Chapter 23
Rock Creek West Area Element

Hawthorne
Barnaby Woods
Rock Creek Park
ROCK CR EAST
Chevy Chase
MILITARY RD
Friendship Heights
Friendship Heights
American University Park
Tenleytown
Tenleytown-AU
Van Ness
Forest Hills
Crestwo North
MASSACHUSETTS AVE
NEBRASKA AVE
Van Ness-UDC
Crestwoo
Spring Valley
McLean Gardens
PORTER ST
Cleveland Park
Cleveland Park
Cathedral Heights
CLARA BARTON PKY
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
Palisades
Battery Kemble Park
Wesley Heights
Woodley Park
Lanier Heights
Mass. Ave. Heights
Woodley Park-Zoo/ Adams Morgan
Adams Morga
Foxhall Crescents
Glover Park
Woodland-Normanstone Terr
Kalorama Heights
CANAL RD
Burleith/ Hillandale
NEAR NORTHWEST
Dupont
Foxhall Village
Georgetown
N
Miles
0
0.5
1
1.5

Rock Creek West Area Element

Overview 2300

The Rock Creek West Planning Area encompasses 13 square miles in the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia. The Planning Area is bounded by Rock Creek on the east, Maryland on the north/west, and the Potomac River and Whitehaven Parkway on the south. Its boundaries are shown in the Map at left. Most of this area has historically been Ward 3 although in past and present times, parts have been included in Wards 1, 2, and 4. 2300.1

Rock Creek West's most outstanding characteristic is its stable, attractive neighborhoods. These include predominantly single family neighborhoods like Spring Valley, Forest Hills, American University Park, and Palisades; row house and garden apartment neighborhoods like Glover Park and McLean Gardens; and mixed density neighborhoods such as Woodley Park, Chevy Chase, and Cleveland Park. Although these communities retain individual and distinctive identities, they share a commitment to proactively addressing land use and development issues and conserving neighborhood quality. 2300.2

Some of the District's most important natural and cultural resources are located in Rock Creek West. These resources include Rock Creek Park, the National Zoo, Glover Archbold Park, Battery Kemble Park, and Fort Reno Park as well as numerous smaller parks and playgrounds. Many of these areas serve as resources for the entire city. Cultural resources include the Washington National Cathedral, American University, the University of the District of Columbia, Howard Law School and George Washington University's Mt. Vernon Campus; numerous churches; and several museums, including the Kreeger and Hillwood. The neighborhoods themselves are an important cultural resource, with several historic districts and many historic landmarks. Rock Creek West is also the location of the Naval Observatory and the home of the U.S. Vice President. 2300.3

Despite its residential character, Rock Creek West actually has more jobs than households. The community is host to major corporations such as Fannie Mae and Intelsat, and three of the region's commercial television stations. It includes a large number of foreign missions, including the International Chancery Complex at Van Ness Street. Several large hotels are located in the community, including the Omni-Shoreham and Marriott Wardman Park near the Woodley Park Metro station. 2300.4

Some of the District's most vibrant retail districts are located around the area's Metro stations and along its major corridors. Commercial overlay zones have been created in three of these areas, allowing a mix of retail uses and retaining a human scale and pedestrian character along

Single family homes in North Cleveland Park

neighborhood shopping streets. Much of the commercial land use in the area is located along the Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenue corridors in shopping districts like Friendship Heights and Cleveland Park. While the presence of these uses is generally positive and creates some of the most livable neighborhoods in the city, the downside is that major thoroughfares are often congested and residential side streets are burdened with parking problems. 2300.5

The Rock Creek West area has strong economic momentum, leading to past and present concerns about the effects of unrestrained development on traffic, public services, and quality of life. This creates a different dynamic than is present in many District neighborhoods, and reduces the need for government programs to stimulate private investment. The combination of a relatively affluent population, excellent transportation (including five Metro stations with some of the system's highest non-CBD ridership levels), stable and attractive neighborhoods, high-quality retail, and a limited supply of vacant land, has led to very strong market demand. This in turn has led to an emphasis on growth control rather than growth incentives. The need to appropriately control and guide growth, and to protect neighborhoods, remains a top priority throughout the community and is a major theme of this Element. 2300.6

