



# Questionnaire for 2014 District of Columbia Mayoral Candidates

There is a perception among some elected and appointed officials that DC's prosperity is linked to development. Residents often feel that their interests or other public policy goals are considered secondary and expendable when their concerns conflict with developers' interests. The mayor's vision and understanding of his or her role in land use is a fundamental aspect of mayoral leadership. The following questions are intended to elicit your views on development as it relates to public policy.

## **I. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia documents how our 52 square miles of land area should be used to further stated public policies under the purview of deputy mayors, departments and agencies, and regulatory bodies. It is approved by the Council after protracted work by a mayoral- and council-appointed task force and extensive meetings and hearings throughout the city and at the Council. It highlights the citywide priorities of residents for their neighborhoods and provides in depth analysis of our history and our future.

**Question:** Recently the Comprehensive Plan has been widely ignored by city officials making proposals and decisions. Should the Comprehensive Plan, developed by the Mayor and approved as law by the Council, be the blueprint for appropriate development throughout the city? Yes or No, Explain.

Schwartz	<p><i>I do hope you understand that during the time when you stated, “the Comprehensive Plan has been widely ignored by city officials making proposals and decision,” I have not been in elected office. I left in January of 2009 after targeted for having given sick and safe leave to workers. One of the things that attracted me to Washington, DC nearly 40 years ago was its beauty – its architecture, its greenery – and for that reason I am fully supportive of a Comprehensive Plan in that it helps to preserve and enhance our city’s beauty. So yes, I believe that the Comprehensive Plan should not be ignored (notwithstanding course corrections with public input) and should provide guideposts for all District agencies. Also, residents deserve to have a sense of how their environment and neighborhoods can change in the coming years. So the more important question then should be why is it being ignored?</i></p> <p><i>If it is being ignored to help favored developers who may have close political and/or financial ties with city officials, then yes, we do need to either better adhere to the rules of the Plan or tighten campaign finance reform. I am not participating in “pay-to-play” politics, going so far as to run my current campaign under the law passed by the Council to close the LLC loophole, even though the law does not go into effect until January 2015. After all, leaders should lead. On the other hand, while hindsight is always 20/20, I seriously doubt anyone of us who were on the Council in 2006 when we last approved the Plan could have foreseen the rapid changes and growth that we have enjoyed in the District in less than a decade. So rather than ignoring the Plan, it should be used to help the District’s goals and projects to be more aspirational, and ensuring that any development brings value to the majority District residents.</i></p>
Bowser	<p><i>Yes. The Comprehensive Plan reflects extensive thought, effort, and public input in regards to how the District’s built environment and land use should progress. For that reason, it should absolutely serve as the blueprint for development in the District, to which government agencies should adhere. That said, since the Comprehensive Plan is updated infrequently, there are limited circumstances in which it is appropriate for quasi--judicial bodies such as the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment to consider exceptions to the Comprehensive Plan. But, they should only do so after considering extensive public input about the ramifications of such exceptions, particularly from those who represent impacted communities.</i></p>
Catania	<p><i>The District’s Comprehensive Plan is a public declaration of our city’s goals with respect to land use, transportation, economic development and more. It is important to note that the Comprehensive Plan is also a living, breathing document that benefits from public participation to ensure that we are best capturing the current and future development needs of our city. As such, I believe that the Comprehensive Plan serves as a strong foundation for the District as it looks to promote appropriate development throughout the city, and as Mayor, I will ensure continued public input into the process so that we can best improve the lives of all residents.</i></p>

## II. ZONING

Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan: The Home Rule Act requires zoning laws to be “not inconsistent” with the Comprehensive Plan. Included in the Comprehensive Plan are maps that show where existing building patterns and uses should be unchanged and where development should be focused. The maps also show appropriate density levels that guide zoning height limits and other zoning allowances and restrictions. These features are intended to inform the Zoning Commission actions so that the city’s built character can be maintained.

**Question: Should citizens’ interests be protected and development be predictable based on zoning laws or should it be standard practice for developers to get approval for changes to zoning that will allow greater heights, more lot coverage, and greater density on a parcel than has been planned for that area? Explain.**

