

**DC Council Performance Oversight Hearing**  
**Agency: DC Office of Planning, February 22 2024**  
**Amended Testimony by: Chris Otten for DC for Reasonable Development**

OP's lack of performance is their performance which is harming DC residents and communities. Councilmembers, we need your accounting of the Office of Planning, a group of people who are supposedly certified planners but are choosing not to plan.

We can't get answers from OP as to these key Comp Plan policies, can the Council help us:

- **Action CSF-1.1.D: Public Facilities Planning**  
*Develop a Public Facilities Plan that helps to inventory, consolidate and coordinate facility information across District agencies. 1103.27*
- **Action CSF-1.2.C: Coordinate Facilities Master Planning with Public Facilities Planning**  
*Improve facilities master planning processes and outcomes by coordinating facilities master planning efforts of individual agencies with public facilities planning efforts. This coordination can illuminate relationships and dynamics across systems, helping to inform the District's public investments. 1104.11*

**Other Topic Areas:**

- **Racial Equity** -- OP has abandoned the concept of racial equity just as it was getting out of the gate with the recent additions of racial equity policies in 2020-21 rewrite update to the Comp Plan. This is quite evident in Zoning Case No. 23-02, where the city is trying to implement the unlawfully unstudied FLUM Amendment 8050 at 17<sup>th</sup> and U Street. This case demonstrates that apparently despite racial equity expectations plainly written in the Comp Plan, that OP has made those racial equity policies optional because apparently they are not in the Zoning Code. Regardless, OP chose not grant basic respect to the community around 17th and U and chose not to do any outreach or provide proper notice to the impacted community. There's been no analysis of displacement impacts on more vulnerable residents in the area, there's been no conversation with housing vulnerable residents, businesses or churches nearby. I didn't realize the city needed to mandate basic fundamental respect for the Office of Planning to actually act respectfully. Councilmembers we need your help to get OP straight on what racial equity actually means.

- ***Actual Planning Means Evaluating & Mitigating Long term Impacts AT THE START OF THE DISCUSSION***-- According to the principles of American Institute of Certified Planners and planning and zoning caselaw, examining basic planning issues, problems, impacts are to happen at the earliest points in any discussion regarding imminent development at any site(s) or areas throughout the city. But OP wants to punt and do no planning and put everything in Dept. of Building's hands. DOB doesn't plan for impacts, they follow the prescriptive requirements of the Construction Codes, they don't plan. The DOB will not be looking at direct or indirect displacement impacts for example during permitting review. DOB won't be permitting based on any racial equity analysis. DOB won't be outreaching to neighbors to discuss a plan for the future development of any given site. DOB handles construction issues, how buildings are proposed to be built in the city. They are engineering and technical questioners and checkers, not planners. The City Council has to twist the planners heads back onto the staff at OP. Zoning Case 23-02 at 17th and U Street shows the depravity of how far OP has shrunk away from their fundamental role as planners -- shown by the lack of outreach to the affected communities to allow an open and transparent discussion of planning and mitigating impacts and to work collaboratively with communities. It is so desperately needed right now and the Council can help us make sure the city planners do so much better.

## **Appendix – Truthtelling Planning in DC**

- There is no housing crisis in DC -- DC clearly has a truly affordable housing crisis, not a housing crisis. There are conservatively 40,000 vacant Class-A studios and one bedrooms around the city right now, likely more. AOB report 2019-2021 (at p.13).  
[https://dhcd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhcd/page\\_content/attachments/DC%27s%20Rental%20Housing%20Market%20Strikeforce%2020210219.pptx.pdf](https://dhcd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhcd/page_content/attachments/DC%27s%20Rental%20Housing%20Market%20Strikeforce%2020210219.pptx.pdf)
- **DC's affordable housing is NOT affordable** -- The Area Median Income (or Median Family Income) keeps going up every year. This year, the Area Median Income (AMI) for a single household is \$100,000/yr (for a household of four, its \$142,000/yr). <https://dhcd.dc.gov/node/1604746>

DC's premier affordable housing program, Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is based upon the annually increasing AMI. Therefore, each year, DC's affordable housing becomes less and less affordable. For example: In 2017, a single person household could be making between \$47,000 and \$61,000 per year could qualify for one of DC's "Affordable" studio/one bedrooms. Now in 2022-23, a single household (an individual) making \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year could qualify for an "Affordable" housing unit in DC.

