

# [PLAN]DC

THE DC OFFICE OF PLANNING



## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

### OVERVIEW

Since adoption of the District's Comprehensive Plan in 2006, DC has gone through a period of transformative change. A host of forces including regional transportation, economic growth, national demographic shifts, and increasing international appeal are reshaping the District into a global city with all the benefits and challenges that go with it. Between 2010 and 2015 alone, the District's population increased by 70,000 residents and added approximately 30,000 households, which is a dramatic reversal after decades of population decline in the late 20th Century. The growth trends are expected to continue into the future. Growth has had both positive and negative effects on the District's housing market. While the number of housing units has increased, housing has become less affordable for many residents in the District.

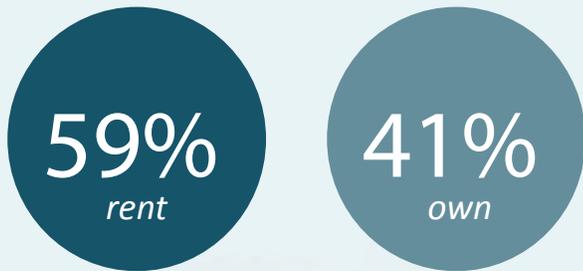
### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The concern over housing affordability was a key issue raised by residents during the seven "Plan DC" citywide community meetings in the fall of 2016 and throughout various engagement forums last year. A large number of participants expressed concern that rising housing prices, especially for low, moderate and middle income families from the District. Concerns were expressed about the rising cost of rental and for-sale housing, the lack of affordable housing for low income families, and the transformation of once affordable neighborhoods into high income areas. The lack of deed-restricted affordable housing constructed as part of new neighborhoods, "workforce" housing for moderate and middle-income families, family-sized units in new housing, and the geographic concentration of affordable housing were also expressed by community members. Overall, there was a general concern that housing prices are impacting the diversity and quality of life for residents, especially for families, lower income residents and people of color.



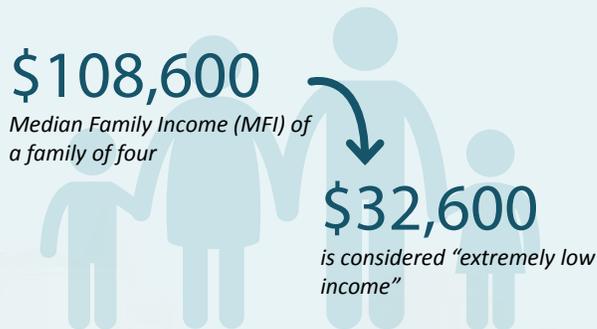
# BACKGROUND + FACTS

## HOUSING TENURE



Source: U.S. Census

## MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

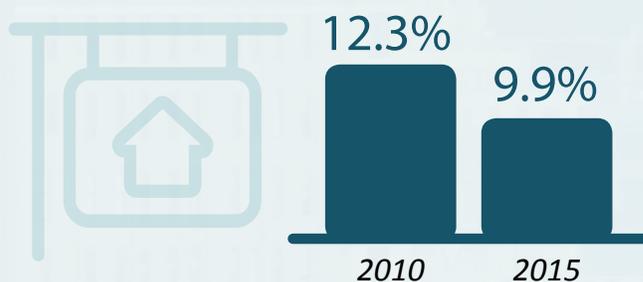


## GROWTH IN HOUSING UNITS



Source: Office of Planning

## VACANCY RATE



## HOUSING UNITS AFFORDABLE FOR HOUSEHOLDS MAKING 60% OF MFI



## UNITS BY BUILDING TYPE



Source: U.S. Census

## MEDIAN SALES PRICE



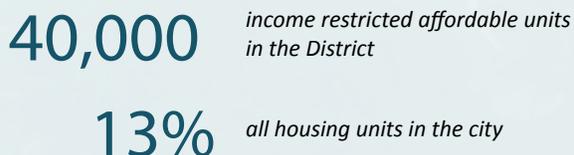
Source: GCAAR

## COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS



Source: U.S. Census, HUD, DHCD

## INCOME RESTRICTED AFFORDABLE UNITS



Source: DC Preservation Network

## COMP PLAN DIRECTION

The Housing Element of the Comp Plan contains the District of Columbia's official policies for housing production and conservation, along with detailed background information on the City's housing stock. In addition, each Area Element includes a summary of the housing characteristics and housing issues in that Area. These policies and programs emphasize affordable housing production and preservation for households of all economic means. Examples of the current policy direction on housing affordability from the Comp Plan are as follows.

**MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** The Comp Plan includes policies and programs to expand the production of housing for low income and working class households. Examples include maintaining a Housing Production Trust Fund, enacting zoning laws to promote more affordable housing, conserving existing affordable housing and creating development incentives for more affordable housing in higher income areas.

### Example:

*Policy H-1.2.1: Affordable Housing Production as a Civic Priority. Establish the production of housing for low and moderate income households as a major civic priority, to be supported through public programs that stimulate affordable housing production and rehabilitation throughout the city.*

*Policy H-1.2.7: Density Bonuses for Affordable Housing. Provide zoning incentives to developers proposing to build low- and moderate-income housing. Affordable housing shall be considered a public benefit for the purposes of granting density bonuses when new development is proposed. Density bonuses should be granted in historic districts only when the effect of such increased density does not significantly undermine the character of the neighborhood.*



**INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY.** Since the City is growing and will continue to grow in the future, the Comp Plan identifies the need for more market rate housing throughout the City. New housing will be targeted towards transit station areas, boulevards and new neighborhoods, such as the Southwest Waterfront and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Increasing the supply of housing at all income levels will ensure that housing prices stabilize relative to incomes. Increasing overall housing supply at all price points will enhance overall affordability.

**DIVERSITY OF HOUSING TYPES.** Washington, DC is a diverse city with many different types of household sizes that cross the age spectrum. This has implications for the District's housing policies. The Comp Plan includes policies and programs to maintain and enhance the diversity of the housing stock, including policies to promote housing for families, co-operative and co-housing, in-law units, and single room occupant units.

### Example:

*Policy H-1.3.1: Housing for Families: Provide a larger number of housing units for families with children by encouraging new and retaining existing single family homes, duplexes, row houses, and three- and four-bedroom apartments.*

## POLICY IN ACTION!

Action H-1.2.A called for the adoption of an Inclusionary Housing Requirement in new, multifamily developments. In 2009, the District adopted a requirement that new market rate housing developments with 10 or more units set aside 8% to 10% of units for households earning 50%-80% of Median Family Income.

To date, 500 IZ units of affordable housing have been created with approximately 800 more units in the pipeline for the next 2-3 years.

## IMPROVING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

While much of the Comp Plan focuses on new development and growth, there is also a strong focus on conserving and rehabilitating existing housing. This occurs through a policies aimed at the restoration of vacant housing, directing housing investments to neighborhoods with the greatest potential for sustained improvements, the renovation of public housing and purchasing properties on scattered sites to de-concentrate poverty and promote integration of low income housing into the community at large.

### Example:

*Policy H-2.2A: Housing Code Enforcement: Improve the enforcement of housing codes to prevent deteriorated, unsafe, and unhealthy housing conditions, especially in areas of persistent code enforcement problems. Ensure that information on tenant rights, such as how to obtain inspections, contest petitions for substantial rehabilitation, purchase multi-family buildings, and vote in conversion elections, is provided to tenants.*

**PROTECTING RENTERS.** Nearly 60 percent of the housing units are rentals. This percentage is likely to increase in the future if housing costs continue to outpace income growth. The District has a long history of protecting tenants' rights and is one of only a handful of major cities in the United States with rent control laws. Additional programs include the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act, which helps tenants purchase their buildings, and just cause eviction requirements which provide tenant security.

### Example:

*Policy H-2.1.6: Maintain rent control as a tool for moderating the affordability of older rental properties and protecting long-term residents, especially the elderly. In*

*considering future refinements to the rent control program, the District should be careful to determine whether the proposed changes improve effectiveness, fairness and affordability without discouraging maintenance and preservation of rental housing units.*

*Action H-3.1.G: Tenant Purchase Program. Increase assistance to tenants seeking to purchase their units. Review the effectiveness of the city's existing Tenant Purchase program and enhance the ability of this program to provide technical, financial, legal, organizational and language assistance to tenants in exercising their purchase rights.*

**SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING.** A plan for an inclusive city cannot ignore the needs of the homeless, troubled youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Comp Plan policies include equitably distributing affordable and special needs housing throughout all 8 Wards of the City, promoting partnerships with non-profits and organizations that promote special needs housing, and extensive community engagement to address neighborhood concerns on special needs housing.

### Example:

*Program H-4.2-A: Incentives for Retrofits: Create financial incentives for landlords to retrofit units to make them accessible to persons with disabilities, and to include units that are accessible in new housing construction.*

*Program H-4.2-A: Incentives for Senior Housing: Explore incentives such as density bonuses, tax credits, and special financing to stimulate the development of assisted living and senior care facilities, particularly on sites.*

