

Reimagining the Heart of Southwest DC: An Opportunity to Create A World-Class, Inclusive-Housing, Commercial, and Community Space at 4th and M Streets SW

Two central lots in the historic heart of Southwest DC represent a golden opportunity for the Bowser Administration to create a highly visible, model space that will accomplish many of the goals the Mayor has set for the city, including:

- Significantly increasing Black-owned residences;
- Growing minority-owned small business;
- Creating viable, sustainable, and affordable housing across the economic spectrum;
- Providing much needed green space to improve the attractiveness and livability of this high-profile and rapidly growing neighborhood; and
- Cementing and showcasing DC as a world-class and cosmopolitan city that advances innovative, urban spaces.

KEY POINTS

- The existing SW Neighborhood Plan (2015) promised equitable development: “Southwest will remain an exemplary model of equity and inclusion.” Despite strong support for that vision by new and old SW residents, this promise has not been kept. **Page 2, slide deck**
- Almost all new development in SW has resulted in expensive and high-end rental units, mostly one-bedroom and efficiency units. This makes it impossible to attract the lower- and middle-income individuals and families to our neighborhood or retain them. This population is paramount to accomplish the goals of the Plan, foster home ownership and create a stable, vibrant community. **Page 3, slide deck**
- Current plans for the lots at 4th and M (425 and 375 M Street SW) call for the construction of two 11-story, block-length buildings with 598 units of rental housing and only a bare minimum (8%) set aside as affordable housing. These plans have been met with widespread community opposition (as seen at the April 3rd Southwest Neighborhood Assembly community forum the Mayor attended) and are at odds with the Neighborhood Plan. **Page 4, slide deck**
- Here's a better, visionary solution: DC acquires the lots and cedes them to the Douglas Community Land Trust, which guides an inclusive planning and long-term stewardship process – one that centers the long-term stability, affordability, and growth of the neighborhood. **Pages 6-10, slide deck**
- While community land trusts (CLTs) have a long and proven history of being financially sound, they're also rooted in the racial justice movement, and are used throughout the country and the world to help long-time residents and communities thrive and successfully push back against harmful gentrification and displacement of long-time dwellers. **Pages 9-10, slide deck**
- While the 2 lots would be expensive acquisitions, DC has spent equal or greater amounts in its other quadrants to develop parks, transit, and sports stadiums. **Page 11, slide deck**