

Trayon White

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Q1

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name	Trayon White Sr.
Best email address to contact:	info@traywhiteformayor.com
Website	https://traywhiteformayor.com/
Social media	https://www.instagram.com/trayonwhite/

Q2

Yes

The “36Kx2025” target—the Bowser administration’s goal to add 36,000 new units of housing in the District by 2025—was announced in 2019 and will, presumably, be completed in just a few years. Do you commit to another housing-production goal for 2030?

Q3

If so, how many additional units of housing do you think should be built in the District by 2030?

50,000

Q4

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 strongly support to eliminate restrictive zoning in Wards 2 and 3. I believe this will have a cascading effect on affordability across the city. As is, restrictive zoning in these specific areas creates artificial housing scarcity in parts of the city with a lot of amenities where many people would like to live. This will reduce the need for people to seek more affordable housing in developing lower income neighborhoods, addressing gentrification, and certainly reduce displacement and housing insecurity.

Q5

Please rank the following policies to increase housing production in the order that you would request your administration to pursue them, if elected. If you would not request your staff pursue a policy, please select N/A. (This list is purposefully not inclusive of affordability and stabilization policies, which are addressed in subsequent questions.)

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

Q6

Given the likely marginal effects of converting office buildings to residential on increasing the District’s housing supply (page 3, #1), and given the fact that paying building owners to place affordability covenants on their properties is a preservation, not production, policy, how will you address the District’s housing shortage at a scale that will meet the need of its residents at all income levels?

Additionally, I would change the Inclusionary Zoning program, so that it is more intentional in terms of equity and choice. In high market value, high demand, fast built out areas such as Ward 1, Ward 6, and parts of Wards 4 and 5, inclusionary zoning has inhibited developers seeking to build more affordable housing. Non-profit developers who have a long and proven record of building mostly affordable housing, could be given some flexibility in density to solely respond to housing needs. I believe a better method for preserving affordability in these kinds of areas is through continued investments in project-based housing, including through upkeep of public housing, and through the re-development of public lands as social housing developments. I would also institute a pilot program for targeted rent control in parts of Wards 5, 7, and 8. Much like I proposed in three bills, aimed at creating relief and preventing High Risk of Displacement in targeted census tracts, through processing these implementations, in areas that show demographic economic expansion and a net decline in low-income population (B23-0353, B23-0605, B22-0033).

Q7

Costing no more than 30 percent of one’s household income

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

Q8

Costing more than 30 percent of one’s household income

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

Q9

How many units of housing do you think should be built in the District by 2030 for households making between:

0-30 percent MFI (\$0- \$27,100 per year for a household of one)?	10,00
30-50 percent MFI (\$27,100-\$45,150 per year for a household of one)?	0
50-80 percent MFI (\$45,150 to \$72,250 per year for a household of one)?	5,000
80-120 percent MFI (\$72,250 to \$108,350 per year for a household of one)?	2,500
	1,000

Q10

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?

I would prioritize programs like the Food Access fund to ensure areas taking on a disproportionate share of the city's subsidized housing burden receive commiserate investments to account for lower disposable incomes.

Q11

How will your administration 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)?

By eliminating restrictive zoning in Wards 2 and 3 I believe there will be a similar effect on rents for these AMI thresholds.

Q12

How will your administration 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)?

My priority and track record has focused importance in giving developing areas the ability to grow more equitably, rather than through rapid changes for households of one, and its accompanying displacement, which has become a normalized traumatic cycle for Black family households with more than one, in DC.

Q13

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

Q14

I prefer this scenario because:

A 30 unit 60 to 80 AMI project in Forest Hills, along with the other policy proposals I have discussed in this questionnaire, will make it more likely Bellevue "market rents" (not solely rates) stay reasonable for people in Bellevue. By providing housing options in Forest Hill for that income range it lowers the demand to rapidly create that kind of housing elsewhere in a manner that may be out of step with the community and lead to displacement of people and businesses.

