February 9, 2021

The Hon. Phil Mendelson, Chairman
Committee of the Whole
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

RE: Housing Priorities Coalition & Partners Urge DC Council to Pass Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2020 (B23-0736)

Dear Chairman Mendelson and members of the DC Council:

The Housing Priorities Coalition (HPC) and fellow stakeholders call on the Council to pass the updated Comprehensive (Comp) Plan as soon as possible. 2020 was a year that none of us ever saw coming, and one that we will never forget. The simultaneous pandemics we face have only exacerbated the very real challenges our city is battling. And yet, one of our most critical tools to address housing affordability, racial equity and a number of other challenges is awaiting adoption by the DC Council. The Comp Plan is a critical mechanism that sets a long-term vision for the District, to help inform decision-making for residents, officials, and stakeholders. The plan is vital to land use, zoning and shaping the District’s budget.

As it stands, the Comp Plan is outdated and does not provide the long-term vision for an inclusive city. Written in 2006 and amended in 2011, much has changed over the last decade, and we must adopt an updated plan that reflects today’s conditions, opportunities, and challenges. Inertia and outdated tools are barriers to achieving our best quality of life, including housing affordability, eliminating racial inequity, access to opportunities, and protecting the environment for future generations. COVID-19, its economic effects, and civil unrest highlight the need for the Comp Plan to appropriately guide the District through and beyond these events. Simply put, we can’t afford to go any longer without an updated Comp Plan on the books.

In October 2019, the Council made great strides by passing key amendments to the Comp Plan’s Framework Element. These critical revisions ensure that the Comp Plan prioritizes affordable housing and the prevention of displacement. We thank you for your leadership and are confident that you will move swiftly to pass the remaining updates outlined below.

The proposed updated Comp Plan benefits us all by: setting goals for affordable housing in every neighborhood; increasing capacity for new homes near Metro and along transit corridors in the Future Land Use Map; removing exclusionary language and using a racial equity lens throughout official decision-making; and facilitating construction of more than a thousand affordable homes stalled in legal limbo. The revised plan also takes into account that where an individual lives is still one of the greatest predictors of health and economic outcomes. This updated version helps break down barriers to affordable housing across the City, which is a critical step in the District’s racial justice efforts.

The community has spoken. HPC’s advocacy is compounded with thousands of comments from stakeholders who share our values on housing affordability and racial equity. This is truly a community document, and it comes to the Council having been rigorously reviewed, edited, improved, and refined.

HPC acknowledges that the Comp Plan is crafted to be a guiding document, and we stand behind the intended outcomes of the proposed update. Further, we are committed to continued advocacy with the Mayor, Council, committees and agencies to hold the City accountable to advancing policy that improves the quality of life for all Washingtonians. We are confident the Council can proceed in a timely fashion because the community has contributed to the extensive work for a Plan worthy of adoption. We urge the Council to treat the review and adoption of the Comp Plan as an urgent priority to help thousands of District residents,
employers, and stakeholders have more sustainable opportunities to live, work, and grow. The time is now to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,

Enterprise Community Partners  
DC Fiscal Policy Institute  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
Greater Greater Washington  
United Planning Organization (UPO)  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND)  
Somerset Development Company  
Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED)  
Alex Lopez, ANC Commissioner 6E02  
Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing  
DC Environmental Network  
Dunford Services, PLLC  
Enterprise Community Partners  
H Street Community Development Corporation  
Housing Options & Planning Enterprises  
Housing Up  
Institute for Market Transformation (IMT)  
Jubilee Housing Inc.  
Just Economics LLC  
KPG Design Studio  
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)  
Manna, Inc.  
Michaels Development Company  
Minim Homes  
Mission First Housing Development Corporation  
National Housing Development Corporation  
Neighborhood Associates Corporation  
New Urban Mobility Alliance  
R. McGhee & Associates  
Real Estate Solutions  
Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria  
Tyler House Tenant Association  
U.S Vets Homeless Feeding & Housing Services  
WARD3VISION  
Aaron Parrott  
Adam Chamy  
Adriana Cordero  
Adrienne Ameel  
Allison Davis  
Amanda Seligman  
Andrew Coke  
Andrew DeFrank  
Andrew Thomas McCormack  
Antoinette Russin  
Aprille Ericsson  
Ariel Kennedy  
Aurora Ferrari  
Bob Ward  
Brennan Barber  
Brian Goggin  
Charles Weak  
Chris Jamieson  
Christine Matthews  
Corey Holman  
Daphna Atlas  
Donald Malmati  
Dwight J. Mayes  
Ed Carley  
Elaine Johnson  
Elina Brave  
Elizabeth A. Zgoda  
Elizabeth Pomper  
Ellen Bass  
Ellen Herr  
Elnora Brown  
Emily Conrad  
Evan Davis  
Evelyn Fraser  
Faye Harbottle  
Geoffrey Anderson  
Glenn Stanley  
Hannah Olsen  
Hilary S. Chapman  
Ileana Schinder  
J.M. Haist  
James Chapman  
Jane Hardin  
Janell Pagats  
Janine Berger  
Jeffrey Levine  
Jeffrey Norman  
Jenean E. McKay  
Jonel Lyme  
Jonathan Parker  
June Esposito  
Kayleigh Campbell  
Keith Mellnick  
Kevin O'Halloran  
Kevin Scott O'Brien  
Kristin Purdy  
Kristina Trotta  
Larry Brace  
Larry Cohen  
Leith Bernard  
Linda Toth  
Liz Borkowski  
Louis Thomas  
M. Otto Condon  
Malcolm Mossman  
Marc Gasda  
Marc Edwards  
Marcie Cohen  
Mariana Tamayo  
Marlene Berlin  
Mary Budarz  
Matthew Premysler  
Matthew Baustian  
Max I. Fuld  
Megan Draheim  
Melissa Dickson  
Melissa L Kim  
Micha Gfala  
Michael Whelan  
Mitch Crispell  
Natalie Avery  
Nathaniel Baldwin  
Nick Burger  
Noah Bell  
Nonna A. Noto  
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Pamela Wessling  
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Paul William Ruppert  
Paula Hirschoff  
Paula M. Cohen  
Penny Parker  
Peyton Jane Gibson  
Quinn K. Pregliaso  
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Ralph Garboushian  
Rhys Tucker  
Rich McPhillips  
Richard Aboulafia  
Robert Sheehan  
Ronald Eichner  
Sauleh Siddiqui  
Seth D. Whetzel  
Shirley Snowden  
Stacey Young  
Stephen Varga  
Susan Bennett  
Thomas Hutcheson  
Thor Beck  
Tim Lawless  
Tom Quinn  
Trent Theilen  
Troy Rothman  
Tyler Sanders  
Val Wheeler  
Walter Tersch  
William Feeney  
Yvette Thompson  
Yvonne Mwangi  
Zachary Ferguson