

## DC YIMBYs 2026 Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

- **Do you have a section on your website about housing? Please link.**  
<https://miguelward1.com/priorities/affordability>
- **Do you have a pro-housing quote or statement you think YIMBYs would love to hear? Something for our promotions if we endorse you!**

“I’m running to be the next Ward 1 Councilmember to say yes to more housing in Ward 1 and the whole city. Housing is a human right, but we cannot guarantee access to housing that does not exist. To make DC more affordable, we need to make it easier, faster, and cheaper to build all types of housing across the city. That means increasing our supply of both market-rate and subsidized affordable homes and allowing for gentle-density and high-density multifamily housing in our neighborhoods.”

- **Please answer all questions in this section. Questions marked with \* are required.**

### **Supply & Demand**

**Housing affordability reforms can be broadly divided into supply-side policies intended to increase the supply of housing (e.g., zoning, permitting, land use, parking, height/density limits) and demand-side policies intended to help individuals afford specific homes (e.g., vouchers, inclusionary zoning, tax credits).**

- **What specific supply-side and demand-side policies would you prioritize to reduce housing costs in DC?**

As a Councilmember, I will champion the following **supply-side policies** that are intended to boost the housing production of all types of housing:

- Introducing amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to enable key reforms, if they are not already included in the draft sent to the Council for consideration, such as revising bulk requirements (maximum lot coverage, building height caps, minimum setbacks from lot lines), reducing minimum lot size requirements, and easing minimum on-site parking requirements. These reforms will increase density and allow for creating a larger number of homes on vacant or underutilized sites. As an ANC Commissioner, I supported a resolution calling on the Zoning Commission to amend DC's

low-density residential zones to facilitate “missing middle” or “gentle density” housing, such as townhouses, triplexes, and sixplexes, across the city. This could be done through the Comprehensive Plan rewrite or by submitting zoning map amendments to the Zoning Commission, which are two strategies that I support, with a preference for the former.

- Maximizing the potential of housing developments on public land and over commercial real estate. This is a powerful strategy to increase our housing supply. As a Commissioner, I supported creating affordable housing at the 1617 U Street site. However, we need to upzone public land to increase the number of homes that can be built on those sites to ensure that we do not extend the development of affordable housing on public property over years of procedural hurdles. That only prevents families from accessing affordable homes, which are needed urgently, and significantly increases the cost of building housing. As a Councilmember, I will work with the Zoning Commission to encourage the adoption of neighborhood mixed-use zoning along more commercial corridors to allow for building housing on top of low-density retail.
- Cutting through the red tape to shorten permitting and approval processes to create housing more quickly and to lower unnecessary costs related to procedural delays. I believe that the District should make more housing legal by right, so that a project automatically qualifies for a building permit if it meets all applicable land use and zoning regulations, without going through a lengthy and complex discretionary review process.

For increasing our supply of subsidized affordable housing, I support:

- Enacting the Housing Production Omnibus Act of 2026, legislation co-introduced by Councilmembers Brianne Nadeau and Robert White. It seeks, in part, to preserve the ability of the DC’s main affordable housing production tool — the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) — to actually fund the construction of affordable housing. For the past two years, the District has used HPTF funds to stabilize existing affordable housing rather than construct new affordable developments. The Housing Production Omnibus Act would address this issue by creating five separate accounts, each with a dedicated purpose: production (construction), preservation, property purchases through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), subsidies for deeply affordable homes, and land acquisition by the District. This would enable the Council

to resource and monitor each account and the respective housing goals it funds.

- Taking a more comprehensive look at how we invest in affordable housing production and preservation, and whether we can identify new funding streams to support affordability programs amid constrained budget seasons. As a Councilmember, I would support expanding DC's efforts to create publicly financed mixed-income housing (sometimes called social housing). This may include new housing that is partially financed by equity and debt financing by the DC Government, as well as housing acquired through the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) — an underused tool in the District's housing toolbox.

As a Councilmember, I will support **demand-side policies** that offer tenants protections against being forced to leave their homes due to rising costs:

- Strengthening TOPA, a powerful tool that can be utilized to prevent displacement and give residents a role in the future of their neighborhoods. A local TOPA success story was the (unanimous) vote of the residents at the former Faircliff Plaza East Apartments to assign their rights to a developer, which redeveloped the building into what is now the Faircliff, adding more than 50% more homes. Residents who wished to return to the new development were accommodated through construction and the great majority did end up relocating back to their original neighborhood.