<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes, citizens’ interest should be protected and development should be predictable based on zoning laws and no, it should not be standard practice for developers to get approval for changes to zoning that will allow greater heights, more lot coverage, and greater density on a parcel than had been planned. Zoning laws are put into place to separate land uses that are considered incompatible and/or ensure that the look and feel of a community is not compromised. If zoning laws are to be changed or amended, it should take place through the legislative process, and not as an ad hoc approval between developers and residents.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>Yes. Zoning laws, much like the Comprehensive Plan, reflect considerable and deliberate efforts by experts and members of the public to have predictable rules about how District land should be developed. For that reason, exceptions to the Zoning laws should be granted sparingly. Exceptions are appropriate only when the benefits to the District and public outweigh the costs imposed by such development; and only when those benefits received in exchange are enduring.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>The Comprehensive Plan and our zoning laws provide the backdrop against which development decisions should be made. At the same time, it may also be appropriate to take into account the particularities of a specific parcel and how development options could benefit the lives of residents in that neighborhood and beyond. While such deviations should not be standard practice, I do believe finding the right balance between these two interests will best serve the District.</i>

Rezoning for Additional Office Space: Analyses of office trends has shown a steady decline in office occupancy rates – partly due to the federal government’s commitment to decrease its presence in the region. Developers see the greatest return in office construction and currently the Office of Planning is promoting rezoning that would open up more office construction opportunities in lower income areas primarily to the north and east of the current downtown area.

<b>Question: Do you support this planning initiative and, if so, how would you maintain the stability of the current downtown as businesses relocate into newer buildings?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes, I support some commercial development for office space in lower income areas, particularly since despite some attrition in the federal government’s presence, is worth noting that several studies site DC as having one of the lowest office space vacancy rates in the country, typically around 9%. But as with all development, it must be well-planned, measured and strategic. Opening up office space in lower income areas of the city can help spur growth and bring vitality to neighborhoods that can be well served by the economic boost. However, this same development should also benefit the community’s residents, and be mixed-use in nature, bringing services and affordable housing at the same time.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>I support limited rezoning to allow construction of new commercial office buildings in parts of the District where sufficient demand exists for the office space, but only where the impact to existing residents and businesses in those neighborhoods are beneficial. We must above all ensure that such residents and businesses are not displaced and that the historic character of such neighborhoods is not lost. To the extent that such new development reduces the financial viability of existing office properties, the District should consider tax credits to property owners to encourage renovations and conversion to other uses. To maintain stability of the current downtown, we should focus on business recruitment efforts and economic diversification to boost demand for office space.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As the federal government downsizes, and Metro’s Silver Line opens to our west, the District must do more to ensure that our planning initiatives help to maintain our local economy’s competitive edge. As Mayor, I will prioritize efforts to diversify our economy and grow the local job base to help maintain demand in our downtown commercial corridors.</i>

### III. HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

In 2013, the Mayor and the Office of Planning urged Congress to change the Height of Buildings Act to remove height restrictions outside the L'Enfant City and to greatly increase height allowances within the L'Enfant City.

<b>Question: Do you support maintaining the federal Height of Buildings Act historic height restrictions? And do you support its intent to preserve view sheds of monuments and historic vistas throughout the city? Yes or No, Explain.</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes. I want to preserve our height limits. It is one of the aspects that make DC so unique. The only exception I would even possibly consider would be on the very outskirts of the city where vistas would not be affected, and only then for truly affordable housing.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>Yes. I support maintaining the Heights of Buildings Act as it is currently fashioned. One of the District's greatest features is the human--scaled horizontal nature of its skyline. It protects views of the federal monuments, National Mall, and historic vistas in neighborhoods across the city.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>Yes, I support maintaining the current height restrictions within the federal Height of Buildings Act.</i>

### IV. PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Relationship of Planning to Economic Development: At present the Office of Planning is located under the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development where the primary mandate is to promote development. The perceived consequence of this organizational structure is that the Office of Planning focuses its planning efforts on economic development projects and often favors proposals that seek more intense development than is standard or recommended by the Comprehensive Plan for an area.

<b>Question: The Mayor is the chief planner for the District of Columbia. Do you believe that the role of planning is to primarily further economic development or to further public policies that may advance public goals but may not lead to the greatest financial return for the city?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>I do not believe that this needs to be an either/or proposition and all types of development, whether it advance public goals or it lead to the greatest financial return to the city, can and should co-exist in the District. Washington, DC is a dynamic and diverse city, and to that end we need to ensure that all of our constituents are well-served by development and should have a role in planning it.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>The role of the Office of Planning is not primarily to promote economic development. Rather, its primary function is and must continue to be the collection of data and the design of plans to guide how best to make land use decisions that meet the needs of all District residents on a range of public policy issues. These issues include affordable housing, environmental sustainability, historic preservation, transportation, and economic development, among others.</i>

Catania	<i>I believe planning helps support the District's efforts to promote public policies, such as increasing affordable housing and improving educational options, while helping to guide economic development and growth. I believe these two goals are not mutually exclusive, and as Mayor, I will seek to ensure an appropriate balance between the two as we develop and implement citywide and neighborhood planning initiatives.</i>
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**DC Planning Commission:** Prior to the Fenty Administration there was substantial support, including among Council members and candidates for mayor, for creating a Planning Commission whose members would be appointed by the Mayor, as the chief DC planner. The mission of the Commission would be to interpret and implement the Comprehensive Plan.