Q15

The Office of Planning's Housing Framework for Equity and Growth, released in October 2019, sets 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 every planning area meets its stated target by 2050?

It is important for the residents in ward 8 whom I represent, that GGW acknowledges that in 2019, during the highly controversial Comprehensive Plan Amendment process, it was my office under MY LEADERSHIP, that provided over 100+ text amendments to the City's 2019 Comprehensive Plan. My office, not D.C. Office of Planning, led the incorporation of, for the first time ever in this city's history, a guiding principle in the framework element, defining equitable development, equitable growth, fair and inclusive community participation, and cultural heritage preservation, contextualizing it around climate and racial justice. All of which since 2019 have been the guiding law for any progress made by agencies like DMPED, DCOP, DDOT, DOE, etc. As such my leadership as an elected representative of ward 8 residents ensured the definition and proliferation of equitable growth and development since 2019. Something that had never been done in this city by any administration or leadership. My record of bills introduced on enforcement, monitoring and evaluation of equitable affordable housing funding and implementation, are proof of what is to come by 2050. Beginning with my pending mayoral initiative to seek the elimination of restrictive zoning in Wards 2 and 3. Moreover, I will prioritize public land for subsidized affordable housing, residential use, including project-based housing and investigating the impacts and benefits of placing residential uses over public properties.

Q16

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

As stated, in my platform, I commit to create a fund for "Land trusts" that make home buying in DC more affordable. I stand in that commitment with a legislative record of having introduced two bills delineating and ensuring an equitable process for funding CLT's (B23-0550, B24-0680). In addition, I would develop subsidizing housing/land investment programs, that prioritize cooperatives and limited equity homeownership. As repairs and upkeep are always an issue, I would create cross agency partnerships with established trade programs, including returning citizens programs, to create a pipeline of contractors to build and renovate housing stock under these initiatives. Creating wraparound benefits to these housing communities and increase the viability and proliferation of these models.

Q17

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?

Since my top priority is using District owned property for housing affordability, we would increase the DOPA affordability requirement to 50 percent. The AMI eligibility bands for this type of housing preservation will depend on the pricing of the building, so I would seek to make the AMI bands for DOPA more flexible such as with what I propose for IZ.

Q18

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 think it is inflexible and antiquated. IZ fails to create an adequate of amount of real deeply and extensive affordable housing stock. The way IZ is currently implemented by the current administration is likely a contributor to the city's affordable housing crisis. I think IZ in exchange for density in areas that already have dense development is a hindrance to further development and likely places upward pressure on rent costs. I would make the IZ program more flexible than it currently is in places like wards 2 and 3.

Q19

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?

Q20

No

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.

Q21

None of the above

If District law were amended to allow the designation of historic districts to be removed, which, if any, of the current districts should have its designation removed?

Q22

No

Should apartments be legal District-wide?

Q23

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

Wards 2 and 3

Q24

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 restricts density in affluent neighborhoods more 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?

Q25

Creating opportunities for new housing

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

Q26

No

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?

Q27

Where in the District should production, distribution, and repair 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 the District, please write, "I do not think PDR zoning should be added in the District."

I am a proponent of the proliferation of trade schools. It is important for PDR uses to be integrated in a well-planned manner that is equitable and promotes economic equity that is led by home-grown, rooted residents to create diverse industries in the district. I believe PDR zoning is needed, and I commit to establishing means of researching its best location and equitable affordability as a land use.

Q28

Removing or raising the Height Act only in downtown

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

Q29

Enough cars

Do you think there are not enough cars, enough cars, or too many cars in the District?

Q30

Yes

Do you think inducing residents and visitors to drive less should be an explicit policy goal of the District?

Q31

No

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 support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for dedicated bus lanes, which make bus service faster and more reliable?

Q32

If yes, how will you, as mayor, ensure that DDOT actually repurposes street space to create dedicated bus lanes?

