



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B

February 14, 2020

Mr. Andrew Trueblood
Director
Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW, Suite 650 East
Washington, DC 20024
plandc@dc.gov

RE: Updates to the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

Dear Director Trueblood,

At its regular meeting on February 12, 2020, the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission (“ANC 2B” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With 7 of 8 Commissioners in attendance, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission approved the following resolution by a vote of (5-2-0):

The Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC 2B) is proud to have participated in the process of amending the D.C. Comprehensive Plan. ANC 2B appreciates that the Office of Planning has been responsive to feedback ANC 2B and the Dupont Circle neighborhood have provided regarding this process dating back to 2016. ANC 2B is thankful that our suggestions submitted in 2018 were included in the Recommended Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in October 2019, and that an additional opportunity for ANC feedback was granted.

ANC 2B recognizes the District’s greatest need in land use matters is a critical shortage of housing at all levels other than luxury housing, and that shortage is especially acute at affordable housing levels.

Therefore, we strongly support the Mayor’s initiative to create a minimum of 36,000 additional housing units by the year 2025, with at least one-third of those units being affordable housing. We believe special efforts should be made to ensure that an abundant number of those units deemed affordable be earmarked for tenants and families with an income of 30-50% of the area median income (AMI). Affordable housing should be defined to include housing that is affordable to families, existing residents, and people of low and moderate incomes who are the backbone of service industries in the neighborhood.

We further urge that the Comprehensive Plan Amendments acknowledge that the District's land use and development policies and actions were deliberately used for decades as a means to achieve de facto segregation by race and income class, and we applaud current initiatives, such as eliminating restrictions in broad areas of the District that limit those areas to single family housing only. Allowing duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses throughout those areas would be a means to increase density and diversity. ANC 2B includes five historic districts, and we recognize that historic preservation laws and guidelines will serve to ensure that development will be consistent with the unique character within those historic districts.

The Comp Plan should address the housing crisis with a goal of development without displacement. We must acknowledge that gentrification and higher rents have displaced 25,000 District residents in a decade, and 90% of them were people of color. Displacing long-term residents, often families whose ties to the District go back generations, is not an acceptable way to address the housing shortage.

Therefore, we urge that as additional housing is provided, special protections should be included to retain, replace, and increase stocks of affordable housing. The goal of all major development should be no net loss of affordable housing.

ANC 2B generally agrees with the Recommended Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as related to Dupont Circle and surrounding area. Upon review of the Near Northwest Area Element, the Future Land Use Map, and other portions of the Recommended Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and upon receiving feedback from neighbors, community organizations, and local businesses, ANC 2B provides the below consolidated feedback, building upon our previous resolutions to the Office of Planning.

Near Northwest Area Element

ANC 2B represents Dupont Circle which is within the Near Northwest Area Element.

2108.11 Policy NNW-1.1.10: Parking Management

In the last sentence of the proposed amendment, strike “and ridesharing services” to read “In addition, efforts should be taken to encourage visitors to these commercial districts via non-motorized modes and public transit.” ANC 2B believes visitors to Near Northwest commercial districts should not be encouraged to use car-based services, whether hailed, shared, or personally-owned.

Add “Consider the removal of parking minimums and consider the implementation of parking maximums throughout Near Northwest.” ANC 2B believes mandatory parking minimums are destructive to the future strength and resilience of commercial districts by inducing demand for car traffic, and in residential areas parking minimums negatively impact the cost of housing.

2108.12 Policy NNW-1.1.11: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

Replace paragraph with “Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists through the continued upgrading and improved maintenance of all sidewalks, intersections, and roadways, and by supporting the construction of networks of protected bike lanes and trails. Sidewalks should be constructed and maintained in such a way as to ensure accessibility for people who are elderly or disabled. Protected bike lanes offer many benefits, including improved safety and walkability for pedestrians, reducing traffic accidents and injuries for cyclists, and making bike riding more attractive for riders of varying abilities.” This language clarifies maintenance of all sidewalks and additional context.

