

# 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. Build first. Before the DC Housing Authority may remove residents (for redevelopment) require DCHA to provide comparable housing to residents — in the same neighborhood where the residents now live.

II. Instead of requiring or supporting affordable housing, in general, require large percentages of two and three bedroom units.

III. Make affordable housing downtown a priority, not only to help revitalize downtown, but to put affordable housing residents close to work and transit opportunities.

2. Would you support the creation of an independent Planning Commission? **No.**

Currently, the DC Office of Planning reports to the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. This unduly focuses Planning priorities on economic development at the expense of other priorities. I support an independent Office of Planning. Only after giving that option a chance to succeed would I support a Planning Commission.

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

Part of DC's beauty is that no building may be taller than the Washington Monument. I would like to preserve that image for the District

## **Downtown**

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

Downtown should be a hub for art and music. I would encourage a theater district, an arts district and live music coming out of many, many venues.

In addition, DC should be a place where people (including families) want to live. This means ensuring amenities such as schools, parks and all manner of shops.

## **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?

An important reason that I first ran for office was that lack of opportunities east of the Anacostia River. I was working for Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton at that time — on many projects that helped DC to grow and thrive. Yet, those projects had virtually no impact on my neighborhood.

With respect to health care, I favor an approach long espoused by Council Member Vincent Gray: The need east of the Anacostia is not just for a hospital — but for a health care system that integrates the hospital with a wide range of community based health care services. That integration is yet to be achieved. I wanted to change that consideration, and I still do.

To stimulate the growth of market-based services, such as grocery stores and restaurants, I favor subsidies that will enable businesses to survive their initial years of operation east of the Anacostia.

Finally, since fresh food is so important to a family's health and well-being, I strongly support food distribution programs such as the one that Martha's Table operates on Elvans Road and elsewhere in DC.

## **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?

Thriving MetroRail and MetroBus operations are necessary for DC's economic and ecological well being. Funding for Metro's basic operations must be assured, either through general fund

expenditures or through funding from dedicated sources. I favor a region-wide approach to dedicated funding.

In addition, I support free or nearly free mass transit options — for the sake of public transit users and also to keep streets open for those who choose to use (or must use) cars and trucks.

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.**  
If your answer is yes, what steps should DC take?

The DC - Maryland - Virginia region needs a comprehensive approach to funding all mass transit. DC officials must work with Maryland and Virginia colleagues to develop such a system, specifically one that includes support for commuter rail.

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

In many jurisdictions, including DC, streetcars have been an incentive for economic development. For that reason, I would seriously consider extending the streetcar line into Ward 7.

On the other hand, once continuing economic development along the streetcar lines can be assured, I would be open to streetcar alternatives.

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 only support expanding bike lanes on a case-by-case basis and with extensive input from all stakeholders. A particular concern of mine: assuring the safety of all pedestrians, including as they attempt to enter or exit buses.

## 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.

I favor the preservation of historic landmarks and neighborhoods. Furthermore, I believe that we can increase popular support for historic preservation by affording some flexibility in the administration of the program: For example, instead of being required to use wooden window frames, property owners should have the option of using other materials — so long as those materials have the same look and feel as wood.

## Affordable Housing

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

The District should make greater use of DOPA, the District Opportunity to Purchase Act, which gives the DC Government certain rights of first refusal. When the hotel right at the Woodley Park Metro Station came available for sale, the DC Government should have stepped in, with an eye towards utilizing the property for affordable housing. DC now has a similar opportunity to utilize the Hotel Harrington which now is on the market.

In addition, as a matter of racial and economic equity, deeply affordable housing units must be distributed equitably — into every ward and neighborhood.

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

Rent control benefits those living in rent-controlled units, but not only those residents. By maintaining modest prices in some units, rent control can have an overall effect of moderating the prices of nearby units.

Yes, I support expanding the program to units built before 2005, and I support changing the law so each year additional properties fall within the scope of rent control.

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?

Zoning for single family housing, particularly zoning that requires very large lots, can be a tool for economic and, thus, racial segregation. Rather than a total ban on single-family zoning, I support neighborhood-by neighborhood reviews of the economic and racial impact of single-family zoning — with extensive stakeholder involvement and with the goal of racial equity in mind.

#### **RFK Stadium Site**

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

I favor creating a neighborhood abundant with affordable housing and with all the shopping, education and recreation amenities that a neighborhood needs.

15. Do you support the District subsidizing a new football stadium in the District for the Washington Commanders? **No.**

Please respond to [Chair@Committeeof100.net](mailto:Chair@Committeeof100.net) .