

Greater Greater Washington Housing Campaign

Greater Greater Washington builds informed and civically engaged communities who believe in a growing and inclusive Washington region and speak up for livable communities and high-quality education for all.

For this project, we will work to educate policy-makers, neighborhood leaders, and the general public about the critical importance of planning for and ensuring adequate new housing to meet demand as a major part of cities' and counties' housing strategies, particularly in Washington, DC.

Failure to ensure adequate housing would mean that housing prices in areas with easy access to jobs continue to rise too rapidly for poorer, middle class, or even upper middle class residents. This will stifle economic growth in the District of Columbia, Washington region, and by extension the nation, and exacerbate inequality by limiting access to better jobs for those unable to afford the rising costs.

We will educate the public and leaders with a combination of online media-related activities on the Greater Greater Washington blog, the leading voice covering planning issues in the Washington region, and in-person organizing. Off-line events will also lead to information shareable online, such as videos or articles, and we will recruit people who participate off-line to write articles for the blog.

One key early public participation opportunity is DC's upcoming Comprehensive Plan update. The Comprehensive Plan sets high-level and neighborhood-level policies and can orient the city toward (or away from) increasing housing supply. It will be a clear opportunity for neighborhood leaders and the public to participate.

Objectives for year one

These are stretch targets. We will aim for an average of 0.8 achievement on a 0.0-1.0 scale.

- **Convene leaders from across the District to talk about housing supply issues**
 - Convene Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) commissioners, former commissioners, citizens/civic association members, and other neighborhood influencers from all eight wards for education and conversation on these issues.
 - Include ANC commissioners from at least half of ANCs (20 of 40), at least 2 per ward.
 - Hold one discussion per month, in varying parts of the city, beginning at most 3 months after the grant period begins.
 - Encourage the group to participate in the upcoming DC Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **Bring regular attention to review processes that affect housing**
 - Identify and recruit regular contributors from all eight wards to write about development projects in their neighborhoods on the website.
 - Reach an average pace of two articles per week on neighborhood development projects and/or housing supply issues, written by non-staff and edited by the Staff Editor.

- Develop a plan to reach out to other media outlets, neighborhood blogs, etc. to disseminate content and drive traffic to action alerts.
- **Build organizing capacity**
 - Deploy a CRM system and begin testing embedded take action messages at the ends of posts and report on what works well to drive signups and actions.
 - Send an average of one alert to the email list per week over the second half of the year. Track the open and conversion rates of the alerts to gauge their success and report on what works best for our issues.
- **Maximize the effect of the current media site**
 - Redesign the Greater Greater Washington site to better maximize traffic, sharing, clicks to related articles. Launch new version by 6 months after the grant period begins.
 - Increase daily email subscribers to Greater Greater Washington from 1,800 to 2,500.
 - Increase average weekday pageviews plus in-place opens (clicking “read more” to see the whole article inline without reloading) from current 65,000/day to 75,000/day.
 - Grow Twitter from 18,700 followers to 20,500 and from 2.5 retweets per article to 3.5.
 - Grow Facebook from 3,200 fans to 4,000; from a daily total reach of 4,000 to 4,500; from 284 average daily engaged users to 325.

There are far more potential projects to engage in than resources will allow. This plan and budget attempt to focus on the base scenario of growing operations to the next level and reaching sustainability at that point. If opportunities for larger-scale further resources from other organizations arise, we can certainly seize upon more of them sooner as well.

