Volume II
Area Elements

Chapter 15
Capitol Hill
Area Element

Eckington
Arboretum
Ivy City
Trinidad
UPPER NORTHEAST
Carver
Langston
Near Northeast
FLORIDA AVE
8TH ST
BENNING RD
MARYLAND AVE
Stanton Park
Kingman Park
CENTRAL WASHINGTON
C ST
CONSTITUTION AVE
NORTH CAROLINA AVE
Lincoln Park
EAST CAPITOL ST
INDEPENDENCE AVE
Lincoln Park
MASSACHUSETTS AVE
Capitol Hill
Capitol South
Eastern Market
Stadium|Armory
Hill East
POTOMAC AVE
Potomac Ave
Near Southeast
LOWER ANACOSTIA WATERFRONT/ NEAR SOUTHWEST
Navy Yard
FAR NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST
Buzzard Point
N
Miles
0
0.5
1
1.5

Capitol Hill Area Element

Overview 1500

The Capitol Hill Planning Area encompasses the 3.1 square miles located east of the U.S. Capitol, north of I-695, and south of Florida Avenue and Benning Road. Boundaries of the Planning Area are shown on the Map at left. Most of this area has historically been Ward 6, although in past decades parts have been included in Wards 2 and 5. 1500.1

The Planning Area is bounded on the west by Central Washington and on the south by the Anacostia Waterfront. Because plans for these two areas are of particular concern to Capitol Hill residents, this chapter includes cross-references to relevant sections of the Central Washington and Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Area Elements. Changes along the waterfront—particularly at Reservation 13 and in the Near Southeast—are extremely important to the future of Capitol Hill. 1500.2

In many respects, Capitol Hill is a "city within the city." The community has well defined physical boundaries that enhance its sense of identity. Its neighborhoods are united by history, architectural tradition and relatively consistent urban form, including a system of grid and diagonal streets that has remained faithful to the 1791 L'Enfant Plan for Washington. Much of the community has the feel of a small historic town, with block upon block of attractive late 19th century and early 20th century row houses, well-maintained public spaces, historic schoolhouses and corner stores, rear yard alleys, and traditional neighborhood shopping districts. The community's attractive housing stock, living history, low scale, and proximity to the U.S. Capitol make "the Hill" one of the District's most celebrated and attractive communities. 1500.3

Capitol Hill is comprised of several distinct neighborhoods. The original Capitol Hill neighborhood was developed on the high ground just east of the U.S. Capitol building during the 1800s and is still the historic heart of the community. The Lincoln Park and Stanton Park neighborhoods developed around their namesake squares with similar housing stock and street patterns. Areas such as Hill East, Northeast Capitol Hill, Kingman Park, and Rosedale have their own sense of identity, shaped by such factors as geography, housing stock, architecture, public schools and parks, and commercial centers. Rosedale, for example, is characterized by wood-frame row houses (rather than brick), smaller lots, and less uniform architecture. Other parts of the Hill include concentrations of flats and small apartments, including publicly subsidized housing complexes like Potomac Gardens. 1500.4

The major business districts in the Capitol Hill Planning Area are located along the east-west avenues that cross the community, particularly Pennsylvania Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and H Street NE. Historically,

Capitol Hill is the largest residential historic district in the city.

some of the north-south streets also supported neighborhood commercial districts, including 8th Street, 11th Street, and 15th Street. Among these, only the 7th Street/8th Street SE (Barracks Row) business district remains active today; the others have declined or been replaced by housing as shopping patterns and transportation conditions have changed. As an older urban neighborhood, there continue to be small neighborhood commercial uses such as dry cleaners, beauty salons, and corner stores across the Planning Area. Capitol Hill is also home to Eastern Market, a lively and historic public market where independent vendors sell fresh meats, vegetables, flowers, and other goods to customers from across the city. 1500.5

The Capitol Hill area has an excellent transportation network, making auto ownership an option rather than a necessity for many households. The scale and topography of the neighborhood, as well as wide sidewalks and street trees, create ideal conditions for walking. The southeast portion of the Hill is served by the Capitol South, Eastern Market, Potomac Avenue, and Stadium-Armory Metro stations. Arterials like Pennsylvania Avenue and East Capitol Street provide excellent east-west circulation. The downside, however, is that Capitol Hill neighborhoods suffer from heavy volumes of commuter traffic going to and from areas east of the Anacostia River. The community is also easily accessed by I-295 and the Southeast/Southwest Freeway (I-695). 1500.6

Capitol Hill is home to several parks, including Lincoln and Stanton Squares, Rosedale and Sherwood Recreation Centers, and many smaller pocket and triangle parks. It is also home to the 25-acre Congressional Cemetery, a national historic landmark. The largest parks serving the Hill neighborhoods are along the Anacostia River, including West Anacostia Park and the lands north of RFK Stadium. 1500.7

Much of the community's distinctive character is protected as a National Register historic district; in fact, Capitol Hill is the largest residential historic district in the city and includes some 8,000 structures mostly dating from 1850 to 1915. The historic district includes 19th century manor houses, Federal townhouses, small frame dwellings, Italianate rowhouses, and pressed brick rowhouses, often with whimsical decorative elements. Many of the row houses have rentable English basement units, contributing to neighborhood diversity and affordability. Increased home values and an influx of higher income professionals have increased the buying power of area residents and have helped to revitalize commercial corridors. But housing options for lower income and working class families have been shrinking, especially in the last five years. The tightening housing market has also impacted the many Congressional interns and young staffers who have historically relied on the Hill's moderately priced rental housing. 1500.8

Capitol Hill has always had an active and involved citizenry. The Capitol Hill Restoration Society was founded in 1955 to protect the historic fabric of the Hill neighborhood. Their efforts led to the designation of the Capitol Hill historic district in 1976. Other neighborhood groups, like the Stanton

Park Neighborhood Association, North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, Near Northeast Citizens Against Crime and Drugs, the Barney Circle Neighborhood Association, the Kingman Park Civic Association, and Hill East Waterfront Action Network, are committed to ensuring the livability of their neighborhoods. Business organizations like the Capitol Hill Association for Merchants and Professionals, Barracks Row and H Street Main Streets, Capitol Hill Business Improvement District, and Penn East Alliance all work tirelessly to ensure that the Hill is a great place to shop, work, visit, and live. 1500.9

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Context

History 1501

The Capitol Hill Planning Area has played an important role in the growth of the nation's capital since the 1700s. The neighborhood itself takes its name from what was once called "Jenkins Hill." It was here that Pierre L'Enfant sought to locate the "Congress House" or U.S. Capitol Building. L'Enfant's original vision was that Washington's major commercial street would extend eastward from the Capitol to the Anacostia River. A deepwater port on the river would become the city's center of commerce. The eastern section of L'Enfant's grand design failed to materialize, however, and the city developed to the west. However, the Hill was to achieve its own unique identity. 1501.1

During the city's early years, privately owned buildings were constructed close to the Capitol, and occupied by artisans and craftsmen. The Navy Yard, to the south of the Capitol, also attracted development. By the time the British burned the Capitol building in 1814, a small community had been established on the Hill. Capitol Hill had cemeteries, an outdoor market, churches, hotels, and taverns. Boarding houses were constructed for members of Congress. 1501.2

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, only a few blocks east of the Capitol and south near the Navy Yard had been developed. Most streets were unpaved. Shanties stood side by side with more substantial wood frame and brick dwellings. Horse drawn streetcars served the Hill and the Navy Yard, and connected these areas to the Capitol and Downtown. 1501.3

The neighborhood began to expand after the Civil War. The city had endured and prospered, and investment increased. During the last quarter of the 19th century, brick row houses were built north and east of the Capitol, new stores and banks were established, and streets were graded and paved. A major public works program gave the city—and Capitol Hill—a municipal water supply and sewerage system. A mix of ethnic groups settled in the community, including Italians, Germans, and African-Americans. 1501.4