## DC's "AFFORDABLE" Housing parameters

The following matrix shows DC's "Affordable" Housing income limits in 2017 (per Chapter 5 of the 2021 Comp Plan amendments):

Figure 5.1

### Sample of Housing Programs, 2017 Income Limits and Main Household Targets 500.8

Income Definition	Extremely	Very				
	Low			Moderate		
Household Size	Percent of Median Family Income					
	30%	50%	60%	80%	100%	120%
1	\$ 23,150	\$ 38,600	\$ 46,350	\$ 61,750	\$ 77,200	\$ 92,650
2	\$ 26,450	\$ 44,100	\$ 52,950	\$ 70,600	\$ 88,250	\$ 105,900
3	\$ 29,800	\$ 49,650	\$ 59,550	\$ 79,400	\$ 99,250	\$ 119,100
4	\$ 33,100	\$ 55,150	\$ 66,200	\$ 88,250	\$ 110,300	\$ 132,350
	Historic Home Grant Program					
	Home Purchase Assistance Program					
	HOME, CDBG*					
	Housing Production Trust Fund		Inclusionary Zoning			
	Low-Income Housing Tax Credits					
	Public Housing					

\* HOME and CDBG 80% MFI Income Limits are capped by the Nation's Median Family Income, which currently approximates 65% of the area's MFI.

## Here are DC's "Affordable" income limits in 2022-23:

Note: IZ units currently exist only at the 50%, 60%, and 80% MFI levels.

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income					
	30% of MFI	50% of MFI	60% of MFI	80% of MFI	100% of MFI	120% of MFI
1	29,900	49,800	59,750	79,700	99,600	119,500
2	34,150	56,900	68,300	91,050	113,850	136,600
3	38,400	64,050	76,850	102,450	128,050	153,700
4	42,700	71,150	85,400	113,850	142,300	170,750
5	46,950	78,250	93,900	125,200	156,550	187,850
6	51,250	85,400	102,450	136,600	170,750	204,900
7	55,500	92,500	111,000	148,000	185,000	222,000
8	59,750	99,600	119,550	159,400	199,200	239,050

Source: 2022-2023 MAXIMUM INCOME, RENT AND PURCHASE PRICE SCHEDULE Effective July 1, 2022,

<https://dhcd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhcd/publication/attachments/2022-6-24%20IZ%20ADU%20price%20schedule.pdf>, as found on the DHCD website from here:

<https://dhcd.dc.gov/publication/2022-2023-inclusionary-zoning-maximum-income-rent-and-purchase-price-schedule>

DC's current minimum wage is \$17/hr which equates to about \$33,000/yr. Thus DC's affordable housing is simply not affordable for most working DC residents, especially Black DC residents due to the immense racial wealth gap.

Washington Post Analysis, Economy, "The black-white economic divide is as wide as it was in 1968, Economy" By Heather Long and Andrew Van Dam, dated June 4, 2020, "... [T]he gap between the finances of blacks and whites is still as wide in 2020 as it was in 1968, when a run of landmark civil rights legislation culminated in the Fair Housing Act in response to centuries of unequal treatment of African Americans in nearly every part of society and business."

