Housing Insights Prototype Design Session

The Problem:

Because most affordable housing is privately owned, developers can choose to stop participating in subsidy programs and sell their buildings. The DC government and housing advocates are interested in 'preserving' these buildings - keeping them affordable, and spend time and money to do so.

The current process is largely reactionary – working with buildings only after they've found out an owner has decided to sell. In addition, there are many competing considerations for deciding which buildings are most important to preserve – you may want to maintain income diversity in a gentrifying neighborhood, or preserve more overall units in a less expensive units. While most people agree on the list of priorities, they don't necessarily agree on their rank.

Draft Project Mission:

We want the District to use data and a consistent approach to ranking priorities in allocating funding for affordable housing preservation.

Daily Use:

For each building, neighborhood, or ward there may be a different 'most important issue.' We want the tool to allow the users to find the information relevant to that issue.

Today's Agenda:

1) Setting the stage (30 min)

- Project concept and scope
- Who are the users?
- Project vision - DHCD perspective
- Data Review - what types of data might we include?

2) This user prefers a tool that is... (30 min)

Break into 3 groups, each assigned to a user type. With your assigned user type in mind:

- Fill out a worksheet about tradeoffs (in silence)
- On sticky notes: Complete the sentence for your user - "I prefer a tool that is...." Fill out as many competing options as you need.
- Spend 10 minutes discussing with your group to pick the most representative versions of the "I prefer a tool" statements.

Outcome: 3-4 "I prefer a tool..." statements that are most representative of the user type.

3) Design Sketches: The Front Page (45 min)

- Sketching: Using your group's user perspective, sketch a mockup of the main page of the tool. On the back, write a one sentence explanation of what element of your design you think is most important.
- Quick review: Present your design in groups of ~3

Tradeoffs

Considering your user type, check which of each pair is more important. Fill in as many tradeoffs as you can think of.

User type: _____

Compare neighborhoods	Look at specific buildings
Combine data into a 'score'	Analyze parameters one by one
Show me a prepared summary	Give me a blank slate

I prefer a tool….

On Post-it notes, fill in the statement 'I prefer a tool', using this to emphasize the most important design criteria that you think are relevant for your user type. Do this on your own.

IPT…

That allows me to customize my analysis by filtering

(Policy Advocate)

Scenarios

Policy Advocate

1) You have a list of the 50 buildings that were awarded funding in previous cycles of the Housing Production Trust Fund. You want to compare these buildings to the 'Prioritization Scoring' criteria to look for anomalies between the stated priorities and the buildings that were awarded funding. You don't have the list of buildings that were rejected.

2) You are working on a report showing the overall change in affordable housing over the past 5 years, showing the loss of buildings and their impact on both the neighborhoods and the total availability of housing for low income residents.

Policymaker

1) You are a staffer for Councilmember Charles Allen of Ward 6. He asks you to collect information on the affordable housing in your ward so he can evaluate the impact of an affordable housing bill that is coming up in city council.

Tenant Advocate

1) You are working with residents of a 50-unit multifamily building in Columbia Heights, who have just received a TOPA notice. You want to demonstrates the impact that losing this building would have on its neighborhood. You don't know which criteria will be most important for this building, but look at the 'prioritization scoring' section of the RFP page as well as our data sources list for potential components.

2) For 2018, you want to set aside 20% of your staff time to proactive assistance for buildings – instead of waiting to receive TOPA notices, you want to identify the buildings most at risk so that you can contact the owners and tenants. You know that TOPA notices often follow a contract expiration, and you can look at the risk score associated with the building from the risk algorithm being created as part of this project. Your non-profit focuses just on buildings with at least 50 units, and although risk is a big factor you also have to find buildings that have needs that match with the skill set of your team.