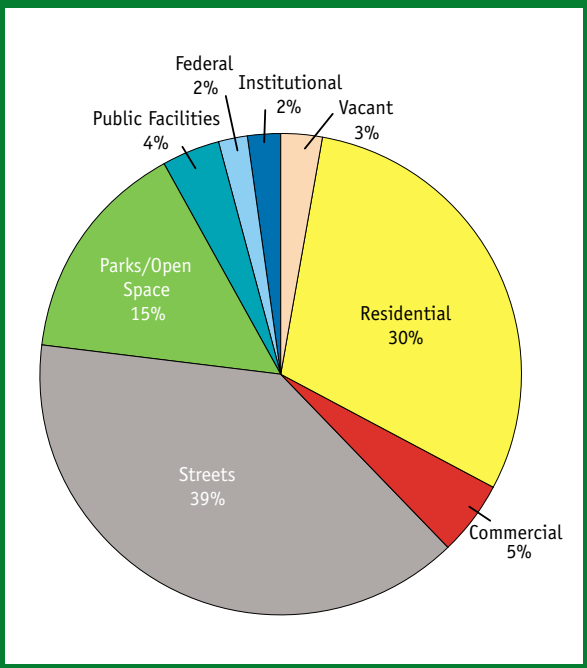
Lincoln Park

By the late 1800s, there were houses as far as Lincoln Park, where the Emancipation statue was erected in 1876. Philadelphia Row, completed in 1866 on 11th Street SE, was one of the first large-scale developments in the area. Senators, congressmen, and other public officials lived in the elegant homes around Lincoln Park and along East Capitol Street. More modest homes supported a growing middle class, employed at the Navy Yard and at the federal buildings around the U.S. Capitol. The area's growth was spurred by the construction of electric streetcar lines in the early 1900s, also giving rise to commercial districts like H Street. 1501.5

The Hill has gone through several cycles of decline and renewal during the last century. During the 1920s, the federal government began renting out many of the houses on Capitol Hill. The neighborhood became less fashionable than the burgeoning area northwest of Downtown, and some of its more prominent residents relocated. By the late 1920s, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission had developed plans for an eastward extension of the National Mall, extending from the Capitol to the Anacostia River. While these plans were not carried out, housing conditions on the Hill continued to deteriorate through the Great Depression and World War II. The 1950 Comprehensive Plan identified much of the neighborhood as "obsolete" or "blighted." Congress funded public housing construction in response, and additional blocks around the Capitol were replaced with new federal offices. 1501.6

Figure 15.1:

Land Use Composition in Capitol Hill 1502.2



Source: DC Office of Plannning,2006

Parts of Capitol Hill were already being "gentrified" by the 1950s. Many turn-of-the-century row homes on the blocks just east of the Capitol were restored, bringing a renaissance to close-in neighborhoods. However, the recovery was uneven and was slower to arrive on the eastern edge of the Hill. Parts of the area continued to decline through the 1960s, and H Street was devastated by the 1968 riots. Most of Capitol Hill remained a stable, diverse, economically and racially mixed community through the 1980s and 1990s. Population decline was not as steep as it was in the neighborhoods to the north and east, and the community has remained consistently strong through difficult as well prosperous times. 1501.7

Land Use 1502

Land use statistics for the Capitol Hill Planning Area appear in Figure 15.1. Capitol Hill comprises 1,959 acres, or about five percent of the city's land area. 1502.1

Capitol Hill contains more land in streets and street rights-of-way (39 percent) than any of the city's 10 Planning areas. This is due to the broad avenues of the L'Enfant Plan, the regularity of the street grid, the extensive system of alleys, and the wide street rights-of-way. 1502.3

Residential uses account for 30 percent of the total. Of the 573 acres of residential land use on Capitol Hill, 520 acres are developed with row houses. Despite the low physical profile of the row houses, overall densities exceed the citywide average and are about 40 units per acre. 1502.4

Commercial uses represent about five percent of the total area, which is comparable to the citywide average. Major commercial areas include H Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, Benning Road, and 8th Street SE. There is almost no industrial development in the community. 1502.5

Open space and parks comprise 15 percent of the Planning Area. The larger open spaces serving the neighborhood are along the Anacostia River, including Congressional Cemetery and the land north of RFK Stadium. Public facilities, primarily local public schools, public charter schools, and the DC Jail and former DC General Hospital complex, comprise four percent of the area. Institutional uses comprise two percent of the total area. In 2005, about three percent of the Planning Area consisted of vacant, developable land. 1502.6

Demographics 1503

Basic demographic data for Capitol Hill is shown in Table 15.1. In 2000, the area had a population of 47,600, or about eight percent of the city's total. Population declined by eight percent during the 1990s. However, the number of households actually increased by four percent during the same period, as average household size dropped from 2.30 to 2.06. The drop in household size was steeper here than in the city as a whole, indicating a growing number of one- and two-person households. On the other hand, the percentage of children and seniors in the Planning Area was virtually the same in 2000 as it was in 1990. 1503.1

Today, the percentage of children in the Planning Area is slightly less than the citywide average, while the percentage of seniors is about the same as the citywide average. About 47 percent of the Planning Area's residents lived in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995. This is about the same as the citywide average of 46.9 percent. About 10 percent of the Planning Area's population resides in group quarters—a majority of this population is associated with the DC Jail. 1503.2

Capitol Hill's racial composition is similar to the city as a whole. Approximately 59 percent of the Planning Area's residents are African-American and approximately 36 percent are white. These compare to citywide percentages of 60 percent and 30 percent. About two percent of the

Table 15.1:

Capitol Hill at a Glance 1503.3

Basic Statistics	
Land Area (square miles)	3.1
Population	
1990	51,755
2000	47,605
2005 (estimated)*	47,600
2025 (projected)*	55,200
Households (2005)*	21,600
Household Population (2005)* (excludes group quarters)	43,500
Persons Per Household (2005)*	2.01
Jobs (2005)*	17,880
Density (persons per sq mile) (2005)*	15,400

Year 2000 Census Data Profile			
	Capitol Hill Planning Area**		Citywide
	Total	% of Total	% of Total
Age			
Under 18	7,454	15.7%	20.0%
18-65	35,138	73.8%	67.8%
Over 65	5,013	10.5%	12.2%
Residents Below Poverty Level	7,560	15.9%	20.2%
Racial Composition			
White	17,350	36.4%	30.4%
Black	28,091	59.0%	60.3%
Native American	147	0.3%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	804	1.7%	2.6%
Other	514	1.1%	2.8%
Multi-Racial	699	1.5%	5.2%
Hispanic Origin	1,375	1.9%	7.8%
Foreign-Born Residents	2,528	5.3%	12.8%
Tenure			
Owner Households	10,812	50.3%	40.7%
Renter Households	10,685	49.7%	59.3%
Population 5+ yrs in same house in 2000 as in 1995	21,460	47.2%	46.9%
Housing Occupancy			
Occupied Units	21,497	89.2%	90.4%
Vacant Units	2,591	10.8%	9.6%
Housing by Unit Type			
1-unit detached	1,019	4.2%	13.1%
1-unit attached	12,922	53.6%	26.4%
2-4 units	4,885	20.3%	11.0%
5-9 units	1,347	5.6%	8.0%
10-19 units	1,576	6.5%	10.3%
20-49 units	1,158	4.8%	7.4%
50+ units	1,048	4.4%	23.3%
Mobile/other	133	0.6%	0.2%

**Figures noted with an asterisk are estimates developed by the Office of Planning and the Department of Employment Services based on a variety of data sources.*

***Total population of subcategories may not match 2000 Census totals due to sampling errors.*

Hill's residents are Asian and 1.5 percent are multi-racial. Only 5.3 percent of the area's residents are foreign-born, and only two percent are of Hispanic origin. Both of these figures are less than the citywide averages. 1503.4

Approximately 54 percent of the housing units in the Capitol Hill Planning Area are row houses.

Housing Characteristics 1504

The 2000 Census reported that 54 percent of the homes in the Capitol Hill Planning Area were row houses. This is more than double the citywide average of 26 percent. Only 4.2 percent of the housing units were single family detached homes, compared to 13 percent for the city as a whole. The area also contained fewer units in large apartment buildings than the city as a whole. Only nine percent of Capitol Hill's housing units were in buildings with more than 20 units, compared to 30 percent citywide. Conversely, Capitol Hill has more units in 2-4 unit buildings than the city as a whole—more than 20 percent in 2000 (compared to a citywide average of 11 percent). 1504.1

The 2000 Census reported that 10.8 percent of the housing units in the Planning Area were vacant. This is a reduction from the 1990 rate of 11.9 percent. The 2000 vacancy rate is comparable to the citywide rate of 9.6 percent. 1504.2

About half of all Capitol Hill households are homeowners and half are renters. The percentage of owners rose from 48.2 percent in 1990 to 50.3 percent in 2000, while the percentage of renters fell from 51.8 percent to 49.7 percent. Capitol Hill has a higher home ownership rate than the city as a whole. 1504.3

