

## **Can We Come Together? Prospects for a Collaborative Approach to Building the Future Community of South Washington**

An Assessment Report by Collaboration DC  
A Project of Search for Common Ground

### **I. BACKGROUND**

In the summer of 2004 the imminent entry of the Fannie Mae Corporation into Southwest Washington at the Waterfront Mall site prompted its local Partnership office to initiate conversations among interested city leadership about how to meaningfully engage the community in revitalization and avoid “Urban Renewal II,” that is, the destruction of existing neighborhoods and displacement of large numbers of low income residents in the wake of redevelopment.<sup>1</sup>

After conversations with a number of interested organizations and agencies, Collaboration DC<sup>2</sup> proposed to conduct an assessment of the potential for developing a collaborative approach to achieving the city’s vision for the area—a stable, mixed income neighborhood.<sup>3</sup> Five organizations expressed support for this undertaking and an interest in considering its results: the Fannie Mae Partnership, the District of Columbia (DC) Office of Planning, the DC Housing Authority (DCHA), Southeastern University (SEU), and the South Washington Alliance, a community group originating within the South Washington/West of the River Healthy Families Collaborative. We refer to these five organizations as our sponsoring group. The assessment has been financially supported by a grant to Collaboration DC from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The assessment was conducted to answer a few questions. Considering the large scale and widespread development planned or underway in this area, and both current and future impacts:

- What are the issues of most concern to key players/groups?
- Which issues are most susceptible to collaborative solutions?

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<sup>1</sup> Just before this report was finalized, Fannie Mae announced cancellation of its plans to move offices to the Waterfront Mall site in Southwest. The “Urban Renewal” reference is to the first Southwest urban renewal program of the 1950’s and early 1960’s.

<sup>2</sup> The Collaboration DC Project at Search for Common Ground was absorbed from DC Agenda in June 2004. The mission of Collaboration DC is to help people, organizations and institutions in DC work together effectively. At DC Agenda, Collaboration DC was serving as an “internal consultant” to the Equitable Development Initiative that had a focus on two areas in the District that were experiencing or about to experience redevelopment activity affecting the lives of established low- and moderate-income residents. Public agencies, nonprofit organizations and individuals of these two neighborhoods consulted by DC Agenda believed collaborative approaches could best enable residents to equitably engage in and benefit from the changes facing their communities. The “Navy Yard,” or what we have expanded to call “South Washington” – Southwest and Near Southeast – was one of the targeted areas.

<sup>3</sup> This vision is presented in the framework developed by the city’s Office of Planning for updating the Comprehensive Plan, *A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City*, at [www.inclusivitycity.org](http://www.inclusivitycity.org).

- How might a collaborative process be helpful and who would have to be involved in such a process? Who would be a credible convener?

As the assessment progressed, the overarching question became: Is it *possible* to achieve the city's goal for this area, that is, to build, through redevelopment and new economic activity, a truly mixed income community or communities in South Washington? What is needed to achieve that result?

The assessment team conducted a targeted, non-random interview survey of key individuals identified in each of the following sectors: community, faith, business and government. A preliminary round of discussions was held with members of a Collaboration DC working group and with sponsors to generate a list of individuals and organizations. The target interview list included forty-five individuals.

Team leader John McKoy, assisted by Mary Jacksteit<sup>4</sup>, conducted interviews primarily at participant sites during October, November and early December of 2004. Attachment A lists those individuals interviewed. Additional potential interviewees were invited but either were not successfully contacted or declined to participate.

### **A Word About the Focus Area**

The term "South Washington" is used here for convenience, but is not a widely recognized descriptor of a section of the District of Columbia. The area of focus to which it refers is the neighborhoods below the Southeast Freeway and bounded by the Waterfront on the West and the Anacostia River on the East, stretching along what is sometimes referred to as the M Street corridor. South Washington covers two established neighborhoods – Southwest and Near Southeast.<sup>5</sup> These neighborhoods currently have little or no interrelationship and residents do not tend to see them as having any connection. However, in our view, looking to future and interim impacts from development, they are and will continue to be connected in important ways. Interestingly, Advisory Neighborhood Commission boundaries were redrawn last year to place this entire area in a single Advisory Neighborhood Commission district, ANC 6D.

