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August 14, 2026

Director Anita Cozart
District of Columbia Office of Planning
899 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 7100
Washington, DC 20002
Via Email: OP.RFKMasterPlan@dc.gov

Dear Director Cozart,

Thank you for the work of the Office of Planning (OP) to develop the Robert F. Kennedy Campus Master Plan (the RFK Master Plan). I am grateful for the in-person and digital outreach, focused on Ward 7 and across the District of Columbia, to both develop and seek feedback on how the District can effectively envision the future of this transformative project. I also want to acknowledge the District government agencies which played an instrumental role in this process, including the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), and the DC Department of Buildings (DOB).

I am equally grateful to the hundreds of District residents who have taken time to participate in community forums, submit comments online, attend public meetings, and testify at the recent hearing at St. Coletta's. This engagement builds upon the substantial community engagement that preceded the Master Plan, including the Ward 7 RFK Stadium Community Benefits Advisory Board (CAB), which developed recommendations to help ensure that the redevelopment delivers meaningful benefits to the surrounding communities.¹ Together, these perspectives reflect both the excitement surrounding this opportunity and the importance of ensuring that community priorities help shape its future.

The RFK Master Plan presents a generational opportunity; over the next several decades, the redevelopment is projected to generate billions of dollars in economic activity and tax revenue; create thousands of construction and permanent jobs; add thousands of new homes; and establish an entirely new neighborhood along the Anacostia River. The central question before us is not simply how to accommodate this growth, but how to ensure that it is planned in a way that delivers lasting, equitable and measurable benefits to the communities most directly affected by it.

For Ward 7, that responsibility extends well beyond the immediate boundaries of the RFK Campus. The Master Plan must reflect the needs and priorities of residents in nearby communities such as Kingman Park, Hill East, Rosedale, while also recognizing the broader impact on neighborhoods east of the Anacostia, including River Terrace, Benning Heights, Greenway, Dupont Park, Twining, Fort Dupont,

¹ RFK Stadium Community Benefits Advisory Board. (2025). *Proposed Community Benefit Agreement for the RFK Stadium Site Redevelopment*. <https://www.wendellfelderdc.com/rfk>

Benning Terrace, Parkside and Mayfair. These communities should not simply experience the effects of redevelopment; they should share meaningfully in its benefits

It is in that spirit which I put forward the following comments and recommendations. My goal is to help ensure that the final RFK Master Plan provides a clear, community-centered framework that protects existing neighborhoods, expands opportunity, strengthens east-west connectivity, and most importantly, translates the District's commitments into meaningful and lasting benefits for Ward 7 residents and the District as a whole.

General Comments

The final Master Plan should take a broader view of how the RFK redevelopment fits within the surrounding community and the District's long-term plans for the area. While the draft provides considerable detail about the six proposed districts within the Campus, it gives less attention and detail to how this investment will affect surrounding neighborhoods, transportation assets, development projects and publicly controlled land. This broader perspective is particularly important for Ward 7. While the Plan acknowledges historic disinvestment and disparities east of the Anacostia River; it should also identify how this significant investment can help address those conditions.

I recommend strengthening the final Plan in three overarching areas:

Broaden the Planning Analysis Beyond the Study Boundary

The geographic boundary of the Master Plan is too limited to fully assess the redevelopment's broader impacts. While the Campus may have a defined development boundary, its transportation, economic, housing and community impacts will extend beyond it.

This limitation is particularly apparent east of the Anacostia River. For example, the areas surrounding the Benning Road and Minnesota Ave Metro stations are not adequately incorporated into the planning framework; even though these transportation hubs and surrounding neighborhoods may experience changes in transit demand, traffic pattern, pedestrian and bicycle activity and other development pressures associated with RFK.

I recommend that the final Plan include a broader area-of-impact analysis examining the communities, commercial corridors, transportation assets and development areas most likely to be affected by the redevelopment. This would help the District identify where complementary investments are necessary and where the redevelopment creates opportunities to strengthen connections between the Campus and surrounding communities.

