2,3  
**bunch** 59:15  
**burden** 52:16  
**Burroughs** 46:5

**business** 7:12  
**buy** 21:18 27:5  
 40:19 41:2 48:15  
 52:19  
**buyer** 21:4  
**buyers** 21:16,19  
 22:8,11,14,17  
**buying** 5:14

---

**C**


---

**C** 47:19  
**call** 7:5 9:13,18,22  
 17:15 23:2 27:18  
 28:1,20 32:17  
 33:10 36:22 37:20  
 41:14 42:19 48:3  
 51:1,3 53:20,21  
 55:7  
**called** 7:5 19:16  
 54:7,20  
**cancer** 10:19  
**capital** 28:11  
**care** 10:17 11:10  
 13:1,8,11,12 14:7  
 14:7 16:10 17:4  
 43:16,16,20 44:7  
 44:14 51:22  
**carried** 33:17  
**case** 37:12  
**case-by-case** 27:2  
**cases** 11:18 15:2,3  
 25:10 26:21  
**cash** 52:21  
**categories** 24:18  
**caused** 35:15  
**CDBG** 5:8  
**Center** 1:10 2:11  
 23:7  
**certain** 38:5 39:9  
 58:8  
**certainly** 48:12  
**certified** 20:22  
**chairman** 55:14  
**challenges** 16:17  
**chance** 10:5 35:16  
 39:15 40:8 57:13  
 60:8  
**change** 22:6 41:6

**charged** 4:4  
**cheapest** 19:11  
 47:2  
**check-ins** 6:9  
**Cheeks** 2:20 55:8,9  
 55:12 57:9  
**child** 45:17 47:16  
 47:17  
**children** 19:3 34:8  
**choose** 51:12  
**circumstances**  
 25:13  
**citizen** 3:20  
**city** 12:8,19 30:8  
 31:21 35:5 36:12  
 42:3 50:9 53:2  
 55:11,20 58:5,20  
 59:4,6,11 60:2,3,8  
**clarification** 40:11  
**class** 33:20  
**clients** 21:14  
**close** 7:12 42:1  
**closed** 19:18  
**closely** 3:9 14:13  
 28:7  
**co-chair** 23:7  
**Coffee** 32:4,6  
**coin** 40:15  
**Cole** 27:18 28:3  
**Coles** 2:12,14 28:4  
 33:11,12,13 36:9  
 36:11,18,20  
**Collectively** 24:12  
**Columbia** 1:1 3:6  
 11:8 29:17,20  
 31:12,13 33:14,19  
 46:10,14 48:6  
**combined** 41:22  
**come** 9:21 17:3,15  
 20:8 27:21 29:1  
 34:10 37:4 39:14  
 42:1 43:20 52:3  
 55:10 57:14  
**comes** 34:15 39:18  
**comfortable** 53:11  
**coming** 18:15  
 21:22 34:1 35:14  
 37:18 57:6 60:13

**comment** 9:1,5  
 61:6  
**comments** 6:11  
 7:11,16,17,19  
 18:11 33:3 61:4  
**Commissioner**  
 48:6 50:6  
**commit** 12:11  
**commitment** 23:14  
 23:18 27:11,14  
**commitments** 24:3  
 26:20  
**committed** 11:6,8  
**committee** 55:14  
**communicate**  
 26:16  
**communicating**  
 26:5  
**communication**  
 26:13  
**communities** 5:7  
 6:2 56:2  
**community** 1:1 3:5  
 3:19 4:3 5:2,5,10  
 6:8 11:22 12:3  
 17:10 20:17 21:2  
 21:7 48:21 53:12  
**community's** 9:9,9  
**commute** 53:1  
**commuter** 53:3  
**Compare** 13:8  
**comparison** 15:3  
**compassion** 50:9  
**compelled** 49:21  
**compelling** 13:16  
 14:9  
**compiling** 61:3  
**complete** 55:16  
**complex** 43:19  
**complicit** 36:13,15  
**complied** 35:3,11  
**comply** 36:5  
**components** 20:21  
**comprehensive**  
 4:10  
**concern** 43:14 49:1  
 49:19  
**concerns** 29:3

48:10 50:5  
**concludes** 60:14  
**conditions** 3:18  
**Congress** 44:15  
**Connie** 2:16 42:19  
 43:7  
**consider** 24:4 27:2  
**consideration**  
 18:12  
**Consolidated** 1:4  
 3:15,16 4:20 7:15  
 8:1 21:9 29:12  
 32:8 33:6 60:14  
 61:8  
**Consolidation** 7:19  
**constituents** 49:20  
**constructive** 32:1  
**constructively** 40:8  
**CONTENTS** 2:1  
**continue** 21:11  
 26:17  
**continued** 23:21  
**continuing** 21:6  
**continuum** 16:4  
**contract** 33:16  
**contributions** 8:13  
 61:3  
**controlling** 56:9  
**convened** 1:10  
**convening** 22:4  
**conversation** 23:22  
 41:16  
**convert** 56:7  
**cooperatively**  
 30:18  
**coordinating** 4:19  
**copies** 8:1  
**copy** 17:8 35:2  
**core** 15:10  
**corporation** 1:15  
 1:16 2:9 9:20  
 17:14 20:20 56:8  
**correctly** 30:14  
**council** 11:2 42:7  
 45:11,12  
**counsel** 39:16  
**counseling** 3:11  
 21:3,10

**counts** 30:16  
**couple** 6:6 26:16  
 47:18,19  
**covenants** 26:22  
**cover** 24:9  
**create** 18:8 31:18  
**creating** 39:13  
**creative** 38:6  
**credit** 21:10 28:7  
 28:15 56:17  
**crime** 58:5,6,12,13  
**criteria** 25:19 26:6  
**criticism** 32:2  
**crucial** 25:3  
**crying** 34:8  
**cure** 43:22  
**currently** 29:22  
 55:16  
**CVS** 59:12

---

**D**


---

**D.C** 1:11 4:11 10:12  
 10:22 11:2,3,12  
 12:13 13:4 15:14  
 19:20 21:11,17,18  
 22:15 30:3,18  
 49:2 50:15 55:15  
 56:19 57:5 58:22  
 59:22  
**D.C.s** 14:16  
**dad** 19:12 44:8,9,9  
 47:13  
**Dakota** 46:19  
**data** 3:19 12:13,20  
 14:9  
**data-driven** 3:21  
**daughter** 51:13  
 52:6 55:1  
**day** 34:9 41:19 46:9  
 46:10,13 49:17,18  
 49:20 50:6,6 56:4  
 59:16  
**DCDOH** 16:3  
**deal** 32:22 35:14  
**dealing** 39:5  
**Deborah** 2:21 57:18  
 57:22 58:2  
**decent** 51:10,11

**decide** 51:13  
**decisions** 3:22  
**declared** 13:22  
**decrease** 11:17  
 37:13  
**decreased** 14:17  
**decreasing** 14:21  
**dedicated** 10:14  
**deeper** 24:21  
**deferred** 56:16  
**definitely** 31:2  
**degree** 51:11  
**demolish** 40:13  
**demolitions** 40:11  
**department** 1:1 4:7  
 12:13 20:16 21:1  
 22:4 39:5,6  
**departments** 39:10  
**Deputy** 1:15 9:22  
**descendant** 56:18  
**descendants** 55:19  
**describe** 4:22  
**deserves** 21:7  
**designed** 3:16  
**desire** 50:14  
**desires** 9:9  
**despair** 58:5  
**details** 24:9  
**determine** 26:6  
**detriment** 12:11  
**develop** 22:16  
 30:19  
**developed** 30:13  
 30:15 31:7  
**developer** 27:5  
**developers** 27:1  
**developing** 4:4  
 31:22  
**development** 1:1  
 1:15,16 2:9,11 3:5  
 3:15,19 4:3,8 5:3  
 5:5,10 9:20 16:6  
 17:14 20:17,20  
 21:2 22:2,15 23:7  
 24:11 30:7,9 31:6  
 31:15  
**developments** 22:3  
 31:19 39:7