The demand for housing also has been consistently strong in Rock Creek West. During the 1980s and 1990s, when the District was losing residents, neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park continued to add households. Growth has resulted from a combination of factors, including relatively low crime rates, numerous neighborhood amenities, accessible neighborhood retail, convenient Metrorail access, active community organizations, and relatively high-performing public schools with strong parental support. 2300.7

These same factors have created a continuing affordable housing dilemma in the community. In 2005, the median purchase price of a home exceeded $800,000 in every zip code west of the Park. Tax assessments have escalated as home prices have increased, placing a burden on many residents—especially seniors and those with low and moderate incomes. Rents have also escalated, and the overall supply of rental units has decreased as apartments have converted to condominiums. Although there are limited opportunities for new housing development in the area, there continues to be a substantial unmet need for new affordable units and a need to protect the remaining affordable units in an environment where affordable units are being eliminated. 2300.8

The preservation and improvement of the natural environment is also a high priority in Rock Creek West. The community is fortunate to have one of the densest tree canopies in the city, several community gardens, the Capital Crescent Trail, and more park and open space acreage than any other Planning Area in the city. However, development on the fringes of the

parks has caused erosion and diminished water quality and views in some places. Tree and slope overlay zones have been created in several locations to address this issue. 2300.9

The sense of community in Rock Creek West is reinforced by a particularly active network of neighborhood associations, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and involved residents. Well-organized Citizens Associations serve many of the area's neighborhoods, including AU Park, Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park, Forest Hills, Foxhall, Glover Park, Palisades, Spring Valley, Wesley Heights, Tenleytown, and Woodley Park. A number of Historical Societies and interest groups are also actively involved in community affairs. These groups shape local land use and development decisions, and provide guidance on a wide range of issues relating to transportation, community services, public safety, and other long-range planning concerns. 2300.10

Context

History 2301

The first settlements in Rock Creek West developed along roads connecting the port of Georgetown to the countryside north and west of the city. One of the first settlements was at the juncture of Georgetown Pike (now Wisconsin Avenue) and River Road, where there was a toll station. John Tennally opened a tavern at the intersection around 1790, giving his name to the area now called Tenleytown. Several large estates were developed in the area during the 1800s, including the estate of Colonel Joseph Belt (named Chevy Chase), Major John Adlum's 200-acre "vineyard" in what is now North Cleveland Park, and the Henry Foxhall estate in modern-day Foxhall. 2301.1

The C&O Canal was completed in 1843, and a parallel road (now MacArthur Boulevard) was constructed to the city's water intake facilities at Great Falls. The canal prompted industrial development along the Potomac River and in the Palisades, including a foundry and several slaughterhouses along Canal and Foxhall Roads. The Rock Creek West area developed strategic military importance during the Civil War, when Fort Reno, Fort DeRussy, Fort Bayard, Battery Kemble, and other fortifications were developed. 2301.2

The area remained rural after the Civil War. The Potomac Palisades became popular as a summer retreat for wealthy Washingtonians. Land adjacent to Fort Reno, meanwhile, was occupied by former slaves who came north in search of homes and land. Their community, dubbed "Reno City," remained until the 1930s when the District developed Deal and Wilson Schools, and the National Park Service developed Fort Reno Reservoir. Another community of freed slaves developed along Chain Bridge Road in the Palisades. 2301.3

Development in the Rock Creek West area began in earnest around 1890. In that year, Senators William Steward and Francis Newlands founded the Chevy Chase Land Company. The company was responsible for the extension of Connecticut Avenue into Maryland, construction of a trolley line, and the development of the residential community of Chevy Chase.

