



## Overview of affordable housing

Ward3Vision supports housing for people that reflect its values. Therefore, it supports increasing the amount and diversity of available housing options including more affordable housing in Ward 3 as part of an effort to overcome a history of exclusionary zoning practices. Development of housing should be consistent with the principles of smart growth, particularly “transit-oriented development” (TOD) meaning increased density along metro and bus corridors, as reflected in the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land-Use Map recently voted into law by the DC Council. We generally favor mixed-income housing, but are not opposed to 100% affordable construction or 100% “social housing” for workforce affordability depending on the location, density, number of units, and adequacy of resources for appropriate supportive programs in the case of serving populations with special challenges beyond sufficient income. We favor mixed income neighborhoods, which can be created and sustained through a variety of policies and actions.

To be clear: Ward3Vision does not assume that Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) in newly constructed buildings is the only way to add affordable units to our neighborhoods. Rather, in the online event program presented in April 2021, Ward3Vision presented the many tools in the ‘Affordable Housing Toolbox’ which are available to build economically viable affordable housing projects. IZ is but one tool. There are others. For example, property tax abatement for developments with a significant number of affordable units can be an efficient and effective tool if designed carefully. Because high land costs in Ward 3 may require extraordinary expenditures from the DC Housing Production Trust Fund, all potential sites must be evaluated to ensure optimal use of public funds. Any potential development site should be assessed for its potential to utilize a combination of subsidies and zoning tools to achieve the housing goals set out in the Comprehensive Plan of 15% of a planning area. Each site (including the Wardman Park site) should be accompanied by a realistic conceptual development plan which should be evaluated from this standpoint as well as for its potential success and for its impact on the neighborhood in which it is located. Other strategies including accessory dwelling units (ADU’s) and gentle density housing may be added in coming years.

**Ward3Vision believes that adding a wider range of housing options strengthens our community and our city.**

Recent academic research including a UCLA study that found that overall increased housing supply lowers, or stabilizes, housing rents. A key take-away:

*Housing production should be prioritized in higher-resource communities where the risk of displacement and other potential harms is lower, and complementary policies such as tenant protections and direct public investments remain essential.*

Expanding housing options in Ward 3 will strengthen our community. Affordable rental homes would allow people who work here a chance to live here - retail and service workers; teacher aids and day care workers; entry level teachers, firefighters and university employees. Affordable ownership homes - condos/ coops and missing middle types - would allow people with moderate incomes to benefit from the amenities of our community as well as contribute to its vitality. Accessory dwellings could help us age in place, house relatives, or just people seeking a more affordable rental home option in a neighborhood that might have few rentals. More people living in Ward 3, especially along the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue transit corridors, will help to support the community of small businesses who need a robust customer base to remain afloat.

### **Our housing vision statement as applied to Ward 3**

W3V supports a wide range of affordable rental home options. These include income and rent restricted homes affordable to people earning low and moderate wages or on fixed incomes. They include homes with a range of sizes to accommodate families and households of different sizes (i.e., from studios to accommodate singles to 4-5-bedroom apartments to accommodate families with children and/or extended families). Best practices in DC and elsewhere show that both mixed income and all-income restricted apartment communities are successful if well designed, built, and managed.

This type of affordable housing is especially suited along or near the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue transit corridors. Capable developers can work with a range of potential sites that exist along or near these 2 corridors in Ward 3 to build this type of housing. These include sites ranging from city-owned sites such as the Chevy Chase Community Center and Library 'campus' that is part of a small area planning process, currently under-developed sites recently given a higher density use designation in Cleveland Park, Van Ness, Friendship Heights, and Tenleytown, and the Wardman that has potential for future repositioning or redevelopment. The amount and type of affordable homes that could be developed on these sites is dependent upon many factors,

including size and development capacity, community support and availability of resources.

The development of affordable rental homes requires support from public and private sources. These include the land use and financing tools available from DC, federal financial assistance in the form of loans, grants and rental assistance, and private financial assistance in the form of loans or grants. Oftentimes, affordable rental housing comes with support services, provided by the developer as is typically the case for experienced non-profits or by DC or agencies funded by DC. This assistance includes support in two primary forms - land use tools such as Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and financial tools such as the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) and vouchers/rental assistance). The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, a federal source of funding, is also a leading source of financing for affordable housing production and rehabilitation.

W3V also supports the development of more moderately priced ownership options and accessory apartments. Moderately priced ownership homes could be achieved by the construction of new condominiums or conversion of existing apartment communities into a condominium or cooperative structure. There could also be the development of more than one family alternatives to the tear-down of smaller homes and construction of larger homes that have recently occurred. Accessory dwellings, essentially rental units that are an accessory to the primary dwelling on a residential lot, can also provide benefit to Ward 3

**Next steps - join our efforts to increase the range and number of housing options.**

Ward 3 Vision has held a series of webinars to educate the community including a recent one on tools to create affordable homes ([Building Inclusivity in Ward 3: What's in the Affordable Housing Toolkit?](#)) and the design of human-scaled streetscapes ([Placemaking on Ward 3's Avenues: What's in the Streetscape Toolbox?](#)). We will continue to educate ourselves and advocate for more housing as well as ways to make it more affordable. We are connecting with more neighbors and community stakeholders to make the case as well as communicating with public officials. We need your help to make more affordable homes a reality here in Ward 3 - join us!

*Ward3Vision is a group of residents who are working to make our neighborhoods even better urban places - more walkable, sustainable, and vibrant. We want a D.C. that grows in ways that are environmentally and socially responsible, positive, and equitable, enhancing our neighborhoods and the vitality of our commercial corridors.*