

# Fletcher Johnson Campus Reuse Project

## Ward 7 Community Vision

### I. Why the Fletcher Johnson Site Matters:

Fletcher-Johnson first opened its doors to students in January 1977 and served more than 1,000 students annually until it was closed in 2008. The facility also included an early childhood provision, a health center and a community center. A Request for Offers (RFO) for reuse of the site was released by the city in 2014; offers were received and evaluated, however no award made for the redevelopment of a Campus that is

- One of the largest publicly owned city parcels
- Walking distance to the Benning Rd Metro Station
- Centrally located within Ward 7
- Walking distance from heavily traveled, major thoroughfares (e.g. East Capitol St, Southern Ave, Benning Road and Central Ave)

At 15.26 acres, it is the **4th largest plot of District-owned, developable land<sup>1</sup>** after

- St. Elizabeth's East (183 acres)
- Walter Reed (59.15 acres)
- McMillan Sand Filtration Site (29.7 acres)
- The current **assessed value is \$51,552,790**, but this assessment is **expected to rise by over \$400,000 in 2018<sup>2</sup>**.
- As acknowledged by our Councilmember, **Ward 7 desperately needs:**
  - **Commercial amenities** to provide local jobs
  - **Adequate access to high quality retail**
  - **Healthcare Services**
  - **Adult Technical Skills and Trades Training**

**OPPORTUNITY:** This campus presents a tremendous opportunity for the District of Columbia to alleviate some specific inequities that have plagued this portion of the city for years. DC is home to 20 Colleges/Universities, and to 19 Hospitals. Currently, none of the hospitals offer any direct Urgent/Emergency care anywhere within Ward 7. There is only one continuing education program

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<sup>1</sup> Poplar Point, RFK, and St. Elizabeth's West are all owned by the Federal Government at present. Skyland Town Center is composed of several smaller lots. Capitol Gateway is only 11 acres.

<sup>2</sup> DC's Office of Tax and Revenue has proposed assessing the site at \$51,959,780 for 2018.

sponsored by UDC within Ward 7. We believe that fully developed Fletcher Johnson campus presents a prime opportunity to bring both vital services and more to the citizens of Ward 7.

## **II. The Community Vision for the Fletcher Johnson Campus:**

The Fletcher Johnson Campus has the potential for creating a more vibrant Ward 7 community by developing a Community/Economic Development hub. The Community's expressed Vision has been clear and consistent throughout multiple DME sponsored sessions since 2014.

The community's expressed Vision for the Fletcher Johnson Campus has included:

1. Comprehensive Performing Arts Space (i.e., THEARC or Atlas)
2. Community Meeting/Gathering Space
3. Post-Secondary Satellite Campus
4. Adult Technical Training
5. Medical Services (i.e., Urgent Care Center)
6. "Non-Traditional" Retail or Business Incubator Spaces
7. Market Rate Housing
8. Shared Office Spaces/Business Center (i.e., The Hive)
9. Membership Gym/Fitness Center
10. Bed & Breakfast facility (i.e., Malolo B&B)

After approximately 4 years of engagement, the DME has failed to persuade the Ward 7 community that the best use for this site is an additional charter school. The community has consistently objected to the proliferation of Charters; pointing out that there are **other more pressing economic and community development priorities.**

## **III. What are Ward 7 Community Leaders Seeking?**

The community has reached the consensus that the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (**DMPED**) would be better equipped to execute this vision!

**The community requests that this project be immediately transferred to DMPED.**

#### IV. **There been an Erosion of Trust between the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) and Ward 7 Community Leaders.**

Along with experiencing Multiple Process issues, the DME has not been able to consistently adhere to self-imposed timelines for moving this Reuse Project forward, in a constructive manner:

- November 2017: Release RFO (for charter school applicants with some consideration of community priorities) - **DEADLINE MISSED**
- January 2018: 90-Day RFO closes, all applications must be in - **DEADLINE MISSED**
- February 2018: Applicants will be asked to present their applications to community **PROCESS STILL INCOMPLETE**
- March 2018: RFO will be awarded - **PROCESS STILL INCOMPLETE**
- May/June 2018: City Council votes to approve the chosen awardee - **IMPLAUSIBLE**

#### V. **DME has wavered on legal questions regarding the site, most importantly, the need for a Charter School to satisfy “right of first refusal.”**

The DME has verbally advised that the offer for the Fletcher Johnson project **must** be solicited from a charter school per the Department of General Service (DGS) General Counsel’s legal interpretation of *DC Code § 38-1802.09 (right of first refusal)*. No related documentation providing such findings has been presented to the community.

