

Washington DC Sustainable Development Plan

A: Washington DC has developed quickly over a short period of time which causes present environmental, social, and economic issues. In the past, government officials have focused on water and air quality in relation to pollution levels. Much of this city is affected by trash, toxic waste, and pollutants from nonrenewable energy sources. The city itself creates an unhealthy living environment for its citizens with air quality and water hazards. Although climate change and its Mid-Atlantic location play a major role in air quality, DC specifically has higher levels than surrounding cities and states which can be traced back to the early 1970s where regulations were just being implemented to alter these pollution levels. With the focus on diminishing these levels, they also wanted to protect the health of their citizens and the public welfare of their city.

On top of these environmental impacts, we see high levels of inequality in and around this metropolitan area. Segregated areas determine your health, life expectancy, education, income, and more. As DC continues to advance, economic, social, and environmental disparities continue to rise and go unfixed. Advocate groups within the community have discussed action to create change, specifically focusing on healthcare, income, and poverty. Each of these issues can be attributed to racial and social injustice. These issues stem from these unequal housing and taxing processes that have been in practice for centuries. With this new focus and awareness spreading around the world, and especially in urban areas, will alter environmental, social, and economic injustices and issues into the future.

B. As of 2020, the health of the District of Columbia has been excelling in some areas, but need significant work in others. In total, the District of Columbia has approximately 705,749 citizens living in the area while the median rent is \$1,487 and a median home value of \$568,400.

However, the total income used for utilities and commodities such as food and gas increase the amount to \$2,456. With this area being more expensive compared to other areas, it creates many problems. First, the poverty rate in the District of Columbia is 13.5% which is a huge amount of citizens in need. Also, during the pandemic, multiple businesses and restaurants have shut down completely. This means that many people have lost their income and therefore may have a harder time paying for the basic needs. In the aspects of demographics, there is a both a 46% rate of Caucasian and African American in the district of Columbia. Next, 11.3% of the population are Hispanic, and 4.5% are Asian, Finally, the minority groups in this region are Native American and Hawaiian at under 1%. Finally, regarding the aspect of owning businesses, this is a very equal representation of each demographic. There are a total of 63,408 firms located in the DC area. As of 2012, 47% of the firms are owned by men and 53% are owned by women. Of that percentage, 47.2% are owned by minority groups while the remaining are not.

Next, is the distinction between how the types of housing is divided in this area very diversely. There are approximately 303,950 homes in the DC. There are 93,470 single family homes which takes up an abundance of land and creates problems for additional housing for the increase in population. As a result, this creates a high demand for people wanting to live in the area, so this drives the price of rent up each year. Finally, the people in the middle to lower class have even more problems trying to get by. Next, there are an estimated 120,600 apartment units that are for rent as well as 64,300 condominiums. Finally, the area is experiencing high revenues

in various businesses around the area. The food industry has accounted 5.1 million dollars while the retail stores have totaled 4.4 million dollars in revenue yearly on average. However, transportation systems are used very frequently in Washington DC. The main forms of transportation are by public transportation such as by bus or the metrorail. Also, many people drive by car as well. In fact, Washington DC has the second largest amount of commuters to the city (600,000 a day) due to the fact that many people take the metrorail from northern Virginia or the suburbs of Maryland to the heart of the city.

Finally, there are unfortunately many gaps that Washington DC needs to rebuild. First is the increase of housing units in the area. This a major thing that needs to happen because it will create a variety of accomplishments. First, it will allow more people to live in the area rather than commuting everyday. Also, the increase in housing will decrease the value of properties and rental homes in the area. Therefore, it will help make things more affording for a single parent and large nuclear family. Secondly, is the homeless population that needs help desperately. There are an estimated 9,500 homeless citizens in the District of Columbia. This is the first time it has been below 10,000 since 2001. Although this is a slight achievement, we need to aid the others as well. Thirdly, we are in need of cleaning up gang violence as well as drug abuse in the area. In January 2019, there was the biggest heroin seizure in the history of DC. There was an estimated 40 kilos of heroin, and multiple guns seized as well. This is the major thing that destroys communities and businesses or loans that are trying to reinvigorate the area. Finally, the outbreak of the coronavirus has made many things difficult due to the pandemic being able to spread quickly in this environment. This is due to the city having a high dependence on public transportation. Also, many people have lost their jobs or even businesses due to slower sales and

shorter hours of operation. This causes a higher rate of people unable to afford their homes. However, despite the areas that need aid, there are many things in DC that create many great assets. Primarily, there is an abundance of tourist attractions and activities to do in the area such as museums, historical sights, and botany tours that attract many people from all around. This not only creates a huge source of revenue for the community, but it helps make the community a more family friendly environment.

