



PARK MORTON FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are responses to questions raised in recent community meetings (Fall 2015) hosted by the New Communities team and other settings about the Park Morton redevelopment.

What is New Communities?

The New Communities Initiative was created in 2005 to address the challenges of low federal investment in aging public housing and subsidized developments. The initiative is a local DC government strategy to ensure we have quality affordable housing at the lowest levels of incomes to foster a diverse and equitable District of Columbia. To date, the New Communities Initiative has invested over \$90 million producing over 1,000 new high quality housing units in the District of Columbia, over 70% of which are affordable, as well as new community amenities such as recreation centers, libraries, educational uses, retail, and park space.

Why redevelop Park Morton?

Park Morton has more capital needs than what can be fully addressed through maintenance or with available DCHA funding. In addition to the physical structures having deteriorated to a point that requires redevelopment versus renovation, other items— site layout, security, amenities, etc. – are not meeting the needs of residents and need to be addressed in the redevelopment process.

Who is responsible for the redevelopment of Park Morton?

The DC Housing Authority (DCHA) and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) are partnering on the redevelopment of the Park Morton site, as well as all of the other New Communities developments. Our development partners for this development are Dantes Partners and The Community Builders. Torti Gallas is the architect and planner for the site.

Will all of the public housing units be replaced?

The New Communities redevelopment process requires one-for-one replacement of all public housing units, in this case 174 public housing units - 27 of which have already been developed at The Avenue in 2012. Pending final development plans, these units will likely be a combination of apartments and townhouses. Unit sizes will be consistent with typical unit sizes on the market, and the number of bedrooms per unit will be based on an assessment of Park Morton household sizes.

What will happen to Park Morton residents during redevelopment?

The “build first” concept minimizes displacement of residents because of the redevelopment. Residents may continue to move for other reasons, but should not be displaced from their neighborhood while Park Morton is being redeveloped.

How long will the redevelopment of Park Morton take?

A development timeline will be developed upon the completion of the master plan update. There is a lot of work to be done before actual construction begins on either site, but DMPED and DCHA will work with the community to finalize a development concept, and initiate the disposition process with the City Council for the Bruce Monroe site in 2016. The New Communities Initiative is a priority for the Bowser administration, and the District is pursuing an expeditious timeline to deliver a project and quality housing long overdue to the residents of Park Morton.



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How can we ensure Park Morton residents have the best opportunity to live in the new housing?

Residents should connect to the NCI case management provider (Housing Opportunities Unlimited) to address any issues (back rent, off-lease tenants, etc.) they perceive as barriers. We are encouraging and assisting residents to make those connections now so they have ample time to clear any issues. They are also encouraged to engage in the redevelopment process through their resident council, the steering committee and other public processes to remain informed about how the development is proceeding. Relocation and return criteria will be determined with residents through a community-driven process.

Does DC have the money to support the redevelopment of Park Morton?

DC has funding for the redevelopment of properties under New Communities. We are currently working to obtain improved estimates of how much the total development of Park Morton (including the offsite) will cost and how much gap financing the project will need from the District. These estimates will be informed by the master planning update, and will tell us whether additional funding is needed beyond what the program already has allocated. We will have a better cost estimate once a design plan is created for the redevelopment.

How was the development team selected?

The current team was selected through a DCHA solicitation in 2014. A pre-proposal conference was held on April 22, 2014, and the RFP closed on July 1st, 2014. Four responses were received.

The Evaluation Panel included staff from the Housing Authority, the Deputy Mayor's Office, and community representation from Park Morton. Upon analysis and recommendations from the Evaluation Panel, the DC Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners voted to select Park View Community Partners (The Community Builders, Dantes Partners, and Torti Gallas) at their November 2014 Board Meeting.

How does the Park Morton development team's proposal tie into the Bruce Monroe site?

DCHA's developer RFP included a section for an offsite "build first" development proposal, and several teams (including the winning one) proposed the Bruce Monroe site. The development team, comprised of The Community Builders and Dantes Partners, was selected based on their qualifications and experience, as well as their overall approach to a development vision. DMPED subsequently performed its own analysis and due diligence outside of the RFP process in order to determine the best option for a "build first" site. DMPED looked at public and private parcels (including all that was proposed in the developer solicitation response), met with members of the ANC, community and civic groups, private property owners, and developers with active residential projects in predevelopment along the Georgia Avenue corridor. In evaluating these options, Bruce Monroe provides the best opportunity to redevelop Park Morton on the fastest timeline without displacing Park Morton residents from the neighborhood, while preserving and producing other affordable housing, and introducing new community and neighborhood amenities to the Georgia Avenue corridor.

What was the community engagement process to select the Bruce Monroe site?