<https://archive.ph/thnvI#selection-1621.0-1621.303>

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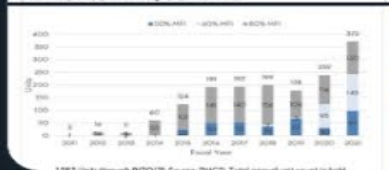
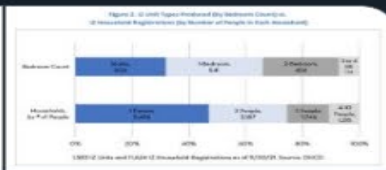
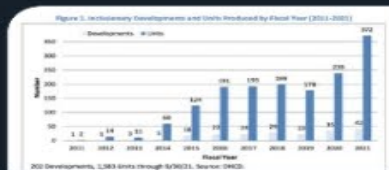


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A new D.C. reports shows the number of inclusionary zoning produced was up a good deal in 2021, but there's an imbalance between the targeted income-ranges of the units and actual incomes of renters/buyers. In short, the units are not affordable enough for the pool of applicants.



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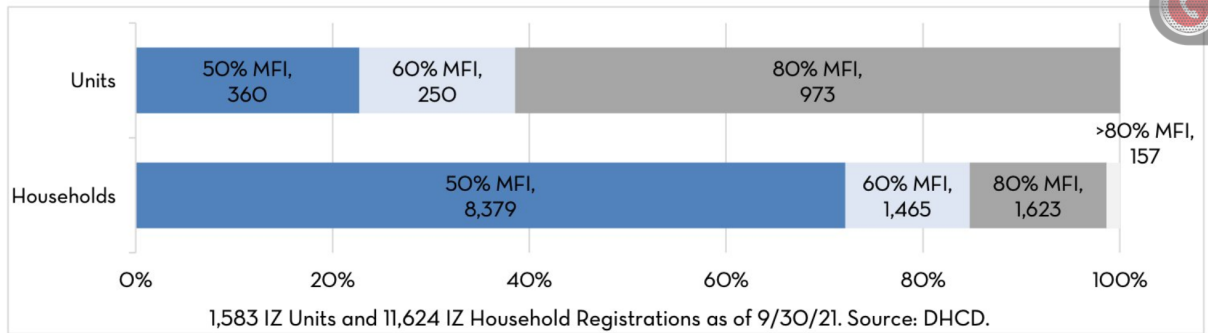
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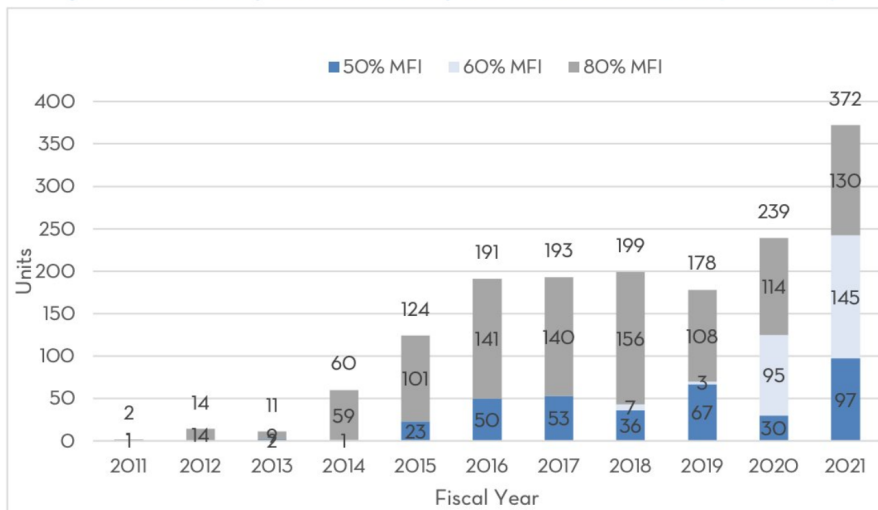
Figure 5. IZ Unit Affordability Levels vs. Household Registration Income Levels<sup>14</sup>



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Figure 4. Inclusionary Units Produced by Fiscal Year and MFI Level (2011-2021)



1,583 Units through 9/30/21. Source: DHCD. Total annual unit count in bold.