Income and Employment 1505

Data from the Department of Employment Services and the Office of Planning indicate there were about 17,900 jobs in the Capitol Hill Planning Area in 2005, primarily in local-serving businesses, public schools, and government. This represents just two percent of the city's job base. However, the Planning Area is surrounded on the west and south by large employment centers, including the U.S. Capitol Complex, and the Southeast Federal Center. Data from the 2000 Census indicates that 37 percent of the jobs within the Capitol Hill Planning Area were held by District residents. Some 48 percent of the jobs were held by Maryland commuters, 13 percent by Virginia commuters, and two percent by residents claiming other areas as their home. 1505.1

In 2000, the Census indicated the median income in the Planning Area was $51,698. This is higher than the citywide average. Nonetheless, 15.7 percent of the residents lived below the federal poverty level and the percentage of residents living in poverty actually increased from 13.6 percent in 1990. Most employed residents in the Planning Area worked in the District of Columbia. 2000 Census "journey to work" data indicates that 41 percent of the area's residents commuted to Central Washington, 22 percent commuted

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, the Capitol Hill Planning Area is expected to see a modest increase in its population during the next 20 years. The number of households is projected to increase from 21,600 in 2005 to 25,400 in 2025, with an attendant 16 percent increase in population from 47,600 to about 55,200.

to other locations in the District and nine percent worked within the Capitol Hill Planning Area. Some seven percent of the area's employed residents walked or bicycled to work, while 28 percent used public transit. 1505.2

Projections 1506

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, the Capitol Hill Planning Area is expected to see a modest increase in its population during the next 20 years. The number of households is projected to increase from 21,600 in 2005 to 25,400 in 2025, with an attendant 16 percent increase in population from 47,600 to about 55,200. Much of the growth is expected to consist of medium density mixed use development along H Street NE, consistent with the approved H Street Small Area Plan. Medium density mixed use development is also currently taking place around the Potomac Avenue Metro station. The land use pattern in most of the Planning Area is well established, however, with only limited opportunities for new development. Capitol Hill's population growth represents about seven percent of the total growth expected in the District of Columbia over the next 20 years. 1506.1

The number of jobs is projected to increase from about 17,900 today to about 21,900 in 2025. Most of the increase is expected to take place on Reservation 13 and along H Street, as new retail and cultural uses locate on the revitalized corridor. Additional job growth may also take place on Pennsylvania Avenue; for example, a grocery store is currently under construction as part of the Jenkins Row mixed use project near Potomac Avenue. 1506.2

Planning and Development Priorities 1507

Several Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in the Capitol Hill Planning Area during 2005 and 2006. These meetings provided an opportunity for residents to discuss both citywide and neighborhood planning issues. There were also well-attended briefings to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals, and the local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. In addition, recent Small Area Plans—including the H Street Planning program and the Reservation 13 planning process—involved many Hill residents and addressed long-range planning issues such as land use, traffic, housing needs, and public facilities. 1507.1

The community delivered several key messages during these meetings. These are summarized below. 1507.2

a. Capitol Hill residents are concerned about the effects of growth on quality of life and community character. One resident described the neighborhood as being in the "vice grip" of development, noting that large-scale changes were planned on the northwest flank (in NoMA),

the eastern flank (at Reservation 13), and the southern flank (the Near Southeast and Stadium Areas). Although changes in the heart of Capitol Hill during the next 20 years will be limited, development on the perimeter will generate traffic, increased demand for community services, and the potential for land use conflicts. These issues must be dealt with proactively, recognizing that the Hill is a fine-grained 19th century neighborhood that has evolved over two centuries. In some respects this is a testament to its endurance, but in other respects the neighborhood remains fragile and vulnerable to change. Conflicts between the booming NoMA area and nearby row house neighborhoods are of particular concern.

b. In addition to concerns about development on the perimeter, there is unease about the effects of future infill development within the neighborhood itself. Over the next 20 years, additional measures may be needed to conserve the moderate density row house character that defines most Capitol Hill neighborhoods. This could include the designation of additional areas as historic districts and further limits on alley closures. Future development should be directed to the H Street corridor and to a limited number of Metro-accessible sites along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor. These areas are already zoned for commercial use and their redevelopment could reinforce the fabric of the neighborhood and provide needed housing and retail services. The renewal of H Street, in particular, has been long awaited. Conversely, the "upzoning" of developed residential land should be avoided, recognizing that the Hill is already one of the densest communities in the District of Columbia.

c. Historically, Capitol Hill has had a large number of older schoolhouses and public works buildings. Some of these facilities, like the Bryan School on Independence Avenue and the streetcar barn on East Capitol Street, have been adaptively reused for housing. Such reuse has preserved important architectural landmarks; however, there are concerns that surplus schools and public buildings will be demolished and replaced with much higher-density housing in the future. Residents at Comp Plan meetings were clear that any future development on surplus public property should conform to the prevailing density and architectural fabric of the surrounding community. There is a particular interest in retaining row houses and building new row houses to keep the Hill an attractive place for families. The redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson and Kentucky Courts public housing projects were both cited as positive examples, to be emulated elsewhere.

d. Compared to neighborhoods in Northwest Washington, Capitol Hill is underserved by retail stores and services. Basic neighborhood services, like groceries, hardware stores, clothing stores, drug

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stores, movie theaters, banks, and restaurants, are in short supply in the commercial districts, and many residents travel to Pentagon City or elsewhere to shop. On the other hand, the community has long sought to control the proliferation of drive-through fast food restaurants and mini-marts along thoroughfares like Pennsylvania Avenue. As much-needed retail is finally arriving on Capitol Hill, new issues have emerged. For example, Barracks Row is seeking to balance its role as a local-serving shopping district with its potential to draw from a regional market attracted by its historic ambiance. On H Street, there are tensions as long-time businesses feel the pressure of changing consumer tastes and expectations. At Potomac Avenue, a new upscale grocery store will provide a needed retail anchor but also has raised fears of gentrification. On the other hand, some of the Hill's commercial districts, such as Benning Road, have yet to see significant reinvestment.

e. While the upgrading of retail services in established commercial districts is a positive sign, there continue to be fears about the encroachment of non-residential uses into row house neighborhoods. This has historically been an issue around the U.S. Capitol, where many small row houses have been converted to offices, national associations, and non-profits. More recently, other issues related to the federal presence have emerged—such as street closures and new security measures around government buildings. Commercial encroachment has also become a concern along 2nd and 3rd Streets northeast of Union Station.

f. A different but related issue has emerged along 11th Street and 15th Street. In the early 20th century, these streets were active neighborhood commercial districts, with many small shops and businesses. These districts are now primarily residential in character, with only a few small businesses and corner stores remaining. There is some interest among the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and residents in rezoning these areas from commercial to residential use. This would provide assurance that future development is compatible with surrounding uses, but it could also create non-conforming commercial uses. As the future of these commercial areas is considered, however, attention should also be given to preserving the small businesses and corner stores that now serve the community.

g. Capitol Hill's parks and open spaces contribute to neighborhood stability and are an important amenity. But there are too few parks to meet neighborhood needs. Some of the community's most important open spaces, like Lincoln Park and Stanton Park, were designed to be ornamental squares rather than active recreational areas. Many of the parks are small triangles with no room for recreational facilities. The new Sherwood Recreation Center has been

a much-needed improvement but primarily serves the northwest part of the Hill. Similar improvements are needed elsewhere. The community needs to be better connected to the Anacostia River, with its vast open spaces and waterfront amenities. As Reservation 13 is redeveloped and as the future of the RFK Stadium complex is debated, opportunities for new large parks serving Capitol Hill should be recognized. The community must be provided with a high level of access to the planned network of shoreline parks and trails, and to existing and planned boating facilities.

h. As a historic community, Capitol Hill faces unique urban design issues. These issues relate to the design of new buildings and infill development, the alteration of existing structures, and the treatment of public spaces like Metro plazas and streets. As noted in the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, contemporary architecture can fit within the fabric of an historic community, but issues relating to scale, texture, materials, and context must be reconciled. Historic places like Eastern Market, the Sewell-Belmont House, and Friendship House should be protected from nearby development that would reduce their architectural and design integrity. Elsewhere, greater steps may be needed to avoid "demolition by neglect" and to ensure that historic preservation regulations are enforced to the greatest extent possible. The public realm also needs improvement, particularly along H Street, Benning Road, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Detailed guidelines may be needed to ensure that lighting, building materials, street furniture, signage, sidewalk materials, street trees, landscaping, trash containers, and other aspects of the streetscape are appropriately designed.

i. Issues of housing affordability and displacement are present in Capitol Hill, as they are in many other parts of the District of Columbia. The pressures are particularly significant in the Near Northeast area (between H Street and Florida Avenue), where home prices tripled between 2000 and 2005. In some respects, Capitol Hill may be better equipped to handle rising housing costs than other parts of the city—the prevalence of row houses with rentable basements creates affordable housing options for renters and extra income for owners. Nonetheless, some longtime homeowners have "cashed out" while some renters have moved elsewhere in search of more affordable housing. The 208-unit Potomac Gardens public housing project has been identified as a possible "new community" site, raising further fears of displacement and the loss of one of the few remaining affordable housing developments in the area. If the site is redeveloped, one-for-one replacement of the public housing units will be an important prerequisite.