As a Councilmember, I will work on reversing or mitigating some of the harmful changes to TOPA under the RENTAL Act. These negative changes include the last-minute amendment exempting two- to four-unit properties from TOPA. These properties make up two-thirds of all multifamily rental properties in the District, and therefore the exemption denies thousands of renters the opportunity to take advantage of TOPA to potentially become homeowners by purchasing their units or ensuring that their properties continue to serve as unsubsidized affordable housing. While an exemption for new construction is reasonable to avoid unintended negative impacts on the supply of new homes, a 15-year window is too long. I would support reducing the exemption timeline. I should note that the RENTAL Act did include some positive tweaks that I support, such as the establishment of Tenant Support Providers to help tenant associations navigate the TOPA process through technical

assistance; the TOPA online portal with a public, searchable database; a cooling-off period that is intended to ensure that tenants have sufficient time to learn about their rights under TOPA before voting on any decisions; and a certification process for qualified purchasers approved by the District to acquire TOPA properties. DC should be proud of TOPA and sustain it. Attaching funding to TOPA (as with DOPA, above) would signal a strong commitment to the continued success of the law.

- Increasing the utilization of federal and DC Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) by focusing on boosting the supply of market-rate housing across the city. I also support other strategies that can help increase HCV utilization, including consistent and sufficient financial resources for pair-testing, which enables fair housing organizations to investigate and document fair housing violations, including housing discrimination based on the source of income (e.g., the use of a voucher to pay for part of a tenant's rent). This is also true for maximizing public investment in rental assistance for tenants with lower incomes. Boosting the supply of market-rate housing can help cool off asking rents, enabling public rental assistance to serve a larger number of households.
- Creating affordable housing for households earning up to 30% of the median family income requires public subsidy not only for construction, but also for operating the property, i.e., to finance the resident support services that are vital for ensuring that tenants will remain stably housed. This is particularly true for Permanent Supportive Housing for residents previously experiencing homelessness. As a Councilmember, I will work on identifying new ways to increase resources for the Permanent Supportive Housing program, which offers both unit-based and tenant-based subsidies, and the Targeted Affordable Housing program, which provides a permanent rental subsidy with quarterly case management check-ins to ensure housing stability.
- Exploring reforms to rent stabilization under the Rental Housing Act of 1985, including expanding the stock of existing multifamily properties that are subject to that law, while ensuring that rent caps do not hurt the financial feasibility of operating those properties amid rising costs like insurance, utilities, and maintenance. Such reforms could include a rolling, rather than fixed, timeframe for the applicability of rent stabilization.

- **If you had to prioritize three major policy reforms in your first term, what would they be?**

As a Councilmember, I will use my legislative authority to champion the following reforms that will allow DC to grow and address the affordability crisis:

- A bill directing the Zoning Commission to initiate a zoning text amendment, and revise the Comprehensive Plan, to reform minimum parking requirements city-wide, with a specific timeline. We can and should provide more flexibility in parking requirements, allowing homebuilders to determine parking needs based on actual demand. This reform would lower housing costs, as mandatory requirements for multifamily housing often result in expensive underground parking with pass-through costs that impact rent prices.
  - Legislation to streamline housing permitting. This could be done by setting mandatory permitting timelines for proposed residential developments, requiring that the Department of Buildings approve or deny permits within a reasonable timeline, with automatic approval if the deadline is missed. This action would remove additional costs incurred by administrative delays and expedite the construction of new housing in DC.
  - The Housing Capacity Preservation Act, legislation that would prohibit historic preservation review boards from reducing housing density for proposed developments beyond what is already dictated by underlying zoning codes. Currently, historic preservation reviews can result in proposed developments being required to build fewer units than what is allowed by the underlying zoning. This bill would prevent historic preservation reviews from being used as a tool to block housing density.
- **Please explain how your proposals work together to increase affordability, rather than shifting costs or displacement from one area to another.**

As a Councilmember, I will support proven tools to build more housing while preserving affordability and protecting tenants from displacement ignited by rising costs — that's not an either-or. Tackling housing affordability and supply challenges requires a full-spectrum approach. We certainly need to build more homes of all types (market-rate and subsidized affordable homes, as well as gentle-density and high-density multifamily housing) in Ward 1 and across DC in

order to bring down costs and increase access to housing. Simultaneously, we can and must preserve affordability and assist tenants experiencing the risk of housing instability and displacement.

Building new homes without preserving the existing affordable housing stock and implementing targeted rental assistance solutions will lead to a net loss of affordable housing options and the displacement of neighbors with lower incomes. However, I acknowledge that housing (both market-rate and subsidized affordable) cannot be built if the secured financing (equity and debt) does not make the proposal financially feasible. The DC government should be cognizant about not imposing well-intended requirements on the demand side, such as rent stabilization or inclusionary zoning, in a way that hurts the financial feasibility of creating and operating housing amid rising costs like interest rate, construction materials, insurance, and maintenance.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

- **The DC Office of Planning is currently rewriting DC's Comprehensive Plan. The new plan will set land use policy district-wide through 2050. As a councilmember, this is your most significant opportunity to weigh in on DC's zoning code.**
- Which of DC YIMBYs' priorities do you support? (Select all that apply.)\*  
See full descriptions of each priority at <https://dcyimbys.org/blog/support-more-housing-in-the-comprehensive-plan/>.