Coordinate RFK with other Major Development and Land Use Decisions

The Master Plan should also consider RFK within the context of other major public and private investments occurring nearby. A Plan intended to guide development over several decades should provide a framework for coordinating those investments as the surrounding areas evolves. Hill East is an immediate example. Significant mixed-used development is planned directly southwest of the RFK Campus. The final Plan should more clearly examine how RFK and Hill East relate to one another and identify opportunities to coordinate transportation, infrastructure, housing, retail, public space and economic development between these major projects.

The same should apply to the DC Jail and correctional campus adjacent to Hill East. Before making a major investment at the existing site, the District should evaluate whether modernization, reconfiguration or relocation best meets its correctional and operation needs while considering the potential for housing, economic development, public space and improved connectivity.

I recommend that the Master Plan call for a coordinated interagency analysis of the correctional campus and its relationship to the RFK-Hill East Area. The plan does not need to determine the future of the DC jail but rather ensure that this significant land-use decision is incorporated into the District's long-term planning for the area.

Connect the Master Plan to the Traffic Operations and Parking Plan

While the Master Plan and the Traffic Operations and Parking Plan (TOPP) serve different purposes, they are closely related. For example, the Master Plan establishes the Campus's physical transportation framework, the TOPP will address how the system operates and how traffic and parking impacts on surrounding neighborhoods are managed.

Because the Master Plan precedes the TOPP, it should preserve flexibility for TOPP findings to inform roadway design, parking access and capacity, traffic routing, transit improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

I recommend that the final Master Plan clearly defines its relationship to the TOPP and establish a process for incorporating TOPP recommendations into future design and implementation decisions. Transportation operations should help shape the Campus, not simply manage the impacts after major design decisions have been made.

Multi-Modal Transportation Planning

Transportation planning for the RFK Campus must accomplish two goals: support a transit-first, multi-modal, year-round neighborhood while protecting surrounding communities from increased traffic and parking impacts. The Master Plan establishes an established framework, but it should provide clearer direction on neighborhood protections, roadway design, transit capacity, and connections to communities east of the Anacostia River.

I recommend strengthening the final Plan across the following areas:

Protect Surrounding Neighborhoods from Cut-Through Traffic

The recent WMATA RFK Transit Study projects significant vehicle traffic on game days, with approximately 75 percent arriving from west of Stadium-Armory and 25 percent from the east. The Master Plan directs much of this traffic toward two principal arterials: Benning Road, NE, serving Garage G2, and Independence Avenue, SE, serving Garage G1.

The final Plan should more directly address how this traffic will affect adjacent residential streets. In particular, access to Garage G2 could increase cut-through traffic on 21st, 23rd, 24th, and 25th Streets NE, while traffic accessing Garage G1 could affect neighborhoods surrounding Hill East.

I recommend that the Plan establish neighborhood protection as a core transportation principle and identify strategies such as geofencing, residential access controls, traffic-calming measures, event-day routing, new parking signage and restrictions on cut-through traffic. These protections should be considered early enough to influence the design and operation of the RFK transportation network.

Strengthening Roadway Design for Pedestrians, Cyclist, and Transit

The Master Plan proposes substantial new rights-of-way intended to accommodate vehicles, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, landscaping, and other uses. The proposed 110-foot-wide KPD-A street is one

example. While this provides flexibility, the Plan should give clearer direction about how that space will be allocated.

I recommend that the final Plan prioritize wider sidewalks, protected bicycle facilities, safe pedestrian crossings, street trees and shade, dedicated transit infrastructure where appropriate, and narrower vehicle travel lanes. Roadway design should reinforce the District's transit-first goals rather than create streets that primarily maximize automobile capacity.

Strengthen East-West Connectivity

The Master Plan should provide greater attention to how Ward 7 residents east of the Anacostia will access and benefit from the RFK Campus. This is especially important given the additional traffic expected to travel through Ward 7 and along Minnesota Ave, Benning Road and East Capital Streets.

The Plan acknowledges the need for future connections across the Anacostia River, but it should go further by identifying potential improvements and establishing priorities that can guide future capital investment. These should include stronger pedestrian and bicycle connections across the river, expanded Capital Bikeshare access, improved connections to the Benning Road and Minnesota Avenue Metro stations, and coordination with existing and planned DDOT projects east of the Anacostia.

