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Mayor Bowser to Meet With 4th & M Street SW Activists As Plans for a New Farmers Market Space Develop

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After almost a year of calling for the two parcels at 425 and 375 M Streets SW to be purchased and transferred to the [Douglass Community Land Trust](#) (CLT), local advocates have secured a meeting with Mayor Muriel Bowser to discuss the proposal. This follows after more than 1,000 people signed onto a petition asking that the mayor and city council purchase and convert the land to a CLT. The meeting with the mayor is set for May 4th.

“Our goal for this meeting is to convince Mayor Bowser that a community land trust would not only put decision-making power in the hands of SW residents, but also help meet her goals for affordable housing, homeownership, and promoting minority-owned businesses in D.C.,” **said Coy McKinney, a member of SW DC Action.**

When advocates first started their petition, there was no set location for the farmers and Friday night markets that so many residents had come to cherish. It was only in March 2023 that residents learned that the DC Department of Parks and Recreation had \$3.5 million to complete the design of, and begin construction for, the first phase of "[Town Center Parks](#)," a plan that was first devised in 2019 and received funding in 2022. The first phase of the plan will build a new space at 4th & I (eye) that will be dedicated to hosting a “farmers’ market, craft fair, holiday festival, and pop-up commerce.”

“It’s reassuring that there’s a plan to build a new space for the Southwest farmers market, but it must take community input into account and ensure that the space is a gathering center, just like 4th & M has been. More importantly, though, it still doesn’t answer the question of what happens to the land at 4th & M.” **said Leysha Caraballo, a member of SW DC Action.** “4th & M still represents an opportunity for two central parcels in Southwest to be owned collectively and for residents to democratically determine their future. This has always been a much larger issue than just fighting for our farmers market.”

Southwest has been bombarded with development that has primarily consisted of class-A, market-rate 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom apartments for the last two decades. By adopting a [community land trust model](#) for the two parcels, community residents can determine how best to utilize the land, while also opening the possibility of building permanently affordable housing and providing permanently affordable retail space to local businesses.

SW DC Action is a volunteer group of SW residents who organize and advocate for a more equitable, anti-racist, and environmentally sustainable neighborhood. For more information, visit <https://www.swdcaction.com/>.

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