Southwest is characterized by a mix of industrial uses on Buzzard Point; waterfront commercial and marina activity; retail at Waterside Mall (being redeveloped); high-rise and medium-density public housing complexes (Greenleaf Gardens, James Creek, and Syphax Gardens); and a mixture of high-rise and medium-density condominiums and rental complexes. Much of the residential landscape was built during the era of the Southwest Urban Renewal Plan in the 1950's and early 1960's. According to the 2000 census there were approximately 11,000 people living in the area; 70% were between 18

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<sup>4</sup> Mr. McKoy was retained by Collaboration DC as a consultant for this project. Ms Jacksteit is the Collaboration DC Project Director.

<sup>5</sup> **Southwest's** boundaries are approximately 7<sup>th</sup> St on the west, G St. and SE/SW Freeway on the north, South Capitol St. on the east, and the Anacostia River and the Washington Channel on the south; **Near Southeast** is bounded by South Capitol on the west, Southwest Freeway to the north, and on the south and east by the Anacostia River. Southwest corresponds roughly to the DC Office of Planning Neighborhood Cluster 9, while Near Southeast corresponds precisely to Cluster 27.

and 65 years old, 15% under 18, and 15% over 65. 65% of Cluster 9 was African American and 26% White, and the median income was \$47,500.<sup>6</sup>

Near Southeast has office and commercial use along M Street and the Navy Yard; construction sites for proposed office and residential at the Southeast Federal Center; vacated buildings of the Capper Carrollsburg HOPE VI (public housing) redevelopment project; and part of the United States Marine Corps facility. The Freeway separates the area from the Marine Corps barracks and retail redevelopment on 8<sup>th</sup> St. SE, the Ellen Wilson mixed income housing and lower Capitol Hill townhouses. Save for a few Marines, the public housing population has essentially been composed of the residents of the area for many years. In 2000 there were 4,600 people; this included a large youth population (33% under 18) and a slight majority (56%) between the ages of 18 and 65. The elderly population was 11%. Residents were overwhelmingly African American (89%) and very poor (median income of \$15,000).<sup>7</sup> This data counts the Capper Carrollsburg population, which has been recently relocated to other public housing while the site is reconstructed. The demographics will change radically when the HOPE VI project and various planned residential and mixed-use development projects are completed.

### **Organization of this Report**

This document has six sections:

- Background
- Summary of Conclusions
- Summary and Observations on the Interview Data
- Findings
- Explanation of Conclusions
- Next Steps

These attachments are provided:

- Attachment A - List of Interviewees
- Attachment B - Interview Protocol
- Attachment C - Suggested Criteria
- Attachment D - Stakeholders and Conveners Suggested in Interviews

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<sup>6</sup> District of Columbia Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan, Cluster 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, Cluster 27.

## II. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Based on our interviews and discussions we conclude there is an opportunity to convene government, community and business stakeholders to identify and take action to create the preconditions for a sustainable mixed-income community that is the city's vision for the South Washington area.

Our further conclusion is that *the* critical precondition that is not receiving the necessary attention is **planning and preparing residents (and particularly low-income residents) for new wealth creation opportunities of employment and small business entrepreneurship** to be created by the economic development activities planned and underway. Related to this is an additional conclusion that creating employment readiness and other preconditions to a successful mixed-income community requires **building new capacity within the community and community organizations to engage residents, forge a shared vision, and advocate the community's needs and interests.**

## III. OBSERVATIONS ON THE INTERVIEW DATA

There are three overarching observations arising from interviews across all sectors – community, business, and government.

First, **there are substantial inter-group tensions along racial and class lines.** While the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) was founded decades ago to bring black and white, and affluent and poor residents together to build a community in the Southwest Urban Renewal area, no one judges the effort a success now. Class differences affecting lifestyle, expectations, notions of appropriate public behavior, and so forth are profoundly evident and sometimes create ugly confrontations. While the conflict is often portrayed as racial, the different life outlooks seem as closely related to income. Older Southwest residents remember their commitment to the goals of a mixed-income community and recall intentional efforts by residents to find racial harmony in the years after the first Urban Renewal. Their perception is that many new condominium and rental residents have little or no commitment to such goals, much less to the arduous work of creating an “integrated” community. Though less contentious, the division between new and old residents has another dimension. Older residents tend to regard with sadness the end of the quiet, off-the-beaten track neighborhood they have enjoyed, while newcomers look forward to more amenities and greater connection to the rest of the city.