- Legalize up to Six Homes on All Residential Lots: Allow small apartments citywide.
- Allow Parking Flexibility Citywide: Eliminate burdensome parking mandates and give homebuilders and local businesses the flexibility to determine parking based on their site and neighborhood needs.
- Promote Transit Oriented Development: Allow buildings up to the height limit within ½ mile of Metro stations and ¼ mile of high-frequency bus lines.
- Reduce Minimum Lot Sizes and Widths: Legalize starter homes by removing burdensome, exclusionary lot size requirements.
- Expand Lot Coverage Allowances: Increase allowable lot coverage to at least 70% in residential zones and 80% in RA-3 and higher density apartment zones.
- Reduce Setback Requirements: Eliminate side setbacks to legalize rowhomes city-wide. Reduce front and rear setback requirements to provide more usable building area on residential lots.

- o End Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Mandates: Eliminate FAR limits to enable flexible and efficient land use.
  - o Eliminate Unnecessary Barriers to In-Law Suites: Allow homeowners to build in-law suites, providing affordable options to renters and allowing loved to age in place.
  - o Allow Apartments By-Right on Industrial Land: Allow residential apartment buildings by-right on all land zoned for Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR).
  - o None of these
- What other priorities do you want to see included in the comprehensive plan?

In addition to the listed priorities, I support maximizing density on public land. As a Commissioner, I advocated for maximizing the number of homes (and therefore affordable homes) that will be created at the 1617 U Street site. I have witnessed how the proposal experienced significant delays induced by a complex and costly upzoning process. To enable the building of housing on public land in a faster and cheaper way, we need to revise our Comprehensive Plan to maximize the allowable density on these sites.

- The Office of Planning recently released a draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM), a crucial component of the Comprehensive Plan. The map, as currently drafted, sets DC up for a quarter century of rising prices, displacement, and exclusionary zoning. (<https://dc2050.dc.gov/pages/draft-future-land-use-map>)

The Office of Planning does not plan to send the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Council until Summer 2027. If elected and presented with this FLUM, would you

- o Support the FLUM as currently drafted.
- o Amend the FLUM to ADD housing potential (please explain below).
- o Amend the FLUM to REMOVE housing potential (please explain below).

The DC Office of Planning (OP) recently released a draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM) showing where density could be increased to allow for more housing in DC. In Ward 1, the FLUM suggests increasing density on one city block, plus the Congressional Club, a church, a playground, the DCUSA mall in Columbia Heights, and our beloved Hana Market. That's it. This draft certainly does not

meet the ward's need for more homes that can be built by right, without needing additional layers of zoning-related approvals.

I'm proud to have blazed that trail as Chairman of ANC 1B, where we have passed a major pro-housing resolution — the first one in the city — calling on OP to use the new Comprehensive Plan as an opportunity to legalize row houses everywhere; to allow gentle density like duplexes, triplexes, and sixplexes in every neighborhood; and to let homeowners build and rent out accessory dwelling units (ADUs). As a Commissioner, I championed maximizing the number of affordable homes that will be created at the 1617 U Street site, a model that should be replicated and expanded on other public parcels across the city.

The draft FLUM we have seen should be sent back to the drawing board. We need to adopt the types of land-use and zoning reforms that were successful in unlocking density for new supply in other jurisdictions, including Austin and Minneapolis. These pro-housing and pro-growth strategies include allowing townhouses everywhere, lowering parking and lot size requirements, and enabling higher density on public land and sites near transit. Not all of these strategies can be achieved through a FLUM alone, but this draft does not bode well for the revised Comprehensive Plan, which must enable these important reforms in the near future.

As a Councilmember, I will not vote for a Comprehensive Plan that falls short on creating the housing we need, and I will work on meaningful revisions that unlock housing density in all neighborhoods. The message is loud and clear: we need a revised FLUM that meets the moment. Let DC grow.

- **As a Councilmember, you will be asked to confirm appointees to positions that will have a significant impact on the District's land use policy. How will you evaluate nominees to the following positions? What specific qualifications, policy perspectives, or professional backgrounds would you look for? Please address each position.**

- **Director of the Office of Planning**

As a Councilmember, I will make clear to the mayor's office my expectation that I will not approve a nominee to the Director of the Office of Planning who is not pro-growth and density. This means a leader who will recommend that the regulatory and zoning landscape be aligned with DC's housing goals. This means recommending that the Zoning Commission approve project-specific applications and broader requests to amend the Comprehensive Plan and zoning text/maps in a way that

supports creating more housing across the city. I will also look for a nominee who will proactively lead studies that explore strategies to make it easier, faster, and cheaper to permit and build more housing. That is the only way to meet the moment. The Director should demonstrate an interest in and capacity to lead OP in studying and advancing solutions such as single-entry reform and form-based codes.

Ideally, nominees for Director would have either a professional background or deep knowledge in the field of urban planning, preferably with a deep understanding of housing policy and development.

