

Greater Greater Washington candidate questionnaire 2022

Democratic primary - Ward 3

Matthew Frumin

Due to technical difficulties, we do not have this candidate's responses to questions 1-3.

Housing

Question 4

With 36,000 presumably completed units as a baseline, how many additional units do you think should be built in the District by 2045?

Between 50,000 and 100,000

Question 5

Housing production in D.C. has been uneven and particularly concentrated in certain neighborhoods. Do you support the mayor's goal to set production targets in each area of the District to more evenly disperse the construction of new housing?

Yes

Question 6

On the forty-three percent of all surface area that is owned by the federal government in the District, it is illegal to build an apartment; according to a D.C. Policy Center report, "single-family units make up only 30 percent of the District's housing stock, but occupy 80 percent of its residential buildings." Should apartments be legal on 100 percent of all surface area governed by the District?

No

Question 7

Council's land use authority is limited: The Home Rule Act states, "the mayor shall be the central planning agency for the District" (page 13), and councilmembers do not, generally, vote up or down on individual developments. Councilmembers' most direct influence on land use is through the Comprehensive Plan, though they cannot change that unless amendments are proposed by the mayor. However, the council can still act to increase housing production, whether through legislation and budgeting, or by directing the executive to pursue amendments before the zoning commission. Please rank the following policies that would increase housing production in the order that you would request your staff to pursue them, if elected. (This list is purposefully not inclusive of affordability and stabilization policies, which are addressed in subsequent questions.)

- 1 Incentivizing the conversion of office buildings to residential properties
 - 2 Increasing the percentage of affordable housing required in public-land dispositions
 - 3 Legalizing and incentivizing housing above public facilities, such as libraries, rec centers, and fire stations
 - 4 Subsidizing individual homeowners to construct ADUs
 - 5 Eliminating the Height Act
- Did not rank** Legalizing two-unit buildings District-wide
Did not rank Legalizing four-unit buildings Districtwide
Did not rank Eliminating parking requirements in new construction
Did not rank Amending the building code to reduce construction costs

Question 8

Where in Ward 3 do you think new housing should be built? If you do not think new housing should be built in Ward 3, please write, "I do not think new housing should be built in Ward 3."

The greatest areas of opportunity are on the commercial corridors and particularly near transit. The upcoming planning processes for the Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue corridors offer enormous promise.

Meanwhile, as my work as Chair of the Board for the Lisner Home shows, land owned by mission driven organizations provide another area of opportunity. We won the first ever Housing Production Trust Fund Award in Rock Creek West and will be building 93 units of deeply affordable senior housing on our site. Churches and synagogues could replicate our model.

Also, public land and air rights over public buildings should also be a focus.

These priorities echo the agenda of the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) Ward 3 Housing Initiative of which I have been a part and a leader.

Question 9

Where in Ward 3 do you think density should be increased to accommodate the construction of new housing? If you do not think density should be increased in Ward 3, please write, "I do not think density should be increased in Ward 3." On commercial corridors and particularly around transit hubs.

On commercial corridors and particularly near transit hubs.

Question 10

Given the opportunity, how would you amend the District's Height Act?

Removing or raising the Height Act entirely

Question 11

Would you support amending the District's preservation laws to remove height and mass from the purview of historic review? Under such a proposal, District historic officials would still review materials, aesthetics and compatibility of designated structures, but overall density would be controlled by zoning the same way it is for non-designated structures.

No

Question 12

I consider affordable housing to be (check all that, in your opinion, apply):

- Means-tested or income-restricted
- Subsidized
- Rent-controlled

Question 13

I consider market-rate housing to be (check all that, in your opinion, apply):

- Not means-tested or income-restricted
- Unsubsidized
- Not rent-controlled

Question 14

What is, and is not, within the scope of a councilmember's authority to produce more affordable housing in the District? Or, describe not what you will do to produce more affordable housing in the District, but, rather, what any given councilmember can do to produce more affordable housing in the District.