DMPED carefully vetted potential "build first" sites for Park Morton this year. DMPED and DCHA began communicating in the spring of 2015 to Park Morton residents, the ANC, and community organizations that the Administration was focused on moving the development of Park Morton forward. The first



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steps were to identify viable offsite parcel(s), and work with the community to update the 2008 Park Morton master plan. As co-implementer of New Communities (along with DCHA), it is DMPED's role to identify opportunities for offsite "build first" development. DMPED reviewed a number of public and private sites, and took community suggestions and input into consideration.

DMPED also reviewed planning efforts that have been done to date around Park Morton and the Bruce Monroe site. This review included the report developed by the Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force, which addressed the futures of both Park Morton and Bruce Monroe in its [Community Review](#) in 2014. The participants in the discussion about Bruce Monroe favored a mixed-use development that would see a park in conjunction with other uses (residential and commercial). There was limited support in that session for a continued park-only use.

What has been the community engagement process since selecting the Bruce Monroe site?

DMPED and DCHA's first responsibility was to engage the Park Morton residents whose livelihood and living situation is most immediately and significantly affected by the redevelopment. Since announcing the plan forward for Park Morton, DMPED and DCHA have participated in the following forums to engage the larger community on the development:

- Presentation/Update to Park Morton Resident Council (October 15th, and November 19th)
- Convening of Park Morton Steering Committee (October 22nd, October 29th, and December 10th)
- Update to Bruce Monroe Task Force—a subset of ANC 1A (October 27th)
- Update to Georgia Avenue Task Force (October 28th)
- Mayor Bowser and DMPED attendance at the Park View UNC Meeting (November 4th)
- Update to ANC 1A (November 12th)
- New Communities public meeting (November 16th)
- Update to Luray Warder Block Association (November 21st)
- Update to ANC 1B subcommittee (December 7th)
- New Communities Planning/Design Workshops (December 1st and December 12th)

DMPED and DCHA are committed to continued active and consistent community engagement as the development process moves forward into 2016, and the master plan is updated.

Has the Bruce Monroe site already gone through the legal disposition process?

As with any District disposition of city-owned land, in order to develop the site, DMPED will follow all policies and procedures as required under DC Code 10-801, which governs the surplus and disposition process of District land. The final development program will go through multiple public approval processes, with input from the City Council, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, as well as the Zoning Commission through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process.

Is the Park Morton redevelopment plan already developed?

The development plan for Park Morton and Bruce Monroe will be developed in consultation with community input. There will be replacement housing for Park Morton on both sites. The mix and proportion of other uses is still to be determined and community input will be part of this determination process. The baseline will be the 2008 New Communities Redevelopment Initiative Plan. The actual plan



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will be developed through community planning workshops, intended to engage and inform Park Morton residents, neighbors and the community.

Why not use the Hebrew Home site?

The Bruce Monroe site was selected as the best option for accomplishing the guiding principles of New Communities. Reasons Hebrew Home is not optimum (compared to Bruce Monroe) include:

- Would displace Park Morton residents outside of their local neighborhood and even the Ward
- Yields fewer units, and would potentially require a third DMPED/DCHA development project to replace all the Park Morton units
- Would delay Park Morton redevelopment, as it requires additional site work, demolition of an existing structure (Paul Robeson School), and approvals related to historic preservation
- Has development and design constraints related to working within an existing historic structure that would increase costs

With Mayor Bowser's commitment to affordable housing across the city, both sites can be utilized to deliver affordable units for District residents that are in need of affordable housing.

What about other site options in the neighborhood?

We considered many other sites and their ability to offer affordable units, particularly for extremely low-income families. That is part of the mission of both DMPED and DCHA. Of all the sites we considered specifically to facilitate the redevelopment of Park Morton, though, none of them offered the benefits of Bruce Monroe – minimized displacement of Park Morton residents; large size; ability to accommodate housing, retail and recreation space; and public land whose value can be used to subsidize affordability.

What criteria were used to identify offsite parcels for Park Morton "build first?"

- **Parcel size and density** to yield enough replacement (public housing) units to implement a "build first" (NCI Guiding Principle to minimize resident displacement) strategy and phasing of the Park Morton redevelopment. Additionally, parcels large enough to yield additional affordable and market rate units to create mixed-income housing.
- **Parcel location** within the immediate neighborhood, within close proximity to the Park Morton public housing site to minimize displacement.
- **Parcels with existing site control**, and with the fewest complications (entitlement issues, site condition issues, etc.) to becoming "shovel ready."
- **Parcels with enough development flexibility** to bring transformational change not just to the built environment, but that could be designed and programmed with human capital opportunities, quality accessibility and open space, community building and integration, and opportunities for economic empowerment for residents



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Why is Bruce Monroe important to the Park Morton redevelopment?

Bruce Monroe is the District's best opportunity to fulfill the "build first" concept, which is intended to minimize resident disruption and displacement in the redevelopment process. Successfully implementing this concept means that Park Morton can be a national model for public housing redevelopment that speaks to the needs of the public housing residents who have been overlooked and underserved for too long. Implementing "build first" requires control of land in the surrounding neighborhood of Park Morton that is at scale to build mixed-income housing. Park Morton has been stalled for years, a significant reason being the difficulty of acquiring offsite land to satisfy "build first."