Second, **the combination of employment opportunity and employability of public housing residents (particularly young males) is, by far, the most frequently stressed social issue.** There is strong skepticism that the substantial construction and commercial employment in, or coming to the area, will in reality provide the means for upward mobility for poor residents. There is concern that business and developers have not been, and will not be, pushed to comply with the District's First Source Employment requirement, a potentially powerful leverage point for gaining jobs for DC residents. At the same time, there is a widely shared assessment that many potential job-holders in the

area, particularly young men, are poorly prepared and even poorly motivated to enter the world of work. Both businesses and community organizations have been frustrated in achieving the successful employment of low-income public housing residents.

Third, among *both* those who believe that development will bring good things and those who are skeptical or disbelievers, there is a broad (though not universal) view that **the organizational capacity of these communities is inadequate** to enable residents to come together around a unifying vision and fully engage in and seek benefit from pending business-and government-stimulated opportunities created by new development. Heard from all sectors was a view that no existing entity is effectively brokering on behalf of the low-income community with government, business, and nonprofits. While some community organizations maintain that they need only more resources in order to fulfill that role, doubt abounds that the type and depth of community development expertise and managerial talent found in other parts of the city is extant here. Many interviewees, across sectors, bemoaned what they view as negative, fractious, “in-your face” advocacy by some community leaders that they see as counterproductive. In particular, ANC 6D was described as deeply divided and its meetings described as rancorous and unproductive. ANC Commissioners were credited with sometimes drawing attention to important issues and viewpoints, but faulted for hampering or preventing attempts to progress towards solutions.<sup>8</sup> There is universal frustration with “meetings” – anybody’s meetings – that do not lead to action.

Despite this, there is a general willingness in people to work with other stakeholders to address the problems and opportunities that confront the area. Regardless of viewpoint, those interviewed felt that issues like jobs, affordable housing, crime and class/racial clashes can only be mitigated or solved by cooperative approaches. Respondents are anxious, however, for “*productive*” interaction. Despite the serious issues cited, all respondents, across sectors, expressed hope that the next few years will bring improvements and new economic opportunity to the area, and opportunities to work in collaborative fashion to build a mixed-income community.

#### IV. FINDINGS

Because the responses of individuals differ by sector as to issues and priorities, the findings are grouped by sector.

##### *Community Respondents*<sup>9</sup>

The top concern mentioned by community respondents was jobs. **Job readiness and preparation, substantial job opportunities, and more visible city support for the training-placement cycle** were articulated as concerns, in whole or in part, by almost every community interviewee. Job creation and employment were said to be critical

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<sup>8</sup> Interviews were sought with ANC members. Since they did not make themselves available, this report does not reflect their views. The Fall 2004 election changed some of the ANC’s composition.

<sup>9</sup> Most interviewees live and/or work in Southwest due to the existence of a much larger population in that area. It follows that the richer set of issues was surfaced in Southwest.

requirements for revitalizing the area. Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) leadership reported linking that organization's support of the South Capitol Street baseball stadium site to making 50% of stadium-related jobs available to Southwest residents. Public housing residents cited the absence of job and life-skills training. Literacy education was mentioned as a key unmet need for preparing residents for employment.

Many individuals described lapses or weaknesses in enforcement of the city's "First Source" hiring requirement. They saw no accountability and no incentives offered for bona fide efforts to meet the requirements of the law. Recognition of some job creation at the Navy Yard was paired by the observation that this did not involve the entry-level or basic skill-level work that is a realistic first step for many residents. The idea of intentionally drawing employers with those kinds of jobs was mentioned enthusiastically by several people.

While blame is widely laid for the cited lack of jobs and job-readiness, the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) was strongly criticized for being largely absent in the area. The DC Public Housing Authority (DCPHA) was faulted for a lackluster record in producing apprenticeship recruits from the ranks of the residents. Some respondents thought there was really no training capacity currently existing to meet the needs; others thought the need is simply getting funding to existing organizations with some training track record.

Related to employment was an interest by some residents in there being room and support for small business opportunity. Entrepreneurship programs at local universities were cited as potential supports. Concern was expressed for retaining and creating more "Mom and Pop" retail at the Waterside Mall site and new retail locations, including the stadium.

A second concern expressed was about the **continued ability of low-and moderate-income residents to continue to live in this area**. Public housing residents expressed suspicion and fear that the hidden agenda is their removal, tapping into still-tangible bitterness about the harsh impacts of the first Urban Renewal. Others see displacement happening, even if not intended, by natural operation of the marketplace as land value skyrockets. There was speculation among many about the fate of the Southwest public housing projects, with people wondering whether the properties will be sold to developers or redeveloped under the HOPE VI program. In the view of some, this is only a matter of time. There was also concern expressed that Fannie Mae's entry into the neighborhood would spark a push towards home ownership for low income people which, while benefiting some, would force others to move should they not qualify. Some thought that though new residential construction might be required to include 20% affordable housing, this would not be adequate to house existing residents if displaced from current residences.