Fully fund the Housing Production Trust Fund. Update our rent control laws. Press for increases in inclusionary zoning requirements. Conduct aggressive oversight to ensure our agencies are hitting their goals in the production of affordable housing and to ensure a proper mix of units by unit size, income level and age. Advocate for specific projects where they make sense and use the bully pulpit to encourage developers to maximize affordable housing on specific sites and look for ways to support them in doing so. Use their significant familiarity with the Ward to look for opportunities for new developments including on public land or in air rights over a public building to encourage new projects.

Question 15

The D.C. Housing Authority is an independent entity, and its debt is likely too great for it to realistically be moved under the purview of the District government. Given this, how would you, as a councilmember, answer calls to "fix" public housing?

This is an agency that has been plagued by scandal. We need aggressive oversight to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse and to improve coordination between the agencies. Reform governance of DCHA to make it more responsive and accountable. Put necessary funds in the local budget for repair and renovation of public housing units. Participate in national advocacy to get HUD to increase levels of investment in the repair and renovation of existing public housing. Tenaciously monitor and support projects for the redevelopment of public housing sites to a larger mixed income site with at least as much affordable housing as the existing site using tools like expedited development and IZ preferences for current tenants to ensure it actually delivers on the promise of improving quality of life for the tenants. The model has earned significant skepticism and residents are right to insist that the city prove its efficacy. Review the waiting list for public housing to realistically assess need and address immediate needs. There likely are many names on the list that are now out-of-date.

Question 16

How many units of housing do you think should be built in the District by 2045 for households making between:

I reluctantly provided an overall number for 2045 because so much can change. That reticence is compounded here. I do not believe I can responsibly parse like this projecting out 23 years. We need a lot in all of these categories.

Question 17

In response to criticisms that it has failed to meet its targets for building extremely low-income housing (units restricted to residents earning 30 percent AMI or below), the Department of Housing and Community Development has stated, on page 23 of this report, that it cannot do so without coordination and support from other agencies, such as the D.C. Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Human Services. What is the best path forward to ensure extremely low-income housing is reliably produced?

Focus resources including dollars, expedited permitting, technical support and tax abatements and freezes for developments in this category. Use public lands and opportunities above public assets and DOPA more aggressively to create opportunities for such housing.

Question 18

As a councilmember, how will you ensure that the District produces housing for residents who make between 50 percent AMI (\$45,150 for a household of one) and 80 percent AMI (\$72,250 for a household of one)?

Use the same tools as in response to Question 17. But for this income level, I note there are no questions going to programs to support home purchases by residents in this category like HPAP and incentives for teachers, firefighters and police. Such programs also are important vehicles that can bring market housing within reach of residents in this income bracket. We should be aggressively funding and expanding such programs which have the added benefit of wealth creation.

Question 19

As a councilmember, how will you ensure the District produces housing for residents who make between 80 percent AMI (\$72,250 for a household of one) and 120 percent AMI (\$108,350)?

Use the same tools as in Question 18 including the tools listed for Question 17

Question 20

While the District has a robust Housing Production Trust Fund, it is not infinite, and land costs in the District impact the number of affordable units that can be constructed, as well as the percentage of MFI to which they are subsidized. The below scenarios are not inclusive of all options that will ever be on the table. They are, however, representative of the tradeoffs inherent in balancing funding for and the location of publicly subsidized affordable housing, which is often cross-subsidized with market-rate housing. Please choose the scenario you would prefer, and explain why you prefer that scenario.

- ✓ One 30-unit project in Forest Hills for residents making between 60 (\$54,200) and 80 (\$72,250) percent MFI, and one 20-unit market-rate project in Bellevue

Building workforce housing in Ward 3 is an important priority and the chosen scenario delivers on that. The fourth option is also attractive as it delivers deeply affordable housing which is also a priority but fewer units. This will always be a challenge -- the cost of deeply affordable is high -- but the 3 to 1 ratio pushed me to the 30 units of workforce housing option. The 25 units in both Bellevue and Forest Hills also has an appeal but the chosen option reached more residents with greater need to give them access to Forest Hills.

