

# The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



## Committee of 100 Candidate Questionnaire - June 2024 Primary

### Planning and Zoning

1. Over the past 15 years the Office of Planning has supported maximum zoning allowances, smaller residential units, and luxury amenities as priorities in revitalizing neighborhoods. Significant displacement of Black residents and businesses has followed. What three changes to planning and zoning would you recommend that will address growth and change while maintaining the culture, history, and demographic of DC's neighborhoods?
  - I. Implement legislation mandating the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development to increase community engagement by issuing more OurRFPs, ensuring greater input from residents throughout the planning process.
  - II. Enforce legislation requiring all development projects in Ward 7 to be accompanied by an Equitable Development Plan, aimed at preventing displacement and prioritizing the inclusion of small and local businesses in the development process.
  - III. Launch educational initiatives to inform families in Ward 7 about the implications of the recent comprehensive plan on their communities, particularly regarding development and its potential impact on local culture and demographics.
2. Would you support the creation of an independent Planning Commission?  
Please explain your answer.

No, I wouldn't support the creation of an independent Planning Commission. Instead, I believe in working closely with the Office of Planning, as they possess the expertise needed for effective planning initiatives. Collaboration with existing agencies allows for leveraging their knowledge and resources to address planning challenges efficiently.

3. Do you support retaining the current Height Act?  
Please explain your answer.

Yes, I support retaining the current Height Act. While I recognize that increasing height

restrictions could potentially benefit the District by facilitating the creation of new affordable housing, I also want to be mindful of the impact such changes could have on existing communities. Altering height restrictions might negatively affect the historic and cultural presence of these long-standing communities, so maintaining the current regulations is important to balance these considerations.

### **Downtown**

4. Aside from office to residential conversions, what do you believe are the best solutions to the hollowing out of downtown?

The District could implement various incentives to attract small and local businesses to downtown areas, such as providing financial assistance, offering tax breaks, or streamlining the permitting process. By creating a supportive environment for these businesses, downtown areas can experience revitalization, fostering economic activity and community engagement.

### **Neighborhoods**

5. It is an established fact that Wards 7 and 8 lag behind the other Wards in terms of services and amenities, such as grocery stores, comprehensive health care and restaurants. What do you think can be done to bring real racial and economic equity to these Wards?

One of the primary challenges facing Ward 7 is the absence of a robust local economy. As the next Ward 7 Councilmember, I am deeply dedicated to addressing this issue by actively working to create economic opportunities that uplift families in our community. This involves implementing strategic initiatives to attract businesses, promote entrepreneurship, and foster job growth. By prioritizing economic development, we can empower residents, enhance access to essential services, and ultimately foster greater racial and economic equity in Ward 7.

### **Transportation**

6. What can be done to support MetroRail and MetroBus considering the reduced ridership from the pandemic and the potential reduction in federal subsidies? What should the Council do to ensure funding of DC's share of WMATA's costs?

It was encouraging to witness the District's commitment to covering WMATA's budget shortfall. However, the ongoing challenges facing WMATA demand sustained attention. As the next Ward 7 councilmember, one of my recommendations is to establish a control board to oversee WMATA's budget, ensuring transparency and accountability in fund allocation. This measure aims to guarantee that resources are utilized effectively and efficiently to support MetroRail and MetroBus services, especially amidst reduced ridership due to the pandemic and potential cuts in federal subsidies.

7. More than 60% of the vehicles on DC streets are commuters from outside the District. Both MARC and VRE are planning significant increases in commuter rail traffic coming into and through DC, which should reduce the number of commuters driving into the District. For example, Virginia is investing about \$2 billion to construct a second Potomac River rail bridge and expand the L'Enfant VRE Commuter Rail Station. Should DC more actively support the development of commuter rail?

Yes, DC should actively support the development of commuter rail, given its potential to reduce traffic congestion and promote sustainable transportation. However, it should be done with careful consideration of infrastructure impacts and equitable access for all residents.

8. Should the existing 2.5-mile streetcar line on H Street NE continue in operation, or be dismantled and replaced with buses?

Yes, I believe the existing streetcar line on H Street NE should be expanded into a network. Halting projects midway and not fully funding them would be wasteful of taxpayer dollars. From the perspective of connectivity for residents, especially in Ward 7, expanding the streetcar network can provide significant benefits. Drawing from successful models like the Eighth Street line can help guide this expansion effectively.

9. The installation of bike lanes around the city has resulted in strong opposition. Different stakeholders say their interests have been ignored and they are now less safe and less welcome in these areas. What are your views? Are you aware of any data that show that bike lanes have resulted in increased bicycle use and safety? Do you think an evaluation of newly installed bicycle lanes should be conducted (considering such factors as increases in bike ridership; rider, pedestrian, car safety; reduced traffic, etc.) before there is any expansion?

I have no issue with bike lanes, and I recognize their importance to residents who use them. However, I believe DDOT should be more strategic and considerate in selecting locations for bike lane installations, taking into account their potential impact on communities and street dynamics, particularly along major thoroughfares. Moving forward, DDOT should prioritize frequent engagement with residents before installing new bike lanes to ensure their concerns and needs are addressed effectively.

### **Historic Preservation**

10. Historic preservation is a hallmark of DC's development history. Do you have any concerns about protecting the integrity of landmarks and historic districts as the city continues to grow? Please explain.

No, not at the moment.

### **Affordable Housing**

11. What tools and investments are needed to maintain housing affordability or increase affordable housing opportunities throughout the city?

The city should ensure sufficient funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund.

12. Whom do you think DC's rent control regulation DC benefits? Would you support expanding the program to multi-family buildings built before 2005?

I think it's crucial to revisit our rent control policies to ensure they effectively protect residents from being priced out of their homes due to skyrocketing rent prices. Making amendments to these policies could help ensure that families in the District, especially those in multi-family buildings built before 2005, have access to affordable housing options. By expanding the program to include these buildings, we can provide greater stability and affordability for residents across the city.

13. Interest has been expressed by the Council in eliminating single-family zoning as one way to address the shortage of affordable housing. What is your thinking on this strategy, and on what data do you base your conclusion?

I believe it's important to explore various strategies to address the shortage of affordable housing, including reevaluating single-family zoning regulations. However, any decision should be informed by comprehensive data analysis and community input to ensure it effectively addresses the housing crisis while considering the impact on neighborhoods and residents.

### **RFK Stadium Site**

14. If the District acquires the RFK Stadium property, for what purposes would you want it used?

The future of the grounds of RFK Stadium holds significant potential to shape the fabric of our community. Given its importance, I believe that decisions regarding its use should be driven by extensive community involvement. I advocate for the District to facilitate a comprehensive series of community conversations spanning at least a year.

15. Do you support the District subsidizing a new football stadium in the District for the Washington Commanders?

I would prefer to conduct further examination before making an informed recommendation regarding the District subsidizing a new football stadium for the Washington Commanders.