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Parking remains an issue on Capitol Hill, especially on the western edge of the area near the U.S. Capitol and in the Eastern Market/ Barracks Row area. The reopening of RFK Stadium has created parking problems on nearby residential streets in Hill East, and the prospect of a revitalized H Street and emerging NOMA business district may bring future parking problems to nearby residential side streets.

j. Parking remains an issue on Capitol Hill, especially on the western edge of the area near the U.S. Capitol and in the Eastern Market/ Barracks Row area. The reopening of RFK Stadium has created parking problems on nearby residential streets in Hill East, and the prospect of a revitalized H Street and emerging NOMA business district may bring future parking problems to nearby residential side streets. These problems are complicated by the fact that many of the homes and apartments on Capitol Hill do not have dedicated off-street parking spaces. Curb cuts serving new development have further reduced the supply of on-street spaces. Residential permit parking has achieved some success in the area, but there are issues related to enforcement and abuse of parking privileges.

k. As already noted, Capitol Hill is intersected by major commuter routes serving the Maryland suburbs and areas east of the Anacostia River. Its neighborhoods are also vulnerable to overflow traffic when the freeways are congested. Residential north-south streets are often clogged with "cut-through" traffic as commuters weave between the east-west arterials. This creates noise, air pollution, and safety issues for residents. One-way streets have been established to facilitate traffic flow but the streets are not always paired, leading to circuitous travel and high volumes of fast-moving commuter traffic. Street and lane closures, illegal parking, and poorly timed signals contribute to congestion problems. At one time, a freeway link was proposed between I-295 and I-395 via Barney Circle, but this project was cancelled in the 1990s. A more recent proposal calls for removal of a portion of the Southeast/Southwest Freeway, its replacement with an at-grade roadway between Barney Circle and 8th Street, and a tunnel in lieu of the elevated freeway between 8th Street and South Capitol Street. While this would remove a barrier between Capitol Hill and the waterfront, there are many questions yet to be answered about the effects on traffic and adjacent land uses.

Policies and Actions

CH-1 General Policies

CH-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation 1508

The following general policies and actions should guide growth and neighborhood conservation decisions on Capitol Hill. These policies and actions should be considered in tandem with those in the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Element should be consulted for policies relating to the future of the adjoining Southeast Waterfront Area. 1508.1

Row Houses near Eastern Market

Policy CH-1.1.1: Conserving Residential Uses

Maintain the integrity and quality of Capitol Hill's residential uses, and recognize the importance of its historic architecture and housing stock to the entire District of Columbia. Ensure that Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations for Capitol Hill neighborhoods sustain its moderate density land use pattern. 1508.2

Policy CH-1.1.2: Renovation of Housing Stock

Encourage the rehabilitation and renovation of the building stock throughout the Capitol Hill Planning Area, taking steps to preserve and restore important historic features. Where infill development occurs, its scale and character should be compatible with prevailing neighborhood densities and its design should contribute to neighborhood continuity and quality. 1508.3

Policy CH-1.1.3: Upgrading Commercial Districts

Reinforce and upgrade the major commercial districts of Capitol Hill, including the H Street and Benning Road corridors, the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor, 7th and 8th Streets SE, and Massachusetts Avenue between Union Station and Stanton Park. Support the further development of these areas with local-serving retail services, provided that such uses are compatible with surrounding land uses and the historic architecture and scale of the shopping districts themselves. Support the retention of existing neighborhood-serving businesses in these areas through programs that provide technical and financial assistance to small, locally-owned establishments. 1508.4

Policy CH-1.1.4: Directing Growth

Direct growth in the Capitol Hill Planning Area to commercially zoned land, with a particular emphasis on the H Street/Benning Road corridor. Mixed

H Street NE

use development combining ground floor retail and upper story residential uses should be supported in this area, along with streetscape improvements that improve visual and urban design qualities and enhance pedestrian, bus, and auto circulation. As in all parts of the city, the scale of development must be sensitive to adjacent uses and should reflect the capacity of roads, infrastructure, and services to absorb additional growth. 1508.5

Policy CH-1.1.5: NoMA/Capitol Hill Transition Areas

Improve buffering and urban design transitions between the emerging office and high-density residential corridor north of Union Station ("NoMA") and the adjacent row house neighborhoods of Capitol Hill. Use zoning, design guidelines, historic preservation review, and other measures to avoid sharp contrasts in scale and character where high density and moderate density areas abut one another. 1508.6

See the Urban Design Element for additional policies on scale transitions where high density Downtown uses abut row house neighborhoods. See the Central Washington Element for policies and actions on the NoMA neighborhood.

Policy CH-1.1.6: Inappropriate Commercial Uses

Prevent the proliferation of fast food outlets, self-service gas stations, convenience mini-marts, and other "drive-through" businesses along Capitol Hill's commercial corridors, recognizing that these streets are part of the historic L'Enfant Plan and shape the city's identity and national image. 1508.7

Policy CH-1.1.7: Alleys

Protect Capitol Hill's system of historic alleys and develop plans for the use of large block interior spaces where appropriate. These plans should be developed in coordination with the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, residents, and community groups. 1508.8

Policy CH-1.1.8: Encroachment of Non-Residential Uses

Strictly limit the conversion of housing to non-residential uses and the replacement of housing with non-residential uses in the Capitol Hill Planning Area. This includes the development of private clubs, apartment houses, rooming houses, single room occupancy homes, museums, colleges, universities, and dormitories within the Capitol Hill Historic District. 1508.9

See also Land Use Element Action LU-3.2.B to amend the R-4 Row House Zoning District so that museums, dormitories, colleges, etc. are not permitted as "matter of right" uses.

Policy CH-1.1.9: Conversion of Non-Residential Structures

Allow the conversion of obsolete or vacant non-residential structures (including schools, churches, warehouses, and institutional uses) to housing, provided that important architectural resources are conserved and the resulting development is consistent in density with surrounding uses. 1508.10

Policy CH-1.1.10: Public Housing

Rehabilitate public housing projects on Capitol Hill, ensuring that any units that are removed are replaced in-kind by new public housing units within the community. Where feasible, rehabilitation projects should provide home ownership opportunities for public housing residents. 1508.11

Policy CH-1.1.11: 15th Street Commercial District

Discourage the further expansion of commercial uses along 15th Street SE. This corridor should gradually transition to predominantly residential uses, compatible in density with adjacent row house blocks. As this transition occurs, efforts should be made to retain the existing corner stores and small businesses which serve the community. 1508.12

Policy CH-1.1.12: RFK Stadium Area

Provide improved buffering and landscaping screening along 19th Street and elsewhere in the vicinity of RFK Stadium in order to reduce the effects of noise, dust, vibration, and air pollution on the adjacent Hill East community. Work collaboratively with the National Park Service and National Capital Planning Commission on long-range plans for the stadium and adjacent parkland and parking lots. Waterfront open space in this area should be retained and improved for the benefit of Hill East, Kingman Park, and Rosedale residents. 1508.13

Policy CH-1.1.13: Traffic Management Strategies

Establish traffic management strategies to reduce commuter traffic on East Capitol Street, Independence Avenue, C Street NE, 17th Street SE, and other predominantly residential streets that also function as through-streets. These strategies should include limiting additional one-way streets on Capitol Hill (and possibly restoring existing one-way streets to two-way traffic), improving signal timing on Benning Road and Pennsylvania Avenue, and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. Measures should also be implemented to route through-traffic around residential neighborhoods, and to restrict trucks and heavy vehicles on local streets. 1508.14

Policy CH-1.1.14: Southeast/Southwest Freeway

Mitigate the effects of the Southeast/Southwest Freeway; including noise, emissions, dust, and visual blight on adjacent Capitol Hill neighborhoods. Continue to evaluate the transportation and land use impacts associated with the freeway's proposed replacement with an at-grade boulevard and tunnel. 1508.15

Eastern Market

Barracks Row

Policy CH-1.1.15: Transit Service

Maintain and improve mass transit service in the Near Northeast section of the neighborhood, particularly along the corridor extending from Union Station along H Street to Hechinger Mall and continuing on Benning Road to the Minnesota Avenue Metro station. 1508.16