Question 21

In the Office of Planning's Housing Framework for Equity and Growth, released in October 2019, Mayor Bowser set targets for the production of affordable housing per planning area "to achieve an equitable distribution of no less than 15 percent affordable housing in each planning area by 2050." Progress on those targets since January 2019 is illustrated in the above chart, from the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. What will you do to ensure the planning area you would represent, Mid-City, meets the stated targets by 2050?

Press for creative approaches in the planning processes for the Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue corridors to maximize affordable housing units. offer enormous promise. Opportunities on public land and air rights over public buildings and working with mission driven land owners like churches and synagogues should also be a focus. As my work as Chair of the Board for the Lisner Home shows, land owned by mission driven organizations can present opportunities. We won the first ever Housing Production Trust Fund Award in Rock Creek West and will be building 93 units of deeply affordable senior housing on our site. Other similar organizations could replicate our model. Provide

support for the creation of limited equity coops, land trusts and social housing arrangements. Promote the addition of ADUs. There are many tools and we must use them all.

Question 22

The Committee on Housing and Executive Administration has failed to advance any reform to the District's existing rent stabilization policies. Check the boxes to indicate the policies for which you would vote:

- ✓ Allow only one increase per year, with notice, for any D.C. rental housing that's exempt from rent stabilization
- ✓ Eliminate voluntary agreements that take rents to market-rate
- ✓ Implement stronger oversight of all landlord petitions filed with the Department of Housing and Community Development
- ✓ Clarify what types of landlord upgrades qualify for capital improvements petitions
- ✓ Narrow the scope of hardship petitions; stagger allowable increases; and make increases temporary, rather than permanent
- ✓ Make rent increases under substantial rehabilitation petitions temporary rather than permanent
- ✓ Cap annual rent increases at the level of inflation, or consumer price index, and eliminate the extra two percent allowed under current law
- ✓ Eliminate vacancy increases

Question 23

The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act has historically enabled the cooperative purchase of apartment buildings that are put up for sale by a tenants' association. There are many ins and outs of the TOPA process, one of which is the ability of tenants to take buyouts, if the interested buyer is willing to make them. Buyouts have skyrocketed, to, in some deals, \$60,000 per unit, making TOPA, functionally, not an anti-displacement policy but, rather, a tenant equity policy. Do you think that this is a suitable evolution of TOPA, or should the law be amended to either formalize or restrict this?

TOPA should be amended to formalize this.

Without this vehicle, it is likely only tenants of means could benefit from the program. Wealth creation is also a good, so we should keep this vehicle open. That said, it should be formalized and regulated to

ensure fairness and transparency. We should gather and make public data on transactions using the vehicle so we can assess whether it is being used in ways that are exploitive and to give tenants enough information to stand on more equal footing in negotiations with potential partners. Moving from ad hoc to more systematic can help us improve this vehicle.

Question 24

The D.C. Council voted to exempt single-family home sales from TOPA in 2017. As a councilmember, would you support reinstating single-family TOPA?

No

Question 25

Given widespread support for limited-equity coops and community land trusts, what would you, as a councilmember, do to encourage their proliferation?

Use Housing Production Trust Fund dollars to support each. Study the viability of new land trusts that could cover areas that are not a focus of existing land trusts. Provide technical support for persons interested in creating limited equity co-ops and land trusts. Expand programs like HPAP to apply to limited equity programs. I would also seek to support programs to facilitate social housing arrangements.

Question 26

The District Opportunity to Purchase Act "gives the mayor the authority to purchase certain apartment buildings in order to maintain existing rental affordable units for tenants and increase the total number of affordable rental units within the District." DOPA is primarily used as a preservation tool: If tenants do not exercise their TOPA rights, the District can make an offer on a building, as long as it "consists of five or more rental units and 25 percent or more of those units are 'affordable' at 50 percent of the median family income." What would you change about this, if anything?

The city should have the ability to exercise DOPA rights on the sale of any multifamily and commercial properties.

Question 27

Describe your views of the District's inclusionary zoning policy. What do you think it should be achieving? What is it currently failing to do? What, if anything, you think should be changed about it?

IZ is a valuable tool, but at current requirement levels far from adequate to even begin to address our affordable housing needs. We should look to press up the requirements and be more explicit about income levels to be served.

