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**Affordable Housing Groups Praise Council Chairman’s Comprehensive Plan Bill**

**Washington, D.C. - October 3, 2019** - Today a coalition of affordable housing stakeholders applaud critical revisions to the draft Comprehensive Plan released by DC Council Chairman Phil Mendelson. This transformative update incorporates three of the coalition’s priorities: ensuring the creation of affordable housing, preventing displacement, and addressing racial equity. The bill will get its final votes by the full council next **Tuesday, October 8**.

“We are gratified that the Comprehensive Plan bill offers the guidance our city needs to make affordable housing and preventing displacement top priorities. The bill also provides clarity to the development approval process, clearing the way for increasing affordable housing and other public benefits, along with community input as part of the negotiated process,” said Cheryl Cort, [Coalition for Smarter Growth](#), a member of the DC Housing Priorities Coalition.

The group pressed for the DC Council to amend its bill after the first vote on July 10, urging the body to adopt stronger language on how affordable housing would be prioritized in land use decisions. It appealed to zoning experts and the DC Office of Planning to work with the DC Council to ensure the development approval process (i.e. [Planned Unit Developments](#)), would achieve greater levels of housing affordability, tenant protections, and increased certainty. The group’s goal was to achieve more affordable housing and prevent displacement of existing residents, while reestablishing a more fruitful development review process.

“We talk about the Framework elements as a “bill of rights” for District residents and communities,” said Melissa Bondi, Mid-Atlantic State & Local Policy Director for [Enterprise Community Partners](#). “It is important that the current language reflects our values, including prioritizing resident protections, emphasizing greater housing affordability, and evolving our approaches to achieve a truly inclusive, equitable city.”

“We thank Chairman Mendelson for amending the Comprehensive Plan bill to prioritize the creation of affordable housing and prevention of displacement, while also providing needed clarity to the development review process. We particularly appreciate that the administration, the Council, and advocates were able to find common ground to facilitate a more equitable development process for the District,” said Steve Glaude, President and CEO of the [Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development \(CNHED\)](#).

“The revised language provided by Chairman Mendelson will accomplish the goals we set - to elevate affordable housing and racial equity, and fix the broken project review process, said Heather Raspberry, Executive Director of [the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers \(HAND\)](#). “Creating and preserving more affordable housing throughout the District is the cornerstone to building an inclusive city where all of our neighbors have an opportunity to thrive. We appreciate the Chairman and Council’s thoughtful review of the Plan which will serve the city and surrounding region well.”

“Prioritizing affordable housing and the prevention of displacement in the Comprehensive Plan are two necessary steps our city must take in charting a path toward a more equitable future,” said Adam Kent, Senior Program Officer at [the Local Initiatives Support Corporation \(LISC\)](#). “We look forward to working with the DC Council on the remaining elements of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure these priorities are maintained throughout.”

# DC Housing Priorities Coalition

## Who We Are

The DC Housing Priorities Coalition includes: Enterprise Community Partners, [DC Fiscal Policy Institute](#), Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED), [Somerset Development Company](#), Coalition for Smarter Growth, [Greater Greater Washington](#), [United Planning Organization \(UPO\)](#), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND).

## Why We Formed

The Housing Priorities Coalition formed three years ago to help update the DC Comprehensive Plan, the land use policy that guides development decisions in the District. (Learn more from DC Office of Planning on the DC Comprehensive Plan amendment process [here](#)). See the full Housing Priorities Coalition amendment package [here](#). The Housing Priorities Coalition's guiding principles for amending the DC Comprehensive Plan are:

- Meet the housing demand
- Equitably distribute housing
- Best utilize areas near transit
- Include families: ensure homes for people of all income levels and of all household sizes, including families.
- Prioritize affordable housing as a community benefit
- Preserve existing affordable housing
- Protect tenants
- Support neighborhood commercial corridors
- Clarify zoning authority
- Improve data collection and transparency

## Why These Priorities:

Lack of affordable housing and risk of displacement are among the greatest challenges DC faces to achieving racial equity, quality of life for residents, and economic sustainability for all.

Low-income District residents, particularly residents of color, do not currently enjoy equal access to affordable housing connected to communities of opportunity, perpetuating a gaping racial equity gap.

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, which is an important way to produce new housing with substantial affordability, is now held up in constant court challenges resulting in thousands of stalled homes, including hundreds of affordable homes. Court challenges and rulings have relied heavily on narrow interpretations of the Comp Plan, so the proposed amendments help to clarify how the Zoning Commission should judge and prioritize PUDs. Such clarification is critical, because even the risk of lawsuits has dramatically reduced the use of PUDs for affordable and market-rate housing (ex: Park Morton public housing blocked due to Bruce Monroe PUD lawsuit). View the list of stalled projects published by Washington Business Journal [here](#).