The Master Plan should also identify opportunities for additional pedestrian and bicycle crossings of the Anacostia over the long term. Improving east-west connectivity should be treated as a central transportation objective of the redevelopment, not simply as an ancillary benefit.

As one River Terrace resident who regularly travels across the East Capitol Street Bridge and through the RFK Campus without a car stated: *“If this Master Plan is going to reshape transportation around RFK for decades, it should be ambitious enough to include real transit infrastructure for the neighborhood next door — not just traffic mitigation for stadium nights.”*

Transportation investments associated with RFK should not only move people efficiently to and from the Campus; they should leave Ward 7 with a stronger, safer, and better-connected transportation network.

Preserve Opportunities to Expand High-Capacity Transit

The RFK redevelopment will create a new neighborhood and major regional destination that will operate well beyond stadium events. The District should therefore preserve opportunities to expand high-capacity transit as development and ridership grow.

I recommend that the final Master Plan preserve the possibility of a future infill Metro station near Oklahoma Avenue, even if such a station is not feasible in the near term. Planned improvements to Stadium-Armory and the proposed Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit can address important transportation needs, but they should not stop consideration of additional Metrorail capacity in the future.

Preserving this option now would allow the District and WMATA to reevaluate its feasibility as the Campus develops, ridership patterns become clearer, and transportation needs evolve.

Parking Garages

The Master Plan must balance the parking needs of a major event venue with its stated goal of creating a transit-first, multimodal neighborhood. Parking should support the Campus without dominating its design, encouraging unnecessary vehicle trips, or creating disproportionate impacts on surrounding communities. As transit capacity and travel behavior evolve, the Plan should also avoid committing the District to more permanent parking infrastructure than is necessary.

I recommend strengthening the final Plan in three areas.

Reevaluate the Need for a Third Permanent Garage

Additional permanent parking capacity is not automatic. If the Campus succeeds in increasing Metro, bus, bicycle, pedestrian, and other non-automobile trips, parking demand should evolve accordingly.

Rather than committing now to a third garage, the Plan should require that any additional permanent garage be supported by demonstrated need based on actual parking utilization, transportation mode share, transit capacity, and the findings of subsequent transportation planning. This approach would preserve valuable land for housing, open space, retail, recreation, or other community-serving uses rather than permanently dedicating it to vehicle storage.

The Plan should also encourage shared parking and adaptive reuse so that permanent garages can respond to changing transportation needs over the life of the Campus.

Minimize the Impact of Garage G2 on Kingman Park

The location and scale of Garage G2 warrant particular attention because of its proximity to Kingman Park. While locating parking near Benning Road may provide transportation benefits by directing vehicles toward a principal arterial, the Plan should also consider whether the garage's size and access points could encourage traffic through nearby residential streets.

I recommend that the final Plan evaluate alternatives that reduce the size of G2, relocate some parking capacity, offer alternative relocation options for G2 or configure garage entrances and exits to direct vehicles to major roadways rather than residential streets. The objective should be to retain the transportation benefits of northern parking access without transferring the burden of that access to Kingman Park.

Garage design should also minimize its physical impact on the neighborhood through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, screening, tree canopy, and active uses along publicly visible frontages.

Activate Garages and Establish a Clear Strategy for Temporary Surface Parking

Parking structures should contribute to the Campus's year-round activity rather than function as large, inactive structures outside of event periods. The final Plan should encourage ground-floor retail, community-serving uses, recreation, public art, and other forms of activation where feasible.

The Plan should also provide greater clarity regarding the approximately 2,000 temporary surface parking spaces contemplated for the initial phases of development. It should identify where those spaces are expected to be located, how long they are anticipated to remain, and how those sites will transition to their ultimate uses.

Temporary parking should remain temporary. The final Plan should establish a clear expectation that surface lots are phased out as development proceeds and transit and multimodal capacity increase, ensuring that valuable land is ultimately used to advance the broader goals of the Campus.

