

# Dexter Williams

## Page 1: Contact information

### Q1

#### Contact information

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## Page 2: Prescreening questions

### Q2

Do you support Mayor Muriel Bowser's goal, announced in 2019, to add 36,000 new units of housing in the District by 2025?

Yes

### Q3

If successful, the 36,000-unit goal will be met by 2025. However, the District's population is estimated to grow to 987,000 people by 2045, and the region is expected to have a shortfall of about 690,000 housing units by then. Will you support a second goal for housing production in the District by 2045? If the mayor or your colleagues don't propose a production goal, will you propose one yourself?

I'll support another housing production goal, and would be willing to propose one myself.

## Page 3: Questionnaire

### Q4

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

**Q5**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q6**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q7**

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.)

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| Legalizing two-unit buildings District-wide   | <b>5</b> |
| Legalizing four-unit buildings District-wide  | <b>4</b> |
| Subsidizing individual homeowners to construct ADUs   | <b>9</b> |
| Increasing the percentage of affordable housing required in public-land dispositions                            | <b>1</b> |
| Incentivizing the conversion of office buildings to residential properties                                      | <b>2</b> |
| Eliminating the Height Act  |          |
| Eliminating parking requirements in new construction  | <b>3</b> |
| Amending the building code to reduce construction costs   | <b>8</b> |
| Legalizing and incentivizing housing above public facilities, such as libraries, rec centers, and fire stations | <b>6</b> |
|   | <b>7</b> |
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**Q8**

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

I believe that the city needs new housing stock to keep pace with demand, even beyond the mayor's housing goal. Even if we met the Administration's production goal by 2025, we would still not be able to meet demand based on population projections. The District should look at the RFK site as one opportunity to build new housing stock. We also need to seriously look at vacant residential buildings as an opportunity to meet our housing needs.

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**Q9**

Where in the District do you think density should be increased to accommodate the construction of new housing? If you do not think density should be increased in the District, please write, "I do not think density should be increased in the District."

If we want to meet the high demand for housing and expand our economic base, we will need to increase density. As I mentioned in my response to question 8, I believe that the RFK site would be ideal for housing and mixed-use development to make the site attractive. As councilmember, I will work with experts and the community to identify other areas in the city that could absorb more density.

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**Q10**

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

**Raising the Height Act only for buildings that will produce more affordable housing than required by inclusionary zoning**

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**Q11**

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.

**Yes**

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**Q12**

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

**Costing no more than 30 percent of one's household income**

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**Q13**

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

**Not means-tested or income-restricted, Expensive**

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**Q14**

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 (with, of course, an emphasis on the opportunities present to at-large members versus ward members) can do to produce more affordable housing in the District.

As a former legislative staffer at the DC Council, I appreciate this question because, from my experience, the Council's role is to provide the Administration with direction and oversight - something the Council does not do a good job of when it comes to our housing agencies.

As it relates to housing, my first priority will be to provide greater oversight over the management of the Trust Fund. I'm glad to see that the mayor is proposing a \$500M investment, but that investment would be undermined if it's not managed well and no assurances that the money is actually being spent appropriately.

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**Q15**

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?

As councilmember, I would work with the new chair of the council's housing committee to identify additional funding during the budget process, where available, to fix some the chronic issues we have with our public housing facilities. I appreciate the mayor's \$110M investment but we will need additional funding, particularly given the high cost of deferred maintenance. I would also collaborate with Representative Norton to fight for federal dollars.

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**Q16**

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

0-30 percent MFI (\$0-\$27,100 per year for a household of one)?

**As Councilmember, I will consult with experts on what this number should be.**

30-50 percent MFI (\$27,100-\$45,150 per year for a household of one)?

**As Councilmember, I will consult with experts on what this number should be.**

50-80 percent MFI (\$45,150 to \$72,250 per year for a household of one)?

**As Councilmember, I will consult with experts on what this number should be.**

80-120 percent MFI (\$72,250 to \$108,350 per year for a household of one)?

**As Councilmember, I will consult with experts on what this number should be.**

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**Q17**

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?