- o **Member of the Zoning Commission**

Likewise, I will make clear to the mayor's office my expectation that I will not approve a nominee to the Zoning Commission who does not prioritize housing production over parking or other factors in reviewing applications or adopting revisions to zoning maps or text. I am looking for nominees who are invested in advancing zoning changes to spur housing construction, including reforming excessive on-site parking and setback requirements and unnecessarily restrictive caps on building height and floor area ratio, which determine maximum allowable building density and bulk. I would also ask that members of the Zoning Commission develop — or, failing that, I would seek to legislate — a reasonable and expedited timeline for the review of applications to avoid delays to housing development, which increases costs. Nominees for the Zoning Commission should have either a professional background or deep knowledge in the field of urban planning, with a focus on land use and zoning or housing. However, a commitment to growth and density is more important than, strictly, one's professional background.

- o **Member of the Historic Preservation Review Board (Currently has one empty seat.)**

I will not vote to approve nominees to the Historic Preservation Review Board who would weaponize and misuse historic preservation to obstruct, significantly delay, or downsize housing development proposals. When historic preservation is unjustifiably used to either block or reduce housing production, it worsens housing shortages and contributes to high housing costs. I therefore support B26-0008, the Housing Capacity Preservation Amendment Act of 2025, which would “clarify that review of new construction by the Historic Preservation Review Board shall not result in

the reduction of housing units or density below what is permitted under zoning.”

- o **Member of the Board of Zoning Adjustment (Currently has two empty seats, including the chairperson.)**

As a Councilmember, I will make clear to the mayor’s office my expectation that I will not approve any nominees to the Board of Zoning Adjustment who do not prioritize housing production over other factors in reviewing applications for variances from requirements governing the bulk or the use of a development. This means making it easier to obtain relief from restrictive height caps, floor area ratio, setback, and lot coverage requirements, to support additional density that allows for creating more housing.

- **Which of the following legislative reforms would you support? (Select all that apply.)**

- o **Legalizing single stair apartment buildings (<https://archive.is/Yvf0z>) up to six stories**

- o **Legalizing smaller elevators ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Or1\\_qVdekYM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Or1_qVdekYM)) in small buildings to lower costs**

- o **Streamlining DC’s permitting processes**

- o **Preventing HPRB from reducing the height or unit count of a building**

- **What additional legislation would you support to increase the supply of housing in DC?**

As a Councilmember, I will support the Fair Share Housing Targets Act, legislation that would set specific housing goals for each of DC’s 10 Planning Areas, to ensure that all neighborhoods and Wards are contributing a fair share of housing. This bill intends to ensure equal contribution to the city’s housing production goals by establishing a process for assessing and remedying barriers to housing production in Planning Areas that do not meet their housing targets.

As a Councilmember, I would introduce a bill directing the Zoning Commission to revise the Comprehensive Plan, followed by a zoning text amendment, to reform minimum parking requirements city-wide, with a specific timeline. We can and should provide more flexibility in parking requirements, allowing homebuilders to

determine parking needs based on actual demand. This reform would lower housing costs, as mandatory requirements for multifamily housing often result in expensive underground parking with pass-through costs that impact rent prices.

I will also introduce a bill that would launch a low-cost and low-interest lending program for low- and moderate-income homeowners who are interested in creating ADUs on their properties. This legislative effort would be accompanied by legislation directing the Zoning Commission to revise the Comprehensive Plan, followed by a zoning text amendment, to remove ADU owner-occupant requirements, which impose barriers to renting ADUs to non-family members, minimizing the impact of ADUs on expanding rental housing options in DC.

- **The DC Council's decision to require construction of housing in the former RFK Stadium site to go through standard zoning procedures has potentially delayed the development of the new Riverfront neighborhood (and the planned 6,000 units of housing within it, including 30% income-restricted units) by a decade or more, with full opening not expected until the 2040s**

**Do you support reversing this decision and providing exemptions for the construction of urgently needed housing? (Yes/No)**

- **What other actions would you support to increase and maximize the speed and quantity of housing construction at RFK (e.g., fast-tracking necessary infrastructure improvements to the area or exploring an expansion of planned housing units)?**

As a Councilmember, I would explore measures to:

- Establish a single entity for permitting housing at the RFK site, which would include representatives from relevant government departments like the Department of Buildings, Department of Energy and Environment, and DC Water. This action would streamline permitting housing at the site.
- Authorize advance infrastructure financing to ensure that housing construction at the site can be expedited. If infrastructure improvements follow the stadium construction timeline, housing construction would not start until 2030 or later. We need to ensure that housing can be created at the site as soon as possible.
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan to maximize housing density in the site's residential parcels. The goal is to enable the construction of as many

housing units at the site as possible. The DC government should also explore strategies to maximize the number of affordable homes at the site.

- Require the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED) to issue Requests for Proposals for all residential parcels at the Kingman Park, Plaza, and Riverfront districts within a statutory timeframe. This action would ensure that the process for selecting applicants to develop these districts into housing would be completed within a reasonable timeline.

