

Smart Growth Principles for the 2026 DC Elections

A vision for an inclusive, walkable, transit-oriented, affordable, and thriving DC

Despite many recent challenges, the District of Columbia is still resilient and in demand with walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, a robust bus and rail transit system, and a reservoir of dedicated affordable housing. DC's elected leaders must build on these strengths to ensure that all current and future residents can find the homes and transportation options they need to connect to the services, jobs, education, recreation, and communities they seek to build a better life.

Principles

1. Create inclusive, walkable, transit-oriented communities
2. Provide affordable homes for all
3. Build safer streets, connected communities
4. Offer better transit & better buses

1. Create inclusive, walkable, transit-oriented communities

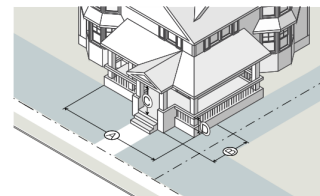
DC neighborhoods should be walkable and inclusive -- offering more homes within a fifteen-minute walk to daily needs, and access to frequent, reliable transit, and safe bikeways. Diverse housing and transportation choices must be available throughout the District as we continue to build a more vibrant, equitable, and inclusive city.

Upzone land along transit corridors to encourage medium and higher-density housing options and mixed-use buildings. Combine with affordability tools such as Inclusionary Zoning/IZ+, conversion of public land for housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and form-based zoning.



Allow rowhouses and house-scale multi-unit buildings, especially near transit corridors and in high-priced, high-demand areas. Encourage adaptation and construction of context-sensitive multi-family house-scale buildings instead of the enlargement of single-family homes. [Pictured: conversion of 2 rowhouses to 10- and 8-unit buildings on Florida Ave. NW]

Establish place type design standards in zoning with detailed standards and examples for blocks, streets, buildings, and public and private open space. These standards are to maintain and improve neighborhood character while meeting DC's goals for increased housing and equity. [Illustration: City of Buffalo, NY porch standards in form-based [zoning code](#)]



Eliminate vehicle parking requirements and allow for vehicle parking based on anticipated demand, cost, streetscape, and non-driving mode share goals.

2. Provide affordable homes for all

Preserve existing dedicated affordable housing, and nurture local affordable housing development capacity to increase affordable and mixed-income housing throughout the city, especially near transit and in high opportunity neighborhoods. Restore confidence in investing and lending for new affordable housing in the city.

Public land for public good: continue to leverage public land (and air rights) dispositions and ground leases for permanently affordable and mixed-income housing. Invest in the Douglass Community Land Trust, DC's largest community land trust. [Pictured: The Wren, 965 Florida Av. NW public land disposition includes: 99 units at 50% AMI, 33 at 30% AMI, total units: 433]

Fund and improve existing housing programs:

Housing Production Trust Fund, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), Local Rent Supplement Program, Housing Purchase Assistance Program, and public housing.

Restore and strengthen agency capacity to

deliver housing projects and services at DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), DC Housing Finance Agency (HFA), and DC Housing Authority (DCHA). Fund ongoing compliance and monitoring.



Support tenant rights to ensure all residents have protections to live in safe, affordable, and stable housing.

Restore investor and lender confidence necessary to support construction and maintenance of housing by implementation of reforms to landlord and tenant laws.

Leverage the robust capacity of DC's affordable housing development sector to restore and accelerate cost-effective affordable and mixed-income housing construction and management.

Support complementary private housing market investments to make the most of subsidies for dedicated affordable homes. Continue to support affordable Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) as a tool to integrate affordable homes into new market-rate developments.

3. Make streets safer for people walking, biking, and rolling

Make DC's streets safer for people of all ages walking, biking, and rolling, especially the highest risk streets in Wards 7 and 8, where the most crashes with serious injuries and fatalities occur.

Implement the [Vision Zero Plan](#): Commit to arterial redesign for the High Injury Network. Rapidly deploy temporary materials and follow up with capital projects for permanent improvements. Preserve DC's right to use photo enforcement for traffic safety and bus lanes efficiency.

Protected bike lanes: Build out and connect DC's protected bicycle network to promote safety, access, health, and mobility for recreation and sustainable transportation.

Address the negative impacts of autonomous vehicle (AV) adoption:

Increased traffic congestion, emergency response delays, air pollution, transit ridership loss, and cybersecurity risks should be addressed through a strict AV regulation and pricing framework.



4. Offer better transit and better buses

Ensure funding and priority for DC's bus and rail system to make commutes and daily errands more affordable, accessible, and sustainable for residents, workers, and visitors.



Fully fund Metro operating funding, increasing the funding over time to support the full better bus network. Commit to funding DC's share of the \$460 million in additional annual capital funding identified by DMV Moves.

Accelerate installation of the bus priority network for fast, reliable service, including dedicated bus lanes, signal priority, enhanced stops, improved shelters, safer access, and photo enforcement.

Support incentives for sustainable commuting options, including expanded implementation of parking cashout and easy to access low-income transit passes.

All photos by Cheryl Cort, CSG