

## ***GCAAR Issue Brief***

### ***2015 District of Columbia Year in Review***

---

#### ***Recordation and Transfer Taxes***

DCAR recommended lowering DC's extraordinarily high recordation and transfer taxes and finding a more stable source of revenue for the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF). We made the case for decoupling funding for HPTF from recordation and transfer taxes (currently a small portion of these taxes go towards the HPTF). This change would provide more affordable housing, making homeownership possible for more District residents.

The *First-time Homebuyer Tax Benefit Amendment Act of 2015* was reintroduced and cuts the recordation tax rate from 1.45% to 0.725% for first-time buyers in the District.

#### ***TOPA***

Legal protections help tenants avoid unfair displacement, which is the intent of DC's Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA). DCAR gathered an expert Task Force to meet with stakeholders and officials about the problematic elements in the law and solicited member feedback for improvements.

#### ***Tenant Bill of Rights***

Starting July 1, 2015 all housing providers need to give a Tenant Bill of Rights to potential renters in the District. The document lays out DC laws and regulations on everything from lease and security deposits to rent increases and eviction. DCAR worked very closely with coalition stakeholders and the Office of the Tenant Advocate to shorten and streamlined the text.

#### ***Inclusionary Zoning Regulations***

The District's Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) regulations are being amended to address problems and streamline the rules. DCAR and GCAAR provided recommendations on the regulations with an eye on helping more District residents gain access to housing that is affordable and suited to their needs. Comments focused on making the application process simpler for those who qualify and removing obstacles for the real estate professionals assisting such buyers.

#### ***Revised Sign Regulations***

DDOT revised rules regulating the display of outdoor signs and exterior advertising in DC. The new regulations update and consolidate DC's current sign regulations, respond to issues raised by the Federal Highway Administration, amend the rules on signs on public space & private property, and establish a means for enforcement and permit fees. Thanks to DCAR's advocacy efforts, the proposed regs are condensed, simplified, and streamlined, making the information you need easier to find.

### ***Homeowner Protection Forum***

DC REALTORS® attended a Homeowner Protection Forum to learn more about foreclosure and other housing scams, helping buyers navigate mortgage regulations, and other issues that put homeowners in financial jeopardy.

### ***Pop-up Height Limits for R-4 Zone***

In June 2015, the DC Zoning Commission adopted new zoning regulations for the R-4 Zone.

### ***DC Income Tax Reduction***

The District's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget passed with the Council accelerating the Tax Revision Commission's recommendations to lower taxes in September 2015. Earners in the following tax brackets will likely see\*:

- \$25-50K → 33% DC tax reduction
- \$50K-100K → 16% DC tax reduction
- \$100K-200K → 10% DC tax reduction
- \$200K-\$350K → 5% DC tax reduction
- \$350-500K → 2% DC tax reduction

*\*Numbers are approximations. See a licensed tax professional for exact tax calculations.*

Residents earning over \$500K will see a slight increase in their taxes paid.