

March 24, 2022

Good morning. My name is Alex Baca and I am testifying today on behalf of Greater Greater Washington, where I serve as the D.C. policy director.

In our reading, it seems like what's possible in a year for an agency of 83 people is supported with the mayor's budget, though if the committee finds anything that detracts from more planning—necessarily in service of the construction of more housing, and more affordable housing, District-wide—we would like to see it restored.

More specifically, GGWash is pleased to see that Office of Planning's budget is structured to advance the work we've long supported: more neighborhood planning (such as small-area plans and design guidelines) and analyses of current land uses. It appears that more of this work is being done in-house, with the additional FTEs supporting it, but I would like to hear from the director if my conclusion there is correct. I'd also like to hear more about the Open Streets for People project. I am mostly just curious about what the next steps for the program are, and whether there are plans for sustained funding. GGWash loves open streets, but we don't see them as just a pandemic-recovery measure; \$2,325,000 in one-time funding indicates to me that maybe the mayor does just see the idea of closing streets to traffic as a pandemic-recovery-measure-special-event sort of thing, when open streets' highest and best use would, in our opinion, be as a regular and predictable program.

Additionally, GGWash has been pushing for a full rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan since 2019. While the recent amendments were extensive, they were not sufficient enough to address the District's housing shortage and uneven land uses, and the Comp Plan itself is still an unwieldy document that attempts to address far too wide of a scope. An [April 2020 staff report](#) from OP says that a rewrite of the Comp Plan should **conclude** in 2025, but it is obvious that no one is particularly interested in doing this. (I do respect the desire to work on things that are no doubt less miserable.) We would like to see funding in FY24 for an outreach and data-gathering process, and in FY25 for a rewrite. However, before establishing a firm ask for how much that would cost and where it should go, I'd appreciate the chairman and the committee asking OP what budget resources are necessary to achieve the goal of a fully rewritten Comp Plan by 2025, as the council also endorsed that goal with the passage of the Comp Plan amendments.

Thank you.