

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



November 18, 2019

The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor
Mayor's Office
The Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004

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Dear Mayor Bowser:

We are writing to urge you to extend the public comment period on the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Elements, released on October 15, from December 20, 2019 to April 1, 2020 (with ANC comments due on May 1). A time extension is necessary because:

1. The 60-day time frame for public review of this lengthy document is unreasonable when several weeks of this period are during the holiday season.
2. The Office of Planning rejected the majority of public-submitted amendments, dismissing a large proportion with identical boilerplate language in lieu of a genuine explanation. Yet OP made substantial, substantive changes to land use policies throughout the city, unilaterally and without public consultation or discussion. In effect, the Office of Planning has created a new plan, not an amended plan, absent the deep community engagement and data that would normally accompany a new plan. In its rigid stance on the time for review, and its direction to citizens not to scrutinize the details but only comment on the "big picture," your administration risks the charge that it is dismissive and indifferent to your constituents' concerns.

Since the Council will not review this plan before the summer after the budget is adopted, there is ample opportunity to allow both the public additional time for review and OP the time to formulate considered responses to public comment. A time extension to April 1 would help to restore credibility to a top-down comprehensive planning process and signal that your office understands that a partnership with the residents of the city around their city's future is essential to good government.

We urge you to extend the public comment review time immediately to April 1, 2020 with ANC review extended to May 1, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.A. Hansen".

Stephen Hansen, Chair

Cc: Members of the DC City Council; Andrew Trueblood, DC Office of Planning