Action CH-1.1.A: Façade Improvements

Support urban design and façade improvements along H Street, Benning Road, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Barracks Row. Such improvements should preserve and enhance the historic features, scale, and texture of existing structures. 1508.17

Action CH-1.1.B: 15th Street Rezoning

Rezone the 15th Street commercial district for residential uses, consistent with the corridor's designation on the Comprehensive Plan. 1508.18

Action CH-1.1.C: Transportation Studies

Complete DDOT's Capitol Hill Transportation Study and implement its major recommendations. Also, implement the Middle Anacostia and H Street transportation study recommendations, aimed at reducing through-traffic on neighborhood streets within Capitol Hill, limiting truck traffic, and improving conditions for Capitol Hill pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. 1508.19

Action CH-1.1.D: H Street Streetcar

Implement proposed streetscape improvements for the H Street/Benning Road corridor, including the development of a streetcar line between the Minnesota Avenue Metro station and Union Station. 1508.20

Action CH-1.1.E: Eastern Market Shuttle

Provide shuttle bus service from the Eastern Market Metrorail station to the future Washington Nationals ballpark site on South Capitol Street, including stops along 8th Street SE to further promote businesses along Barracks Row. 1508.21

CH-1.2 Conserving and Enhancing Community Resources 1509

Policy CH-1.2.1: Recognition of Historic Resources

Protect and preserve historic structures, places, and landmarks on Capitol Hill, including Congressional Cemetery. Seek greater recognition of the neighborhood's defining physical features—including the L'Enfant street plan—as important and nationally-significant cultural resources. 1509.1

Policy CH-1.2.2: Implementation of Preservation Programs

Solicit additional community input on historic preservation needs and opportunities in the Capitol Hill Planning Area, including the surveying of additional areas, expansion of existing historic districts, and increasing the number of landmarked buildings in the city's current inventory. The HPO should concentrate its efforts in the areas north and east of the Capitol Hill Historic District, and should seek to protect structures along H Street and in other areas that are not currently protected under the District's preservation law. Historic district laws and guidelines should be strictly monitored and enforced for all new construction, alterations, and public space uses. 1509.2

Policy CH-1.2.3: L'Enfant Avenues

Protect and preserve the special character, scale, and historic features of the major L'Enfant Plan avenues that cross Capitol Hill, especially Massachusetts Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, and East Capitol Street. 1509.3

Policy CH-1.2.4: Community Facilities

Promote continued investment, maintenance, and modernization of important community public facilities in the Capitol Hill Planning Area, including schools, libraries, and social service facilities. Particular attention should be given to sustaining Eastern High School as a community anchor, and to maintaining Friendship House and the local Boys and Girls Club as social service organizations. 1509.4

Policy CH-1.2.5: Riverfront Parks

Ensure that the proposed Anacostia waterfront parks are designed and planned to benefit Capitol Hill residents, with efforts taken to create safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to the shoreline and to provide park facilities and services that respond to the needs of Hill East neighborhoods. 1509.5

Policy CH-1.2.6: Improved Park and Recreation Services

Improve parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities throughout Capitol Hill, with a priority on the Near Northeast neighborhood (between H Street and Florida Avenue). The 2006 Parks Master Plan determined that this area was particularly deficient in recreational facilities. Continue efforts to improve safety, security, and maintenance levels at all parks in the Capitol Hill Planning Area. 1509.6

Policy CH-1.2.7: National Park Service Coordination

Recognize that most of the parkland in and around the Capitol Hill Planning Area is owned and operated by the National Park Service (NPS), and consequently that a high level of coordination is required between the District and federal governments to ensure that this land is managed in the best interest of Capitol Hill residents. NPS parks include Lincoln Park, Stanton

Ensure that the proposed Anacostia waterfront parks are designed and planned to benefit Capitol Hill residents, with efforts taken to create safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to the shoreline and to provide park facilities and services that respond to the needs of Hill East neighborhoods.

Sherwood Recreation Center

Park, Folger Park, Garfield Park, Seward Square, Marion Park, and the Virginia Avenue playground, as well as the RFK stadium area. These spaces should be conserved and improved as aesthetic, recreational, and natural resources. 1509.7

Policy CH-1.2.8: Streets as Open Space

Maintain and enhance "functional" open space within Capitol Hill, particularly the landscaped areas contained within street rights-of-way. These areas include the Pennsylvania Avenue esplanade, the numerous triangle parks along diagonal streets, public plazas such as the area around Eastern Market Metrorail, and the front "yards" of most Capitol Hill row houses, portions of which are located within the public right-of-way. 1509.8

Action CH-1.2.A: Historic Surveys

Conduct historic surveys for the portion of Stanton Park not currently in the Capitol Hill Historic District, and for the Near Northeast, Hill East, Rosedale, and Kingman Park neighborhoods. Based on the findings of those surveys and additional community input and recommendations, prepare nominations to the National Register as appropriate. Consideration should be given to extending the Capitol Hill Historic District eastward to the boundary of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan. 1509.9

Action CH-1.2.B: Capitol Hill Design Guidelines

Develop graphic design guidelines for the Capitol Hill Historic District, illustrating appropriate architectural design features for new construction, renovation, and alterations. 1509.10

Action CH-1.2.C: RFK Stadium Area

Actively participate in the current effort by the National Capitol Planning Commission, the National Park Service, the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, local Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, residents, and neighborhood groups to develop a long-range plan for the RFK Stadium complex, extending from the DC Armory north to Benning Road. The plan should include provisions for a substantial amount of waterfront open space, as well as measures to enhance and restore the natural environment in this area. 1509.11

Action CH-1.2.D: Park and Recreation Improvements

Upgrade the Rosedale, Watkins, Hine, and Payne recreation centers and playgrounds, and the William H. Rumsey Aquatic Center. Explore the development of an additional recreation center in the area between H Street and Florida Avenue. 1509.12

Action CH-1.2.E: Senior Center

Explore the feasibility of developing a senior center in the Northeast part of Capitol Hill. 1509.13

Action CH-1.2.F: Old Naval Hospital

Retain and renovate the Historic Naval Hospital on Pennsylvania Avenue as a community facility. 1509.14

CH-2 Policy Focus Areas 1510

The Comprehensive Plan has identified four areas within the Capitol Hill Planning Area as "policy focus areas," indicating that they require a level of direction and guidance above that provided in the prior section of this Area Element and in the citywide elements (see Map 15.1 and Table 15.2). These areas are:

- H Street/Benning Road
- Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor
- U.S. Capitol perimeter
- Reservation 13/RFK Stadium Complex. 1510.1

Each of these areas is addressed below. Other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan may be consulted for additional policies affecting Capitol Hill, including policies for NoMA (Central Washington Element), and the Near Southeast (Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Element). 1510.2

CH-2.1 H Street/Benning Road 1511

At one time, the mile-long stretch of H Street between Union Station and the "starburst" intersection at Bladensburg and Benning Roads was the second busiest commercial area in the District of Columbia. The area declined during the 1950s and 1960s and was heavily damaged by the riots of 1968. An Urban Renewal Plan sparked some reinvestment on the corridor in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Hechinger Mall development on the eastern end, but the strip has yet to fully recover. H Street's retail space has not kept up with the rapidly expanding buying power of the surrounding neighborhoods, or the burgeoning office market north and east of Union Station. 1511.1

In 2003, the Office of Planning completed a Small Area Plan for the H Street corridor, designed to guide community, private sector, and public agency action and investments. The Plan lays out a vision for H Street as a great neighborhood shopping street, serving resident needs, providing connections to the larger city, and improving the livability of the surrounding community. The Plan segmented the corridor into four parts, each with a unique identity and character (see Policy CH-2.1.1 below). The potential for over 750 units of new housing, 200,000 square feet of new office space, and 300,000 square feet of retail space was identified. However, these projections may have been low; just two years after the Plan's completion, there were already 450 units of housing under construction on the 200 block of H Street (the former Children's Museum site), and another 300 units proposed across the street. 1511.2

Table 15.2:
Policy Focus Areas Within and Adjacent to Capitol Hill 1510.3

Within Capitol Hill	
2.1	H Street/Benning Road (see p. 15-19)
2.2	Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor (see p. 15-24)
2.3	U.S. Capitol Perimeter (see p. 15-26)
2.4	Reservation 13/RFK Stadium Area (see p. 15-28)
Adjacent to Capitol Hill	
1	NOMA/Northwest One (see p. 16-41)
2	Northeast Gateway (see p. 23-18)
3	Lower Bladensburg/Hechinger Mall (see p. 23-20)
4	Near Southeast (see p. 19-21)
5	Pennsylvania Av (East of the River) (see p. 17-22)