A frequent concern for middle-income residents and some business and community leaders was insuring moderately priced housing, including rental, in the area. Rapidly increasing housing prices are creating a strong inducement for homeowners of modest means to sell. For some, this raised a question about the stability of areas of privately

owned homes, especially the blocks of small row houses in Southwest close to South Capitol Street. Land prices have also induced ownership changes in several moderately priced apartment buildings near Waterside Mall that have led to increasing rents. Some interviewees emphasized the need for middle and “working class” housing – for police and teachers, for example -as opposed to low-income housing. Their view was that current public housing in Southwest and the HOPE VI redevelopment in Near Southeast will accommodate low income numbers adequately, while existing condominiums and new residences planned at the Waterfront, the Waterside Mall site and the new Southeast Federal Center cover demands for high-end housing. The gap they saw was in the middle.

A more general concern enunciated by community respondents was that **the District government cares more about physical and economic development than it does about human development.** At public meetings they have not seen District planning teams include both physical *and* social planners, leaving them feeling that the social support services necessary to enable residents to benefit from revitalization have been given short shrift. Failure to plan for the loss of the only grocery store, pharmacy and bank in the Southwest neighborhood during construction on the Waterside Mall site was cited by many in the neighborhood as evidence of this blindness to the “people issues.” One person called it a “breach of trust” impacting particularly hard on public housing residents without cars. There was positive reaction to the outreach efforts being made by the Fannie Mae Partnership office to engage with residents about Fannie Mae’s (then) planned office development on M Street.

Community respondents were **critical of their community leadership’s capability** to productively engage government or business interests on their behalf. They expressed anxiety that with the speed of changes, there is a strong probability of either being “left behind” the progress or, worse, displaced by redevelopment. A frequent complaint, especially among lower income residents, was of a lack of information about what is happening and being planned.

Community residents and organizations described **racial and class friction.** There is a racial and socio-economic divide between Near Southeast and Capitol Hill to the north, and between the neighbor “haves and have-nots” of Southwest. Physical barriers like the Southwest Freeway, South Capitol Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street were viewed as memorializing these divisions. People described these frictions becoming open and visible in recent debates about the type of retail to go into new development at the Waterside Mall site, a proposal for new mid-income rental units on M Street, the shift in use at the Randall school property from a homeless shelter to the Corcoran School of Art, and the new baseball stadium. When asked, people from all perspectives expressed doubt that there is one common vision of the future of either Southwest or Southeast that unites residents. Older Southwest residents recalled the intentional effort made by the SWNA in the early days after Urban Renewal to create a truly integrated community. They expressed strong sentiment that many of the newer condo and rental residents are not as committed to such goals or to the work of creating an “integrated” community, citing the decision to close a long-established daycare center at one of the older condominium buildings because it was serving only nearby residents from public housing and none of the condominium owners.

**Crime** was an issue for some community residents. Drugs and drug-related maladies were mentioned as a high profile problem for residents of the Capper Carrollsburg public housing and some of the Southwest public housing projects, especially those to which displaced Capper Carrollsburg residents have moved. For Southwest residents, there was a concern about the safety of pedestrians, particularly around the Waterside Mall Metro stop, with less access to the Mall walkway and its eventual elimination when construction begins on that site.

Increased **density and traffic** were frequently mentioned issues for Southwest condominium and apartment dwellers though many felt they had been successful in achieving ameliorating changes through public processes of the DC Office of Planning and the National Capitol Redevelopment Corporation. Some continued to oppose the opening of 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW.

Faith leaders are an important subset of the community with a perspective worth highlighting. Several issues were particularly highlighted by the ministers interviewed.<sup>10</sup> One was the striking class conflict in Southwest between low-income residents and renters and home and condominium owners. One view was that the absence of places or spaces for intergroup community activity to take place exacerbates the divisions. There was hope that the community could come together around affordable housing and that new development in the area would bring economic opportunities, including entrepreneurial ones. There was concern that job opportunities include access to apprenticeships in the construction trades. Some cited their direct experience with the difficulty of moving people from poverty to work. Two churches have current and/or planned activities for on-site job training.