### **Height Act**

- **In response to fire safety concerns related to the construction of the 164-foot Cairo Building in 1894, Congress passed the Height of Buildings Act, limiting the height of buildings in DC to 90 feet on residential streets and 130 feet on commercial streets. Modern building codes and fire safety technology allow for much taller buildings, and today the Height Act restricts the construction of more homes in DC and infringes on home rule.**

**Would you support Congressional legislation to repeal the Height of Buildings Act and return authority over height limits to local elected leaders? (Yes/No, Please explain your answer.)**

As a champion of statehood, I want DC to receive full autonomy and rights. This includes dictating zoning requirements governing development, without Congress and federal laws imposing restrictions on how tall buildings on non-federal sites can be. However, I acknowledge that underlying DC zoning laws impose caps on building height that are below the allowable heights under the Height of Buildings Act. This means that the Zoning Commission can amend zoning maps to allow for taller buildings with more density in DC without waiting for federal action.

### **Specific Projects**

**The Zoning Commission hears upzoning cases that can cause strong disagreements. While general support for building homes is common, oftentimes elected officials will hedge when it comes to specific projects.**

- **How will you evaluate whether to support specific upzoning cases or development projects? What general criteria or framework do you use?**

[Under the D.C. Charter](#), all powers and duties with respect to zoning are the jurisdiction of the Zoning Commission. [Section 423\(b\) of the Home Rule Act](#) specifies that the Council's planning and land use authority is limited to the revision, modification, and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan submitted by the Mayor.

While no laws or rules expressly prevent Councilmembers from weighing in on zoning cases, it should happen very rarely, as has historically been the case. It would be most appropriate for Council input on a zoning case to aid the Zoning Commission in understanding the intent behind provisions of the Comprehensive Plan related to that case.

If Councilmembers are more empowered to support zoning cases, they will also be more empowered to oppose them, even if a case should otherwise be approved under the Comprehensive Plan.

- **What are your opinions on 1617 U St NW (Ward 1, ZC 23-02)?**

As a Commissioner on the ANC with jurisdiction over this site, I have explicitly supported maximizing density, maximizing affordable housing, and securing community benefits (police, fire, public green space, etc.) at 1617 U Street. However, as a Councilmember, I would support a broader effort by the Zoning Commission to maximize density on all public land, rather than opine on zoning changes on public land on a case-by-case basis. As I mentioned above, I would rather not have individual Councilmembers' support for or opposition to a specific proposed development be a determining factor in whether a project gets approved or not. We have seen this process have serious implications for housing production in cities like Chicago and San Francisco, and I would rather move away from that model as much as possible.

**What are your opinions on 901 Monroe St NE (Ward 5, ZC 24-15)?**

**What are your opinions on Cleveland & Woodley Park and Wisconsin Ave NW Mixed Use Zoning (Ward 3, ZC 24-10 and ZC 25-13)?**

## **Chevy Chase Civic Center**

- **The city is redeveloping the Chevy Chase Civic Center to provide a state-of-the-art library and community center and add housing on the site. This project will provide hundreds of homes in a walkable, transit-rich neighborhood. DMPED selected the proposal with the most homes, but they required the developer to reduce the building height and mass, reducing the total units from 206 to 177 and the income-restricted units from 137 to 54.**

**If this proposal came before the Council today and you had a vote, would you:**

- **Vote against it.**
- **Vote in favor of it.**
- **Vote in favor of it if specific changes were made (please explain below).**

The DC Council's role in public development projects is generally limited to approval of deeming a site surplus to government needs, the disposal of a public site for development, and authorizing financing for these projects. By the time the Council receives such measures, almost any changes made would effectively halt or derail the project. Setting a precedent of last-minute Council revisions to a major development project would create significant uncertainty and distrust in doing business with the District.

## **DHCD / Housing Production Trust Fund / Inclusionary Zoning**

- **DC invests billions in housing through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). We also have an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) program that ensures multifamily housing with more than 10 units provides income-restricted, affordable homes.**
- **What changes, if any, would you make to the HPTF to produce more homes and serve residents at a wider range of incomes?**

As a Councilmember, I will support the Housing Production Omnibus Act of 2026, legislation co-introduced by Councilmembers Brianne Nadeau and Robert White. It seeks, in part, to preserve the ability of the DC's main affordable housing

production tool — the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) — to actually fund the construction of affordable housing. For the past two years, the District has used HPTF funds to stabilize existing affordable housing rather than construct new affordable developments. The Housing Production Omnibus Act would address this issue by creating five separate accounts, each with a dedicated purpose: production (construction), preservation, property purchases through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), subsidies for deeply affordable homes, and land acquisition by the District. This would enable the Council to resource and monitor each account and the respective housing goals it funds. The legislation would also allow the District to invest its retirement funds in affordable housing production that is subsidized by the DC government, providing a new financing tool for affordable housing production and preservation.