Question 28

Housing is publicly subsidized in two main ways: project-based subsidies (such as Housing Production Trust Fund dollars or Low-Income Housing Tax Credits) that are tied to a unit and reduce its cost for any qualified tenants who live there and tenant-based subsidies (i.e., portable vouchers) that a qualified tenant can use on any market-rate unit. Acknowledging that an even split is not realistic, how do you think the District should divide its public subsidy money between these two methods?

- ✓ Mostly project-based

LAND USE

29. The District's current Comprehensive Plan was written in 2006 and amended in 2021. Despite an extensive amendment process, it is still out-of-date and still more greatly restricts density in affluent neighborhoods than elsewhere. An April 2020 staff report from Office of Planning states that a rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan should be complete by 2025 (page 8). Do you commit to supporting the necessary budget and process for a rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan by 2025?

Yes

30. In a rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan, which of these three options would be your top priority?

Creating opportunities for new housing

31. Traditional smart-growth planning principles concentrate high-density construction, including apartment buildings, on major corridors. This, by design, leaves residential areas off of corridors untouched. Do you agree with this approach to the distribution of housing within neighborhoods?

Yes

32. The mayor has committed the District to attempting a fair distribution of affordable housing production across planning areas by 2050. More unevenly distributed than affordable housing is land zoned for production, distribution, and repair—basically, industrial uses. PDR zones are largely concentrated in the Near Northeast planning area. In a Comprehensive Plan rewrite, would you support a fair-share approach to the location of parcels

zoned for PDR, which would necessitate adding PDR zoning to planning areas where there currently is none or very little, such as Near Northwest and Rock Creek West?

No

33. Where in Ward 3 should PDR zoning be added so as to more fairly balance it across Ward 3? If you do not think PDR zoning should be added in Ward 3, please write, "I do not think PDR zoning should be added in Ward 3."

I would have liked to have said "yes" to Question 32 but could not come up with significant enough sites in the area to make it a reality without consuming green space or displacing an existing use (or major conversion of Friendship Heights which would squander an enormous housing opportunity). Under the circumstances, it struck me as disingenuous to say "yes" to Question 32. Still, even if a "fair share" is not achievable, I would support in any upcoming Comprehensive Plan process taking a hard look at opportunities to add specific sites to the PDR portfolio.

TRANSPORTATION

34. Internal data for WMATA estimates that bus delays cost the system about \$14 million per year. Buses are primarily delayed by sitting in single-occupancy vehicle traffic. Bus riders are more frequently Black and brown, and less affluent, than rail riders and drivers. Would you, as a councilmember, support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for dedicated bus lanes, which make bus service faster and more reliable?

Yes

35. If yes, how do you think DDOT should prioritize repurposing street space to create dedicated bus lanes?

DDOT should repurpose whichever lane its staff believe is best on any given street.

36. A 12-year study, published in 2019, found that protected bike lanes drastically lowered fatal crash rates *for all road users* in Seattle (-60.6%), San Francisco (-49.3%), Denver (-40.3%) and Chicago (-38.2%), among others. The *Washington Post* recently reported that "lower-income neighborhoods in the District recorded eight times more traffic fatalities in recent years than the city's wealthiest area," and that the "40 traffic fatalities in the nation's

capital last year were the most since 2007." Would you, as a councilmember, support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for protected bike lanes?

Yes

37. If yes, how do you think DDOT should prioritize repurposing street space to create protected bike lanes?

DDOT should repurpose whichever lane its staff believe is best on any given street.

38. Road pricing, or congestion pricing, in which motorists pay directly for driving on a particular road or in a particular area, has successfully reduced congestion, improved air quality, and raised money in London, Stockholm, and Singapore by reducing the number of vehicles on the road and improving transit performance. New York will be implementing road pricing in the next few years. However, many drivers are loathe to pay for something that they currently get for free. Would you, as a councilmember, support road pricing as a means to reduce congestion to speed up transit, improve air quality, and raise revenue?

Yes

39. If yes, how would you propose re-investing the \$90 to \$500 million in revenue road pricing is estimated to generate for the District? If no, please write, "I do not support road pricing."

