



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release 5/15/17

Contact:

Stephen Hansen, 202-355-4503

stephen.hansen1@gmail.com

***A Bad Idea: Exempting the Zoning Commission from Conforming to
The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map***

The *Committee of 100 on the Federal City* (C100) has issued a statement in opposition to a specific provision in the “Priorities Statement” issued by a coalition of DC-area developers and non-profit organizations under the auspices of Greater Greater Washington, that would empower the Zoning Commission (ZC) to ignore the Council-adopted Comprehensive Plan.

http://committeeof100.net/download/planning/comprehensive_plan/2017-05-08-C100-White-Paper-Exempting-the-Zoning-Commission-from-Conforming-to-the-Comprehensive-Plan-Is-a-Bad-Idea.pdf

The coalition’s proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan would: ***“Clarify zoning authority. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the District should affirm that the Zoning Commission has the purview to allow increased density for Planned Unit Developments that supersedes the levels in the Comprehensive Plan’s maps in exchange for community benefits.”***

Stephen Hansen, Chair of C100 stated: “The term “clarify” is misleading: You cannot affirm something that is not true. What is true is that the Zoning Commission (ZC) does not have the “purview” to supersede the levels in the maps in exchange for community benefits. In fact, if adopted, this provision would be a radical departure from current law with significant negative consequences, giving the Zoning Commission power it does not currently have and would virtually gut the ability of residents to challenge land use decisions that they felt were in conflict with the Plan. We reject the “clarification” proposal as a spurious attempt to use affordable housing as a vehicle to avoid future challenges to ZC decisions and to destroy the ability of citizens to challenge developments that are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Maps.”

Laura Richards, former chair of the Zoning Subcommittee said: “The Home Rule Act requires that zoning shall not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which the DC Council adopts and periodically updates. The intent is to make sure that there is reliable predictability for those investing in an area, and that the unelected and unrepresentative five-person ZC’s land use and development decisions comport with the democratically-approved city planning policies as to how the District should use and develop land. Because this new language would authorize the ZC to make decisions that are inconsistent with the Plan, it could not legally be a part of the Plan. The ZC already has considerable discretion in interpreting the Comprehensive Plan and should not be given greater authority to override the Plan.”

The Committee of 100 strongly supports a wide range of actions to yield housing for middle and low income residents. (See *C100 Principles of Affordable Housing in DC* at

http://committeeof100.net/download/planning/comprehensive_plan/2017-05-09-C100-Principles-of-Affordable-Housing.pdf