- **What changes, if any, would you make to the IZ program to better leverage private and non-profit development?**

The District's IZ program has been successful in large part because it has not changed significantly, which has provided developers, equity investors, and lenders an important level of predictability and consistency. As a Councilmember, I will oppose changes to the IZ program that would hurt the financial feasibility of new housing, particularly amid rising costs, including interest rates, construction materials, and insurance. The IZ program is intended to encourage the creation of mixed-income developments, particularly in services- and opportunity-rich neighborhoods — an important tenet of DC's affordable-housing strategy that we need to sustain. IZ is not our primary tool to produce affordable housing at great scale, given the absence of the public subsidies that would be necessary to make large, subsidized projects financially feasible (pencil out).

The Council can play a role in improving the IZ program by using energetic oversight, budget, and legislative actions to enhance the DC Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) administration of the program. The Auditor's report of late 2024 revealed significant flaws, including unacceptable wait times and insufficient enforcement against property owners who violated affordability covenants. The Council must ensure that DHCD is able to match qualifying tenants with IZ units more quickly and easily once they come online.

- **What changes, if any, would you make to how DHCD is structured or how it deploys its resources?**

As a Councilmember, I will make clear to the mayor's office that I will only approve a nominee to the Director of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) who prioritizes innovation and effectiveness in allocating DC resources to affordable housing developments that can help address our significant housing supply and affordability challenges.

As a Councilmember, I will support the passage of the Housing Production Omnibus Act of 2026, as it would enable both the Council and DHCD leadership to be more strategic about deploying resources to support specific goals (production, preservation, property purchases through TOPA, subsidies for deeply affordable homes, and land acquisition), as well as monitor each account and the respective housing goals it funds. The adoption of this bill will enable DHCD leadership to be more strategic about advancing DC's affordable housing goals more comprehensively, rather than having a micro focus on individual proposals.

I also believe there are ways in which DHCD can be more innovative in tackling DC's housing affordability challenges, including more actively using its Property Acquisition and Disposition Division program to acquire and support the transformation of vacant and blighted properties into affordable housing, as well as using the Unified Fund more strategically to rapidly acquire and preserve the affordability of unsubsidized affordable properties.

## **Homelessness**

- **What is your plan to address homelessness in DC?**

As a Councilmember, I will focus on implementing key elements from the Homeward DC 2.0 plan, which identifies that housing is the solution to homelessness (a strategy that is commonly known as Housing First). While these provisions are promising, there has been a lack of efficient and proper implementation.

First, we need to overcome barriers to permit and finance Permanently Supportive Housing (PSH) with supportive services needed to enable tenants who have previously experienced homelessness to stay stably housed. Creating affordable housing for households earning up to 30% of the MFI requires public subsidy not only for construction, but also for operating the property, i.e., to finance the resident-support services that are vital for ensuring that tenants will remain stably housed. In other words, this type of housing is not only a question

of construction/development policy but also one of budgetary choices and tax policy.

The District's main housing production tool, the HPTF, offers gap financing, which only covers a portion of the overall construction cost (i.e., a one-time contribution) and does not subsidize the cost of operations over the long term. Additionally, rental assistance offered by the DC government, especially the Local Rent Supplement Program, is not sufficient to meet demand. Addressing these challenges will require finding ways to raise budget revenue to fund both the construction and, crucially, ongoing operation of this type of housing. This includes identifying ways to increase financial resources for PSH, which offers both unit-based and tenant-based subsidies, and the Targeted Affordable Housing program, which provides a permanent rental subsidy with quarterly case management check-ins to ensure housing stability.

Second, we need to increase the speed and efficiency of the housing lease-up process for PSH units. This includes reducing time between PSH unit availability and occupancy, streamlining DCHA inspection processes for PSH units, improving case manager coordination during housing search, and reducing administrative barriers to lease execution.

Third, I will support moving away from the congregate shelter model to non-congregate shelter (transitional housing) with access to supportive services for unhoused individuals and families. To ensure the success of this model, we will need to have better outreach, documentation, and case-management systems. In my role as a Commissioner, I have worked with unhoused individuals staying in or near my district, and I have seen the challenges in navigating the wide array of stakeholders (and multiple simultaneous case managers!) that enter into the picture. Bureaucratic complexity is itself a burden that we impose upon those with the least legal/administrative capacity and fewest resources. I am eager to deliver effective systems that match unhoused DC residents with low-barrier transitional housing to rapidly rehouse individuals and families experiencing homelessness and provide them with medical and financial support to ensure their success and keep them stably housed.

I do believe that the most essential strategy is to rely on effective upstream tools to prevent households experiencing housing instability from experiencing homelessness. This means better access to effective eviction prevention tools, such as rental assistance and legal aid.

- **What reforms to DC's Comprehensive Plan and zoning code would you support to bridge the gap between temporary emergency shelter and the long-term, permanent housing units required to end chronic homelessness?**

While I support zoning reforms that would help make it easier, faster, and cheaper to build all types of housing, I do not believe that revisions to the Comprehensive Plan or zoning code will have a significant impact on bridging the gap between temporary emergency shelter and long-term, permanent housing units. In my opinion, this is not an appropriate use of the Comprehensive Plan or zoning code, as scaling our supply of PSH will largely rely on expanding the public subsidies (both for construction and operation) needed to make housing affordable for tenants earning up to 30% of the FMI to be financially feasible. I do not think that upzoning without sufficient public subsidies will be an effective strategy to scale PSH.