<b>Question: Would you support creating a Planning Commission to serve as the primary interpreter of the Comprehensive Plan and the overseer of budget priorities linked to Comprehensive Plan goals?</b>	
Schwartz	<i>I would be willing to discuss it.</i>
Bowser	<i>I would support the study of creating such a Planning Commission. Before making such a decision, I would have to know more about the implications of doing so, including a nationwide survey of best practices on this issue. While the creation of such commissions sometime make it possible to place important decision--making power with a panel of experts and achieve political independence, it may also have the negative effect of preventing public input or cause delays.</i>
Catania	<i>I support strengthening the overall planning process. I also support developing a system that has greater transparency and accountability, as well as public participation, which is a key factor at the early stages of decision--making.</i>

**Public Subsidies for Development:** Recent large public land parcels have been planned to give developers cheap land with the city (and DC residents) paying for preparing the sites and building the infrastructure. At McMillan Reservoir the opportunity to create uses compatible with preserving the landmark site have been squandered as a series of developers have partnered to propose a dense project that lacks amenities and promises to exacerbate congestion. At Barry Farm the commitment to rebuild low income housing has been questioned by residents and consultants hired by the Mayor who concluded that the New Communities Initiative can't deliver on its promises. Yet, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) has spent years and substantial resources pursuing public land developments, such as McMillan and Barry Farm, that seem to benefit developers but don't address the critical needs for affordable housing, passive and active green space, and preservation of historic resources. The most recent public land initiative involves undervaluing the Reeves Center and replacing the economic catalyst for its neighborhood with a less dynamic housing use in order to facilitate the building of a soccer stadium.



**Question: Do you support the use of public land for private development that is perceived to offer little to District residents and much to private interests?**

Schwartz	<p><i>No. Public land is one of the District's greatest assets and should be treated as such, as I have always done. I hope you remember that I stopped the Anthony Williams-Doug Jemal impoundment lot sweetheart deal years ago. For this effort and many other similar ones, the City Paper called me "The Best Friend of the District Tax Payer."</i></p> <p><i>The Reeves Center land swap deal is also an egregious example of our government not protecting our property assets. It is unconscionable that the District would even consider paying Akridge \$21 million for a sliver of land on deserted Buzzard Point and in exchange let him have the Reeves Center at our booming 14th and U corridor for \$55 million which is less than one-third of the price the former CFO appraised it for several years ago. If I were on the Council now I would fight for a more equitable deal, and as Mayor I would always ensure that any deal must be negotiated to bring the maximum benefit to the District and its residents. I'll continue to be a protector of our property, hanging on to our land for our future needs, and if there is really unneeded property, only release it for competitive bids and plans that meet District needs, such as affordable housing with some portion of green space.</i></p>
Bowser	<p><i>No. As Chair of the Committee on Economic Development, I have carefully scrutinized many of the projects mentioned above and questioned whether District land is being put to the best possible use to meet the District's many public needs. That's why I have shepherded legislation that will require at least 30% of all residential units built on District land to be made affordable. As for the proposed soccer stadium and redevelopment of the Reeves Center, I have held two public hearings in the effected communities to hear directly from residents about what benefits they want to see from development, and at my urging the Council has hired a third party expert to conduct a detailed cost--benefit analysis of the proposal. Similarly for Barry Farm, I have held several oversight hearings regarding the housing complex and the New Communities Initiative, as a whole. These hearings have led to, among other things, more effective maintenance and preservation of existing units and a detailed analysis of the successes and failures of the program, including recommendations about how best to improve it. As Mayor, I will require greater transparency about decisions to develop public land, and I will overhaul the New Communities Initiative so that public input is incorporated into the projects, the necessary resources are dedicated, and strong leaders achieve what is intended.</i></p>
Catania	<p><i>I have consistently spoken out against the use of public land for private development when such development does not provide a fair return for District residents. Most recently, I stated my opposition to any proposed deal for a new soccer stadium that is based upon a land swap that severely undervalues the city--owned Frank D. Reeves Center at 14th and U streets NW.</i></p>

**Disposition of Public Land:** Several years ago, after Council used emergency authority prior to adjourning for summer recess to approve a complicated exchange of public land for private development in the West End, the public outcry resulted in the passage of a law outlining the process to surplus and dispose of public property. No longer is private development the default best use for public land. Instead a transparent and participatory process is required to assess the need to use the resource for a continuing, if different, public use. However, instead of following the law, the DMPED continues to invite private developers to envision uses for public land that will benefit their bottom line.

