



Testimony Tips and Tricks: What to Expect and How to Testify on the Comp Plan

When:

- Thursday, November 12th (starting at 10am) or Friday, November 13th (starting at 9am)

How:

- Virtual live testimony on the dates above. This will take place on Zoom or WebEx.
 - [Sign up here](#) as soon as possible because the committee may limit participants. The last day to sign up to testify live is November 9th at 5pm.
 - Witnesses who need spoken language interpretation, or require sign language interpretation, should inform the committee at least five business days before the hearing. Requests submitted fewer than five days before the hearing will likely not be accommodated.
- Written testimony can be submitted to cow@dccouncil.us through December 3rd at 5pm.
- Voicemail testimony can be recorded by calling 202-430-6948. It must not exceed 3 minutes. The voicemail will later be transcribed for the committee.

What to Expect:

- After you sign up, the committee will send you a link to the hearing with further instructions after the deadline of November 9th. Hopefully, we all will be accommodated!
- Each panelist will have **3 minutes** to testify. Only one person per organization may testify.
- Testimony received by November 10th at 5pm will be posted in advance on the Chairman’s website. Participants who plan to testify live are encouraged to submit their written testimonies by this date, but the record will stay open until December 3rd if you need to update your testimony after the hearing.
- The committee director will send out the witness list on November 10th. For this two-day hearing, it will tell you on which day you are scheduled to testify. And you can also get a sense of who will be on your panel.
 - Panel size is TBD. Some committees have stuck to the usual 4 people per panel while others have incorporated larger panels.
- When it is time for your panel, committee staff will move you from the “waiting Zoom/WebEx room” into the Zoom/WebEx room with the committee members. They will also unmute you when it is time for you to deliver your testimony. You will see a timer that will help you keep track of how much time you have left as you speak.

- After everyone on your panel testifies, the Chairman and members of the committee will have the opportunity to ask you questions.

Tips and Tricks:

- Testifying at the live hearing is the most effective way to have your voice heard.
- Sometimes the committee is late in sending out the witness list so don't panic! You can always reach out to the committee director if you haven't heard back by November 11th.
- Once you do receive the witness list, you may observe that you are scheduled to go at an inconvenient time for you. You can reach out to the committee director to see if you can be moved up or pushed further back.
- Sometimes, witnesses don't show up so the list will get shifted in real time. Be sure to monitor the hearing in case you get called earlier than expected.
- Log onto the Zoom or WebEx platform about 10-15 minutes before you are scheduled to testify to make sure there are no tech issues. This timeframe may change based on committee preferences.
 - You can also check your lighting at this time too. Sitting in front of lights or windows can reduce your visibility on camera.
- You only have 3 minutes so practice timing yourself! If you are unable to condense your written testimony into 3 speaking minutes, you can do a longer written testimony for the record and read a shorter oral version. But be sure you hit your main points in the oral one.
 - Don't be surprised if your mic gets cut off once you exceed 3 minutes.
- Make sure you can see your testimony on your screen if you don't have a printer.
- If you don't know the answer to a question asked of you by members of the Committee, you can be honest and say that. If you want to be on a panel with partners (which can be helpful in answering questions), feel free to make a request to the committee director.
- Committee Director for specific inquiries – Evan Cash, ecash@dccouncil.us.

How to Testify on the Comp Plan:

- You should include the bill title and committee name at the top of your written testimony.
 - Committee of the Whole, Public Hearing on Bill 23-736, the “Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020.”
- You should begin your testimony by addressing the chairperson and committee members. State your name, whether you are testifying on behalf of a group or organization, and why you are there.
 - “Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Doni Crawford, and I am a policy analyst at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI). I'm here to urge the Council to pass Office of Planning's amendments to the Comp Plan intact by the end of 2020.”
- Make it personal. As an individual, you should speak from your own experience. And if you live in DC, make sure to say that.
 - “I am a resident of DC/Ward 5 and I really care about ensuring that we dismantle the structures and policies that make Black communities and other communities of

color most vulnerable to being involuntarily displaced from DC. The revised Comp Plan is one tool that can be used to address significant racial disparities in housing and economic opportunity.”

- You have limited time, and your audience has a limited attention span. Be as clear, and direct as possible. If you have concrete recommendations, list and bold them at the beginning of your testimony and again at the end if you have time.
 - Beginning: **“I’m recommending that this Committee approve and enact the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act in 2020.”**
 - End: **“Approving and enacting the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act in 2020** will increase housing options across the District and help prevent the displacement of Black and brown residents from their communities.”

We have drafted [talking points](#) on topline messaging, the urgency of the Council acting this year, and context on the Comprehensive Plan’s evolution that you can incorporate into your testimony. Feel free to share and use!