If the city is serious about building extremely low-income housing, then the appropriate agencies need to collaborate to achieve this goal. As Councilmember, I will work with my colleagues to hold a hearing for the relevant agencies to identify why, if at all, there is a lack of coordination and support. If the hearings indicate that this matter isn't a priority for certain agencies, I will explore every available legislative tool to ensure we're building low-income housing.

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**Q18**

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)?

As councilmember, I will work with diverse stakeholders in the community and my Council colleagues to maintain accountability through the implementation process.

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**Q19**

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)?

As councilmember, I will work with diverse stakeholders in the community and my Council colleagues to maintain accountability through the implementation process.

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**Q20**

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**

I prefer this scenario because::

I selected this scenario because it represents the best equitable solution.

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**Q21**

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 that all planning areas meets the stated targets by 2050?

As Councilmember, I will ensure that the city is on track to meet these goals by 2050 through my oversight capacity, mainly through the agency performance oversight hearing process in the early part of every year.

**Q22**

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:

**Make buildings built prior to 2005 subject to rent stabilization**

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**Allow only one increase per year, with notice, for any D.C. rental housing that's exempt from rent stabilization**

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**Cap annual rent increases at the level of inflation, or consumer price index, and eliminate the extra two percent allowed under current law**

**Q23**

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 restrict this.,**

Please explain your selected response.:

As Councilmember, I will fully analyze this issue to identify the best legislative path to restrict this practice. This city is already difficult to afford, and displacement is too common.

We should do everything we can as a city to ensure that tenants aren't priced out and that the intent of TOPA is realized.

**Q24**

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?

**Yes**

**Q25**

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

I would work with experts and stakeholders to identify any necessary investments or incentives.

**Q26**

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?

As councilmember, I would look at this closely to identify areas of the law that may need to be changed. However, given the issues we have with TOPA, I am concerned that it is based on tenants exercising TOPA rights, but this is a matter where I'll want to speak with experts and tenants to get a deeper understanding of the issues, if any.

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**Q27**

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?

I support inclusionary zoning because it increases residents' ability to thrive in the city and participate in DC's economic ecosystem. Affordability is very important, and I will work with the community to explore how we can do more for our residents so that no one is displaced.

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**Q28**

**Mostly tenant-based**

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?

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**Q29**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q30**

**Creating opportunities for new housing**

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

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**Q31**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q32**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q33**

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

As Councilmember, I would consult with experts on deciding where they could be located.

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**Q34**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q35**

**DDOT should prioritize repurposing existing travel lanes.**

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

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**Q36**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q37**

**DDOT should prioritize repurposing existing travel lanes.**

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

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**Q38**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q39**

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."

I will propose investing the generated revenue into fixing our public housing facilities, more workforce housing, academic and social supports for students negatively impacted by the pandemic, and crime prevention.

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**Q40**

**Yes**

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?

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**Q41**

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?

I will work with my Council colleagues to identify funding to close the gap. I would also partner with COG to encourage the region to pay its fair share as well.

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**Q42**

**Yes**

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"?

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**Q43**

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

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?

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**Q44**

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 parts of Minnesota Ave that need repair because the street can be very bumpy and damage the balance of your car. I'll work with my colleagues, primarily the Ward 7 Councilmember, to send a letter to DDOT requesting repairs to the street. I will also follow up with them during public hearings.

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**Q45**

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.

Implementing a road-pricing program	<b>3</b>
Increasing the cost to own a car in the District, including RPP and parking registration	<b>8</b>
Removing minimum parking requirements in new developments near transit	<b>7</b>
Implementing road diets on arterial streets	
Making some streets, especially residential streets, car-free	<b>2</b>
Making some streets, especially residential streets, car-free	<b>5</b>
Regional reciprocity for automated traffic enforcement	<b>4</b>
Building more housing and affordable housing in the District proximate to transit and job centers	<b>6</b>
	<b>1</b>

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**Q46**

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?

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**A resident is able to find an available public street parking space within 100 feet (about a 30-second walk) of their residence's, entrance, most of the time**

**Q47**

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 don't live far from the Safeway on Alabama Ave SE. When it's not time sensitive, I can walk to the store instead of driving.

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