**DHCD** 4:4,18,20  
 6:19 21:1 22:9,12  
 23:16 24:1,2,13  
 26:4,13,22 27:2,4  
 33:17 34:16 38:8  
 41:9 61:8  
**DHCD's** 3:15 4:9  
 25:3  
**dhcd.events@dc...**  
 7:18  
**DHCDOH** 12:20  
**diabetes** 44:1,1  
**diagnosed** 11:9  
 13:6,17 14:19  
 15:3  
**diagnosis** 15:10  
**die** 35:19  
**difference** 41:8  
**different** 29:9 39:4  
 40:4  
**difficult** 25:14,18  
 29:18 31:16,20  
 32:9  
**difficulty** 21:19  
**direct** 5:16 7:17  
**directly** 26:5  
**Director** 1:11,14,14  
 1:15 2:2,8,20 3:3  
 3:4 7:14 8:6,11,15  
 9:19,22 10:6 17:6  
 17:20 18:10,14,19  
 18:22 20:3,15,19  
 22:21 27:16 28:18  
 32:5 33:2,7 36:17  
 36:21 42:17 43:1  
 43:4 47:20 48:2,5  
 49:21 50:20 51:5  
 53:14 54:3 55:4  
 55:12 57:8,21  
 60:11  
**disabilities** 49:6  
**disability** 49:14,15  
**disabled** 19:15  
**discontinued** 54:21  
**discussing** 6:7  
**discussion** 31:9  
**disease** 10:19  
**disparities** 55:22



**displacement**

23:11

**displacing** 39:7**disregarded** 34:5**District** 1:1 3:6 6:20

11:7,17 14:19

15:21 23:12 25:7

26:19 29:17,20

33:14,19 41:5

46:10 48:6

**District's** 23:14,19**District-owned**

27:5

**DMPED** 38:16**document** 6:21 8:2

8:3 9:8 24:17

**dodged** 35:8**DOH** 15:17**doing** 12:19 14:22

15:6 19:3 20:10

45:6 49:2

**dollars** 12:9 15:2

22:2 38:2

**domain** 41:2**Donaldson** 1:11,14

2:2 3:3,4 7:15 8:6

8:11,15 10:6 17:6

17:20 18:10,14,19

18:22 20:3,16

22:21 27:16 28:5

28:18 32:5 33:2,7

36:17,21 42:17

43:1,4 47:20 48:2

48:5 50:20 51:5

53:14 54:3 55:4

57:8,21 60:11

**door** 27:21**DOPA** 25:7,12,19

26:4,11 40:5

**Draft** 8:22**drafting** 6:21 8:19

26:14

**drastically** 11:6**dreams** 37:22**drive** 59:15**drugs** 58:16**due** 21:17 58:6

---

**E**

---

**earlier** 24:7 26:7

40:18

**early** 9:2 61:6**economic** 1:14,16

2:9,10 5:5 9:20

17:13 20:19 23:6

**economists** 52:8**education** 51:11**Eleanor** 44:15**elected** 29:7 42:11**Elections** 55:18**electric** 44:21 45:1

52:13

**electronic** 7:17**element** 43:22

44:13

**elements** 15:11**email** 7:12,17**Emergency** 5:18**eminent** 41:2**employment** 16:6

18:3 58:7

**encourage** 30:9

60:22

**encouraged** 23:17

27:9

**encourages** 29:22**endeavors** 36:10**enforce** 26:17

56:20

**engage** 23:22**engaged** 13:1,8,10

17:4

**engagement** 6:8**enrolled** 14:5**ensure** 25:4**ensuring** 24:21**enter** 16:19**entity** 33:16 34:15**environment** 52:6

59:3 60:9

**environmental** 36:1**EPA** 36:3,5**equal** 44:16**equally** 11:8 13:16**especially** 48:17**establish** 26:4**Eugene** 2:15 36:22

37:2

**Evaluated** 29:12**evening** 3:3 8:14

10:3 17:21 20:15

23:4 33:12 42:21

43:6 48:4,8 53:22

55:8,9 57:15 61:9

**everybody** 35:1

44:15 45:16

**evict** 40:12**evicted** 19:7 40:8

44:4 47:18

**example** 21:19 27:4

30:3 31:12 38:12

40:18

**excluded** 33:20**exclusion** 34:2**Executive** 1:14 2:8

2:20 9:19 20:19

55:12

**existing** 16:9,12

23:19 24:3 30:10

**expand** 23:18 27:3**expense** 12:11**experience** 25:22

26:8

**experienced** 25:22**experts** 24:10

39:18

**explore** 22:18**exquisite** 49:12**extent** 27:14**extra** 47:8**extraordinary**

25:13

**extremely** 32:19**eyed** 59:13

---

**F**

---

**F.R** 2:12 27:18 28:4**face** 16:17**facilitate** 16:6**facilities** 5:6 22:15**facing** 37:14 59:17**fact** 34:14 37:11

40:10 41:1 43:21

**fact-finding** 33:15**factors** 25:17**fair** 51:20,21 60:8**fall** 24:18**familiar** 11:19**families** 5:21 6:5

18:6,7 54:11

**family** 30:13 44:10

52:1

**fantastic** 40:6**far** 7:6 34:6**Farms** 56:1**father** 43:17,18

47:10

**feasibility** 24:20**federal** 3:22 4:5,22

5:9 21:22 37:12

41:21 52:16,22

**feds** 15:6**feed** 52:17**feedback** 6:14 61:7**feel** 8:4 52:6**feet** 59:11**felt** 49:21 54:19**fewer** 15:7**fierce** 17:9**fifth** 59:1**fighting** 44:16**fill** 60:16**final** 3:14 5:22 32:1**finally** 26:17**financial** 21:3,12

26:20 48:19

**financing** 24:11,20**find** 19:10,11 29:14

31:21 32:14,15

33:15,19 34:3,10

34:14 43:22 48:13

49:10,15 50:12

53:9

**finding** 21:20 32:2

34:14

**first** 2:15 5:2 9:14

9:18 21:4,15 22:8

22:11,14,17 24:4

37:3,9 45:22

53:20

**fiscal** 4:19 21:9**fit** 21:20

**five** 4:8 7:15,19  
 20:13 31:14 53:4  
**five-year** 32:10,12  
**fix** 48:16  
**fixed** 50:2  
**flat** 15:6  
**flexible** 5:8  
**flip** 40:15  
**Florida** 51:9 59:8  
**focus** 27:10  
**focuses** 16:4  
**folks** 6:17 16:5,7,8  
 20:12  
**following** 21:9  
**food** 44:5 45:1  
 52:13,19,20  
**force** 16:6,19  
**forced** 19:20 41:10  
**foreclosure** 21:4  
**former** 29:7  
**formula** 15:1  
**forthcoming** 35:21  
 36:11  
**forum** 6:12 32:3  
**forward** 8:13 18:17  
 21:6 22:9 34:19  
 36:6 42:15 53:19  
 57:14  
**found** 32:3 40:22  
**four** 4:22 24:18  
 31:14  
**fourth** 59:1  
**fraction** 37:16  
**free** 8:4  
**friend** 51:2  
**friends** 58:22  
**front** 42:5 45:17  
 46:1  
**frustrated** 56:4  
**full** 31:13 35:3,6  
**full-blown** 15:2  
**full-time** 43:13  
**fuller** 26:14  
**fully** 24:16 25:6  
**fun** 8:18  
**Fund** 27:12  
**funded** 12:15 15:6  
 21:1