### **Tenant Protections**

- **While DC YIMBYs pursue increased housing production in order to bring down housing costs, we support targeted tenant protections. DC is known for its strong (and sometimes unique) tenant protections, including rent control, the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA), automatic month-to-month lease renewals, and an active Office of the Tenant Advocate. However, DC is equally known for the gaps in these tenant protections, with flagrant housing condition violations.**
- **What current tenant protections do you support, and what tenant protections would you modify, and how?**

**TOPA:** As I mentioned above, I support TOPA as a tool that preserves affordability and enables tenants to stay stably housed. I also support strengthening TOPA by reversing the recently adopted negative revisions to the program (the 15-year exemption for buildings and the blanket exemption for properties with four or fewer units). As a Councilmember, I will champion the establishment of financing mechanisms to enable TOPA (and DOPA!) to be more effective tools for preserving affordability by enabling tenants, the District, or mission-driven third parties to acquire unsubsidized multifamily buildings to preserve their affordability and enable their tenants to avoid displacement.

**Rent Stabilization:** As a Councilmember, I will support exploring reforms to rent stabilization under the Rental Housing Act of 1985, including expanding the stock of existing multifamily properties that are subject to that law, while ensuring that rent caps do not hurt the financial feasibility of operating those properties amid rising costs like insurance, utilities, and maintenance. Such reforms could include a rolling, rather than fixed, timeframe for the applicability of rent stabilization.

**Eviction Prevention and Tenant Protection:** I support DC's tools intended to mitigate evictions and provide tenants with resources to help them avoid displacement. This includes requiring property owners to have a just cause for pursuing evictions, the right to legal counsel in eviction proceedings, source-of-income protections for voucher holders, and a 30-day notice to cure lease violations.

- **What is your opinion on the DC Housing Modernization and Accessibility Act of 2026 ballot initiative?**

The proposed ballot initiative is in tension with my priority of facilitating housing construction to increase our supply. First, revising requirements for any housing built on public land to up to 45-60% of the AMI without providing additional public subsidies will likely hurt the financial feasibility of and make it harder to finance these proposals, as the DC government does not fully finance affordable housing built on public land. Additionally, this change would be in conflict with the concept of creating mixed-income, publicly financed social housing on public sites, which would create housing for incomes from 30-120% of the AMI. This model has gained the support of many groups and policymakers, including Councilmember Lewis George.

Second, revising household eligibility for rental housing created through gap financing from the HPTF (from up to 80% of the AMI to up 45% of the AMI) will have unintended negative impacts on the program. Due to significant supply and cost challenges, such a change will prohibit households that are unable to afford housing in DC from accessing much-needed affordable homes supported by the HPTF. Think especially about households that earn up to 50-80% of the AMI who will be unable to afford rental housing without public subsidy. Additionally, it is not wise to change the program requirements without ensuring that the HPTF has additional financial resources to support deeper affordability requirements, especially since the HPTF only partially finances affordable housing

development, meaning that other private capital resources are needed to fully finance these developments.

Third, revising the definition for an affordable housing unit to a “dwelling unit that is offered for residential occupancy and is made available to, and affordable to, a household whose total household income is equal to or less than 45% of the area median income for rental units,” will create a misalignment between the affordability requirements of local affordable housing programs and federal programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, which includes units affordable to households earning up to 60-80% of the AMI. It is uncommon that a subsidized housing development is fully financed without any federal subsidies. This change may also make it harder to access debt services through private lenders.

Lastly, while blanket rent freezes are intended to preserve affordability, I do have concerns about unintended consequences on new construction, especially when these freezes are not informed by the reality of housing finance and the cost of creating and operating housing in DC. For example, St. Paul voters approved a 3% cap on rent increases in 2021, with no exemptions for new housing. This blanket rent cap contributed to a significant drop in permits for constructing new housing. In 2025, the City Council adopted amendments to the law, including permanently exempting all buildings constructed after 2004 and enacting a rolling 20-year exemption for all buildings as well. These revisions are intended to address the city's housing shortage and incentivize the construction of much-needed homes. Since housing is financed by a combination of equity and debt, any sudden policy changes that are not well thought-out may also disincentivize the provision of much-needed financing to build new housing.