Parks and Open Space

Federal law requires that at least 30 percent of the Campus be maintained as open space. Meeting that requirement, however, should involve more than identifying enough acreage on a site plan. The final Master Plan should ensure that open space is well distributed, accessible, environmentally resilient,

actively programmed, and connected to the Anacostia River and surrounding neighborhoods. The Campus's parks and public spaces should become destinations in their own right and one of the redevelopment's most significant long-term community benefits.

I recommend strengthening this portion of the plan in the following areas:

Protect and Better Distribute Usable Open Space

The distribution of open space is as important as the total acreage provided. Approximately 77 percent of the required open space identified in the Plan is concentrated in the Recreation and Stadium Districts. While these areas will provide substantial public space, other portions of the Campus should not become heavily built out without meaningful green space for residents, workers, and visitors.

This is particularly important along Oklahoma Avenue, where residents have raised concerns about the impact of the proposed roadway network on the existing Great Lawn. The Great Lawn currently serves as a neighborhood gathering space, environmental and visual buffer, and important connection between Kingman Park and the RFK Campus. Any reduction in this space should be carefully evaluated and mitigated through the design of the surrounding public realm.

The Plan states that additional smaller open spaces “may” be developed at the block level. I recommend that the final Plan provide greater certainty by establishing minimum expectations for the location, timing, design, and maintenance of block-level open space, including walking paths, seating, shade, and landscaping.

Make the Anacostia River a Defining Feature of the Campus

The Anacostia River is one of the Campus's greatest assets. The redevelopment should orient more of its public realm toward the river and strengthen connections between the Campus, Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, Kingman and Heritage Islands, Langston Golf Course, and communities on both sides of the river.

I recommend that the final Plan establish a stronger framework for expanded trails, overlooks, accessible riverfront gathering spaces, environmental education, nature-based recreation, and improved physical and ecological connections to the river. These improvements would also advance previously identified community priorities for greater river access and environmental stewardship.

Create Cultural and Community Destinations Within the Open-Space Network

The Campus's open spaces should be more than landscaped areas between buildings. They should become cultural, recreational, and community destinations that reflect the history and identity of Ward 7 and the RFK site.

I recommend that the final Plan identify and reserve appropriate spaces for public art, performances, markets and festivals, cultural programming, community gardens, outdoor fitness, children's play, and flexible community gatherings. The landscape itself should also provide opportunities to recognize Ward 7, the history of the Anacostia River and surrounding communities, Black DC, Indigenous history, and the site's sports and cultural legacy.

Use Open Space to Advance Health, Sustainability, and Climate Resilience

The Plan recognizes urban heat and establishes important sustainability goals, but those goals should be more directly reflected in the design of the open-space network. The loss of existing tree canopy and green space, combined with new roads, buildings, and other impervious surfaces, could increase heat exposure if not adequately mitigated.

I recommend that the final Plan establish measurable expectations for tree canopy, shade, native landscaping, stormwater management, heat-island reduction, biodiversity, and access to green space across the Campus. Particular attention should be given to shaded walking routes, seating and rest areas, drinking-water access, community gardens, and outdoor fitness and wellness spaces.

Ultimately, the 30-percent requirement should be treated as a floor, not a measure of success. Success should be determined by whether RFK's open spaces are accessible, connected, active, culturally meaningful, environmentally resilient, and genuinely useful to the people who live around them.

Housing and Anti-Displacement

The RFK redevelopment provides an opportunity to add thousands of new homes, including a significant number of affordable units. The Master Plan appropriately recognizes the 30 percent affordable housing requirement and the potential for redevelopment to place additional pressure on nearby housing markets. However, the final Plan should articulate a broader housing strategy that addresses what types of housing are built, where affordable housing is located, and how existing residents are protected as investment increases around RFK.

I recommend strengthening the plan in the following key areas:

Equitably Distribute Affordable Housing Throughout the Campus

Affordable housing should be integrated throughout the residential areas of the Campus rather than concentrated in certain buildings or districts.

I recommend that the final Plan establish the expectation that affordable units are distributed throughout the Campus and delivered alongside market-rate housing as development occurs. The Plan should also distinguish between affordable and deeply affordable housing and identify how different income levels will be served.

Provide a Housing Mix That Reflects Community Needs

The number of affordable units alone does not determine whether the redevelopment meets the housing needs of District residents. The types and sizes of units are also important.