**funding** 5:19 10:20  
 23:15 48:13 49:11  
 50:12  
**funds** 5:3,8 10:15  
 10:22 12:9,10  
 21:22 30:8 37:12  
**further** 9:1  
**future** 31:16  
**FY** 1:4

---

**G**


---

**Garden** 47:4  
**gas** 44:20,22 52:12  
**gather** 48:18  
**general** 10:13 38:2  
 38:17,21 53:10  
**generation** 59:1  
**gentleman** 40:5  
**gentlemen** 50:7  
**gentrification**  
 38:15  
**getting** 12:3 13:12  
 14:6,8 15:8 16:7,8  
 18:2 25:1 28:10  
 32:7 44:4 58:12  
**Gilmore** 2:19 53:21  
 54:1,5 55:5  
**give** 9:15 40:12  
 42:20 45:7 53:3,6  
 60:8  
**given** 39:20 48:8  
**giving** 42:21 53:5  
**go** 16:11 17:12 19:5  
 20:6 32:11 36:14  
 36:15 42:7 44:8  
 44:22 46:17  
**goal** 11:11 13:13,19  
 13:19,22 16:1,2  
 17:2 27:13  
**goals** 12:5,6,7,16  
 37:21  
**God** 35:13,16  
**goes** 31:4  
**going** 4:12 6:6 9:13  
 10:6 11:5 14:11  
 14:16 20:6 24:9  
 24:14 31:6,15,17  
 34:21 35:5,9,19

36:6 38:14,19  
 41:20 47:8 48:17  
 51:13,14,16 56:20  
 56:22 57:22 58:10  
 58:11,11 59:20  
**gold** 34:1  
**good** 3:3 10:3  
 14:14 17:20 20:15  
 21:6,16 23:4  
 32:13 33:12 42:21  
 46:12 48:4 53:21  
 55:8,9 61:9  
**government** 29:20  
 30:18 39:19 41:6  
 42:9 52:16,22  
 55:13 56:8  
**graduate** 46:13  
**graduated** 43:9  
**grandmother** 52:3  
**grant** 5:3,19 48:18  
**grants** 6:2 30:7  
 48:14  
**grateful** 23:21  
**great** 14:22 17:20  
 19:1 20:8 41:19  
**Greater** 1:10 3:8,13  
**greatly** 28:17  
**group** 13:1 23:8  
 24:10 26:11  
**Group's** 24:5  
**groups** 13:3  
**growing** 4:11 49:6  
**guarantee** 31:1  
**guess** 30:17 59:19  
**gun** 58:15  
**guys** 32:20,21  
 59:20 60:4  
**Gwen** 2:19 53:21  
**gym** 47:6

---

**H**


---

**H** 46:15  
**H-A-L** 57:21  
**H-A-L-L** 57:20  
**hair** 19:3  
**haired** 59:13,19  
**halfway** 13:18  
**Hall** 2:21 57:20,21

57:22 58:2,2  
 60:12  
**hand** 13:19  
**handicap** 49:7  
**handout** 7:20  
**happen** 56:5  
**happening** 55:11  
**happy** 3:12 58:11  
**hard** 18:2 45:16  
 50:3 60:1  
**harder** 18:3  
**Harry** 45:12,13  
**haul** 8:17  
**HCS** 25:10  
**He'll** 7:4  
**health** 11:21 12:14  
 18:1,5 19:5 21:12  
**health-related**  
 14:12  
**hear** 9:6 18:20 50:6  
 57:5  
**hearing** 1:3,10 3:15  
 6:19 7:1,10 8:5,11  
 8:13 27:19 41:7  
 42:15  
**hearings** 6:10 61:4  
**heavy** 32:22  
**Heights** 56:2  
**held** 6:10,12  
**Helen** 46:5  
**Hello** 17:19 28:21  
**help** 3:16 16:8 19:6  
 20:2 45:6,6,8,18  
 45:20,20 47:15,16  
 52:17 53:8,9  
**helped** 54:22,22  
**helpful** 26:14 32:19  
**helping** 15:11 16:5  
**helps** 41:15 52:22  
**Hepatitis** 11:4  
**hey** 39:19  
**Hi** 3:4 4:17 10:2  
 17:18 18:18,19  
 23:4 51:3  
**high** 43:9 46:14  
**higher** 14:4,4  
**highlight** 24:1  
**history** 45:14

**HIV** 10:15,19 11:3,7  
11:9,12,14,16,18  
12:3,4,10,21 13:4  
14:12,19 15:3,18  
16:16,22  
**HIV/AIDS** 6:5 17:10  
**hold** 42:11 59:22  
**holds** 26:22  
**holistic** 52:14  
**Holmes** 44:15  
**home** 3:10 5:12,15  
8:9 18:7 19:7 21:4  
21:10,13,16,19,22  
22:2,8,11,14,15  
22:17 29:16,18  
49:13 50:1  
**homeless** 5:20  
10:18 45:3  
**homelessness** 4:2  
10:13 26:1 34:7  
**homes** 21:20 34:7  
**homework** 46:13  
**honored** 3:7  
**hoodwinked** 35:11  
**hope** 9:2 26:15 36:9  
46:12 57:18 61:5  
**hopeful** 26:11  
**hopes** 37:22  
**HOPWA** 6:2 10:11  
10:12,20 12:9,15  
12:18,22 13:4,9  
13:10,20 14:3,6  
14:16,17 15:2,5  
15:12,20  
**hospitalized** 47:17  
**hosted** 3:8  
**hotel** 31:7  
**house** 1:15 2:5 10:1  
10:4,17 29:19  
34:22 54:18  
**household** 21:20  
49:16  
**Houseman** 2:13  
28:20,21,22 32:6  
33:3,5  
**houses** 30:12,13,15  
48:11  
**housing** 1:1,16 3:5

3:11,18 4:2,2,7  
5:9,15 6:1 10:10  
10:10,15,17,22  
12:9,12,15,21  
13:12 14:12 15:12  
15:16,19,22 16:3  
16:4,9,11,13,15  
16:16 19:17 20:16  
20:22 21:1 22:20  
23:9,11,20 25:9  
26:21 27:10,12  
28:9 29:3,8,22  
30:6,21 31:10,19  
31:22 38:20 39:6  
42:12 43:14,19  
44:9,17 49:4,10  
49:16 51:17 52:10  
52:15 53:9 54:2,5  
54:9,18 55:18  
56:7,14 59:4  
**Howard** 59:12,17  
**HPAP** 22:1,5  
**HUD** 4:8 15:1 20:22  
33:16  
**huge** 26:19 27:11  
**human** 34:11 36:5

---

**I**


---

**idea** 40:6  
**identifying** 22:14  
**idle** 30:20  
**illiteracy** 17:1  
**illness** 16:22  
**illnesses** 25:17  
**immediately** 60:18  
**impact** 12:14  
**imperative** 22:16  
**implement** 50:16  
**implementing** 25:6  
**importance** 27:10  
**important** 6:13,17  
11:14,20,22 12:17  
29:15 30:7 42:4  
42:10  
**impossible** 12:2  
25:14,18  
**improve** 5:5 22:10  
22:12