Land use recommendations in the H Street Plan were accompanied by transportation recommendations, some of which are already being implemented. A transitway will be developed along the corridor, with streetcars sharing the right-of-way with vehicles. The streetcar line will connect Union Station to Minnesota Avenue, providing a "loop" between Metro's Red Line and Orange Line and increasing transit access for Northeast Capitol Hill residents. The 2003 Plan also recommended the retention of on-street parking and development of new off-street parking structures. 1511.3

Extensive streetscape, signage, and façade improvements also are planned, including new pedestrian crossings and a civic plaza at the eastern gateway near Hechinger Mall. The H Street Plan also calls for increased code enforcement, the use of preservation tax credits, new incentive and assistance programs, and the creation of a Business Improvement District (or incorporation of H Street into the Capitol Hill BID). 1511.4

East of H Street, the Benning Road (between 15th Street and Oklahoma Avenue) corridor includes a mix of residential uses and auto-oriented commercial uses. The character of the street changes considerably, with higher traffic volumes, a wider right-of-way, and a much less pedestrian-oriented atmosphere. The proposed construction of the H Street-Benning streetcar, along with accompanying "Great Street" improvements such as new street trees and lighting, will create opportunities for revitalization and new businesses along Benning Road. This will provide a needed amenity for the adjoining Rosedale and Kingman Park neighborhoods, which currently lack convenient retail services. 1511.5

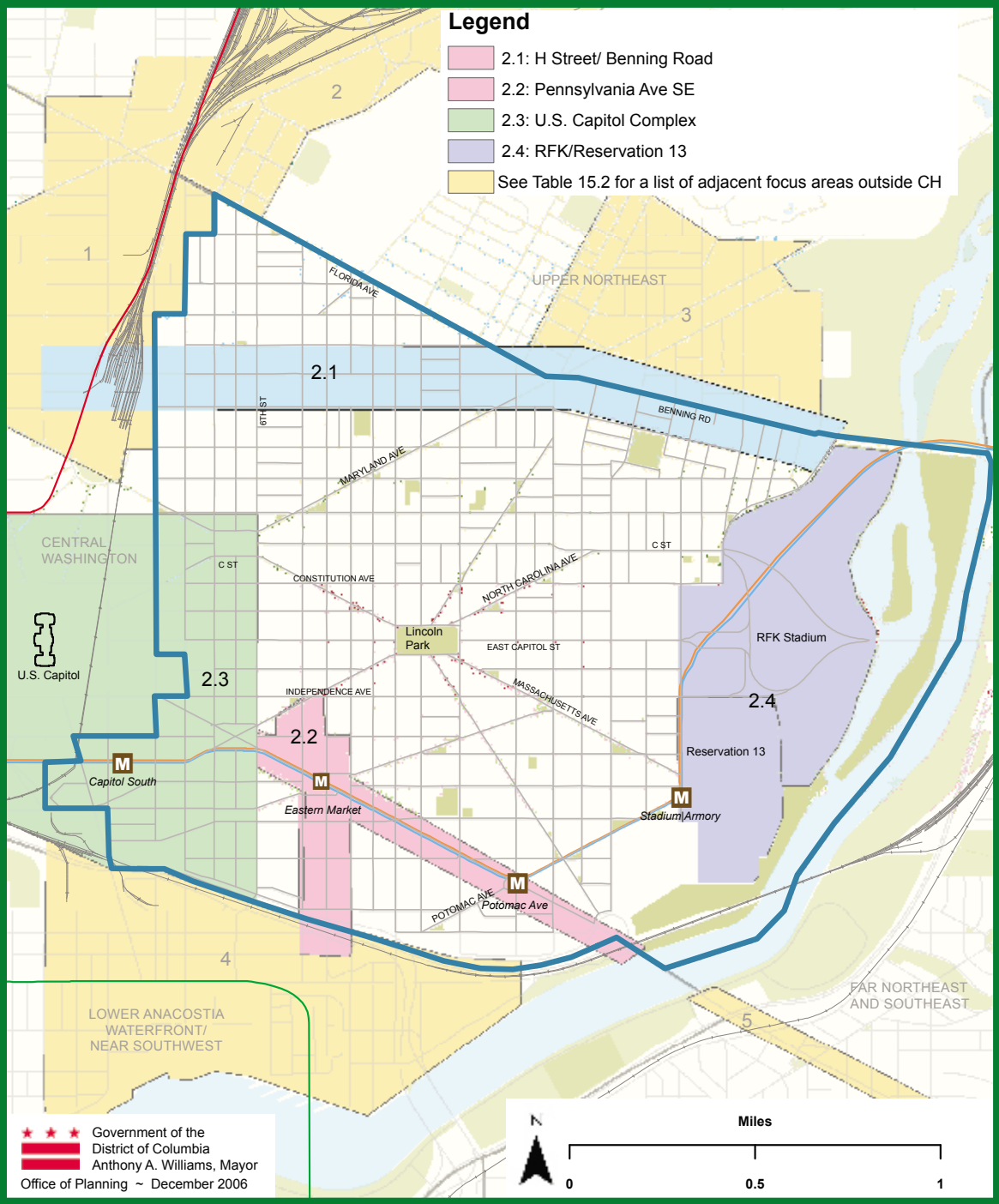
Policy CH-2.1.1: H Street Revitalization

Support the revitalization of the H Street corridor between North Capitol Street and 17th Street NE in a manner that is consistent with the approved 2003 H Street Strategic Development Plan. This Plan recommended the development of four thematic areas along the H Street corridor:

a. **Western Gateway**, between North Capitol Street and 7th Street NE. This area includes air rights development over the CSX railroad (Burnham Place) and an "urban living" district between 2nd Street and 7th Street NE. The Urban living district is intended for medium to high density residential development, with limited ground floor retail uses.

Map 15.1:

Capitol Hill Policy Focus Areas 1510.4



H Street NE

b. **Central Retail,** extending from 7th Street to 12th Street NE. This area is envisioned as the "downtown" of the H Street community. Existing retail space is to be revitalized, and new mixed use projects combining ground floor retail and upper story housing are encouraged. Parking is to be enhanced by removing on-street parking restrictions and identifying opportunities for structured off-street parking.

c. An **Arts and Entertainment District,** extending from 12th Street to 15th Street. This area builds on the established Atlas Theater, H Street Playhouse, and RL Christian Library. New arts and cultural uses are encouraged, as are complementary specialty retail uses, sit-down restaurants, arts-related retail, and other community services. Moderate-density residential and office space, including live-work space, also is encouraged in this area.

d. **Hechinger Mall** (in the adjacent Upper Northeast Planning Area). Continued improvements to the Hechinger Mall are planned to make the area more pedestrian-friendly, construct a civic plaza, and add infill development (including housing) on the mall parking lots. 1511.6

Policy CH-2.1.2: Clustering of Retail

Recognize that the existing supply of retail space on the H Street NE corridor may exceed demand, and that retail development should therefore be clustered on the 700-1100 blocks. 1511.7

Policy CH-2.1.3: Physical Improvements

Improve the infrastructure and physical appearance of the H Street corridor as a way to enhance its market perception, and to attract investors, visitors, shoppers, and residents. 1511.8

Policy CH-2.1.4: H Street Transit and Streetscape Improvements

Undertake transit and streetscape improvements to enhance mobility along H Street, and improve the area's accessibility from the surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of the city. Improvements should upgrade aesthetics and pedestrian safety and make walking along the street more comfortable and enjoyable. 1511.9

Policy CH-2.1.5: Parking

Retain existing on-street parking along H Street. As recommended by the H Street Small Area Plan adopted by Council, encourage the development of structured off-street and shared parking lots serving the retail and theater areas in the central and eastern parts of the commercial district. 1511.10

Policy CH-2.1.6: Historic Preservation

Encourage the preservation of historic buildings along H Street, and promote educational and cultural tourism activities to raise awareness of the corridor's history and unique historic character. Consistent with the H

Street Small Area Plan, this should include expanded surveys, tax credits, and a determination of the H Street corridor's eligibility for designation as a National Historic District. 1511.11

RL Christian Library

Policy CH-2.1.7: H Street Overpass

Ensure that any future development in the air rights adjacent to the H Street overpass recognizes the limitations of the streets beneath the bridge to serve high volume commercial traffic, and includes provisions for parking and delivery ingress and egress from the bridge itself. The allowable height of any building constructed in the air rights should be measured from the existing grade of 1st Street or 2nd Street NE, rather than from the overpass. 1511.12

