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Unprecedented poll of D.C. residents shows most see housing affordability as the District's biggest issue

Availability of housing for specific groups is also a major concern, according to new research by REALTOR® associations, think tank

WASHINGTON – Eighty-one percent of D.C. residents say that housing affordability in the District of Columbia is either a very or fairly big problem, according to just-released poll results from the Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® (GCAAR), the D.C. Association of REALTORS® (DCAR), and local advocacy nonprofit Greater Greater Washington (GGWash). The organizations joined forces to conduct unprecedented research gauging the community's knowledge of housing issues as D.C. embarks on an update of its Comprehensive Plan this year.

The poll found that housing availability for specific groups is also problematic, with large majorities of residents saying there is too little housing available for people with moderate incomes (81 percent), people with low incomes (81 percent), seniors looking to downsize (61 percent) and housing for one or two-person households (57 percent).

Current home prices are seen as the biggest obstacle facing 55% of aspiring homeowners, and there is broad support for new housing development throughout the District among all D.C. residents – particularly for new housing construction in Anacostia and east of the river, but less so for new housing in historic districts.

“While the poll data is not surprising, it reinforces the immense need for affordable housing solutions and more housing units across the District and throughout our region,” said GCAAR President Samantha Damato.

GCAAR, DCAR and GGWash conducted the third-party public-opinion poll, funded by a grant from the National Association of REALTORS®, of all D.C. residents in late 2024 to determine their baseline knowledge about the District's zoning, housing and development – and their level of interest in these topics. This is the first time such a detailed, District-wide poll on baseline housing knowledge in D.C. has been conducted.

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“This poll makes it clear that D.C. residents want to see more housing built, and that they’re more concerned about housing affordability than about protecting the character of neighborhoods,” said Chelsea Allinger, executive director of Greater Greater Washington. “We’re glad to work in partnership with GCAAR and DCAR to bring this data to bear.”

“In order for the District to be a viable option for individuals looking to purchase a reasonably priced home in our area, we must address these very important issues of availability and affordability,” said DCAR President Samuel Medvene.

The Comprehensive Plan guides the use and density of land within the District, directly shaping the District’s physical form as it changes and develops in the future. The D.C. Office of Planning and other District officials will begin discussing updates to the plan, which is reviewed every 10 years, later this year.

About GCAAR

The Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS®, one of the largest local REALTOR® associations in the U.S., is the voice for REALTORS® in Washington, D.C. and Montgomery County, Maryland. Representing more than 12,000 real estate professionals in the greater capital area, GCAAR provides services vital to its members' daily business needs and works with lawmakers to ensure public policy that encourages homeownership and supports the real estate industry. For more information, visit www.GCAAR.com.

About GGWash

Founded in 2008, Greater Greater Washington (GGWash) is a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. GGWash publishes daily content on land use, housing, transportation issues, works to build knowledge and civic capacity among residents, government officials, and other stakeholders, and advocates in DC and around the Washington region for more equitable and sustainable housing and land use policies. For more information, visit ggwash.org.

About DCAR

The District of Columbia Association of REALTORS® (DCAR) is recognized by the National Association of REALTORS® as a state-level Association, representing more than 3,000 REALTORS® in D.C. DCAR advocates, protects and promotes the interests of members and the public DCAR serves. DCAR is the voice of real estate in the District, fighting to ensure homeowner rights are preserved. For more information, visit <https://dcrealtors.org/>.

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