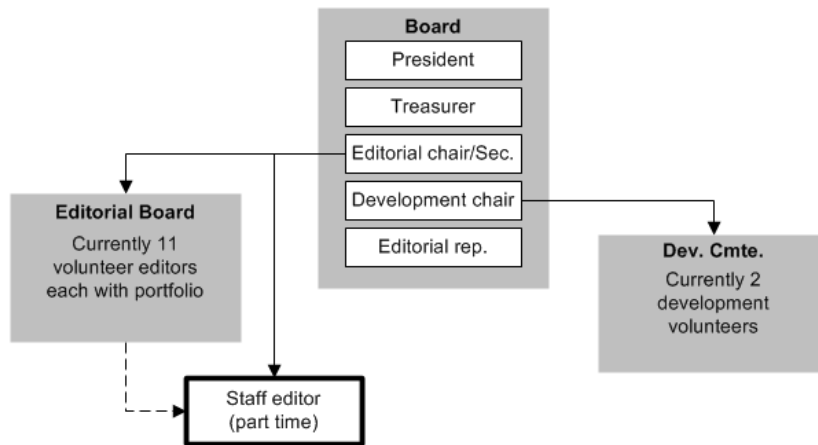
This list shows top priority items from the original discussion which will either not happen or will only happen in small scale under the current project, but which could happen at larger scale if further funding opportunities arise; we will seek to apply for grants to pursue these when possible.

- **Educate the public further about the economics of development.** Many developers make arguments about how a particular regulatory hurdle would make a project not “pencil out,” but few members of the public really understand the economics and are unable to reliably evaluate the truth or falsity of the claim. A writer with an economics background could help explain, through text, graphics, and video, the calculations that go into such buildings and how various regulations affect it, publish that information, and create seminars for neighborhood leaders.
- **Pilot policies to better link neighborhood and citywide incentives.** Any negative impacts of development are primarily localized, while policy benefits are mainly diffuse across the city or even the entire region. Laws could ensure that revenue-generating growth in one neighborhood also brings specific improvements that residents affirmatively want, and planning processes could help build consensus on where within the neighborhood more growth would best go.

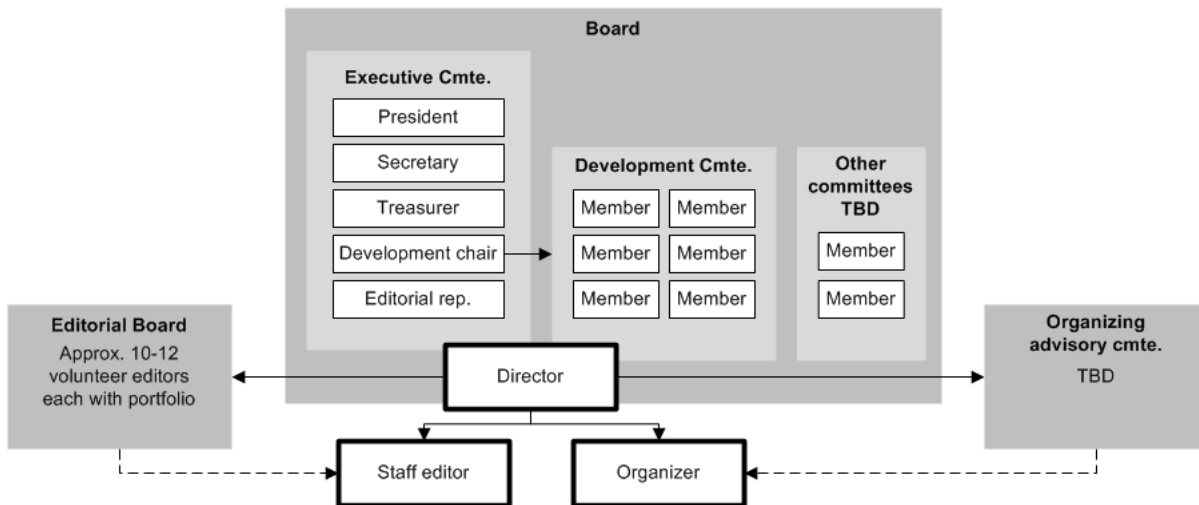
- Develop “games” around planning and constraints:** Online tools can directly help people engage with the planning process and understand the constraints around economic development. The Redistricting Game (<http://redistricting.greatergreaterwashington.org/>) let people redraw ward boundaries given constraints of each ward’s size and contiguousness; similar constraint satisfaction “games” could help people explore what it would take to bring a grocery store to their neighborhood or recommend how the city or community should grow.

Organization

Current:



Future:



Leadership

The **President** (volunteer) will oversee the strategic direction of the organization. He/she will be responsible for fostering high-level relationships with other organizations and funders, setting organizational goals, and ensuring alignment with the mission.