C: According to the District of Columbia Office of Planning the forecasts for population, households, and jobs will all increase over the next 20 years. The graph below shows that the population is expected to be over 894,000 people, households are predicted to increase to 381,000 and there should be 978,000 jobs by the year 2035. Because of this increase in numbers it is also expected the average household size will increase from 2.11 to 2.21 people per household.

Figure 1. Summary of COG 9.0 Cooperative Forecasts (thousands)

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2015- 2045	Percent Change	Annual Rate
Population										
DC	672	730	787	842	894	941	987	315	46.9%	1.6%
Region	5,372	5,673	5,956	6,214	6,453	6,665	6,876	1,504	28.0%	0.9%
% DC/Region	12.5%	12.9%	13.2%	13.6%	13.9%	14.1%	14.4%	20.9%		
Employment										
DC	798	846	895	938	978	1,012	1,045	247	31.0%	1.0%
Region	3,152	3,343	3,563	3,767	3,949	4,125	4,291	1,140	36.2%	1.2%
% DC/Region	25.3%	25.3%	25.1%	24.9%	24.8%	24.5%	24.4%	21.7%		
Households										
DC	297	319	341	363	381	396	412	115	38.6%	1.3%
Region	2,009	2,135	2,256	2,371	2,470	2,558	2,651	642	31.9%	1.1%
% DC/Region	14.8%	15.0%	15.1%	15.3%	15.4%	15.5%	15.5%	17.9%		
Jobs/Housing Ratio										
DC	2.69	2.65	2.62	2.59	2.57	2.55	2.54	2.15		
Region	1.57	1.57	1.58	1.59	1.60	1.61	1.62	1.78		
Avg DC Household Size										
	2.11	2.13	2.16	2.18	2.21	2.24	2.27			

Source: WMCOG, DC Office of Planning (March 2016)

Because of the huge increase in people, Washington DC has to make adjustments in order to accommodate. There will be an increase in neighborhoods where the rising values will allow

for more expensive high-rise construction which will help maximize site capacity under zoning. Also the increase in average household sizes are caused by the migration of new and growing families into the District, while older families are looking to downsize in more suburban areas.

The District of Columbia Office of Planning has also stated that the increase in population will help create an abundance of choices for transportation, entertainment, education, health, housing, food, etc. There are also plans to improve public school performance and create government initiatives like universal pre-K, which will attract young families.

Washington DC also plans to return to historic patterns of job growth but with greater emphasis on private job sectors. With more new job opportunities, more young professionals are attracted to the city, and more middle aged workers can fill vacant senior positions left by those who choose to retire. Sectors like professional and business services, retail, education and health services will continue to dominate job growth and office vacancy will decline. Also employment will continue to disperse and grow throughout DC neighborhoods as the trend toward retail and commercial ground and second floor uses continues to develop.

There are also plans for new neighborhoods, such as McMillan Reservoir, Walter Reed, and others that are large parcels of land that are either currently vacant or underutilized that have development opportunity, but require a large amount of investment and infrastructure.

D: Past, present and future needs revolve around racial injustice that have been around for centuries in this area. Especially now with COVID-19 this lower income community is struggling and homelessness is rising. The community and government officials are creating environments and resources that promote anti-racist ideals and safe spots for these targeted families. Not only that but they're educating the community and involving people who really

care to help. According to the DC line, the community is calling out the dangers black people experience from “those with power and privilege”, bringing social change along with economic help into the community.

Another social inequality that older DC residents are speaking about are the accessibility, safety, specificity lacking for this community. Although this community is not as large as the youthful working class, as boomers begin to age this population will grow and they desire better conditions. Seeing as though this is an urban area with hustle and bustle, run down areas, and little access to space and transportation, it is not suitable for the older population. Under AARP livable communities, policy makers have considered their points and are focusing on making sidewalks and streets safer, creating affordable housing, better access to transportation, and so much more.

Another underrepresented community is the lower income groups (can be attributed to racial injustice) who suffer from a lack of health needs. Throughout my research I found this specific need to continue to resurface in assessment over many years. It is clear this research and intervention is either not enough or not sustainable for this community. This need cannot be solved easily as it is an issue around the world in many communities similar to this one. A recent report done on Community Health Needs Assessment in DC focuses on their needs and engages the community in more equal and accessible treatments. Specifically, mental health, care coordination, health literacy, and place-based care. Past struggles within these needs have caused this community to gain recognition and cause for change, moving away from racial and income inequalities.