**improved** 14:12  
**improving** 24:19  
**in-stage** 10:18  
**incarceration** 17:2  
**incidents** 11:7  
**include** 22:22 25:20  
**included** 44:19  
**including** 22:5  
**income** 18:6 21:21  
23:12 28:14 29:19  
50:2 51:17 52:10  
52:12 54:12,20  
**increased** 12:8  
**increasing** 14:20  
**incredible** 12:19  
**indicated** 32:11  
**individual** 11:21  
39:10  
**individuals** 5:20  
7:11 29:18 48:14  
49:5,22  
**informal** 6:9  
**information** 7:20  
38:10  
**infrastructure** 5:6  
**initiative** 55:16  
**initiatives** 16:1  
**injured** 19:4  
**input** 20:4 61:7  
**inside** 39:19 46:22  
**interest** 56:17  
**interested** 32:18  
**interesting** 29:14  
40:21  
**interestingly** 14:2  
**introduce** 20:10  
**introducing** 55:17  
57:4  
**invest** 12:8 16:14  
**investment** 3:21  
5:13  
**involved** 25:15  
**ironically** 15:8  
**issue** 6:17 28:7,9  
28:10,14 37:6,8  
40:9,22  
**issues** 10:8 18:1  
29:8 32:22 38:20

55:10 57:1  
**items** 29:7,14

---

**J**


---

**jail** 36:14  
**Jennifer** 2:4 4:13  
4:16,17 8:16  
60:16,22  
**Jersey** 46:16  
**job** 8:16 14:22 15:7  
34:17 38:10 50:8  
51:7 53:4 55:22  
56:14  
**jobs** 28:14 34:8  
43:12 46:16 48:19  
55:22  
**John** 2:20 24:8,18  
55:7,11  
**joined** 4:18  
**joining** 8:12  
**Joseph's** 1:15 2:5  
9:22 10:4,16  
**Jr** 45:13  
**June** 11:4 51:7  
**jurisdictions** 3:17  
**Justice** 2:15 37:3

---

**K**


---

**keep** 17:4 34:19  
36:6 37:17 47:6  
60:7  
**keeping** 14:7,22  
15:4  
**Kennedy** 1:16 2:10  
17:13 20:7 23:2,4  
23:5  
**kept** 35:9  
**key** 3:9 6:13 14:6  
30:17  
**Kidd** 2:7 18:16,18  
18:20 19:2  
**kids** 19:15 51:22  
**kind** 8:2 28:15 32:8  
38:22 45:15 58:9  
**kinds** 56:22  
**King** 19:8  
**know** 8:20,21 11:12  
12:18,18 14:15

15:13 21:16 26:3  
27:13 28:13 31:16  
35:2,12,12,13  
37:11,13,20,21,22  
38:18 41:8,9,11  
46:11 51:18 53:4  
54:21 57:1 58:20  
59:6,21  
**knowing** 56:4 58:7  
**knowledge** 26:7  
**knowledgeable**  
40:22  
**knows** 35:16 44:15  
46:9

---

**L**

---

**L** 57:22  
**lack** 21:17 58:6,7  
**lacking** 55:22  
**ladies** 50:7  
**lady** 44:3 45:17  
59:9,13,19  
**land** 22:19 26:22  
27:5 30:20 41:3  
**large** 20:22 27:6  
**larger** 27:1  
**late** 46:9  
**Latino** 1:14,16 2:8  
2:10 9:19 17:13  
20:19 23:6  
**launched** 6:15  
**law** 41:5  
**lawmakers** 38:4  
**Lea** 51:4,5  
**leadership** 24:1  
**leading** 4:14  
**League** 1:10 3:8,13  
**leave** 59:3  
**LEDC** 20:20 23:17  
25:10,15 26:10  
**LEDC's** 20:21 23:8  
23:9  
**left** 52:19  
**legislation** 33:14  
33:18 34:5  
**letting** 43:6  
**levels** 17:3 24:21  
**leverage** 26:18 27:3

41:15,16  
**leveraged** 42:5  
**leveraging** 24:20  
**library** 46:5,6,12  
**life** 16:17 43:16,17  
59:1  
**light** 48:17 49:3  
**limit** 20:12  
**limited** 16:5,13 41:1  
**Lincoln** 56:2  
**line** 7:16,19 44:18  
**list** 19:17 20:7  
24:12 26:14 27:22  
49:6  
**listening** 48:21  
**literacy** 21:3  
**little** 8:21 17:15  
28:7 29:2 32:9  
36:2 45:4,5 46:9  
**livable** 4:11  
**live** 28:22 35:17  
44:8,9,17,19 46:2  
46:2,17 47:1,2  
51:14 52:2 53:2,4  
53:10 54:18 58:3  
58:19 60:7,9  
**lived** 43:8,8 58:22  
**lives** 53:11  
**living** 6:4 10:15  
11:14 12:10,21  
13:3 14:19 15:18  
16:16  
**load** 11:16,20 12:1  
12:4 13:2  
**local** 3:17 4:1 5:3  
6:2 12:15 41:22  
**locally** 41:7  
**locations** 6:9  
**long** 8:17 19:18  
46:7 49:6  
**long-standing**  
23:14  
**long-term** 24:22  
**look** 8:9,12 21:5  
22:9 28:6,16 30:2  
30:11 31:5 32:10  
37:7 38:12 42:8  
42:15 46:6 59:8

60:2,4  
**looked** 41:17  
**looking** 19:13  
29:11 30:12,21  
32:10 37:9 49:17  
53:7  
**looks** 8:2 36:4  
41:18  
**loony** 59:15  
**lose** 34:22  
**lost** 37:15  
**lot** 15:4 16:19 30:5  
31:8 32:21 48:7  
51:18,19 52:15  
54:22 58:6,13,17  
58:20  
**love** 17:8 50:8  
58:20 59:4  
**low** 5:6 18:5 22:8  
23:12 30:14  
**low-income** 5:16  
6:4  
**low-range** 28:13  
**lower** 12:4  
**lowest** 56:17  
**Luther** 19:8

---

**M**

---

**mail** 7:12  
**mailed** 7:14  
**main** 28:14  
**maintain** 17:3 44:2  
**major** 24:2 55:10  
56:9,9  
**making** 3:21 11:8  
15:9 21:21 29:19  
32:17  
**manage** 54:19  
**manager** 1:16 2:10  
23:6 26:2  
**managers** 6:14  
**mandate** 15:12  
**manufactured**  
58:16  
**manufacturers**  
58:15  
**map** 4:9  
**Marion** 43:11 45:11

54:7  
**market** 3:17 37:17  
**market-rate** 18:4  
**Martin** 19:8  
**Maryland** 44:18  
**Massey** 2:18  
**Massie** 51:1  
**master's** 51:11  
**materials** 32:7  
**matter** 37:11 56:18  
61:11  
**maximum** 22:6  
30:8  
**Maxine** 2:17 48:3  
**mayor** 11:4 12:5,16  
**mayor's** 13:19,22  
16:2  
**mayoral** 11:1  
**McKinley** 46:13  
**Meadow** 47:4  
**mean** 36:3 38:12  
39:5,12 40:17  
**meaning** 11:11  
**meaningful** 53:10  
**means** 45:7  
**meant** 9:8  
**media** 58:13  
**median** 29:19 30:22  
**medical** 13:1,8,11  
13:12 14:5  
**medications** 14:8  
**meds** 17:5  
**meet** 16:1 17:2 42:3  
42:10  
**meeting** 35:9,10  
42:1  
**meetings** 60:14  
61:4  
**meets** 26:6  
**member** 4:14 33:21  
45:11,12  
**members** 20:16  
26:10 52:1  
**memories** 18:8  
**men** 10:15,18 16:16  
16:18  
**menacing** 34:10  
**mental** 16:22 18:1,5