### **In Your Backyard**

**As YIMBYs, we don't just support housing in neighborhoods around the city, but advocate for more housing in our backyards.**

- **As a Washingtonian, where specifically (building/business name, address, street are all acceptable) would you like to see more homes built in your neighborhood? For the purpose of this question, consider a 3–4 block radius around your home as "your neighborhood."**

As a YIMBY and pro-housing Commissioner, I have supported and will continue to support opportunities to create new housing and increase density in my own neighborhood. I support creating new housing at the vacant or underutilized sites

that I see (and rue) every day as I walk or bike around Ward 1. Examples include the parking lot and paint store at 14th and Clifton Streets and the gas station at the corner of 14th and Euclid. These are not the best and highest uses of land along a commercial corridor zoned for mixed use and boasting excellent transit connectivity. I support redeveloping these sites into mixed-use developments that include housing and commercial spaces (as well as upzoning the commercial corridor). Another example of underuse that often dismays me is the self-storage building at the corner of Florida Avenue and Ontario Road, which is a prime location for a residential property with proximity to Marie Reed, Oyster-Adams, and the heart of Adams Morgan. To my east, I (along with many neighbors) have watched as lots owned by Howard University have lain dormant for years, such as the parking lot along 8th Street, between W Street and Barry Place (behind McDonald's). I am committed to partnering with the university to speed the delivery of its plans for this and other parcels along lower Georgia Avenue.

For built-up areas, I support exploring options to facilitate "gentle density," such as by allowing the construction and occupation of ADUs and enabling homeowners to convert their homes into duplexes, triplexes, etc. I also support exploring options to increase the density of existing buildings along the 14th Street corridor to create high-density transit-oriented development (TOD) with multifamily housing and any needed retail spaces. One prime example would be to redevelop the former CVS at 14th and Irving into high-density TOD with multifamily housing.

- **Is there anything else you'd like DC YIMBYs members to know about your housing platform?**

The DC YIMBYs chapter represents pro-housing Washingtonians, which I define as people who say yes to more housing to enable more people to afford living in DC, regardless of their income or background. Your constituents are people from different walks of life and professions who are passionate about creating more housing and diversifying housing types to make DC more inclusive and affordable. I am a self-described YIMBY and a pro-housing ANC Commissioner myself. As a Commissioner, I have collaborated with the DC YIMBYs to craft and pass a resolution (1B was the first Commission to introduce it) that supports legalizing gentle-density in all neighborhoods, which is a top priority for your group. I have also championed more housing at the 1617 U Street site — building more housing on public land is also a DC YIMBYs goal.

I am the most pro-housing candidate in the race to become the next Ward 1 Councilmember. My housing platform acknowledges that addressing DC's supply and affordability challenges requires significantly increasing the supply of housing by making it easier, faster, and cheaper to build all types of housing, including both subsidized affordable housing and market-rate housing.

My housing platform calls for creating more housing of all types, as well as preserving affordability and protecting tenants against displacement — it is not either/or. I find that conversations about housing production goals too often pit affordable housing and market-rate housing against each other. This is counterproductive, because we need to build both types complementarily to increase housing availability and affordability/attainability. I believe that market-rate housing is not necessarily expensive and out of reach for all income levels. For example, market-rate housing can be affordable/attainable for renters earning 60–80% of the DC family median income (naturally-occurring affordable housing). That means those renters do not pay large shares of their income on housing. I say yes to more housing, to support substantially increasing the supply of market-rate housing in Ward 1 and District-wide. This strategy will help cool off asking rents, benefiting DC households that do not qualify for subsidized housing or rental assistance.

However, I do understand that increasing supply is not enough to address affordability challenges for our neighbors with lower incomes. That is why I support reforms to the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) to be more strategic about how we invest in creating and preserving affordable homes. I also support exploring ways to scale DC's efforts to create publicly financed housing (sometimes called social housing), possibly through activating the District Opportunity to Purchase Act (DOPA) to support mixed-income properties that fill the gaps in our affordability and supply needs.

I also believe that we can offer protections for tenants against displacement and ensure affordability in a way that does not negatively impact new construction. I support creating a financing mechanism for the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase (TOPA), as well as exploring efforts to expand rent stabilization under the Rental Housing Act, which can be done in a way that does not hurt the financial feasibility of operating those properties amid rising costs like insurance, utilities, and maintenance.

As a Councilmember, I will use oversight to push for better enforcement of housing standards and work with the Office of the Attorney General to identify

and prosecute bad landlords. I also support the Strengthening Tenant Receivership and Oversight for Neighborhood Growth (STRONG) Homes Amendment Act, a proposed bill that would empower the Attorney General to more quickly hold negligent landlords accountable.

Ensuring housing habitability relies heavily on recording and enforcing the correction of violations committed by negligent landlords. As a Councilmember, I will use oversight to ensure that the Department of Buildings, in collaboration with the Department of Energy & Environment, moves from individual inspections focused on specific complaints toward conducting comprehensive building-wide inspections that document major health and housing code violations and ADA noncompliance in properties with negligent landlords. I will also explore additional legislative actions to ensure that our infraction system for housing-related safety and maintenance violations deters negligent landlords from delaying necessary maintenance work. We should have effective “sticks” that encourage property managers to rapidly address maintenance issues, such as chronically disrupted access to elevators, heating, electricity, and water.

I am running for the Ward 1 DC Council seat with housing supply, affordability, and quality at the core of my vision for the ward and the whole city. I would love to receive DC YIMBYs’ endorsement as a candidate and partner with you to advance these priorities if I am elected to represent Ward 1.