

Greater Washington Research Program
The Brookings Institution
Washington, DC

Statement by
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March 5, 2007

One year ago, the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force delivered a detailed set of policy recommendations to DC's Mayor and City Council. As co-chair of the task force, I am pleased to acknowledge that Mayor Anthony Williams and the City Council made important progress during 2006 in moving forward with the funding and implementation of a number of key task force proposals. But much remains to be done.

Mayor Adrian Fenty committed himself during his campaign to fully implement the Task Force's recommendations. Indeed, Councilman Fenty was a co-sponsor with Councilman Harold Brazil of the legislation that created the Task Force. In his new role as mayor, Mr. Fenty will soon send to the City Council his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008. His new Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, Neil Albert, is formulating his recommendations to the Mayor on this Administration's housing program. An important and much appreciated first step has been the creation of the position of Housing Chief in the Deputy Mayor's Office, a primary recommendation of the Task Force. The recent appointment of Leslie Steen, a member of the Task Force, to fill this important position is especially good news.

The progress made during 2006 in acting on aspects of the Task Force report was impressive. The legislation that created the Task Force called for annual report to be made to the Council on the progress made in implementing the recommendations. The Brookings Greater Washington Research Program took upon itself the job of preparing the first annual report. Today we are releasing a detailed matrix of all of the Task Force recommendations showing the implementation status of each item and the lead agency or city official whose responsibility it is to act. The matrix can be viewed by going to our Program's web site at www.brookings.edu/washington. Let me note some of the major accomplishments:

- In December, the City Council passed and Mayor Williams signed into law the all important update of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The "housing element" of that updated plan is the same in most important respects to the housing strategy proposed by the Task Force.
- Also in December, the City Council passed and the Mayor signed legislation enacting a new inclusionary zoning program for the city that was supported by the Task Force and approved last fall by the Zoning Commission.

- In his 2007 budget request last spring, Mayor Williams requested, and the City Council approved, \$78 million for several main provisions of the Task Force report concerning affordable housing efforts, including:
 - An increase in the real estate recordation and transfer tax to 1.45%, thereby increasing the size of the automatic 15% set aside of these revenues for the Housing Production Trust Fund (yielding an estimated \$15.1 million for 2007);
 - A total of \$11.8 million for a new rent supplement program;
 - \$6.9 million for the Housing Choice Voucher Program to take up some of the slack caused by declining federal funds;
 - \$7.5 million for emergency assistance to prevent evictions and \$6 million for low income energy assistance; and
 - \$5.8 million for the New Communities Program;
- The city's 2007 budget includes \$5 million for workforce housing. The City Council approved and the Mayor signed into law "Workforce Housing Land Trust Design and Implementation Plan" legislation. The city has committed an additional \$5 million from its Housing Production Trust Fund, thus making available a total of \$10 million for a 1,000 unit pilot community land trust project.
- Mayor and Council approved new regulations for the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) to \$70,000 per unit for the lowest-income first time homebuyers.
- Mayor and Council approved legislation requiring that at least 30% of Home Again housing be affordable.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development has committed \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2007 to support the purchase of housing by tenants.
- The city's 2007 budget includes \$10 million to implement the Homeless No More initiative. Further, \$1.7 million has been budgeted to assist in the housing of homeless youth.
- Mayor and Council enacted legislation requiring a living wage of \$11.75/hour for projects receiving over \$15,000 in city assistance or contracts with the city for over \$100,000.

On behalf of the Task Force, I urge Mayor Fenty, his cabinet members, and the DC City Council to take aggressive action to fund and implement all of the Task Force proposals. We must take advantage of the significant momentum gained up over the past eight years in building up the city's efforts to produce affordable housing.