Each of these needs and desires focuses on the outliers in this community, meaning DC as a whole should be more inclusive in accessibility, sustainability, and evolve from past

practices. Although these assessments point to different groups they all share this long lived injustice that is being brought forward within the community to improve the present and future lives of these residents. Making healthcare more accessible and fair for all groups within the city, creating better and safer transportation for elders, and hopefully ending racial disparities within their city. All of which are difficult but can be solved through multi-level intervention, which is a step that has already been taken for most of these needs.

E. DC, although a highly stable and rapidly growing community, does have its flaws and residents desire change to many pieces of their community. A community needs voice opinions for change to be made, more equitable ways of life to be served, and a historical policy to be eliminated. Although these changes take time and a lot of effort, DC has already begun its journey to a better future. By bringing these issues forward people of power in the community or at the policy level are able to intervene and change the community to better the future as a whole. For a while now DC has been ingrained with old practices that were built off of inequalities, racism, sexism, and many more issues, this new recognition allows the community as a whole to move past this and create a more sustained lifestyle for all levels involved.

Vision: We hope DC becomes a completely desirable community for all groups of people who reside in its borders. As the community draws attention to the ongoing social, environmental, economic issues the city faces, they will be able to improve and move away from past policy and harmful ways that have damaged the community and lifestyle in any way.

Vision Statement:

We hope DC becomes a completely desirable community for all groups of people who reside in its borders. As the community draws attention to the ongoing social, environmental, economic issues the city faces, they will be able to improve and move away from past policy and harmful ways that have damaged the community and lifestyle in any way.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities:

1. Give more power to lower income and minority populations in the local government for planning, social, economic, and environmental discussions.
2. Invest in new infrastructure in neighborhoods, such as McMillan Reservoir and Walter Reed, since they are currently large parcels of land that are either vacant or underutilized but have development opportunity.
3. Improve public school performance and create government initiatives like universal pre-K, which will attract young families.
4. Overall make rent more affordable in the area. There are many families that are unable to afford rent plus utilities each month. This is due to an abundance of single family homes in the area causing little room for an increase of housing units.

Public Plan Strategy:

1. Creating more equitable social involvement in the local government will finally give voices to lower income minorities who have been held down, economically, socially, and environmentally, by this system for so long. These specific groups suffer most from economic disadvantages, gentrification, and accessibility this system has created, by

involving them in future planning allows their perspective to be heard instead of assumed. The problems they face have a better chance of being heard, funded, and fixed in the long run. It seems this solution is very easy but in the past it has been ignored and dismissed, while these political issues remain in the hands of the white and rich.

Objective 1.1: By 2025 have at least 10% of local government officials be from minority groups.

Activity 1.1: Creating affirmative action standards to ensure proper levels of minority groups are represented.

Activity 1.2: Having a designated number of hearings in lower class, middle class, and upper class communities.

2. McMillian Reservoir and Walter reed are two neighborhoods that have not lived up to its potential. The plan would be to increase in the necessary infrastructure it would take to make these vacant areas into a community of homes, stores, restaurants, ect. Specifically for McMillian Reservoir the 2.1 million-square-foot project will create 146 townhouses, more than 500 apartments, retail, a Harris Teeter, a park, and a community center. The proposal's design will keep some historic structures, like the 20 silos. The project will also provide 3,000 construction jobs, 3,200 permanent jobs, and more than \$1.2 billion in tax revenues for the city.

Objective 1.1: Keep the employment rate increasing by at least 1% each year

Activity 1.1: infrastructure of new neighborhoods will provide more construction jobs and the new business that emerge in these neighborhoods will provide more jobs as well

Improving the DC education system is also a top priority. Plan to invest in DC's lowest scoring schools by providing better access to educational materials, improving school transportation for families who don't have access to private means of transportation, and smaller class sizes. There is also a plan to provide universal Pre-K so that younger families will be attracted to more urban neighborhoods within the city. The city will also reach out to citizens and hear what they think is and is not working within the educational system to better fit their needs as a parent and their children's needs as a student.

Objective 1.1: Raise the average standardized testing scores in DC public schools by 5% within the next 10 years

Activity 1.1: Investing in better access to free tutoring and studying materials for tests within the school community

3. The goal of making homes more affordable is to increase the number of housing units in the area of DC. This goal can be reached by future planning and further division of land for the use of apartment or condo buildings specifically on single family home property that take up valuable space. There could be many chances to enact a land parcel on the property to ensure that it will be subdivided into established areas. Also, there can be attempts to buy the land from the residents by local government in order to produce major benefits to the area. Reaching this goal will allow the inflation of values and rent in the District of Columbia to end, and allow more people to move into the community rather than commuting daily. We are able to receive support and awareness through social media to help push our goal. Social media will be very dominant to establish this goal because it is very easy to spread an idea to millions of people on apps such as

Twitter. To achieve this, we need the support of many people, so the government will look into the cause.

