

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**



Hearing on  
Robert F. Kennedy Campus Redevelopment Act of 2025

Testimony of  
The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor

Before the  
Committee of the Whole  
Council of the District of Columbia

July 30, 2025  
10:00 a.m.

Good morning and I want to thank you, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Council, for convening this hearing. I also want to thank Chairman James Comer, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Members of Congress for their leadership on the Hill, as well as President Biden and President Trump and their teams at the Department of Interior and the National Park Service for their partnership in our shared priority of activating 180 acres on the banks of the Anacostia River in the best city in the world.

We owe tremendous thanks to our Executive Branch colleagues in the CFO, Glen Lee's office, as well as Attorney General Brian Schwalb's office. And our partners in sports and entertainment at Events DC. And I especially want to thank DC residents and businesses who actively participated in this process—from early Events DC visioning sessions to community meetings in Kingman Park and neighbors throughout Ward 7. We want to acknowledge the people who participated in Councilmember Felder's community benefits engagements, and at the DC Chamber's small business convenings, and the hundreds of DC residents and businesses who made their voices heard and who asked for more in two Council hearings—the first on the BSA on June 18 and just yesterday.

I want to further emphasize my great appreciation to all of you. I want to thank for your urgent and thoughtful consideration in this atypical year, in this consideration of the District's biggest economic development or infrastructure project in our history. I want to acknowledge and appreciate you for your helpful additions to both the process and the agreement's terms with the team.

To borrow a phrase—this is a BFD. Very big. And I recognize that passions are high, questions are intense, and our great desire to get this right is at the forefront

of our thinking. I also recognize that the time is now to act or miss our window of opportunity to capture \$2.7 billion in private investment and get a shovel in the ground by the end of next year.

I am pleased to testify, Mr. Chairman and Chairman McDuffie, without equivocation, to say that we are delivering the best deal for DC to transform the RFK campus. And I'm even more pleased to be able to say to the residents of the District of Columbia that I am keeping my promises. Every one of them.

Throughout, my commitments have been:

- 1) To secure the land and expand how the land could be used. Just last year it could only be used for sports and recreation uses; now, with the passage of the Congress' legislation at the end of last year, it can be used for a mix of uses, including housing, hotels and family entertainment.
- 2) I committed to ensuring an all-year activation by securing a world-class stadium with a roof.
- 3) I committed to build a state-of-the-art SportsPlex for DC youth and to preserve access to the Fields at RFK throughout construction and on game days.
- 4) We committed to improve parks and recreation and connections to the Anacostia River so that the parks and river become more than what they are now, and that the access is improved so that people aren't attracted to just the built environment, but also the natural one.
- 5) We agreed to preference communities farthest from opportunity in a Community Benefits Agreement, especially for grocery needs and youth engagement and enrichment in Ward 7, and DC resident hiring and small and local business preferences in Wards 5, 7 and 8.

6) We agreed to limit our investment to horizontal infrastructure only, with caps on exposure for stadium or parking cost overruns.

7) We agreed to advance a fiscally sound deal that respects our debt limit and avoids eliminating capital projects or operational cuts to accommodate debt service.

8) And finally, we committed to achieving this overarching goal: securing the fastest and surest path to building out the 180-acre campus and delivering the greatest benefit to DC taxpayers with a respected catalytic anchor and Master Development partner in the Washington Commanders, as well as a parking and events partner with our official sports authority, Events DC, and with great support from Commissioner Roger Goodell and the National Football League. And like our investment in Monumental Sports, we are helping to shift our economy, betting bigger on sports and entertainment as our federal footprint changes.

Here's what we are investing:

- \$500 million for stadium infrastructure—that's horizontal development only
- \$356 million for parking garage infrastructure
- \$202 million for infrastructure investments through DDOT
- And \$77 million, currently, for the new DPR indoor SportsPlex

And here's what we're getting:

- Five new districts, replacing the current blighted stadium and asphalt parking lots, to include housing, recreation, entertainment, and parks spaces.
- We're getting a world-class, roofed stadium with a commitment to LEED Platinum standards, and we are getting the Club to pay for the stadium, a stadium that we will own. We will also create a maintenance fund to keep

pace with the capital investments necessary to keep the stadium current and earning and producing for the residents of the District.

- We include a \$50 million community benefits agreement preferencing Wards 5, 7, and 8.
- A Project Labor Agreement on the stadium and adjacent hotel that preferences trade unions as long as they meet DC resident hiring commitments of 51% of hires and excludes contracts of \$15 million or less from the PLA, making way for CBE engagement.
- We are proud to support a CBE equity requirement for projects valued at \$40 million or less in the mixed-use development.
- Also, we support enforceable mixed-used development milestones for the Master Developer.
- We also get the creation of 30,000 construction jobs.
- Up to 6,500 new homes where 10,000 DC residents will live.
- And nearly \$18 billion in direct spending and over \$5 billion in total taxes from both the stadium and mixed-used development.

In our wide engagement strategy since we inked the deal, you asked us many questions and offered many suggestions, but four main buckets emerged:

*You asked us to reconsider parking.* We listened. We are committed to robust traffic management planning; the evaluation of Metro needs at the current station and future station needs; and consideration of the necessity of a third parking garage and where it might be sited. Further helpful Council enhancements include the addition of the parking tax, capturing non-stadium ticketed event day parking, as

well as the creation of the Transportation Fund, with allowable uses for parks and green space infrastructure.

*You asked us to improve our commitment to the environment.* We heard you and we agree. The Team has made clear in writing its approach to both the mixed-use development, the stadium, and the long-term operations of the sites.

*You asked us to produce more general fund revenue.* We have redesignated sales taxes produced at the stadium to the general fund rather than the RFK fund and included a sales tax on parking and food and beverage.

*And finally, enforceable timelines for mixed-used development delivery with the addition of expedited administrative supports* is included.

Now, this is where we are:

- We have secured the land.
- The Commanders committed to DC to get to RFK, to me, since June of 2024, with an exclusivity period through the Council's planned recess of July 15th.
- Community engagement and two Council hearings and dozens of community meetings have concluded.
- An amended deal reflecting the Council, the community, the team, labor, small business, and my priorities is done.

And now it's time to get through the window of opportunity before it closes.

On Friday, councilmembers, I'm asking for your strong unified vote to help shift our economy, grow jobs, grow business opportunities, and to bring our team home.

Before I take your questions, please permit me an additional word of thanks. I am so grateful that in my 10 years as your mayor to be served by tremendously hard-working, smart, creative, committed public servants—from my Executive Teams at the EOM and the City Administrator's Office and the Senior Advisor's Office, to my Budget Team, the Big Deal Team at DMPED, my Intergovernment and my Comms Team, to all my cabinet officials past and present, and to DC workers on the front lines and in between. This is what they have in common: an immeasurable love of DC, an immeasurable commitment to securing our rightful place in this nation, and the fact that they can't stop, they won't stop, and they never quit.

I speak for them when I make this promise. I make this promise to the residents who have elected me three times to serve as their mayor and have trusted my judgement in doing so. I promise to get this right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.