**Question: As Mayor, will you reverse the current practice and require your administration to explore how public land and buildings could be used to bring needed city services like job training, child services or parks to our communities? How will you approach public-private land deals?**

<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes. Throughout my career in public service I have always taken seriously my responsibility to protect the public's trust, whether it be fighting against sole source contracts and earmarks, warning about potential abuses with Constituent Services Funds, or bringing forward the strongest Whistleblower Protection Law in the country – one that the federal government replicated – that protects District employees who identify examples of waste, fraud and abuse. As Mayor, I will work to ensure transparency when considering public-private land deals, assuming that all viable public options for the land have been ruled out.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will require careful consideration of what, if any, public needs can be met on public land before it is disposed of. This requires greater community outreach and more flexible solicitations so that economic development is not unreasonably prioritized over other needs.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>I believe it is important that the District prioritize needed city services when undertaking the process to surplus and dispose of public lands and buildings. I recently authored and secured enactment of legislation, the Comprehensive Planning and Utilization of School Facilities Act, that strengthened this process with respect to the disposition of excess school facilities. As a result of this Act, the Mayor may now formally take into account the needs of other public agencies and the residents they serve before making decisions regarding whether or not to release a former DCPS building to either charter schools or private development. This will help the District maintain sufficient public space to best meet the needs of District residents.</i>



## V. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

DC citizens repeatedly identify affordable housing as the number one issue in the city and politicians and public officials support the need for more affordable housing. The effort has not matched the rhetoric: the need and opportunities to maintain and create more affordable housing are continuously overlooked or rejected. Also, while it is widely recognized that the first best step is maintaining existing housing stock, nothing is proposed that would foster that.

**Question:** How would you propose to actively maintain existing affordable housing from replacement, and aggressively work with developers to recalibrate their expectation for profiting from high market rate housing while building minimal amounts of affordable units?

Schwartz

*In 2007, I voted for inclusionary zoning, which requires developers of large new residential buildings to set aside 8% to 10% of the units for low- to moderate-income households for rent or ownership at below market rates. However, we must ensure that affordable housing units are not only available, but are also affordable for the people who need them, particularly since housing prices in the District are higher than before the recession.*

*Currently, the income eligibility for inclusionary zoning set-asides are 50% to 80% of the area mean income (AMI). As the DC Tenant Advocacy Coalition (TENAC) points out, the area median income includes averages of the surrounding suburbs, which are among the most affluent in the country. The AMI for the Washington metropolitan area for a family of four is \$107,000, but in the District of Columbia, the median income is only \$88,000 for a family of four—the logic is unsound and puts District residents at a disadvantage. Therefore, I would work toward aligning eligibility requirements to actual District figures, making the affordable housing within inclusionary zoning truly affordable for many DC residents.*

*I believe that there are some immediate steps that can be taken to address the affordable housing crisis in the District. Instead of waiting on construction, I will increase funding for tenant-based assistance programs through the Local Rental Support Program (LRSP). Tenant-based assistance programs provide direct relief to our city's most vulnerable, especially those on the extreme low end (0-30% AMI) who are at a greater risk of homelessness. By strengthening the city's tenant-based assistance funding efforts for qualified recipients, our most vulnerable families will receive vital relief while new affordable housing can be built. In that spirit and as a short-term solution, will also commit to doubling the funding for LRSP for the FY 2016 budget in the aforementioned categories for qualified recipients. With investment in affordable housing and spurring the growth of more rental units, this allocation can be reduced in subsequent years.*

*I would also work to increase the set-asides through such methods as possible tax incentives for cooperative housing developers. Those developers will be held accountable to deliver on affordable housing, and I will push for legislation that makes development contracts subject to severe fines for non-delivery of agreed-upon affordable housing.*

*A goal of inclusionary zoning is not just to provide affordable rentals, but to increase affordable home ownership. Long Term Affordable Homeownership (LTAH) programs offer ownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income households and are designed to keep those units affordable in perpetuity. Through LTAHs, the District government could subsidize home ownership (investing public funds to reduce the purchase price of a home) and in return for the assistance, homebuyers would agree to certain limitations to preserve the affordability for future low- and moderate-income homebuyers, most typically a restriction on the price for which they can sell the property. Among LTAH programs, I believe that Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHCs) offer the most promise. What makes LEHCs unique among these types of programs is that the District could also provide pre-purchase and post-purchase education, financial counseling, and additional services to promote the success of the homeowners. Wrap-around services like these not only minimize the financial risk to the District of Columbia but also ensure the financial security of the homebuyers.*