One natural pairing would be to use the dollars to contribute to funding the WMATA operating budget or any deficit in that budget and/or subsidies for use of public transit. Other possibilities include funding the installation and operation of electric charging stations, Vision Zero initiatives to increase safety and Birth to Three which is an important only partially funded District initiative.

40. In 2019, the council budgeted \$475,000 for a road pricing study. The study is complete, but Mayor Bowser has not yet released it. Do you think the study should be made public?

Yes

41. WMATA will be facing a \$375 million budget deficit in FY24, as federal support for transit provided during covid-19 is not likely to be renewed. Though the District, Maryland, and Virginia entered into a regional commitment to fund some of WMATA's capital costs year over year, WMATA's operations do not have a similar dedicated funding stream. Given the need to find local solutions, what will you do, as a councilmember, to assist in closing WMATA's operational funding gap?

As noted above, revenues from congestion pricing are a possibility. Also, a renewal of the regional pact.

An issue that does not arise in this questionnaire is Statehood, but it has relevance here. If the District could achieve Statehood, its bargaining power relative to the neighboring jurisdictions would change

and there could be a discussion about instituting commuter taxes and using the revenue to pursue regional transit, park and infrastructure projects.

42. Do you support Councilmember Charles Allen's Metro for D.C. proposal, which would "put a recurring \$100 balance to D.C. residents' SmarTrip cards every month and make a \$10 million annual investment in improving bus service and infrastructure in the District"?

Yes

43. Assuming \$500 million could be invested in *either* fare-free transit for all users or guaranteed headways of 10 minutes or less on bus lines within D.C., which would you prefer?

Guaranteed headways of 10 minutes or less within D.C.

44. Pick a major street in the District that does not currently have a pending transportation project. Describe what you envision for it, and explain how you would, as a councilmember, work with the District Department of Transportation to implement that vision.

There are bike lane projects on Connecticut Avenue and coming up from American University on Nebraska Avenue to Van Ness. A push should be made to connect them coming up Nebraska to Tenley Circle up past Jackson Reed (formerly Wilson) High School by Deal Middle School and then up or over to connect with the Connecticut Avenue trail. Connection will increase the utility of all trails. Also, I would like to explore more bus lines, even using small buses, to increase east west connectivity. Such transit options could help address concerns about lost parking due to other initiatives. If there were more ways to get to commercial corridors without recourse to a car some of those concerns could be allayed. In the meantime, improving east-west connectivity including to points east of Rock Creek Park would be a good in and of itself.

45. Reducing traffic deaths will require not just incentives for people to drive less and nudges to make them drive better. It will also require policies that actively reshape the District's transportation systems and its landscape to decrease single-occupancy vehicle trips, and to slow down the speed of those trips when people do make them. Please rank the following policies in the order that you would request your staff to pursue them.

1 Regional reciprocity for automated traffic enforcement

2 Building more housing and affordable housing in the District proximate to transit and job centers

3 Implementing a road-pricing program

4 Implementing road diets on arterial streets

5 Increasing the cost to own a car in the District, including RPP and parking registration

Did not rank Removing minimum parking requirements in new developments near transit

Did not rank Making some streets, especially residential streets, car-free

46. On-street parking occurs in public space, which means that an on-street parking spot cannot belong to a specific individual, and people park in different places at different times. What do you consider the threshold beyond which it is reasonable to park in a neighborhood, most of the time?

A resident is able to find an available public street parking space within one block in any direction of their residence (about a two- to four- minute walk), most of the time

47. The District's goal to be carbon-free by 2050 requires most of the reduction of its transportation emissions to come from residents turning existing single-occupancy vehicle trips into transit, walking, and biking trips. Please describe at least one trip you currently take by car that you can commit to taking on foot, by bus, by train, or by bike instead.

I have been a bike commuter for years. I am now a convert to an electric assist bike which enables me to do even more things (in satisfactory weather) by bike that I might otherwise do by car including virtually all of my shopping other than major trips to the grocery store. New technologies such as this can be revolutionary for people of all ages and should be encouraged.