Action CH-2.1.A: H Street Strategic Development Plan

Implement the recommendations of the 2003 H Street Strategic Development Plan. 1511.13

Action CH-2.1.B: Great Streets Improvements

Implement "Great Streets" streetscape plans for H Street and Benning Road, including landscaping the avenue from Union Station to the Anacostia River, maintaining the width of the street, planting trees, upgrading signage and street furniture, and taking other steps to manage traffic flow and reduce cut-through traffic in adjacent neighborhoods. Many of these recommendations may be found in the 2004 DDOT H Street NE Corridor Transportation Study. Additional improvements should include provisions for a mid-block traffic signal and crosswalk on the 600 block of H Street NE to ensure pedestrian safety and to allow safe ingress and egress to development planned in this area. 1511.14

Action CH-2.1.C: Library Replacement

Pursue replacement of the RL Christian Library with a modern state-of-the-art library facility at 13th and H Streets. 1511.15

Action CH-2.1.D: Business Assistance

Implement programs to improve retail success along H Street, including financial assistance to small businesses, grant and loan programs, façade improvement programs, Small Business Administration loans, and the creation of a Business Improvement District. 1511.16

Action CH-2.1.E: Marketing and Branding

Continue collaborative efforts with merchants, property owners, and residents to improve "branding" and marketing of the H Street corridor and highlight the street's direction as a center of neighborhood life in Northeast Capitol Hill. 1511.17

See also Action CH-1.1-D on the H Street-Benning Road streetcar.

The Potomac Avenue Metro station area suffers from a lack of identity, poor visibility, and conditions that are dangerous for pedestrians. The area could become a much more dynamic neighborhood center in the future, with new shops, housing, and public spaces.

CH-2.2: Pennsylvania Avenue SE Corridor 1512

Pennsylvania Avenue is sometimes referred to as "America's Main Street" and has ceremonial, historic, and symbolic importance. In many respects, the avenue is also Capitol Hill's Main Street, with walkable shopping areas extending up 7th Street to Eastern Market, and down 7th and 8th Streets through the Barracks Row historic area. This concentration of commercial uses is known as Capitol Hill's "Central Business District." 1512.1

East of 9th Street SE, Pennsylvania Avenue becomes more residential in character, although there are commercial uses at many of the intersections. Some of these commercial uses are auto-oriented (gas stations and fast food outlets), and serve the heavy volume of commuter traffic headed to or from the Sousa Bridge. The juxtaposition of older residential row homes and drive-through commercial uses creates land use conflicts on the corridor, and compromises the image of Pennsylvania Avenue as a gateway to the nation's capital. Consequently, the entire corridor from the U.S. Capitol east to the Maryland line was designated by the city as a "Great Street" in 2005. Efforts are underway to improve the streetscape, and address a variety of land use, transportation, and design issues. 1512.2

Two metrorail subway stations along the corridor present both challenges and opportunities. The Eastern Market station entrance is an unwelcoming public space located in an otherwise attractive pedestrian-friendly area. The possibility of developing the plaza as a "town square" has been explored in the past and should continue to be pursued. Historic Eastern Market itself is in need of structural improvements, and there continue to be issues related to the lack of parking in the vicinity. 1512.3

The Potomac Avenue Metro station area suffers from a lack of identity, poor visibility, and conditions that are dangerous for pedestrians. The area could become a much more dynamic neighborhood center in the future, with new shops, housing, and public spaces. The community remains concerned about the scale of proposed development around the station, given that the area is currently characterized by two and three story row houses. Opportunities for new multi-family development should be concentrated on vacant lots and on the "drive-through" commercial properties along the avenue, and should emphasize moderate densities rather than medium or high densities. Refurbishing and renovation of older commercial buildings, particularly those with pedestrian-oriented retail storefronts, should also be strongly encouraged. Efforts to create a "Main Street" program in this area were initiated several years ago and should be supported in the future. 1512.4

Policy CH-2.2.1: Pennsylvania Avenue "Great Street"

Improve Pennsylvania Avenue SE as the ceremonial gateway to the U.S. Capitol. The design of the avenue, including adjacent buildings, land uses,

and public spaces should adhere to high aesthetic standards and should enhance the avenue's role as a neighborhood commercial center and walkable street. 1512.5

Old Naval Hospital, Pennsylvania Avenue SE

Policy CH-2.2.2: Neighborhood Shopping Improvements

Sustain existing businesses and encourage additional neighborhood serving retail uses along Barracks Row, on 7th Street SE between Pennsylvania Avenue and North Carolina Avenue, and along Pennsylvania Avenue between 2nd Street and 4th Street SE, 6th and 9th Streets SE, and 12th and 16th Streets SE. Any improvements or alterations in these areas should protect and preserve the historic texture, scale, and features of the existing buildings and adjoining neighborhoods. 1512.6

Policy CH-2.2.3: Eastern Market Metrorail Station

Improve the urban design quality of the Eastern Market Metrorail station area. Consider development of moderate density housing with ground floor retail on underused commercial sites in the station vicinity. Provide appropriate transitions between such development and adjacent residential areas, and take steps to manage additional traffic and parking demand and improve Metro access. 1512.7

Policy CH-2.2.4: Eastern Market

Continue to promote Eastern Market's intended function as a produce, meat, farmers, and retail market as well as a community meeting place and visual arts center. Preserve the historic character of the Market and surrounding area. 1512.8

Policy CH-2.2.5: Barracks Row

Continue to promote Barracks Row as a neighborhood-serving retail center. Emphasize local-serving rather than regional or large-format retail uses, and retain the area's historic scale and character. Particularly encourage additional retail to locate along the portion of Barracks Row south of the freeway, thus enhancing the connection between Capitol Hill and the emerging waterfront neighborhoods. 1512.9

Policy CH-2.2.6: Potomac Avenue Metrorail Station

Support the revitalization of vacant commercial space and additional moderate density mixed use development around the Potomac Avenue Metro station. Such development should be located on existing commercially zoned property and developed in a manner that is consistent with existing zoning (including established provisions for planned unit developments and pending programs for inclusionary housing). Any infill development should be relatively low-scale, respecting the character of the adjacent row house community. 1512.10

Action CH-2.2.A: Streetscape Improvements

Implement "Great Streets" plans to beautify Pennsylvania Avenue, including landscaping, street furniture and street lighting improvements, maintenance of the esplanade and small parks along the avenue, pedestrian improvements, and traffic management measures. These improvements should reinforce the avenue's role as a historic street and ceremonial gateway and should complement the efforts that have already been made to improve the streetscape in the 600 block and near Eastern Market. 1512.11

Action CH-2.2.B: Eastern Market Plaza

Prepare and implement an urban design and transit improvement plan for the Eastern Market Metro station entrance, making it a more attractive "town square" and improving the plaza's ability to function as a major transfer point between Metrorail's Blue Line and connecting buses serving Southeast Washington. 1512.12

Action CH-2.2.C: Eastern Market Renovation

Implement plans to improve Eastern Market, addressing structural deficiencies and renovation needs, as well as related issues such as parking, access, and deliveries. 1512.13

Action CH-2.2.D: Potomac Gardens New Community

Pursue redevelopment of Potomac Gardens as a new community, replacing the existing public housing development with new mixed income housing, including an equivalent number of affordable units and additional market rate units. Overall densities on the site should be compatible with adjacent uses. Every effort should be made to avoid the long-term displacement of existing residents if the project is reconstructed. 1512.14

See the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan for specific actions relating to the improvement of the city's "Main Street" retail areas such as Barracks Row.