19:4 25:16 59:14  
**mentally** 59:21  
**mention** 52:7,12  
**mentioned** 10:16  
 26:7 40:5,18  
 60:21  
**methodologies**  
 31:21  
**metrics** 30:12  
**mic** 9:14,16 54:4  
**microphone** 20:9  
**mid** 28:13  
**million** 27:12 30:5  
 39:12  
**mind** 17:8  
**minimum** 48:16  
**minute** 36:8 58:8  
**minutes** 6:7 20:13  
 32:13 36:7 60:19  
**Miranda** 1:19 2:6  
 17:17  
**moderate** 23:12  
**moderate-income**  
 5:7 22:8  
**mom** 43:19,20 44:6  
 44:8,11 45:5  
 47:12  
**moment** 4:13,21  
 8:10 42:22 60:16  
**moms** 34:8  
**money** 15:8 38:16  
 50:1 51:10 52:18  
 52:19  
**monies** 34:3  
**Montana** 29:8  
**month** 44:20 46:21  
 50:3 53:5 57:6  
**months** 56:15  
**Moore** 2:16 42:19  
 42:20 43:3,5,7  
 47:21 48:1  
**Morgan** 28:22 31:2  
 31:5  
**mortgage** 21:15  
 34:21 56:16  
**mother** 43:15,18  
 47:10  
**move** 40:13

**moved** 19:12 51:7  
**moving** 7:1 21:17  
 34:19

---

**N**


---

**name** 4:17 7:4 9:15  
 20:18 23:5 28:21  
 33:13 36:11 37:2  
 37:8 43:6 55:11  
 57:19 58:2  
**names** 53:20  
**Nannie** 46:5  
**nation** 11:10  
**national** 56:21  
**native** 43:7  
**navigate** 25:12  
**navigating** 16:10  
 16:12  
**near** 59:12,12  
**necessary** 37:17  
**need** 9:6 10:14  
 15:12 16:8,16,19  
 20:2 34:17 38:20  
 39:13 42:2,3,9  
 45:20,20 58:18  
**needs** 3:19 4:2 9:9  
 9:10 21:7,20 30:1  
 41:15 44:13 45:5  
 59:22  
**neighborhood** 29:1  
 29:4,5 31:2,5  
**neighborhoods** 5:4  
**never** 16:18  
**new** 10:14 11:18  
 19:8 23:17 31:6  
 37:17 46:5,6,15  
 46:16,17 47:5  
 49:13 50:1  
**news** 14:14,15  
**nice** 52:5  
**night** 44:12 49:20  
 51:15  
**Nightingale** 2:17  
 48:3,4 50:21  
**nightmare** 55:19  
**nights** 44:11  
**non-housing** 4:3  
 5:10

**nonprofit** 6:3  
**Norton** 44:16  
**note** 6:17 29:15  
 54:1 56:16  
**November** 1:7 7:13  
**number** 14:18  
 21:16 28:10 29:6  
 29:14  
**numbers** 13:15  
 15:7  
**nurturing** 10:17  
**NW** 1:11

---

**O**


---

**Obama** 47:7  
**obligation** 38:17,22  
**obtaining** 18:2  
**obviously** 11:20  
 29:10 31:14 40:19  
 41:11  
**October** 46:20  
**offer** 9:5 25:2  
**offices** 7:14  
**official** 29:7  
**officially** 43:12  
**officials** 42:11  
**oh** 34:19 42:2 51:5  
 57:21  
**okay** 9:20 17:12  
 19:1 20:8 32:3  
 33:8 44:17 45:10  
 56:12 57:6 58:14  
**old** 43:11  
**older** 16:7,8 19:2,2  
 43:18  
**once** 22:6 32:15  
 42:13 43:9  
**online** 6:15 37:18  
**open** 19:18  
**opened** 46:20  
**Opening** 2:2,3  
**opportunities** 6:1  
 9:4 10:10 16:7  
 21:13 22:7,17  
 23:22  
**opportunity** 9:5  
 10:7 20:18 25:2,5  
 25:7 27:8 31:18

37:4 44:16 50:18  
 57:15 61:7  
**option** 53:2  
**Orange** 45:14  
**order** 9:7 12:6 16:1  
 28:1  
**organization** 37:3  
 55:14  
**organizations** 6:3  
 7:7  
**organizers** 25:10  
 26:2,3,5,7  
**organizing** 2:10  
 23:6,16 24:11  
 25:17  
**originally** 56:6  
 58:21  
**outcomes** 14:13  
**outlined** 12:17  
 24:17  
**outside** 8:3 38:8  
 51:15  
**overall** 30:5 37:8  
 61:8  
**overview** 5:1  
**ownership** 5:15  
 21:10,13 22:3,15  
**owns** 26:22 30:3

---

**P**


---

**P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-...**  
 3:1  
**p.m** 1:11 3:2 61:12  
**Page** 2:1  
**paid** 50:8 54:15,17  
**Paralee** 2:18 51:1  
**parent** 47:11,12  
**parents** 43:17  
 54:10,11  
**Paris** 1:19 2:6  
 17:17,19,22 18:13  
**Parkland** 47:3,4,5  
**part** 7:9 9:1 21:1  
 27:5 54:15  
**part-time** 43:13  
**participation** 3:20  
**particular** 33:15,20  
 34:15 37:6

**Particularly** 23:16  
25:15 29:6  
**Partnerships** 5:13  
**PASS** 2:20 55:12  
**pay** 34:21 47:6  
51:20 52:12  
**paying** 34:16 44:20  
**payments** 56:16  
**people** 6:11 10:11  
12:10,20 13:3,7  
13:10 14:7,19,20  
14:22 15:4,11,18  
16:10,12,15 28:12  
32:18 34:7 35:12  
35:18 39:8 40:7  
42:2,6,6 48:18  
51:18,20 52:11,17  
52:17 53:1,1,8,10  
56:1,3,9 57:2 58:9  
58:11,19,20 59:15  
**percent** 11:11,14  
11:15,17 13:7,9  
13:11,16,20 14:1  
14:18,18 51:16  
52:7,9,11 54:14  
54:17  
**performance** 29:12  
30:11  
**period** 8:17 42:14  
**permanent** 15:16  
16:14  
**permits** 40:12  
**person** 9:21 45:2  
**person's** 12:1  
**persons** 6:1,4  
11:14,15 18:1  
**perspective** 31:20  
37:7 38:9 40:10  
53:8  
**perspectives** 6:19  
**peruse** 8:4  
**Petworth** 29:5 31:1  
**Philip** 1:16 2:10  
17:13 20:7 23:2,5  
**phone** 49:20  
**piece** 28:16 30:16  
**place** 13:14 19:14  
20:1 22:7 26:19

31:8 40:13 45:1,3  
45:7,13 47:2 50:4  
**place-based** 3:21  
**places** 15:4 19:16  
19:22  
**plan** 1:4,4 3:16,16  
4:1,9,15,20 7:15  
7:19 8:1,19,22 9:7  
21:9 32:8,11,13  
32:14 33:6 35:2,3  
35:6,7 36:1,10  
37:6,9,20 38:1  
41:18 56:6 60:15  
61:5,8  
**planning** 11:2 23:1  
40:1 60:3  
**play** 26:3  
**please** 7:3,17 8:3  
20:8,9,14 22:18  
23:3 27:21 36:22  
50:11 53:19,21  
57:16,16 60:16  
61:10  
**point** 30:17 34:18  
39:9 40:3 42:4  
**points** 11:13 13:21  
14:4 60:20  
**policy** 4:5 6:22  
**political** 57:3  
**Polly** 1:11,14 2:2  
3:4 7:14  
**pool** 13:7  
**populations** 25:21  
**portfolio** 15:22  
**possibilities** 22:18  
**possible** 27:15 30:9  
39:12  
**Post** 51:19  
**post-purchase**  
24:22  
**posted** 51:19  
**poverty** 17:1  
**powerful** 40:1  
**predominantly** 59:7  
59:18  
**prejudiced** 59:10  
**premise** 9:11  
**prepared** 57:13