Bowser	<p><i>The creation and preservation of affordable housing must be a multi--pronged approach. As Mayor, my goal will be to produce more affordable housing, preserve what we have, and help people get good middle class jobs so they can afford housing. We'll improve production by pledging \$100 million annually to the Housing Production Trust Fund and requiring 20% to 30% of new units to be affordable when built on District land. We'll preserve housing by expanding property tax credits and boosting grants for home improvements. I am also focused on preserving the 17,000 units of federally subsidized housing whose affordability covenants are due to expire over the next decade. We'll help people get better paying jobs by overhauling the Department of Employment Services and creating a General Service Academy to train residents for District government jobs.</i></p>
Catania	<p><i>The District is facing a housing affordability crisis. We must maintain and create new affordable housing opportunities and look for creative ways to take advantage of existing housing stock for our working and middle class families. As Mayor, I will work to ensure better utilization of available financial incentives and ensure that we fully leverage federal tax benefits and resources. This will give us the ability to maintain current affordable housing options and convert existing housing stock to serve a range of affordability needs. I will work to find an appropriate balance between the development of market rate units and affordable units by improving our inclusionary zoning program and streamlining the regulatory process to make construction of affordable housing less costly.</i></p>

## VI. TRANSPORTATION

DC has a unique transportation profile. We have a majority of jobs filled by out-of-state residents who commute to the District. We are the nation's capital and major tourist destination. We have a finite metro system that is reaching capacity and that doesn't reach many residents who live more than a mile from a station. We have an historic street grid pattern that includes broad ceremonial avenues and narrow neighborhood streets. Some of these features contribute to the vitality and beauty of the District but all present challenges and demand creative, comprehensive planning. This set of questions explores your vision for the District's transportation network.

Transportation Choices. The last few mayors have supported the development of more transportation options, including streetcars, Circulator, biking, and pedestrian enhancements.

Question: Do you generally support the transit programs of your predecessors or would you establish different priorities? How would you explain your priorities?	
Schwartz	<p><i>I support giving our residents and visitors choice in how they move about our city and to that end I would work to ensure that our roads are never in need of repair, mass transit is affordable and reaches all corners of the city, and there is a comprehensive network of bike lanes that allow cyclists to move about the city safely. In regard to prioritizing initiatives, I place greater emphasis on maintaining systems where infrastructure already exists vs. newer systems that are still being built.</i></p> <p><i>It is worth noting that while I was on the Council I initiated and maintained a perpetual fund for potholes, street repair and sidewalk repair. Unfortunately, when I left the Council – not by my own choice – this fund was eliminated. As Mayor I would reinstate it immediately.</i></p>
Bowser	<p><i>As Mayor, I would generally support the improvement and expansion of the District's multi-modal transportation network. This includes, but is not limited to our road and bridge systems, rail, bus and streetcar transit, as well as biking and pedestrian networks. All of these priorities are reflected in the Move DC plan, which is the product of a lot deliberate work and public input. I like some of the specifics and not others. But, I respect the process. The next step is for DDOT to develop an implementation plan with specifics about project priorities, timelines for completion, and performance metrics for tracking progress. We'll also need good leadership in the relevant agencies to make sure the work gets done. For the District to continue to grow and prosper sustainably, we have to improve our transportation options and Move DC will help us do that.</i></p>
Catania	<p><i>I believe that District residents benefit from having a robust transportation infrastructure that provides a variety of transit options. I support many of the efforts already undertaken, including implementation of the streetcar system, making bicycle and pedestrian enhancements, and expanding the Circulator system. As Mayor, I will build upon these initiatives and will approach transportation planning not as an ancillary consideration but rather as a central element of the city's long-range planning efforts. I will also prioritize leading a regional effort to fund Metro's Momentum Plan, keeping our streets and sidewalks safe, and harnessing transit-oriented development opportunities.</i></p>

**Streetcar Technologies:** Technology advancements create opportunities to eliminate what most consider unsightly overhead wires from streetcar infrastructure. Yet, DDOT has been unwilling to abandon the retrograde system that results in networks of wires, cables and support systems crisscrossing views and vistas.

