



Event Summary: How Land Use Policies Impact Housing Opportunity Across the District

Thank you for your interest in our “How Land Use Policies Impact Housing Opportunity Across the District” event.

On Saturday, December 7th, 2019, the DC Office of Planning (OP) and the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) co-hosted an expert conversation to discuss how historic federal and local racially exclusionary and discriminatory land use policies created housing segregation and shaped opportunity across the District.

The conversation explored the way segregation has been experienced in neighborhoods across the city, and highlighted the continued legacy of these policies on residents’ economic opportunity.

This document highlights information shared at the event, summarizes feedback from the community members who participated, and shares next steps for the initiative.

Where was it: Wilson High School Auditorium

When was it: Saturday, December 7th, from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

Who attended: More than 300 community members from all 8 wards and the surrounding region

Event Overview

This community conversation on housing was a 90-minute event structured to highlight how federal and local land use policies created segregation across the District, how they produced the current inequitable geographic distribution of affordable housing, and how this has impacted economic and educational opportunities for residents.

More than 300 people participated in the event, both in person and online via livestream.

The agenda consisted of the following:

Welcome

- John Falcicchio, Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development

“Segregated by Design” Video

Fireside Chat: The History of Segregation in the District

- Facilitator: Don Edwards, Founder & CEO, Justice & Sustainability Associates
- Dr. Willow Lung-Amam, Associate Professor in the Urban Studies & Planning Program, University of Maryland
- Neil Flanagan, Writer & Associate, Maginniss + del Ninno Architects

Presentation: The Impact of Segregation on Opportunity

- David Williams, Policy Director, Opportunity Insights

Fireside Chat: Tying It All Together

- Facilitator: Don Edwards, Founder & CEO, Justice & Sustainability Associates
- David Williams, Policy Director, Opportunity Insights
- Polly Donaldson, Director, DC Department of Housing and Community Development

Next Steps & Call to Action

- Andrew Trueblood, Director, DC Office of Planning

You can view a recording of the event [here](#).

“Segregated By Design” Video

For the first 20 minutes, a short film titled “Segregated by Design” was screened. The film is based on the book “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,” by Richard Rothstein. The video highlights the different ways that federal and local governments, real estate agents, and private actors intentionally created segregated cities through policies and practices, producing disparate effects in multi-generational wealth accumulation and access to housing and opportunity based on race.

You can view the video for free here:

<https://www.segregatedbydesign.com/>

Fireside Chat: The History of Segregation in the District

The film was followed by insights from two experts, Dr. Willow Lung-Amam and Neil Flanagan, who discussed how federal policies highlighted in the video affected the District. Our event facilitator, Don Edwards, moderated that conversation.

Highlights from that conversation included learning about how federal policies filtered down to the local level to systematically separate people by race and economic classes, how the African American community of Fort Reno was intentionally cleared to make way for a park ([you can read more here](#)), and how segregation negatively affects all of us.

Presentation: The Impact of Segregation on Opportunity

David Williams then presented research on the impact of place and high opportunity neighborhood on children's outcomes. David is the Policy Director for Harvard University's Opportunity Insights, an initiative that uses big data to empower policy makers and civic leaders to create targeted local solutions that revive the American Dream.

As part of his presentation, David highlighted how across the District, low-income children have vastly different economic outcomes depending on where they live. For example, data from children born between 1978 and 1983 reveals that a low-income child who grew up in Anacostia earned on average \$23,000 a year as an adult compared to a low-income child who grew up in Cleveland Park and earned on average \$45,000 a year as an adult. David then highlighted how research conducted in Seattle, WA indicates that when low-income families looking for housing are provided support (by customized search assistance, increased landlord engagement, and short-term financial assistance) in using their housing vouchers to move to high opportunity areas, they are four times more likely to move to those areas.

You can view the slides from David's presentation [here](#).

To learn more about Opportunity Insights, please visit <https://opportunityinsights.org>

Fireside Chat: Tying It All Together

In the last session of the event, David Williams was joined by Polly Donaldson, Director of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development, to discuss how the District is working to advance housing opportunities for low-income families in the District. Director Donaldson highlighted the Planning Area goals established in the Housing Equity Report released by Mayor Bowser in October of 2019 ([you can find the report here](#)), and the significant investments the District has already made through the Housing Production Trust Fund, the Housing Preservation Fund, and Local Rent Subsidy Program.