I recommend that the final Plan support a diverse mix of housing types, including family-sized units, senior and accessible housing. Particular attention should be given to two-, three-, and larger-bedroom affordable units that can serve families and multigenerational households.

Consider and Plan for Displacement Pressures

Although many anti-displacement tools fall outside the scope of the Master Plan, the potential impact of RFK on surrounding housing markets should be considered as part of the District's long-term planning.

I recommend that the final Plan recognize potential displacement pressures in surrounding communities and call for continued monitoring of housing conditions as redevelopment proceeds. This should include coordination with the appropriate District agencies on strategies to preserve existing affordable housing and support long-term residents.

The Master Plan cannot resolve displacement on its own, but it should ensure that its land-use and housing decisions support a mixed-income community at RFK without losing sight of the residents who already call the surrounding neighborhoods home.

The DC Armory

Lastly, the DC Armory is a significant asset at the center of the RFK Campus, with a long history of civic, cultural, athletic, and public uses. Given its prominent location and uncertainty surrounding its future, the Master Plan should provide clearer direction for how the Armory fits within the long-term redevelopment of the Campus.

I recommend that the final Plan call for a coordinated assessment of the Armory's future, including whether the facility should be preserved and modernized, adaptively reused, or redeveloped. That assessment should consider the building's condition and historic significance, the cost and feasibility of reuse, and opportunities for community, cultural, recreational, and economic uses.

The Master Plan does not need to determine the Armory's ultimate future, but it should establish a clear process and guiding principles for that decision so this strategically located site can contribute fully to the long-term vision for the RFK Campus.

Local Business and Economic Development

The RFK redevelopment should create opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs while strengthening existing commercial areas. While hiring, contracting, and business assistance programs will largely be addressed outside the Master Plan, decisions about where and how commercial and flexible-use spaces are incorporated into the Campus are important parts of the planning process.

I recommend that the final Plan provide for neighborhood-serving retail, affordable commercial space, restaurants, and flexible spaces that can accommodate small and local businesses. The Plan should also identify locations for food trucks, outdoor markets, flea markets, pop-up shops, vendor kiosks, and other temporary or low-cost commercial uses that create opportunities for entrepreneurs who may not be ready or able to lease permanent storefront space.

The Plan should also consider phased and interim uses of land awaiting permanent development. As the Campus is built over time, vacant parcels and temporary spaces could support markets, food and retail vendors, seasonal businesses, community events, and other entrepreneurial activities. This would help activate the Campus throughout its development while creating lower-barrier opportunities for Ward 7 businesses and entrepreneurs.

Finally, the Plan should consider how commercial activity at RFK can connect with existing and planned Ward 7 commercial corridors, including Benning Road and Minnesota Avenue. The goal should be to ensure that RFK creates space for new economic activity while also helping strengthen businesses and commercial areas beyond the Campus.

Community Benefits and Implementation

The Ward 7 RFK Stadium Community Benefits Advisory Board previously identified a range of community priorities for the redevelopment. While many of those recommendations will be addressed through the Community Benefits Agreement or other District programs, several have direct implications for the Master Plan.

I recommend that the final Plan account for community benefit priorities that affect land use and the physical development of the Campus, including affordable housing, community-serving retail, parks and

recreation, cultural and community spaces, river access, environmental sustainability, and connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

The Master Plan does not need to address every community benefit. It should, however, ensure that the land-use and development decisions made today provide the space and flexibility needed to deliver these community benefits as the project moves forward. In closing, the RFK Master Plan will shape this part of the District for decades. It should not only guide development within the Campus, but also strengthen surrounding neighborhoods, improve east-west connectivity, and ensure that this major public investment delivers lasting benefits to the communities most affected by it.

I appreciate the Office of Planning's consideration of these recommendations as it finalizes the Plan. Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 202-724-8068 or wfelder@dccouncil.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendell Felder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Wendell" and last name "Felder" clearly distinguishable.

Wendell Felder
Council Member, Ward 7
Chair, Subcommittee on Local Business Development

Cc: RFK Project Executive Brian Hanlon
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