**preparing** 21:12  
**PRESENT** 1:13,18  
**preservation** 23:9  
25:9  
**preserve** 23:11,19  
**preserving** 26:20  
**presiding** 1:11  
**pressing** 10:14  
**pretty** 13:14 36:2,4  
**prevent** 23:10  
**prevention** 21:4  
**previous** 8:1 32:12  
32:14,17  
**price** 29:17 31:2  
**prices** 30:21  
**primarily** 14:21  
**printed** 7:20  
**priorities** 6:22 26:9  
**priority** 21:21  
**private** 24:20 56:7  
**privilege** 24:8  
**PRN** 43:13  
**probably** 14:15  
30:3 37:13  
**problem** 37:8,14  
38:7 56:10,21,22  
**problems** 48:22  
**process** 5:1 6:7  
8:20 24:12,15,19  
25:4,14 26:4,4,12  
40:2,19 41:12  
**producing** 26:20  
37:16  
**Production** 27:12  
**program** 2:10 3:11  
5:3,13,19 6:2  
10:11 12:12 14:3  
14:6 15:20 16:3  
21:11 22:1,5 23:6  
23:10 43:12 54:2  
54:6,8,15,21  
**programs** 3:10,12  
5:20 22:10,12  
50:13,16 54:10  
60:21  
**progress** 15:9  
**progressing** 15:5  
**project** 24:19 27:6

44:10  
**projects** 5:10 6:3  
27:2 31:10 38:15  
38:18  
**promises** 42:12  
**promote** 5:4  
**promoting** 4:10  
**pronounce** 57:18  
**proper** 49:16  
**properties** 21:18  
22:19 26:22 29:21  
30:10,19 31:14,22  
48:12,15  
**property** 30:3,16  
49:4,4  
**protection** 55:13  
**protections** 23:15  
**proud** 13:5  
**provide** 6:14 10:17  
18:7 21:2 48:14  
52:15 53:12  
**provided** 6:11  
**provides** 5:19 6:19  
**providing** 5:16 18:4  
**public** 1:3 3:14 6:10  
6:12 7:10 9:1,1,17  
38:3 60:14 61:5  
**purchase** 3:10 22:1  
23:8 24:4,5,7 25:7  
49:5  
**purported** 33:17  
**purview** 38:8  
**Puryear** 2:15 36:22  
37:1,2 42:18  
**pushing** 39:7  
**put** 24:12 40:19  
41:12 45:7 58:9  
59:2  
**putting** 4:14

---

**Q**


---

**Quality** 32:3,6  
**question** 39:10  
43:18  
**questions** 39:3  
**Quincy** 30:2  
**quote** 11:5

**R**

**raise** 45:8  
**raised** 43:15  
**raising** 22:5 55:1  
**ran** 29:8 54:8  
**range** 6:20 30:16  
 30:22 31:3  
**rate** 14:2 37:18  
 56:17  
**rates** 12:4  
**reach** 12:6  
**reaching** 24:21  
**read** 51:18 52:11  
**ready** 21:15  
**real** 8:18 31:7 38:14  
**realize** 10:5  
**realized** 51:8  
**really** 9:6 10:6  
 11:13,21 13:5  
 14:6,10,14 29:18  
 31:20 35:8 37:4,5  
 37:19 40:9 41:19  
 51:21 60:19  
**reason** 52:8  
**recall** 30:14  
**receive** 10:21 11:9  
 12:21  
**received** 10:20  
**recognize** 29:15  
**recommend** 21:8  
**recommendation**  
 22:10,13 48:13  
**recommendations**  
 24:6,13,16 26:8  
 26:15  
**record** 7:11 9:2,17  
 37:2 61:12  
**recording** 9:16  
**redevelopment**  
 41:8  
**reducing** 11:7 15:9  
**reflective** 9:8  
**reframe** 41:16  
**refuse** 42:9 51:12  
**regarding** 28:9  
**regards** 29:2  
**register** 25:11  
**regulations** 26:12

**rehabilitating** 5:14  
**reinvigorated** 30:1  
**related** 31:10  
**relatively** 37:10  
**relaxing** 28:16  
**release** 11:3 61:5  
**relieve** 18:7  
**relocated** 51:9  
**remaining** 54:15  
**Remarks** 2:2  
**remind** 50:6  
**remove** 56:8  
**removed** 56:1  
**renewal** 32:10  
**rent** 5:15 21:18  
 51:21 52:12,18  
 54:13 55:21  
**rental** 5:16 49:4  
**reparations** 55:15  
 56:12,13 57:5  
**repeated** 27:9  
**report** 11:4 23:1  
 29:12,13 41:14  
**reports** 32:16  
**representative**  
 44:14  
**represents** 25:8  
**requirements** 27:7  
**research** 14:11  
**resident** 1:19 17:17  
 55:2  
**resident's** 31:20  
**residents** 5:17 6:13  
 7:7,16 11:12  
 15:14 17:4 21:11  
 23:13 42:7 48:5,9  
 50:7,14,15 60:1,7  
**residual** 51:17  
**resource** 5:2,9,12  
 5:18,22  
**resources** 3:22 4:1  
 4:6,22 16:5 41:22  
 41:22 58:7  
**response** 10:12  
**responsible** 42:11  
**Restitution** 55:15  
**restrictions** 26:18  
**retired** 19:3

**review** 8:9 29:11  
 32:8,12  
**reviewing** 24:19  
**revitalize** 5:4  
**ride** 59:16  
**right** 16:3 38:20  
 54:3 56:10 60:5  
 60:18  
**rightful** 33:13,18  
 34:4  
**rights** 23:15  
**rings** 49:20  
**Road** 46:12,14  
**robustly** 16:14  
**rock** 50:3  
**role** 10:11 26:3  
**room** 8:4 56:12  
**Roy** 2:13 28:20,21  
**rule** 35:6  
**run** 57:3  
**running** 38:15  
**rush** 34:1  
**Ryan** 11:1 14:5  
 15:15

**S**

**s** 10:12  
**sad** 19:22  
**safe** 14:11 15:19  
 52:6 60:8  
**safety** 51:13 55:13  
**salary** 54:14  
**sale** 25:2 29:16  
**Sam** 47:8  
**Sanders** 1:15 2:5  
 9:22 10:3,4 17:7  
**satisfied** 53:11  
**saying** 42:2 54:16  
 59:19  
**says** 59:9,14,21  
**scared** 51:15  
**school** 43:9 46:14  
**Scott** 1:15 2:5 9:22  
 10:3  
**search** 51:8  
**second** 5:12 9:21  
 25:6 42:20  
**section** 41:13 54:9

**security** 47:7,14  
 56:15,21  
**see** 7:3 8:2 11:17  
 17:11,14 29:4  
 30:18 31:21 33:7  
 35:7 36:13,15  
 37:19 41:18 45:14  
 49:8 58:13,18  
**seeing** 34:6  
**seek** 23:18  
**seen** 27:11 35:6  
 49:3 59:10  
**self** 44:7  
**senior** 16:8 19:16  
 43:17 45:19 46:14  
**sense** 38:3,11 39:8  
 40:17 41:17 48:19  
**sentiments** 48:8  
**September** 10:21  
**series** 9:12  
**serve** 11:1 24:14  
 25:20  
**served** 40:17  
**services** 3:11 5:6  
 5:20 10:22 12:15  
 13:10,20 15:15,20  
 21:7  
**setting** 11:10  
**shame** 16:21 55:21  
**shape** 9:7  
**share** 27:13 33:4  
 51:21  
**shared** 24:17  
**shed** 48:17  
**sheet** 50:13 57:16  
**shocking** 38:13  
**short** 8:17  
**showing** 14:11  
**shows** 12:14  
**sick** 35:20  
**side** 40:15 44:20  
**sign** 7:4 27:22  
 53:19 57:16 59:8  
 59:10,11,15,17,21  
**sign-in** 7:21,22  
**signed** 7:2,6 27:20  
 28:2  
**significant** 37:14