Bruce Monroe also offers an opportunity to use public land for public good. Using Bruce Monroe for the development of affordable housing aligns with the District's priority to use publicly-owned sites for the development of affordable housing, particularly for extremely- and very low-income households. Since the value of land can be used to support the development of the housing, it increases the number of affordable units we can get on a site and/or decreases the outlay of District funding to support these units. In neighborhoods like the one surrounding Park Morton where the market has become increasingly inaccessible to lower-income households, using public land to provide this benefit and minimizing the direct subsidy needed is a best practice.

Park space is very important to the community. How much park space will come back to the site?

Green space and recreational amenities remain critical components of how we redevelop Park Morton. The District did confirm prior to selecting Bruce Monroe as the "build first" site that reprogrammed and reconfigured park space, including the current functionality of the site, will be brought back and made available to the public through the construction of the rest of the site. Through the redevelopment opportunity, the District believes there is potential to repurpose a park that is even more widely utilized and sustainable than as it currently exists today. Furthermore, there is opportunity to create new community park space at the Park Morton site.

Was the Bruce Monroe site supposed to be a park in perpetuity?

The current improvements on the Bruce Monroe site were intended to be temporary, pending a development plan by the District. The site was formerly used for the Bruce Monroe Elementary School, which was closed in 2008 as part of the citywide school consolidation process. The site went through the mandatory Request for Offers for re-use of a charter school per the Landrieu Act, and the District did not receive any responses for schools. The school was demolished in 2009, and the District put \$2 million of capital improvements into the vacant site, which was to serve as a park for community use on an interim, temporary basis until the District revisited the site's development potential.

Can Bruce Monroe become a school again?

According to the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, there is no demonstrated need for another school in that area.

What if the neighborhood wants the Bruce Monroe site for other things besides housing?

The Bruce Monroe site can accommodate multiple uses in addition to residential development, and the community will have input on what those uses are. Bruce Monroe is a large site, and we anticipate ample space for retail, recreation and other community uses in addition to housing. We will work with the community to determine the uses for the site in addition to housing.



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Will all Park Morton residents move to Bruce Monroe?

At the completion of all phases, current Park Morton residents will be spread across the Bruce Monroe site, the replacement units at The Avenue, and the current Park Morton site. We will need to complete a development plan to say with certainty how many Park Morton residents the Bruce Monroe site will accommodate.

How will the development affect crime and safety issues?

Redevelopment of both the Bruce Monroe site and the Park Morton site into mixed-income, mixed-use developments is an opportunity to design the built environment in a way that promotes public safety. "Eyes on the street," defensible space, new ground floor uses, and more secure buildings, including secure access, cameras, and lighting where appropriate, and new pedestrian and vehicular connections, are all potential strategies that can be achieved through the development.

Can the development bring new retail opportunities to the neighborhood?

The recent Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit workshop with the community, facilitated by the Office of Planning in partnership with Street Sense, determined that Georgia Avenue from Park Road to Irving Street might be optimal blocks to promote retail establishments on both sides of the street, a best practice for thriving, successful commercial corridors. An assessment of lower Georgia Avenue retail activity included analysis of the population, demographics, safety, retail competition, vehicular traffic, and existing retail establishments. Bruce Monroe could serve as an opportunity to implement some of these recommendations and create new retail space fronting Georgia Avenue that is serviceable and desirable for established retailers that want to locate in the neighborhood.

Diversity is one of the strengths of the community. How will the development ensure continued diversity for people of all backgrounds?

The development will preserve and produce critical affordable housing units that will allow longtime residents to remain in their neighborhood. As market pressures affect neighborhood demographics throughout many neighborhoods and housing costs continue to rise, the New Communities Initiative is a major tool the District can use to step in and provide housing opportunities for a variety of income levels and backgrounds, promoting and preserving demographic diversity in District neighborhoods.

Preserving the neighborhood fabric is a priority for the community. Too much density is a concern with new development. How will the development affect the neighborhood fabric and the "community feel" of the neighborhood?

Using the Bruce Monroe site shifts the pressure away from placing all of the housing units back on Park Morton. By spreading the development across both sites, the development goals can be achieved at a more appropriate density and scale for the neighborhood.

How much public housing will go onto the Bruce Monroe site?

Bruce Monroe will ultimately be a mixed-income, mixed-use site, with a portion of the public housing units coming to the site. What that portion is will be determined by the planning and design process.

How will the development team use the Bruce Monroe survey?

We hope the Bruce Monroe survey will be released in time to help guide the development, but that release depends on ANC 1A and their partner, Howard University. The survey will be valuable input that can be used to inform the plan in combination with other data points already taken into account.