For purposes of comparison, an examination was made of the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs) for clusters 9 and 27 that cover this area. The SNAP plans raise some additional issues that did not emerge in this assessment, including environmental concerns, and recreational opportunities for young children and seniors. The primarily “physical” focus of the SNAP process seems a reasonable explanation as well as this assessment’s spotlight on the impact of new development.

### ***Business Respondents***

Business respondents frequently mentioned friction of two types: between races (black and white) and between commercial and residential land use (the latter occurring primarily in Southwest near the waterfront). They described that one or both of these frictions pervade their interactions with the public. Several said they have found it almost impossible to communicate with certain community leadership and organizations, and that trust among many groups is hard to gain. Business leaders particularly noted the absence of a strong and positive intermediary with which they can deal about low-income community needs in either Southwest or Southeast, unlike in some other city neighborhoods. They observed that public housing residents in Southwest were largely

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<sup>10</sup> The individuals we were able to interview in this assessment compose such a small sample that their input should not be viewed as representative of all faith leaders in South Washington.



absent from the various public meetings held by the Office of Planning and the National Capitol Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) about developments on the waterfront and Waterside Mall locations. They felt that lack of trust and fear of displacement by low-income residents were yet to be overcome.

With the surge of new business interest in the Southwest waterfront area, business respondents have heard increased concern from nearby mid- and upper-income residents about magnified negative impacts from commercial activity. The business view was that new commercial enterprises will have to draw many more customers and users from outside the area, requiring residents to come to terms with significant changes in their neighborhood.

Business respondents predicted new jobs not only in construction (in the near term) but also in the new retail and other commercial establishments that will enter this area. They saw job readiness and job skills as critical deficits in the ability of the existing low-income residents to take advantage of this economic activity and a specific hurdle to business hiring local residents. Some business leaders felt there has been a lack of adequate attention to the social services and infrastructure needed to support a mixed-income community and in particular, employment: child care, literacy training, and good schools.

### ***Government Respondents***

Government officials mentioned a set of issues similar to those of business. Their top concerns regarding full community participation in the renaissance of Southwest and Near Southeast were job readiness and training to prepare public housing residents for economic opportunities. They opined that addressing this concern would require intensive, long term interventions and programs. The Wheeler Creek Community Development Corporation (CDC) was credited with building a good program for Capper Carrollsburg residents, but with the reservation that it is too early to judge the extent of its success.

Friction with the community was seen as an obstacle to progress, some of it attributed to a natural fear of change, particularly given the history of Urban Renewal in the area. Echoing the business sector, government officials spoke of the difficulty posed by the lack of an effective and positive broker or intermediary, symptomatic of a lack of strong social infrastructure in both Southwest and Southeast to support a unified vision for the community and bring needed assistance to low income residents. Officials said they want a partner that is broadly representative with whom they can work to solve problems.

Officials indicated that the Office of Planning and NCRC held a series of public meetings in the Southwest waterfront area that surfaced concern about traffic, density and crime, but low-income residents did not attend these public forums in any notable number. They acknowledged the worries of displacement by low-income residents but thought these were fueled by fear and mistrust, and not realistic.

Education was seen as both a liability and an opportunity. School programs were described as disconnected from coming employment opportunities; it was noted that the

school system does not currently offer vocational education. On the other hand, the future new elementary school in Near Southeast that will be needed once the HOPE VI is completed was seen as the opportunity to create a high quality program drawing students from the entire area, potentially helping to unify residents across social class and race, and across the South Capitol Street divide.

## V. DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS

The interviews strongly suggest general agreement that –

- Economic and real estate development are inevitable and *could* (and should) bring new opportunity and an enhanced quality of life to residents in this area; and that
- The sustainable mixed-income community envisioned by the city’s planners is a desirable end for this area of the city.

At the same time, there is a mixture of fear, suspicion, indifference, and/or skepticism about whether either goal has the commitment of the city’s leaders and business interests, and therefore whether either goal is practically achievable. With the forces of gentrification seen as inexorable, many assume that the ultimate losers are current low- and moderate-income residents.

On the other hand, there is a deep sense felt by almost an equal number, including government and institutional leadership, that consistent with public policy and principle, and in order to right the wrongs of the past, ***a strong effort must be made*** to create a community in this area that includes current residents and fosters inclusivity. Because of this, we believe that the opportunity exists for building consensus, unity of purpose and cooperation towards shared goals.

The focus and goals are ultimately the decision of any multi-stakeholder group that might convene to consider this assessment. However, we have placed two further conclusions in this report and recommend their consideration by such a group.