<b>Question: Would you appoint a Dept. of Transportation director who embraces new technology and is prepared to pull the plug on the ugly, old technology?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes. The overhead wires that power streetcars are unsightly and diminish one of our city's assets: clear views afforded by our low building heights. However, it is worth noting that regardless of using new technology to replace the overhead wires, I do not support a city-wide expansion of the streetcar system, as I am not convinced the investment into a fleet of streetcars – not to mention the disruption of tearing up our city streets (which in itself has a huge actual cost as well cost in loss of productivity) – will ultimately give the District a return on investment. Rather, I support growing our fleet of longer articulated buses which will increase rider capacity, and run on more efficient diesel-electric hybrid engines and compressed natural gas engines.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will appoint a DDOT director with strong management skills, a vision for the future of transportation in the District, and someone who embraces the latest in innovative technology. I will ask him or her to review previous decisions made about streetcar, including the viability of wireless technology. But, I will not support adoption of technology that is unreliable or cost prohibitive. We must ensure that streetcar is a successful project both in transportation and economic development terms.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will look to appoint a director of the Department of Transportation that will look to the benefits new technologies can provide within our transit infrastructure.</i>

**Commuter Rail:** A prominent issue in the District is the number of employees who commute to the District, congesting our streets and consuming our limited public parking. While there have been public proposals to curtail parking, there have been no proposals to confront congestion and its cause head-on. DDOT has frustrated the best opportunity to expand commuter rail and deal with commuter congestion in favor of a controversial plan by CSX to advance freight rail.

<b>Question: Would you use your administration's authority to control permitting to force CSX to cooperate with VRE and MARC trains to develop expansion plans that meet all stakeholder interests, including the District's interest in decreasing congestion?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Yes. Recognizing that as the Washington Metropolitan region continues to grow, and gridlock continues to worsen, VRE and MARC are already in discussions to extend their lines into the other's states rather than terminating at Union Station, creating a truly regional commuter system. VRE and MARC must overcome a number of obstacles, most related to infrastructure and physical differences between each rail system, but they are not insurmountable. There is no reason then that CSX cannot and should not work with the other two systems to ensure that as long as modifications are being made, they are modifications that benefit all systems, bringing greater efficiency to the region's entire rail system.</i>

<b>Bowser</b>	<i>Yes. I support greater oversight of rail transportation in the District to improve the safety, economic development, historic preservation, and environmental sustainability associated with this mode of transportation. That includes requiring CSX and DDOT to better coordinate with VRE and MARC systems to boost commuter rail in the District.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>While the District's current population stands at approximately 646,000, each workday the population swells to over one million. This is the second highest daytime population shift in the nation, behind only New York City. Many of these individuals commute into the District by car, which results in increased congestion on city streets. As Mayor, I will focus on developing a transit infrastructure that helps alleviate this congestion by focusing on transportation alternatives, such as priority bus lanes and ride sharing programs. In addition, I support efforts to develop a comprehensive rail plan for the District and voted in favor of the fiscal year 2015 budget, which included \$500,000 added by the Council for the development of such a plan. Having a comprehensive rail plan will help guide the District as we make planning and investment decisions on how to best support current and future passenger and freight rail needs.</i>

**Parking:** DC has among the lowest parking minimums required in the country, yet the city's planners are urging that developers be largely exempt from supplying even those minimums. Residents have raised practical and quality of life reasons for the continued need for more underground parking. Recently, DDOT released a report that concluded that there are different parking demands throughout the city and that there is generally not enough public parking to serve the many different types of users.

<b>Question: Do you endorse the policy of no or reduced parking minimums for private development? If yes, how would you manage public parking and would DC residents have priority over other users?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>No.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>The issue of requiring parking minimums for private development is an issue currently before the Zoning Commission as part of the zoning regulation rewrite process. The parking needs of each neighborhood vary greatly such that a one size--fits--all policy does not necessarily make sense. New development should not exacerbate demands on existing public parking. On the other hand, requiring unnecessary parking can increase the cost of housing and prevent other desirable uses and amenities. In short, a balance must be struck. Parking generally must be considered in a more thoughtful and comprehensive manner. I would do so by appointing a parking czar, creating a comprehensive parking plan, and improving access to alternative forms of transportation to reduce parking demand.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will focus on ensuring a transportation system that provides residents, commuters and visitors alike with a variety of options to best serve their transit needs. This includes efforts to establish priority bus lanes and providing safe pathways for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, which will help to reduce street traffic and the demands on public parking.</i>

*Billboards, Special Signs and Other Outdoor Advertising Controlled by DDOT.* Even as old-fashioned billboards have come down in DC, the outdoor advertising industry has established a foothold here with gigantic signs on sides of buildings, often in prime locations near historic treasures. The Verizon Center has erected a number of 1000sf electronic boards with flashing images that have a severe impact on the occupants of neighboring buildings.