- **David Alpert** will serve as President. David founded Greater Greater Washington in 2007 and ran it as editor-in-chief until 2014 when Aimee Custis became Managing Editor. David formerly worked for Google from 2001 to 2007 as a Product Manager.

The **Board of Directors** (volunteer) will provide oversight and advice on strategy and management. Other current board members include:

- **Aaron Lemon-Strauss**, Treasurer. Aaron is the Executive Director of the SAT test program for The College Board, leading College Board's partnership with Kahn Academy to deliver high quality SAT practice resources for all students. Formerly an executive at Kaplan focused on digital product development, Aaron is a DC resident and parent.
- **Aimee Custis**, Secretary and Editorial Chair. Aimee is Communications Manager for the Coalition for Smarter Growth where she brings a tech-savvy, new media sensibility to CSG's organizing around housing and transportation. She has previously managed communications and membership for the 501c6 group Young Professionals in Transportation. Aimee also has a master's degree in nonprofit management.
- **Abby Lynch**, Development Chair. Abby is a development professional with experience managing a diverse portfolio of corporate, foundation, and government donors, currently at Americans for the Arts, the leading policy and advocacy organization for arts and arts education. She has also worked in the development department at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and has been working with Greater Greater Washington since 2013.
- **Dan Malouff**, Editorial Board representative. Dan is a planner for Arlington County, Virginia. As a recent home buyer in DC, Dan was priced out of homes in many city neighborhoods because of rapidly rising housing prices. He founded BeyondDC, an antecedent of Greater Greater Washington, in 2001, and has deep expertise with blogging and communicating complex planning concepts to laypeople.

In summer 2015, we will expand the board to add approximately 3-4 other individuals who bring new expertise in areas such as fundraising, organizational development, and media management, and help to connect to new donors and potential donor audiences.

The board will then convene a core executive committee that meets more frequently and a larger group that meets less often; many of the current board members will be on the executive committee. We will then aim to grow the board size gradually in upcoming years to reach a size of approximately 11-12.

As necessary, there may be additional board committees such as a development committee that specifically talks about organizing development activities, working with the Director and a Development Chair on the board.

We will also institute a “give/get” policy for all board members. The give/get level will vary among members, and the board will have some members who are doing volunteer work for the organization in lieu of a give/get (in particular 1-2 members from the editorial board).

Staff

The **Director** will manage the day to day operations of the organization. He/she will manage the hiring process for staff in coordination with the board, set day-to-day objectives for staff, manage income and expenses, and ensure consistent progress toward fundraising programs including reader drives, corporate relations, and foundation outreach.

The **Staff Editor** will operate the website on a day to day basis, ensuring that a steady stream of high-quality articles get published. He or she will work with the volunteer Editorial Board and volunteer contributors to seek article submissions, work with authors to maximize stories’ impact, and write headlines and social media messages to drive traffic to the articles.

- **Jonathan Neeley**, who has served as part-time Staff Editor for Greater Greater Washington (initially as Associate Editor) since October of 2014, will likely become full-time Staff Editor, subject to his and the Board’s approval.

The **Housing Organizer** will work to educate neighborhood and citywide leaders and the general public on housing supply policy issues within the District of Columbia. He or she will build relationships with these leaders, convene group discussions, ensure that in-person events get shared through text, images, or video on the website, recruit contributors to write about neighborhood housing issues, promote housing topics on social media, and build an email list to grow engagement among the public.

Budget

Expense category	Year 1	Year 2
Staffing & related costs (3 employees, incl. taxes & benefits)	\$ 194,507.50	\$ 198,547.65
Computer & website expenses (servers, site redesign & upgrades, etc.)	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 11,600.00
General expenses (office space, events, insurance, legal, bank fees, etc.)	\$ 39,500.00	\$ 35,000.00

Note: Greater Greater Washington’s fiscal year is the calendar year. This budget covers expenses for one full year beginning when the grant becomes finalized (example: if the grant is available July 1, 2015, then Year 1 reflects expended spending for July 2015 through June 2016).