I will instruct them to do so where it is appropriate, primarily along major corridors.

Q33

No

A 12-year study, published in 2019, found that protected bike lanes drastically lowered fatal crash rates for all road users (in other words, including for people traveling by means other than bicycle) 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 mayor, support removing single-occupancy vehicle parking and travel lanes for protected bike lanes?

Q34

If yes, how will you, as mayor, ensure that DDOT actually repurposes street space to create protected bike lanes?

I will instruct them to do so where it is appropriate, following equitable development priorities.

Q35

No

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 loath to pay for something that they currently get for free. Would you implement road pricing in the District?

Q36

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 do not support road pricing.

Q37

No

In 2019, the D.C. Council budgeted \$475,000 for the District Department of Transportation and the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure to conduct a preliminary study of how road pricing in the District could work. As mayor, will you release the study?

Q38

WMATA is 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 to assist in closing WMATA's operational funding gap?

I would create a flat rate for metro per ride. As it currently exists, the people that live furthest from jobs and amenities pay the most. While people that ride for shorter periods pay much less, even though they use the facilities and contribute to wear and tear on facilities, at least as much.

Q39

Fare-free transit

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?

Q40

Preventing drivers from killing people 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 administration to pursue them. If you would not request your staff pursue a specific policy, please select N/A.

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

Q41

1

Please elaborate further on what you will do to ensure that no one is killed by a driver, especially a driver who has demonstrated their repeated failure to comply with traffic laws.

For people that have been repeatedly cited for dangerous driving, DMV will suspend their licenses. As mayor, I will create equitable enforcement across the DMV regulations, to issue tickets to everyone using any mode of transit, that uses city streets and vehicular rights of way. I would also work with bike riders to develop a set of transit rules and licensing that would keep them safe, for when they run stop signs, red lights, disobey cross signals, and ride on sidewalks where it is forbidden, and hurt or violate pedestrians' rights and safety as well.

Q42

The District's automated traffic enforcement program cannot meaningfully enforce consequences for unsafe driving upon Maryland and Virginia residents, as the District does not have any reciprocity agreement with those states. As mayor, what will you do to facilitate those agreements, and what will you do to implement them?

We need to find areas where there is common ground and where it is a situation where every government is getting the things it needs. We must also understand and be mindful of historic displacement of low income people to our neighboring states. The adverse impacts that biased, racist enforcement can create for Black/Brown people and families who call the entire region home.

Q43

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 a reasonable threshold for evaluating if street parking is sufficient in any given neighborhood?

A resident is able to find an available public street parking space on their residence's precise block (about a one-minute walk), most of the time

Q44

DDOT's Bus Priority Plan, which will roll out 51 new bus priority lanes over the next several years, is more ambitious than previous transportation programs proposed by the executive. Do you have a greater proposal than this for transportation in the District?

I would like to see more service than proposed in Wards 5, 7, and 8.

Q45

Understanding that that proposal will garner opposition, just as it will garner support, how will you navigate pushback so as to implement it?

I will listen and analyze in an equitable manner, with evidence-based data, and lived-experience in mind. I know what it is like for DDOT to not listen and impose their pre-determined solutions onto ward 8 residents. For far too long I've had to mediate and arbitrate DDOT's impositions onto seniors, workforce drivers, students, business owners, returning citizens, bikers, and especially low-income families. I've learned that across the city all our communities are more than capable to determine their own regulations and support solutions that will authentically address their needs.

Q46

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 (even if you, yourself, are not driving) that you can commit to taking on foot, by bus, by train, or by bike instead.

I don't agree with this sole premise. Because any carbon-free goal, must consider climate justice, and historic systemic racial/social class inequities and colonization. The solutions to address climate change are not solely a function of "one trip by car" that is a myopic view in my opinion. We must think holistically if we are truly committed to climate justice and addressing pollution, in the city, nationally and globally.