<b>Question: Do you favor minimizing the restrictions on new billboards, or moving toward a billboard-free city?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>I favor moving towards a billboard-free city and I have a record of fighting against them when I was on the Council. Where billboards do exist, we need to ensure that there are zoning laws in place so as to minimize the aesthetic impact on the neighborhood, and/or minimize disruption to the neighbors as is the case in the area around the Verizon Center.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>I strongly believe that ours is city that benefits greatly by its limitation on outdoor advertising. Several years ago, I also successfully opposed legislation that would have resulted in considerably more special signs in and around downtown and I am proud of that effort. In the future, I will continue to support common--sense sign regulations that regulate the large scale advertising that can blight our streets so long as doing so aligns with free speech freedoms while also addressing issues of safety, historic preservation, and overall quality of life for residents.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>I favor finding a balance between the use of outdoor advertising, free speech, the character of neighborhoods, and the impact on residents. To this end, I support maintaining limits on new billboards and special signs and would be willing to work with community stakeholders about the use of such advertising in the future.</i>



## VII. PARKS

Great cities are known for their public parks. The District is identified with the National Mall, but that is federally controlled and is not a site for DC-oriented uses. The Comprehensive Plan suggested that the former convention center site would be a good location for a DC central park that could serve as a gathering place for DC residents to recreate, relax, and exercise their free expression. That site has been developed with minimal open space. City proposals to expand downtown do not include any public space, let alone a large green park.

<b>Question: Would a DC central park be a priority of your administration? If so, how would you accomplish this and where would you locate it? How would you encourage the provision of passive and active open space throughout the city where green space is lacking?</b>	
<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Not only is Washington, DC blessed with an abundance of green space – the National Mall, Rock Creek Park, our lush tree canopy – it is in and of itself a very singular city. It will be a priority as well to ensure that all development and redevelopment is designed to maximize green space while also ensuring that we get the development we need and want.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>The creation of more park spaces downtown is vital to the quality of life and economic viability for those who live and work in these communities. I would work with federal officials to transfer jurisdiction of the many park spaces currently managed by the National Park Service so they have better amenities and programming for residents and visitors to enjoy. Freedom Plaza in particular is an area particularly well suited to the creation of a central park, though I would not limit my focus to this one location.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will prioritize the development and maintenance of parks across the city so that all residents can have green space to exercise, relax and practice free expression. This includes a focus on park spaces that can serve as central gathering spaces for residents, workers and tourists alike. For example, I will put a priority on the redevelopment of Franklin Park. Located in a rapidly growing area of the city, and near the new CityCenterDC development at the former convention center site, Franklin Park presents a great opportunity to provide for a multi--use public space within the downtown core that incorporates both active and passive recreational opportunities. I also support innovative green space projects, such as the 11th Street Bridge Project, which will provide residents with a variety of recreational and educational opportunities.</i>



## VIII. SMALL BUSINESS RETENTION

The District has some very popular small businesses, but many neighborhoods lack these unique businesses that often bring pride and branding to a neighborhood.

**Question:** As DC becomes more popular with national chains, what will you do to maintain existing small businesses and to encourage new small businesses that are viable when chains are increasingly the sure, but often less interesting, alternative?

<b>Schwartz</b>	<p><i>As the daughter of a small, mom-and-pop business owner, I absolutely understand the value and specialization that small businesses can bring to a marketplace, and to that end I will always support small businesses – both as a policymaker and as a consumer. I also support an economy that is as diverse as our residents and many neighborhoods, so believe that our economy can support both national chains and small, locally based business. I will strengthen our efforts to grow our local economy and enable local businesses to provide the “citizen services” the people of the District desire and need. DC residents today want local shops, a grocery store, and dry cleaner all within walking distance in their neighborhood. They want to know they can make larger purchases like appliances, furniture and automobiles without having to travel to Maryland or Virginia, keeping their money in our community. I can work to offer incentives to new businesses to set up shop in enterprise/empowerment zones designed to bring businesses to areas of the city most in need.</i></p> <p><i>I will work to offer assistance to new minority owned business through the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) to increase funding for programs aimed at increasing the size, scale, and capacity of existing minority owned SMEs in the District. Through the DSLBD I will also support programs that offer financial literacy tools so that every small business owner has the vital information they need to succeed. I can further assist small business through the Office of Planning and Economic Development, which while they offer a comprehensive array of services, understanding how to optimally access them may be daunting for a new business owner to navigate. To solve this I would fast-track the Ambassador Program as recommended by Business Regulatory Reform Task Force. This low-cost/high-impact program can easily assist new business owners with the licensing and permitting processes. As part of my education platform I will work to expand vocational and technical training, to not only engage the student by offering non-traditional academic options but also to open opportunities so that he or she can get meaningful employment upon graduation as the next generation of master carpenters, plumbers, and electricians, they can preserve and restore our historic landmarks, neighborhoods, homes and buildings. I will ensure that schools and classes that offer job training are strategically located in parts of the city with the greatest truancy and drop-out rates. Additionally, these programs would offer classes for careers that hold the greatest economic benefit for the individual student as well as meeting the District’s needs both now and in the future.</i></p>
<b>Bowser</b>	<p><i>Our small businesses truly are a vital part of the District’s economic development efforts. Compared to national and international chain stores, considerably more investment made by small businesses is kept in the District in the form of jobs and tax revenues. For that reason, as Mayor, I will require set asides of space in the development of public lands for small local businesses. I will continue to expand small business grants and tax credit programs that make it more viable to start and operate such businesses as well.</i></p>
<b>Catania</b>	<p><i>As Mayor, I will streamline the local regulatory process to help our small businesses as they seek to establish roots in the District. I will also look to provide incentives for local and small businesses to encourage them to locate – and grow – in the District.</i></p>