Our conclusion prioritizing **developing employment opportunities and work readiness** rests on two grounds.

First, these issues emerged strongly as not being currently addressed, and in need of a new, multi-stakeholder effort.

Second, experts advise that incorporating low-income residents into the workforce (and the small business sector) is essential to the success of intentional efforts to create mixed-income communities. A panel of experts convened by DC Agenda in late 2003<sup>11</sup> concluded that gainful employment was the key to successfully reintegrating public housing residents into the income mix of a HOPE VI development such as the Capper Carrollsburg project underway in Near Southeast. They said that work, and the values of

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Brophy, a noted expert in community development, chaired a Panel that looked specifically at the Navy Yard area and the Capper Carrollsburg Hope VI.

work, were the most critical common experience and value-set required to bridge the social classes.

Viewing the entire area of South Washington as a new mixed-income community-in-the-making, it seems clear to us that employment and building common values around the culture of work will have to be successfully negotiated if the desired outcome is to be achieved. Developments both underway and planned, will result in low-, and many new middle- and high-income residents sharing neighborhoods, new public and commercial venues, retail developments and parks. We believe that intentional strategies are needed for a healthy and stable community to take form. Whether from the developer, future retailer, or young public housing resident point of view, this is a paramount interest and an urgent need.

One can envision a multi-stakeholder process aimed at the design, funding, and staffing of a jobs training organization or a collaboration of organizations like STRIVE, Wheeler Creek CDC, United Planning Organization (UPO) and others.<sup>12</sup> Business, government *and* the community would clearly benefit from cracking the deficit of “qualified” workers able to take new construction, retail and other jobs, and new small business opportunities. A side benefit would be that the working relationships necessarily developed for such a project could eventually be employed in other endeavors.

Our conclusion that **building community capacity** is essential emerged from recognizing the depth and breadth of observations that community leadership and organizations currently lack the preparation and leverage to effectively engage with developers and other stakeholders representing economic development activities, to gain benefits for the community. Development is a foregone conclusion. The challenge is for community infrastructure and know-how to be built. There is a need for building bridges and shared vision, and for resolving conflicts in ways that address multiple interests. Organizational capacity to move the community in this direction seems to be a precursor to sustaining any revitalization effort in either Southwest or Southeast.

One possible action plan could be to conduct a community visioning process aimed at producing a new intermediary organization such as a community development corporation (CDC). This organization need have no grander initial objective than to build capacity to be able to broker with the District Government and businesses for any number of concrete and bounded benefits. The benefits could be jobs at Waterside Mall, numbers of affordable units at the Southeast Federal Center or Waterfront, training slots for Stadium jobs, and so forth. While CDCs are often seen as either community nonprofit housing developers or as economic development organizations, CDCs at root are community brokers. They start as leader/brokers that learn how to develop or hire the expertise required to address community problems as they are identified and as strategies are agreed upon. This point was strongly articulated by a CDC expert during the assessment.

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<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that workforce development is a current priority of both the DC Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Washington. This ought to mean access to innovative thinking and best practices.

Sufficient leadership exists in all quarters and across sectors – community, business and government - to form a steering group, task force, or board for such an organization. Members could build group process capacities and skills as the effort begins and progresses. Process managers could get residents working on the serious intergroup tensions identified in the assessment, getting race and class issues into the open in constructive venues. There are a variety of process designs that can build a successful work plan and the project outcome is a tangible product with enormous versatility.

Once a vision for a South Washington mixed-income community retaining current residents was agreed upon, and the general characteristics of a CDC or “broker” organization defined, corporate and government participants might form a partnership to help capitalize the organization. The funding partnership would have to negotiate staffing, management structure, and resource requirements with the inaugural board. This survey suggests that the managerial talent and experience needed to manage such a start-up might have to be recruited.

Instructive examples of the kind of CDC being suggested here abound in the District. The following are illustrative:

Columbia Heights/ Shaw Family Support Collaborative: This community-based organization was originally crafted to focus on family support and preservation issues. As it delved further into its community, the staff and board saw the opportunity to help with related issues like computer literacy and housing counseling. It has developed a solid reputation for innovation in the foundation community, so that it can now venture into other areas to help support its core mission.

Marshall Heights Community Development Corporation: MHCDC started as a housing developer, but quickly saw the need for more neighborhood retail. Over an extended period, the staff built development capability, purchased land and developed a shopping center.