Andrew Trueblood, the Director of the DC Office of Planning, then joined Director Donaldson and David Williams on the stage and answered questions from the audience. Since there were more questions than time allowed for live responses, those questions that were unanswered were grouped by theme and will be addressed in a forthcoming Frequently Asked Questions document on our website (housing.dc.gov).

Next Steps & Call to Action

At the close of the event, Director Trueblood and Deputy Mayor John Falcicchio indicated that folks who want to support affordable housing production in the District should:

- 1) Support the proposed Comprehensive Plan, including affordable housing policies contained in the Housing Element of the Plan, through consultation with ANCs ([you can learn more about how to engage with the Comprehensive Plan here](#))
- 2) Learn more about housing segregation and its impact on opportunity and continue engaging with the ongoing conversation on advancing equitable affordable housing goals. To support these ends, OP has compiled a list of resources that can be accessed [here](#), and those interested are encouraged to participate online and with social media using the hashtag **#36000by2025**.
- 3) Support affordable housing investments in the upcoming District budget process, details for which will be posted to housing.dc.gov once available.

Overall, what did the participants think about the event?

To determine the event's effectiveness and improve future events, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form after the event. Overall, those in attendance provided positive comments, which included insightful suggestions on shaping future events to better engage community members.

The event was successful in enhancing what participants knew about the history of housing segregation in the District and its impact on opportunity in the District. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) respondents reported that they learned either a lot or a good amount at the event. Nearly a third (31 percent) of respondents reported that they learned a lot at the event and another third (31 percent) reported that they learned a good amount at the event. Out of the remaining participants, 29 percent said they learned some, and 8 percent said they learned a limited amount.

The event was successful in sharing helpful information about housing segregation in the District and its impact on economic and educational opportunity in the District. A high majority (87 percent) of the respondents reported that the information at the event was either very helpful or helpful. Of the remaining respondents, two percent found it neither helpful nor unhelpful, four percent found it unhelpful, and six percent found it very unhelpful.

Participants enjoyed different parts of the event's structure, but also shared how the event could have been improved. When asked what they liked the most about the event, many highlighted that they enjoyed the "Segregated by Design" video the most, followed by the fireside chat with Dr. Willow Lung-Amam and Neil Flanagan and the presentation from David Williams. Some participants highlighted that they liked the mix of the speakers and the overall format of the event.

When asked what they liked the least or potential areas for improvement, many participants highlighted that they would like additional time for Q&A with panelists and more opportunities to be engaged as part of the conversation. Other participants also highlighted a desire for more concrete ideas and plans about how the District intends to build more affordable housing in high opportunity areas of the city and how the District plans to address gentrification and displacement of low-income families across the city.

Participants were eager to participate in future Housing Framework for Equity and Growth events. Nearly all participants (91 percent) reported they were extremely likely or likely to participate in a future housing event, with 55 percent sharing that they were extremely likely and 36 percent sharing that they were likely. Of the remaining participants, six percent were neither likely nor unlikely to participate in a future housing event, and only one participant reported that it was unlikely that they would participate in a future housing event.

Overall, participants enjoyed the format of the event and would like to see future events that engage participants in similar ways. They also highlighted that they would like to be engaged in other ways too. More than half of the participants (55 percent) reported that they wanted future events to be structured in a similar format to the event (i.e. as a panel presentation). Another 22 percent of participants shared that they would like to see small group discussions for future events, followed by 15 percent of participants who wanted a town hall type of format. A few participants shared that they would like to see additional events structured as an open house, online webinars, or other ideas.

A majority of participants learned about the event from District agency outreach while a smaller number of participants learned about the event from neighborhood listservs or other members in their personal or professional network. Over half (59 percent) of participants learned about the event from the Office of Planning or Department of Housing and Community Development listservs, and an additional 14 percent learned about the event from a neighborhood listserv. Over a quarter (26 percent) of participants reported learning about it from other persons in their network, and the remaining participants heard about it from a combination of social media (7 percent). Note, participants could mark several responses, so the total exceeds 100 percent.

Thank you!

Thank you for engaging with the *Housing Framework for Equity and Growth* and learning about the Community Conversation on Housing. We look forward to continuing to listen and learn from you.

Stay tuned to housing.dc.gov to learn more about the initiative, sign up for our listserv, and remain engaged in the conversation, including future events.