**significantly** 12:8  
**simple** 43:21  
**simply** 57:14  
**sincere** 50:14  
**single** 18:5 19:2  
 30:13 43:15 54:11  
**sister** 45:4 46:9  
**sit** 40:14  
**sitting** 30:4,20  
**Skow** 2:4 4:13,17  
 4:18 8:8 36:8  
**slanted** 58:17  
**slave** 56:19  
**slaves** 55:20  
**Smith** 47:19  
**social** 12:12 47:7  
 47:13  
**Solutions** 5:19  
**solve** 38:20  
**somebody** 45:9  
**son** 49:15  
**soon** 8:18  
**sort** 31:15 38:7  
 56:6  
**South** 46:19  
**Southern** 44:18  
**speak** 7:8 10:7 29:1  
 37:5 49:21 50:18  
 54:3 57:2  
**speaking** 56:3  
**speaks** 41:14  
**special** 4:2  
**specific** 60:20  
**specifically** 10:9  
 16:15  
**speech** 57:3,4  
**spend** 4:5 6:6 54:13  
**spent** 32:13  
**spot** 34:2  
**spring** 9:3  
**Sr** 45:12  
**stability** 48:19  
**stable** 14:12 15:16  
 15:19  
**staff** 4:13 40:21  
 48:5  
**stages** 25:3  
**stakeholder** 33:22

**stakeholders** 6:20  
 33:21  
**stamps** 52:20  
**start** 9:11 39:2,11  
**started** 6:7 27:19  
 54:7  
**state** 15:17 33:21  
 34:13  
**statement** 2:3  
 57:14  
**statements** 7:13  
**states** 3:17 6:3  
**status** 11:13  
**statute** 41:1  
**stay** 15:11 37:12  
 44:10,11 45:2,3  
**STD** 11:4  
**step** 53:19  
**stigma** 16:21  
**storage** 45:8  
**strategy** 4:5  
**street** 1:10 30:2  
 31:12,13 32:7  
 47:1  
**strengthening** 24:6  
**stress** 18:7 58:9  
**stressful** 19:21  
**strongly** 15:21  
**structured** 37:7  
**struggle** 16:21,22  
**stuff** 36:12  
**subject** 7:16,18  
 33:13,18  
**subjects** 34:4  
**submit** 7:9,10  
 42:14  
**submitted** 4:6  
**subsequently** 19:5  
**subsidy** 18:4  
**substance** 17:1  
**success** 24:22  
**successfully** 25:11  
 50:17  
**suffer** 35:16  
**suffering** 34:6 35:1  
 46:3,4 49:17  
**suggest** 21:21  
**suggested** 50:12

**summer** 6:8 43:11  
**supplemental** 54:9  
**supplemented**  
 54:13  
**support** 12:6 13:13  
 16:9,9,13,20 21:5  
 21:10 22:11 23:8  
 25:3 55:3  
**supporting** 22:13  
**supportive** 16:15  
 23:13  
**supports** 5:13  
**supposed** 35:7  
 44:6 47:11  
**suppressed** 11:20  
 12:1 13:18,21  
**suppression** 11:16  
 13:3,15 14:3  
**sure** 11:9  
**surprising** 14:10  
**survey** 6:15 60:15  
 61:4,10  
**survive** 47:11  
**swift** 26:11

---

**T**


---

**table** 2:1 7:4,21,22  
 9:13 20:11 27:21  
**tablet** 60:17  
**take** 4:21 7:4 8:3  
 18:12 34:18 38:10  
 43:20 44:7 51:22  
 60:16,18 61:10  
**taken** 6:16 44:1,14  
 60:15  
**takes** 22:7 52:15  
**talk** 58:3 60:20  
**talking** 8:21 24:8  
 29:16 30:15 40:21  
**taught** 44:7  
**tax** 47:8  
**taxed** 47:10  
**TB** 11:4  
**team** 4:14  
**tell** 25:1 60:5  
**telling** 42:9  
**ten** 60:18  
**tenant** 2:10 23:5,8

23:14 24:4,5,6  
 26:2 54:8,20  
**tenants** 23:10  
 24:14 25:1,5,11  
 25:12,16,18  
**tens** 39:14  
**terminal** 10:19  
**terms** 8:20 41:2  
 61:8  
**terrible** 49:9  
**terrific** 8:16  
**testified** 6:11 45:17  
 46:1  
**testify** 7:2 10:5,9  
 20:18 27:8,20  
 37:5 39:16 42:22  
 43:6 53:18 57:12  
 57:22  
**testimony** 2:5 7:9  
 7:18 17:7 20:13  
 22:22 27:17 28:19  
 33:4 35:22 36:18  
 42:14,18 47:21  
 48:7 50:21 53:15  
 55:5 57:9 60:12  
**thank** 8:12,15 10:2  
 17:6,9 18:9,10,13  
 18:14 20:3,4,11  
 20:14,17 21:5  
 22:4,20,21 23:1,3  
 27:16,17 28:2,4  
 28:17,18 32:22  
 33:2,8,8 36:15,17  
 37:1 42:13,17,20  
 43:5,5 47:20 48:1  
 48:2 50:18,20,21  
 53:14,16,20 55:3  
 55:4 57:6,8,9,17  
 57:22 58:1 60:10  
 60:11,13 61:2,9  
 61:10  
**Thanks** 10:4 27:8  
 27:15 42:21  
**thing** 19:11,13  
 38:22 43:10 58:5  
**things** 34:17 39:4  
 40:4 41:11 45:8  
**think** 12:17 37:12



38:3,3,4,6,6,10  
 39:2,9,11,22 40:3  
 40:5,6,7,16 41:6  
 41:13,15 42:4,6  
 42:10 49:8 53:7  
 58:10  
**third** 3:14 5:18  
 39:22 51:16 52:7  
 52:9 59:1  
**Thomas** 45:12,13  
**thought** 35:19 37:9  
**thoughts** 9:6,7  
**thousand** 39:13  
**thousands** 39:14  
**threat** 25:3  
**threatening** 15:10  
**three** 19:7 24:2  
 40:14 43:8,12  
 45:10  
**tight** 36:12  
**time** 8:17 14:18  
 18:2 20:11 21:4  
 21:16 22:8,11,14  
 22:17 33:1 34:19  
 37:16 45:22 49:10  
 51:15 53:18 58:18  
**times** 43:8 45:10  
 47:18,19  
**today** 22:16 29:2  
**today's** 7:1  
**told** 36:3 41:4 48:20  
**tome** 18:16  
**tonight** 3:7 6:16 7:8  
 8:12 9:12 18:15  
 24:1 60:13,21  
**tonight's** 6:18  
**tool** 25:8  
**tools** 23:19 27:3  
**top** 46:18  
**TOPA** 25:2 40:9  
**topics** 6:13  
**touches** 4:1  
**training** 21:2  
**transitional** 16:14  
**transmission** 12:4  
**transmit** 12:3  
**treatment** 11:15  
**tremendous** 16:17

**true** 25:4  
**Trust** 27:12  
**try** 42:14 48:13  
**trying** 32:14 39:20  
 47:15 49:10 55:16  
**turn** 4:12 8:10 43:1  
 47:15 59:7  
**two** 6:10 11:13  
 43:17 44:11  
**two-pager** 32:11  
**type** 34:9

---

### U

**U.S** 4:7  
**unbelievable** 41:3  
**Uncle** 47:8  
**underlying** 12:12  
**understand** 34:17  
**understanding**  
 33:22  
**unfair** 59:5  
**unimproved** 41:3  
**unique** 29:9  
**unit** 18:4 39:14  
**units** 37:15,18  
 39:13  
**university** 59:13,18  
 59:18  
**unobjectionable**  
 37:10  
**updated** 4:6  
**Urban** 1:10 3:8,13  
 4:7  
**use** 9:14,16 21:22  
 23:18 27:1 38:1  
 38:21 40:1,9 41:2  
 51:16 52:9,17  
**uses** 15:1  
**utilize** 30:8  
**utilized** 25:8  
**utilizes** 29:21