Wheeler Creek CDC: This CDC was formed as part of a HOPE VI housing redevelopment project in Ward 8. It became so proficient at developing a case management system to support the social service needs of residents that the Housing Authority subsequently hired the Wheeler Creek CEC to provide similar services at the other HOPE VI sites in the city including Capper Carrollsburg.

Nationally, there are also best practices upon which to draw. Lawrence, Massachusetts may have the best example of a community-wide CDC that adapted its approach and expertise according to the needs confronted. Lawrence Community Works (LCW) has a network of over 700 people from families, organizations and institutions that is working in the areas of community organizing, neighborhood planning, physical revitalization, and family asset building and youth empowerment. <http://www.lcworks.org/home.php>

Regardless of the direction, any chosen path forward will involve significant challenges. One is the decision whether to form a new collaboration or partnership, or, in the alternative, choose and fund an existing program or organization. Reaching agreement on this matter could be difficult. Another is whether the whole South Washington area can be tackled at once, or whether Southwest and Near Southeast need different processes. The assessment suggests they are not one community today. A significant organizing task will be getting effective and sustained community involvement from the start to help determine needs and efficacious strategies. That will require dialogue about the intergroup tensions that keep people apart, and/or discourage involvement. Another challenge is gaining commitment and resources to embed evaluation and assessment into the effort. This is important to provide benchmarks of progress, ongoing learning, and accountability.

Perhaps most critical to building trust, overcoming skepticism, raising expectations and building confidence is identifying and achieving early, meaningful “victories.”

#### **IV. NEXT STEPS**

Collaboration DC will take these initial actions:

- Distribute this Report to all individuals interviewed, and to those in the sponsor group.
- Extend an invitation to the sponsor group and other interested key stakeholder groups and individuals<sup>14</sup> to hear and consider the Report’s findings and recommendations and begin a discussion of whether to move forward, and if so, how. Decisions will be needed then, or subsequently, about:
  - What kind of process is appropriate, for whom and for what purpose.
  - Who will convene such a process. Our recommendation is that the convener be able to command attention in every sector, have access to some resources, and have an undeniable stake in the area’s future.<sup>15</sup>
  - Who can provide initial funding for a collaborative process.
  - Whether further study is needed, and if so, how to run and fund it. A community-based research effort might create an initial means for organizing and educating residents, and building bridges within diverse teams of residents.

Once some initial framework has been sketched, we see these additional steps:

- Briefing the community and key groups not yet involved about the Report’s findings and the actions that have flowed from it. This might take the form of, or

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<sup>14</sup> Attachment D lists stakeholders identified in the interviews. Special outreach needs to be made to groups in the community who were not engaged, or engaged adequately, in this assessment. The faith and educational community and the ANC come immediately to mind.

<sup>15</sup> Attachment D lists conveners suggested in the interviews. AWC seems to have the broadest reach, has a comprehensive mandate in the area and substantial resources. AWC might consider a partnership with three to four of the following other entities: DCPHA, South Washington Alliance, SWNA, GSA, the Waterfront Association, and SEU.

- include, a forum for jointly learning about best practices and successful approaches.
- Developing a design, action plan and time line for a collaborative process aimed at producing concrete, actionable agreements and plans.

### **Acknowledgement**

Search for Common Ground and Collaboration DC would like to thank all of the assessment participants for their candid and complete responses. Regardless of the distinctive views expressed, it is obvious that each and every person cares deeply about the Southwest and Near Southeast communities and wants their members to prosper.