2108.15 Policy NNW-1.1.14: Transit to Georgetown

Replace paragraph with “Improve transit connections to Georgetown by implementing a transit way on K Street.” Language specific to the H Street streetcar can be removed, and “transit way” can be left non-specific to transit mode.

2109.10 Policy NNW 1.2.10: Sustainable Development

Reinstate this paragraph as modified: “Encourage the use of green building practices within Near Northwest, with a particular emphasis on solar installations and green roofs. Rooftop gardens should be encouraged in new construction and major rehabilitation projects as a way to create additional green space, reduce stormwater runoff, and provide an amenity for residents.” ANC 2B is unclear as to why this section was removed, and is comfortable if this or similar suggestions on green building practices are being applied District-wide instead of specific to Near Northwest.

2112.1 Intro to NNW-2.2 DUPONT CIRCLE

Remove the word “parking” to read “The healthy mix of commercial and residential uses necessitates careful management and balance of public safety and noise to maintain a high quality of life.”

Action NNW: “Cap Park” Project

To reflect an updated project name, replace instances of “Cap Park” with “Connecticut Avenue Streetscape and Deck-Over Project”

Policy NNW: LGBTQ Cultural Hub

To reflect the intent of ANC 2B’s suggestion for an LGBTQ Cultural Hub, replace language with “Celebrate existing and new LGBTQ arts, cultural experiences, and history within Dupont Circle with placemaking and sustained, active programming in parks and community areas in the neighborhood.”

Action NNW: Expanded Recreation Center at Stead Park

To reflect recent plans for the Community Center at Stead Park, change title as above and change entire paragraph to: “Create an expanded recreation center at Stead Park to include modern facilities to accommodate the growing needs of community programming for residents of all ages. The expanded Recreation Center should strive to receive certification as a net zero energy building.”

A “Children’s Library” and “outreach services” are not consistent with the DCPL Library Facilities Master Plan nor within the scope of DCPL’s services. Those items are also not within the current plans of DPR for the space.

Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community in the Housing Element and the Community Services and Facilities Element

ANC 2B represents Dupont Circle and is proud to be the neighborhood which is historically the center of D.C.’s LGBTQ+ community. We are proud of our LGBTQ+ community and the fact that D.C. is one of the most welcoming jurisdictions in the country. Members of the LGBTQ+ community can have needs different than non-LGBTQ+ members and the Comprehensive Plan should plan for these needs moving forward.

Housing Element

H-4.3 Meeting the Needs of Specific Groups

Persons in the LGBTQ Community should be identified as one of the populations which have specific requirements that benefit from specific supportive services as profiled in this section.

Policy H-4.3.x

Housing for LGBTQ Older Adults should be considered as an addition to this section. D.C. has the highest percentage of LGBTQ adults in the country but critically insufficient LGBTQ-affirming older adult housing compared to other comparable cities.

Community Services and Facilities Element

In this element, and as appropriate in the Housing Element, indicate better support for youth experiencing homelessness who self-identify as LGBTQ, which constitutes nearly half of D.C.’s youth experiencing homelessness.

Include health care and services for LGBTQ patients, a group that faces disparities similarly to other populations identified as at-risk or disadvantaged.

Action CSF-2.3.D: Improving Coordination and Service Delivery Among District Agencies

Include the LGBTQ community in this language, as there are specific healthcare and services the LGBTQ community either requires or can benefit from.

Implementation Element

2507.5 Policy IM-1.5.3: Faith Institutions

Replace paragraph with: “Recognize faith institutions as members of neighborhood life in Washington, D.C., including their role as neighborhood centers, social service providers, and community anchors. Engage with local faith institutions as participants in neighborhood planning and development initiatives to ensure the views and needs of their members, some who might not otherwise participate in such discussions, are recognized and addressed.”

This continues to recognize the contributions and importance of religious institutions while avoiding language that could be construed to give specific institutions greater weight on neighborhood planning on development initiatives compared to similar institutions.

Commissioners Kari Cunningham (2B07@anc.dc.gov) and Mike Silverstein (2B06@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kari Cunningham".

Kari Cunningham
Vice Chair