The DME continues to offer contradictory information while continuing to push for a charter school at the Fletcher Johnson Campus. DME and DGS verbally argue that the previous RFO did not exhaust the “right of first refusal.”

The fact remains that Ward 7 is already saturated with **21 Total Public Charter Schools**. (While also home to 18 District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)/Traditional Schools). **The Community has consistently expressed the need for a broader Economic Vision for the Fletcher Johnson Campus beyond the arbitrary addition of another Charter School.**

Nevertheless, this vague “DME/DGS Mandate” apparently was not applied in a similar situation:

**Hine Junior High School near Eastern Market** (3.5-acres, also closed in 2008) was **redeveloped into 7-story mixed-use development**

- Redevelopment is providing:
  - 61,000 square feet of retail space
  - 150,000 square feet of office space
  - Mixed income housing
  - A public plaza for community gatherings
  - Underground parking

- **Awarded in September 2009** to a group of developers led by Stanton Development Corp (*A developer of commercial and residential properties in the Historic District of Capitol Hill*) and EastBanc Inc. (*A Multinational Real Estate Development Company specializing in the acquisition, redevelopment and management of commercial real estate assets, in particular in the area of urban revitalization.*)<sup>3</sup>

To date, the DME still has not clearly explained why the Hines Junior High redevelopment process has a different set of mandates and processes than the Fletcher Johnson Project.

Finally, the Ward 7 community is left with the impression that our vision for the Fletcher Johnson Campus is neither viable nor acceptable in the eyes of the DME.

Respectfully Submitted,

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<sup>3</sup> Samuelson, R. 2009. "Stantat-EastBanc Will Develop Former Hine School Site". Washington City Paper. <https://www.washingtontcitypaper.com/news/housing-complex/blog/13120301/stanton-eastbanc-will-develop-former-hine-school-site> Retrieved: January 22, 2018.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Sunkley-Burne, President, Benning Ridge Civic Assoc.  
 Ellen A. Allen, Chair ANC 7E, Advisory Neighborhood Comm  
 Chair, Ward 7 Education Council  
 Robert Maurer SMD 7B05 ANC 7B  
 Phillip J. Hammond SMD 7B04 ANC 7B  
 Donovan Anderson SMD 7B06 ANC 7B  
 Debra Walker SMD 7B01 ANC 7B  
 Miranda Ward SMD 7B03 ANC 7B  
 Tiffany L. Brown SMD 7B02 ANC 7B  
 Dexter Lynnell Humphrey 7B07 CHAIR OF TB  
 Cortez Johnson, President Fairfax Village Community Association, Inc.  
 W. Earl Williams Chair, Skyland Town Center 1 President  
 Federation of Citizens Association of the District of  
 Columbia  
 Rochelle Gray, President, Eastland Gardens Civic Assn  
 Sheila McCaskey Carr, Chair ANC 7F  
 Earn Seattle Vice Chair, ANC 7F05

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Respectfully Submitted,

*T.N. Tate, ANC 7E*  
*Sharon L. Williams*  
 Hillcrest Community  
 Civic Association

*Sharon L. Williams*  
 State Board of Education

*Eric Washington*  
 Ft. Dupont Civic Asso  
 Eric Washington 17 Feb 2018

*Samuelson*  
 ANC 7D, chair

*Malissa Freese*  
 MALISSA FREESE  
 RIVER TERRACE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

*Keith R. Lowery, chair*  
 Marshall Heights Civic Association

*Samuel L. Williams*  
 Penn Branch Citizens Association

*Jamar Wells*  
 Jamar Wells  
 Deannwood Citizens Association

*Shawn D. Smith*  
 Ward 7 Dems

*Andrew L. Holmes ANC 7C07*

*ANC 7D 07*  
*Guell M. Halcomb ANC 7F01*

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Capital View Civic Association.  
Bolder Dodd  
Vice President.

Heave Lewis  
Second Vice President  
Junka - Secretary

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