Objective 1.1: By 2030, there will be a 15% increase of housing units in the District of Columbia Area.

Activity 1.1: Push the federal government to provide incentives to buy the land of the single family homes by mass media or support on the situation.

Public Plan Engagement:

1. Creating outreach on social media, within public hearings, hanging flyers, advertising in local newspapers, on TV news, etc. will allow feedback and involvement from all groups, allowing them to express their opinions in matters that directly impact them. Seeing as though DC is fairly inequitable surrounding income and housing, creating a wide list of ways to contact all groups to be involved in the local government may be difficult and require more outreach strategies than others. Research must be done by low income communities to figure out what may create the most response, and where that advertisement will be done. By involving lower income and minority communities as well as increasing the involvement of these groups in public hearings will allow minority groups to rise above the social ideals, integrate into wealthier neighborhoods, limit homelessness, provide more safety and accessibility resources to minority communities, and create more sustainable practices in the lower income areas.
2. When creating a new neighborhood it is important that the people who will possibly be migrating into that area, find that it meets their needs, so they need to be included in the planning process. There can be meetings where the public can voice their opinions on what they want to see and what they feel is necessary in the new neighborhood. There

can also be a vote on what the people want to see more in the neighborhood, for example, if they would rather have a playground or a new soccer field, etc. The types of homes they want to see, the inclusion of bike lanes, and access to parks are all things that need to be considered when planning new infrastructure and it is important in our planning process to consider the public's opinions.

3. The education system is also something that every parent greatly considers before moving into a new neighborhood, so in order to attract more people the city needs to know what they are looking for when they are looking at potential schools. The city will also reach out to the public and hear what they think is and is not working within the educational system to better fit their needs as a parent and their children's needs as a student. Ask questions like, “what size classroom are you looking for” and “what do you prioritize your children learning, like the arts, sciences, or literature”? Creating an education system that the parents feel best suits their children's needs is the number one priority.
4. This movement can be reached by use of first social media to make the citizens and people surrounding aware of the problem. Many people in the city understand how rent is expensive and unaffordable for a single parent. Also, many people commute and drive hours to the city each day including multiple traffic jams. Once we have a wave of support, The next step is to have community building and press relations on the idea. The press will vastly spread the news as well to create more awareness for the future goal. Finally, we can anticipate influencer outreach to help spread the idea to their followers as well.

Discussion of Social Equity:

1. As discussed previously in my engagement and goals there will be outreach to all communities for their involvement based on how they receive information. Advertising minority groups in local government does not require incentive because they suffered historically from white power and its control in political and government entities. Creating affirmative action standards will increase the number of minority participants in general but will also keep the government official in check, to meet these standards every election and to maintain them in the future. From here minority groups will be more present in public hearings, and voicing their opinions to the local government to create change now that they will be heard. Having people who have experienced and can relate to their experience in power creates an environment that is more likely to solve these issues. Social equity is at the root for many of DC's issues and can be solved by diversifying the local government.
2. In terms of social equity in regards to creating new neighborhoods, it is important to create a community where everyone has equal opportunity. For example, to have a variety of prices for new homes that are being built so it is open to people of all economic backgrounds. Making sure that everything necessary is accessible either by foot or public transportation for those who can't afford a car. Having different types of grocery stores so that there aren't only expensive organic options, but rather options that can meet any person's needs. Creating a new neighborhood doesn't mean making it into a new and expensive community where only few can afford to live, but having a variety of options so everyone no matter their economic position can feel welcomed.

3. Social equity is a huge part of the conversation in terms of the educational system. It has constantly been seen that schools with a majority of white students have better access to materials and learning sources than those that have large groups of minorities. When bettering the DC schools, it is important to adjust funding so that the schools who need it the most get it. Public schools that are located in majority black neighborhoods are often left understaffed, underfunded, and lack learning materials. This new plan will prioritize these schools so that every child no matter of race gets the same opportunity to receive the best education.
4. On the issue of social equity, my plan will create a better living condition for all ethnicities, and ensure that struggling families will have a better chance at a higher quality of life. In addition, my goal is helpful to all people struggling in the area, or people commuting to the city, paying hundreds of dollars in gasoline each month. Minorities in the area will be a major part of the community building in trying to spread the goal. Some of the citizens are working constant shifts, and still not able to afford food or essential amenities each week. Therefore, with the increase of housing units, minority residents will have a better chance of living in the area where they are employed.

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