---

### V

**vacant** 22:19 30:4,5  
 30:9 31:14  
**vacants** 40:18,20  
**various** 30:6  
**verge** 44:3,4,4

**veteran** 49:9,14  
**veterans** 56:15  
**view** 60:20  
**Vincent** 45:14  
**violated** 36:2  
**violates** 33:16  
**violations** 36:5  
**viral** 11:16,20 12:1  
 12:3 13:2,15 14:2  
**virtually** 13:17,21  
**vision** 4:11  
**visit** 52:3  
**vital** 26:3  
**voices** 50:10  
**vote** 6:13 56:13  
**vulnerable** 25:21

---

### W

**Walda** 1:14 2:8  
 9:18 17:11 20:18  
**walk** 51:15  
**Walmart** 46:15,18  
 46:19  
**want** 3:6 4:21 8:5  
 9:10,18 17:11  
 19:19 34:11 35:2  
 35:13 36:15 37:5  
 44:8 49:13 52:5,5  
 58:3 60:7,13  
**wanted** 8:2,9 20:5  
 23:2 28:6 29:1  
 33:4 55:1,9 60:6  
**ward** 6:9 43:8,8,9  
 45:10,11,12,13  
 46:2,3,3,4,6 48:7  
 48:9 49:7 50:15  
 55:2,3 58:3,3,4,12  
 58:15,16  
**Washington** 1:10  
 1:11 3:8,13 19:20  
 49:2 50:15 51:19  
 58:21  
**Washingtonian**  
 19:19 43:7  
**way** 30:9 38:11  
 39:11 40:1 41:9  
 41:10,17 42:1,10  
 42:16 48:20 50:11  
 58:19  
**ways** 24:13 38:5  
**we'll** 7:5 17:15  
 55:17  
**we're** 3:7,12 6:17  
 11:10 14:21 15:4  
 15:6,8,9 20:6,10  
 30:14 35:7 37:14  
 37:16 39:20 56:20  
 56:21  
**we've** 10:20 27:11  
 35:11 46:3  
**website** 8:7,8 32:12  
**Wednesday** 1:6  
 7:13 46:11  
**week** 6:12  
**weeks** 26:16  
**welcome** 2:2 3:6  
 36:20  
**went** 46:21,21  
 61:12  
**white** 11:2 14:5  
 15:15 59:9  
**wide** 6:20  
**William** 47:19  
**wish** 7:8  
**wishes** 37:21  
**witness** 17:12 20:7  
**witnesses** 2:5 7:6  
 9:12  
**woman** 19:3 54:16  
**women** 10:15,18  
 16:17,18  
**wondering** 35:18  
**word** 48:18  
**work** 4:9 16:6,19  
 21:6,11 22:11  
 23:13,16 25:11  
 30:18 32:21 41:9  
 41:10 44:2 46:14  
 46:15 53:1 61:1  
**worked** 43:10 60:1  
**working** 22:9 23:8  
 24:5,10 26:10  
 28:8,12,13 43:12  
 45:16 54:10,11  
**works** 3:9 23:10  
 29:20 47:12,13

<b>world</b> 52:4	<b>18th</b> 7:13 46:12	<b>5</b> 32:15 43:8,9 45:13 46:4
<b>worst</b> 19:13	<b>1975</b> 59:6	<b>5-year-old</b> 45:5
<b>worthwhile</b> 60:19	<b>1996</b> 10:20	<b>50</b> 11:17
<b>wouldn't</b> 17:8 34:11 53:3 54:13	<hr/> <b>2</b> <hr/>	<b>500</b> 14:20 15:20 30:3
<b>written</b> 6:11 7:10 7:13 33:4 35:10 42:14	<b>20</b> 2:9 17:5	<b>51</b> 2:18
<b>wrote</b> 35:22	<b>2002</b> 37:15	<b>54</b> 2:19
<hr/> <b>X</b> <hr/>	<b>2004</b> 15:17	<b>55</b> 2:20 16:7
<hr/> <b>Y</b> <hr/>	<b>2009</b> 13:7,17	<b>57</b> 2:21
<b>Yan</b> 9:19	<b>2011</b> 14:17	<hr/> <b>6</b> <hr/>
<b>year</b> 4:19 7:15,19 10:21 13:9 14:20 19:6 21:9 30:12 39:13 47:9,14	<b>2013</b> 13:7,17	<b>6,600</b> 15:14
<b>year's</b> 29:13	<b>2014</b> 13:8,18,21 29:13	<b>6:17</b> 3:2
<b>years</b> 4:8 14:10,11 17:3,5 19:7 21:22 32:15 35:17 40:14 43:11 46:4,4,7 54:6 56:19	<b>2015</b> 1:7	<b>6:30</b> 1:11
<b>Yon</b> 1:14 2:8 17:11 20:15,18	<b>2016</b> 4:19 9:2,3 61:6	<b>60</b> 52:11
<b>young</b> 44:3 45:16 54:16	<b>2016-2020</b> 1:4 21:8	<b>61</b> 2:22
<b>Youth</b> 43:11	<b>2020</b> 4:19 11:11 13:13	<b>62</b> 13:7
<b>Yvette</b> 2:7 18:16	<b>2091</b> 1:10	<b>67</b> 35:17
<hr/> <b>Z</b> <hr/>	<b>21</b> 14:17,18	<hr/> <b>7</b> <hr/>
<hr/> <b>0</b> <hr/>	<b>21-year-old</b> 45:4	<b>7</b> 48:7,9 49:7 50:15 55:2,3 58:4,4,15 58:16
<hr/> <b>1</b> <hr/>	<b>23</b> 2:11	<b>7:48</b> 61:12
<b>1</b> 15:15	<b>23rd</b> 46:20	<b>74</b> 13:19
<b>1,000</b> 15:19	<b>24</b> 6:10	<b>7th</b> 32:6
<b>10</b> 2:5 17:5	<b>25</b> 54:14	<hr/> <b>8</b> <hr/>
<b>100</b> 21:14	<b>26th</b> 46:20	<b>8</b> 43:8 45:12 46:3,6 54:9 58:4,4,15,16
<b>11</b> 14:4	<b>28</b> 2:12,13	<hr/> <b>9</b> <hr/>
<b>14</b> 31:13 59:11	<hr/> <b>3</b> <hr/>	<b>90</b> 11:11,14,15 13:22
<b>14,000</b> 49:17	<b>3</b> 2:2 15:16	<b>90-90-90-50</b> 11:11 12:5 16:2 17:2
<b>14th</b> 1:10	<b>30</b> 17:5 30:15 32:13 54:14	<b>93</b> 13:9
<b>15</b> 54:6 59:11	<b>30,000</b> 37:15	
<b>16</b> 13:21 43:10	<b>300</b> 56:19	
<b>16,000</b> 15:18	<b>31</b> 13:11	
<b>17</b> 2:6	<b>33</b> 2:14 51:16 52:7 52:9 54:17	
<b>18</b> 2:7	<b>37</b> 2:15	
	<b>39</b> 30:12	
	<hr/> <b>4</b> <hr/>	
	<b>4</b> 1:7 2:4 58:3	
	<b>42</b> 2:16	
	<b>45</b> 32:13	
	<b>47</b> 13:16	
	<b>48</b> 2:17 56:15	
	<hr/> <b>5</b> <hr/>	

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

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Court Reporter

**NEAL R. GROSS**

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