CH-2.3 U.S. Capitol Perimeter 1513

The proximity of Capitol Hill's residential areas to the U.S. Capitol Complex creates a variety of land use, transportation, and urban design issues. Expansion of the Capitol Complex during the 1900s resulted in the development of large office buildings and expanded federal facilities on former row house blocks. This prompted some of the Hill's earliest historic preservation initiatives, along with the adoption of a Capitol Interest Overlay Zone that established maximum height and floor area ratio limits in an area extending from the edge of the Capitol Complex east to 6th Street. Currently, the Capitol Interest Overlay zone encompasses a variety of existing land uses, including homes and apartments, hotels, non-profits, offices, restaurants, retail stores, and parks. Long-range plans for the Capitol

Complex are articulated in a Master Plan that is prepared and periodically updated by the Architect of the Capitol. 1513.1

The following policies define the District's position on land use activities in and around the U.S. Capitol area. These policies seek to mitigate the effects of increased security requirements on neighborhood character, limit adverse impacts associated with the Capitol Power Plant, address parking and traffic impacts related to the Capitol complex, improve urban design conditions, and ensure that future land use decisions are consistent with the Architect of the Capitol's Master Plan. 1513.2

Policy CH-2.3.1: Capitol Master Plan Conformity

Ensure that the future development and/or expansion of the United States Capitol grounds conforms with the guidelines set out in the Master Plan of the U.S. Capitol. Any land transferred from the Architect of the Capitol to the District or a private party should likewise be used in a manner that is consistent with the Capitol Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. 1513.3

Policy CH-2.3.2: Capitol Area Traffic and Parking

Work with the Architect of the Capitol to reduce parking and traffic impacts in areas adjacent to the U.S. Capitol and to address related problems such as tour bus parking and the enforcement of residential permit parking restrictions. 1513.4

Policy CH-2.3.3: Surface Transportation Improvements

Improve surface transportation in and around the Capitol Complex in a manner that reduces impacts on Capitol Hill neighborhoods and facilitates access within the area. This could include the use of shuttles between key destinations such as Union Station, the new Capitol Visitors Center, and the Capitol South Metro station. 1513.5

Policy CH-2.3.4: Impacts of Security Measures

Encourage the Architect of the Capitol to coordinate all proposed street closings, re-routings, and security measures with District government. 1513.6

See the Urban Design Element for additional policies on security and urban design. Please consult the Transportation Element for policies on street closures.

Policy CH-2.3.5: Compatibility of Federal Facilities

Work with the Architect of the Capitol to ensure that the development of future federal buildings is compatible with and protects the moderate density residential character of adjacent residential areas. This includes the development of ancillary federal facilities such as child care centers,

Expansion of the Capitol Complex during the 1900s resulted in the development of large office buildings and expanded federal facilities on former row house blocks. This prompted some of the Hill's earliest historic preservation initiatives, along with the adoption of a Capitol Interest Overlay Zone that established maximum height and floor area ratio limits in an area extending from the edge of the Capitol Complex east to 6th Street.

Reservation 13

housing and classroom space for Congressional interns, police facilities, Congressionally-sponsored service institutions, and public works maintenance and storage areas used by the Architect of the Capitol. 1513.7

Policy CH-2.3.6: Capitol Power Plant

Ensure that the Capitol Power Plant and Refrigeration Plant are operated in ways that reduce air pollution, noise, and other impacts. Update plans for the power plant as needed to reflect revised Capitol needs and community concerns. 1513.8

Action CH-2.3.A: Streetscape and Signage Improvements

Implement streetscape and signage improvements that more clearly define the boundary of the U.S. Capitol Grounds, and distinguish it from adjacent residential and commercial areas. 1513.9

CH-2.4 Reservation 13/RFK Stadium (Hill East Waterfront) 1514

Public Reservation 13 lies on the eastern edge of the Hill East neighborhood on the west bank of the Anacostia River. For more than 150 years, the 67-acre site has been an isolated campus, separated from the neighborhood it adjoins and an obstacle between residents and the waterfront. Reservation 13 has contained public health facilities since 1846, when it became the location of the Washington Asylum—the city's hospital for indigent patients. In later years, it housed a smallpox hospital, quarantine station, and crematory. Some of the site's early buildings, such as Anne Archbold Hall, remain today. However, most of the buildings on the site were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. The site became DC General Hospital in 1953. The DC Jail was built in 1976, replacing the old jail on the site that dated back to the 1870s. 1514.1

Reservation 13 presents itself today as a vast area of large, seemingly unrelated buildings associated only by their proximity and former use. Vast areas of the site are used for parking, and there are few areas where the natural beauty of the waterside setting can be appreciated. The site is not at all related to the low-scale row house neighborhood west of 19th Street, nor is it related to the nearby Metrorail station at Stadium-Armory. While the Departments of Health and Mental Health, the Medical Examiner, and the Court Supervisor and Offender Supervision Agency all utilize space on the site, many of the buildings are underutilized. DC General Hospital itself was closed in 2001. 1514.2

A Master Plan for Reservation 13 was completed in 2002 and later adopted by the City Council. It seeks to retain important civic uses, connect residential areas to the shoreline, and redevelop the site as an extension of the adjacent Hill East neighborhood. Since completion of the Plan, transfer of the site from federal to local ownership along with "pre-zoning" to reflect the uses envisioned by the Master Plan have both been initiated. As of early 2006, neither of these actions has been completed. 1514.3

The adopted Reservation 13 Master Plan retains the DC Jail and other institutional uses and identifies approximately 40 acres for redevelopment. New facilities for health care and recreation are envisioned, along with new housing, offices, retail, and institutional uses. Key urban design features include extension of the Capitol Hill street grid into the site, new parks, and new access to the waterfront, including a great meadow overlooking the shoreline. Other notable elements of the plan include the extension of Massachusetts Avenue to the Anacostia River and a village square at the Stadium-Armory Metrorail station. The preliminary development program identifies the potential for 800 new housing units and over 3 million square feet of non-residential space, roughly doubling the total square footage of buildings on the site. 1514.4

Immediately north of Reservation 13 lies the RFK Stadium complex. RFK Stadium was built in 1961 at a particularly prominent location along the east-west axis that includes the U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial. More than 100 acres of land around the stadium is used for surface parking and unimproved open space. The area is owned by the federal government and is currently under study by the National Capital Planning Commission. It was identified in the 1997 NCPC Legacy Plan as a possible location for major new memorials, recreation, and open space as well as possible private development. 1514.5

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Policy CH-2.4.1: Redevelopment of Public Reservation 13

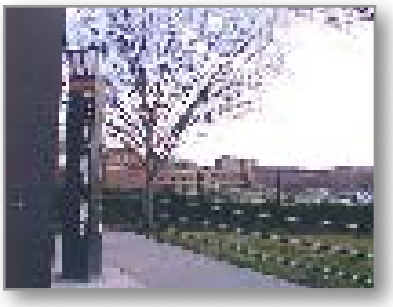
Redevelop Reservation 13 as a mixed use neighborhood that combines housing, office space, health care, civic, education, and recreational uses. Established uses such as the DC Correctional Facility should be retained. Health care and institutional uses on the site should be reorganized to accommodate infill uses, improve the site's vitality and efficiency, and create an environment more conducive to pedestrian travel. 1514.6

Policy CH-2.4.2: Reservation 13 as an Extension of Hill East

Connect the established Hill East neighborhood to the Anacostia waterfront by extending Massachusetts Avenue and the Capitol Hill street grid through Reservation 13 to new shoreline parks and open spaces. Massachusetts Avenue should be designed as a grand boulevard in the tradition of the L'Enfant Plan, and should terminate in a dramatic overlook above the Anacostia River. 1514.7

Policy CH-2.4.3: Reservation 13 Parkland

Create new waterfront parklands and green spaces at Reservation 13, including a grand waterfront park, recreational trails along the waterfront, smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces within the site, and tree-lined pedestrian streets. 1514.8



Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station

Policy CH-2.4.4: Stadium-Armory Station

Capitalize on the Stadium-Armory Metrorail station in the design and development of Reservation 13. This should include development of a new neighborhood center near 19th and C Streets SE that serves the unmet needs of the nearby community, as well as the development of moderate to high density housing on the Reservation 13 site. 1514.9

Policy CH-2.4.5: Reservation 13 Building Heights

Achieve a gradual progression in building heights on Reservation 13, with the lowest heights along 19th Street SE to buffer the adjacent low-scale row house neighborhoods. Taller buildings should be located along the Massachusetts Avenue extension and on the portions of the site where visual impacts can be minimized by slope and topography. Buildings should be designed to maximize waterfront views and vistas, and minimize impacts on nearby residences. 1514.10

Policy CH-2.4.6: RFK Stadium Area

Encourage better use of the National Park Service lands around RFK Stadium, including park and trail improvements that connect Hill East to the Langston Golf Course and National Arboretum areas to the north. 1514.11

Action CH-2.4.A: Hill East/Reservation 13 Master Plan

Implement the Hill East/Reservation 13 Master Plan, including the Massachusetts Avenue extension and the creation of new waterfront parks. Upon transfer of the land from federal to District control, the site should be rezoned to achieve the Master Plan's objectives. 1514.12

Action CH-2.4.B: RFK Stadium Planning

Work collaboratively with the National Capital Planning Commission and adjacent Hill East and Kingman Park communities in planning the area between Benning Road and Reservation 13, including RFK Stadium, and in implementing these plans after they are completed. 1514.13