## IX. YOUR VISION FOR OUR CITY

Unlike other major urban areas, DC has strived to present a planned city that embraces its legacy as the nation's capital and builds on the strong government, education and cultural presence in the city. Ours is a classy city that rivals the great capitals of the world, but it is also a city with dozens of neighborhoods with generations of DC families and new residents living side by side but not always with understanding and respect. Many residents are uneasy that there is no existing leadership that will successfully guide our future. Little things often determine whether our elected officials will follow trends and the pressure from the powerful or move us toward an articulated future. These questions are intended to provide you with an opportunity to explain your vision.

**Question: When you began your public career you must have had a goal that motivated your interest. What was it and did you accomplish it? Have your public goals changed?**

<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Throughout my life I have been driven by my commitment to make the world a better place, particularly for the most disenfranchised of our citizens, be it my early career as a special education teacher, my two terms on the DC School Board and my four terms on the Council. I am proud of the legislation I introduced and passed while on the Council including sick and safe leave for workers, whistle blower protection, the strongest tree bill in the country, lowered income and inheritance taxes, as well as creating the Department of the Environment, and much more. I introduced legislation to protect homeowners from awarding developers their land through eminent domain, and legislation that would have separated Fire and EMS. I have also volunteered for a multitude of organizations, most notably as President of the Metropolitan Police Boys' and Girls' Clubs and as Board Member and Vice Chair of the Whitman-Walker Clinic. Have my goals changed? Absolutely not. As a matter of fact my commitment to tackle our city's problems has only grown stronger as I've gotten older...but not too old to tackle them with great energy!</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>As a fifth generation Washingtonian, my family has instilled in me a passion for serving others, advocating for one's block, neighborhood, or city to make things better for the whole. I've led a career dedicated to public service. Every day, I serve a neighbor, a constituent, a resident, and strive to accomplish the goal my family has passed on – ensuring our city is able to realize its potential.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will continue to fight inequality and increase opportunity. As I've stated publicly, my goal for the District is to build a city based on shared values – equal opportunity for all, fairness, and playing by the rules.</i>

**Question: As mayor, what leadership skills do you bring to the position that will enable you to guide decision and policy makers with regard to issues facing public and private sector interests?**

<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>Success in my career has always been characterized by my ability to get along with people – political opponents and proponents alike, to advance causes – often before supporting them has become fashionable, and to work with stakeholders – often with competing interests – to get the job done.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will bring a strong vision for how the District advances in the coming years. Finding the right people, tasking them with the right roles, setting high expectations and holding them accountable to those is how I will bring about that vision, if elected. I am a hard worker and, by surrounding myself with advisors who share my values and understand my vision, I inspire my team to work even harder. As Mayor, I look forward to inspiring our District employees to work hard to provide excellent city services and programs for residents and visitors across all eight wards.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>After 17 years on the Council, and a lifetime of serving my community, I know that I have the leadership skills necessary to guide this city as we address public and private sector interests. I have a proven record of collaborative consensus building that has led to the enactment of landmark legislation, including a recent overhaul of the District's special education system. I understand and respect that you can't effectively lead until you understand the issues at hand. I am not afraid to face hard challenges head on and will not give up until we have the best result. And most important, I am passionate about improving the lives of District residents.</i>

**Question: What do you hope or intend to do after your tenure as mayor ends?**

<b>Schwartz</b>	<i>I will continue to volunteer and I will sit back, reflect and be proud of all the things I was able to accomplish during my tenure as Mayor, just as I did when my Council tenure ended.</i>
<b>Bowser</b>	<i>My first priority is to be elected Mayor and serve the people of Washington. If elected, I hope any future roles after serving as Mayor continue to make the District a better place to live, raise a family, and pursue the American dream.</i>
<b>Catania</b>	<i>As Mayor, I will continue to focus on addressing the needs of District residents, and I look forward to any challenges that lay ahead after I serve as Mayor.</i>