## Collaboration DC South Washington Assessment

### ATTACHMENT A - List of Individuals Interviewed for Assessment

INTERVIEWEE NAME	ORGANIZATION/AFILIATION
Andrew Altman	DC Office of Planning, Anacostia Waterfront Corporation
Shalom Baranes	Shalom Baranes Associates
Uva Brandeis	DC Office of Planning
David Brewer	Southwest Community House
Yvonne Clary	Carrollsborg Dwellings Resident Council and CDC
Tom D'Amato	Southwest Waterfront Business Association
Margaret Feldman	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly
Gordon Fraley	The Kaempfer Company
Margaret Francese	Staff of Councilwomen Sharon Ambrose
Hal Gordon	Community Action Group (CAG)
Rev. Bryan Hamilton	Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rev. Ruth Hamilton	Westminster Presbyterian Church
David Howard	DC Office of Planning
Rev. Phil Huber	St Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Peter Jones	Neighborhood Services Coordinator, Ward 6
Glen O'Gilvie	Mathew Henson Center
Marge Maceda	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly
Sue Marshall	Community Partnership on Homelessness
Phyllis Martin	James Creek Resident Council Member
Steve McCoy	Capper Carrollsborg On the Hill CDC
Mac McCauley	Southwest Source Corporation
Bill McCleod	Barracks Row Main Street Inc.
Marty Mellet	Community Development Support Collaborative
Naomi Mitchell	Southwest Alliance
Naomi Monk	Southwest Police Services Area (PSA)
David Ouderkirk	Bridges to Friendship
Liz Price	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development
Paul Rowe	District of Columbia Housing Authority
David Russo	Staff of Councilwoman Sharon Ambrose
Vanessa Ruffin	Southwest Neighborhood Assembly
Chris Smith	Charles E. Smith Realty
Bessie Swan	Wheeler Creek Community Development Corporation
Samuel Tramel	South Washington Collaborative
Richard Westbrook	Southwest Resident
Madhu Wijesinghe	DC ACORN

## **Collaboration DC South Washington Assessment**

### **ATTACHMENT B Interview Protocol**

Interview questions included:

- What is your history with the area?
- What are your major concerns and interests in the area?
- Are there issues that need addressing that you feel would benefit from a collaborative approach?
- Who are the key stakeholders affected by or influencing the issue?
- What are their concerns?
- What sort of collaborative process might work?
- Would you participate in such a process?
- Who else should we interview?



## **South Washington Assessment**

### **ATTACHMENT C Suggested Criteria**

The following criteria were useful in arriving at our recommendations and may be helpful to any stakeholder group that takes up this report as it considers where to focus attention:

- The issue is urgent enough to demand attention, but is not so complicated as to require a multi-year process for initial results.
  - Some quick “victories” can be designed into the collaboration.
- A solution is process-susceptible. It is reasonable to anticipate recognizable progress from a collaborative process, as opposed to some other form of decision-making.
  - Examples of fitting processes/approaches in DC or elsewhere are available for study or consultation.
- The benefits of participation are obvious enough to avoid having to “sell” stakeholders to get their commitment.
- The issue offers a chance to build strategic relationships in the community that can be useful in future area projects.
- The process offers the opportunity to model the sort of inter-group behavior/interaction needed for the future success of a mixed income community.

## Collaboration DC South Washington Assessment

### ATTACHMENT D Stakeholders and Conveners Suggested in the Interviews

Individuals were asked during interviews to identify individuals and/or organizations that they believed should be involved in any collaborative process that might take place. Several organizations and individuals were named more frequently and probably constitute the core of those who should be involved in any subsequent process.

#### *Stakeholders*

**Community** respondents were emphatic about including individuals representing: public housing resident councils, condominium and tenant associations, the Near Southeast Healthy Family Thriving Community Collaborative (HFTCC) (Sam Trammell), the ANC, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA), the DC Public Housing Authority, the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Main Street business organization, the Capitol Hill Area Merchants (CHAMPS), STRIVE DC (a group that works to gain employment for “hard to reach” individuals) and ARCH (Action to Rehabilitate Community Housing) (assists youth in high poverty areas to achieve skills and education for career preparation.)

Individuals named were Naomi Monk (on the Public Safety Area (PSA) and a Southwest condominium owner), Revs Ruth and Brian Hamilton of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Naomi Mitchell of the South Washington Alliance, Hal Gordon of the Community Action Group (CAG), John Imperato of the United States Navy, the Mayor, and City Administrator Robert Bobb.

**Faith community interviewees suggested** Rev. James Butts of Second Union Baptist Church, Rick Bardash, a Southwest resident active with neighborhood youth, the HFTCC Collaborative, and the ANC.

**Business** respondents identified the SWNA, ANC, and Office of Planning as key stakeholders.

The **government** respondents most often list the following as stakeholders: public housing resident council reps, Westminster’s Hamiltons, the federal government (Navy, Marines, and GSA), Arena Stage, and Forest City developers.

#### *Conveners:*

The most frequent suggested conveners were Fannie Mae<sup>16</sup>, the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC), Southwest Neighborhood Association. Other suggestions were Southeastern University and its president, Charlene Drew Jarvis, the Office of Neighborhood Services, and the HFTCC Near Southeast Collaborative. Another suggestion was to create a new organization that could be such a convener.

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<sup>16</sup> This view would undoubtedly be changed now that Fannie Mae has canceled its plans to relocate to Southwest.