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Rapid residential development took place during the early 20th century as the Rock Creek rail line began operating on Connecticut Avenue and electric streetcar lines were extended up Wisconsin Avenue and through the Palisades to Glen Echo. Many of the large estates were subdivided during the 1890s and early 1900s. The country estate of President Grover Cleveland for example, was developed as the Cleveland Park neighborhood. Much of the land owned by the Methodist church was developed as American University Park. Row house neighborhoods like Woodley Park, Glover Park, and Foxhall Village were also developed during this period. By the 1920s and 1930s, apartment construction was occurring up and down Connecticut Avenue, with structures like Cathedral Mansions (built in 1924) and the Kennedy-Warren (built in 1931) defining the avenue's image as a desirable residential address. 2301.5

During World War II, the federal government razed the country estate of John R. McLean to build wartime housing in what would become McLean Gardens. The Defense Home Corporation built a mix of apartment buildings and dormitories for military personnel. After the war, the units were converted to private apartments and the dormitories were later torn down. The 30-building complex was converted to condominiums in 1980 and houses over 1,000 residents today. 2301.6

By the 1960s, the land use pattern was well established. Connecticut Avenue had apartment buildings interspersed with retail shopping areas. Wisconsin Avenue still had expanses of single family residences, but mid-rise apartment and office buildings were being constructed on some blocks. The development of Metro led to additional development in the 1970s, including the University of the District of Columbia and Mazza Gallerie in Friendship Heights. By the late 1990s, almost all privately-owned land in the community had been developed. In spite of this fact, much of Rock Creek West retains a small town character today. The area's attractive and well kept housing stock, tree-lined streets, neighborhood-oriented shopping districts, and well-used parks and public facilities make this one of the most desirable parts of the city. 2301.7

Land Use 2302

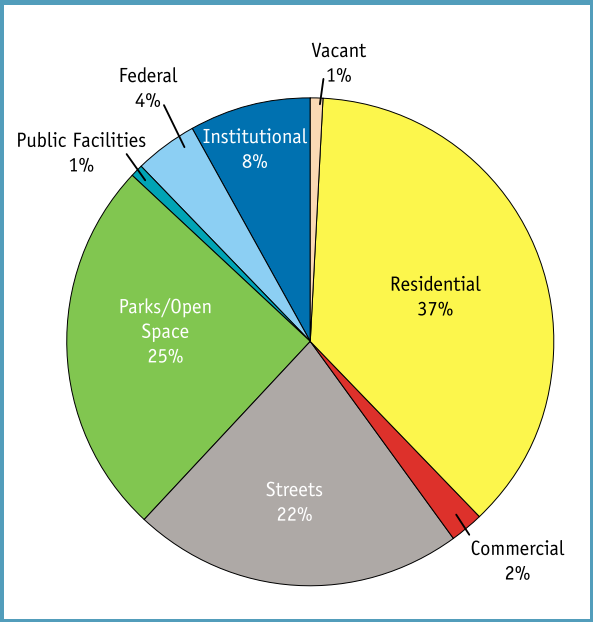
Land use statistics for the Rock Creek West Planning Area appear in Figure 23.1. The Planning Area comprises about 8,300 acres, or about 19 percent of the District. This total includes 7,980 acres of land and 315 acres of water. 2302.1

Residential uses represent the largest single land use in the Planning Area, accounting for about 37 percent of the total. Of the residential acreage, 80 percent is developed with single family detached homes. About 10 percent is developed with semi-detached homes, row houses, and other attached single family housing. The remaining 10 percent is developed with apartments. Higher density housing is concentrated along the Connecticut Avenue corridor, along Massachusetts Avenue between Ward Circle and Idaho Avenue, and along Lower Wisconsin Avenue. Densities in most of the area are well below the citywide average, although individual blocks along the avenues contain some of the densest housing in the city. 2302.2

Commercial land uses occupy just two percent of the area. Major commercial centers are located around the five Metro Stations, in walkable shopping districts along the avenues, and in neighborhood shopping centers like Spring Valley. Institutional uses make up about eight percent of the land area. These uses include American University, Sibley Hospital, and the campuses of numerous private schools and religious institutions. There are no industrial uses in Rock Creek West. 2302.3

Parks and open space comprise 25 percent of the Planning Area. The majority of this acreage is owned by the National Park Service, including Rock Creek Park, the national parklands along the Potomac River, and Glover Archbold Park. Street rights-of-way represent about 22 percent of the Planning Area, which is somewhat lower than the citywide average. Local public and federal government facilities comprise about five percent of the land area. A majority of this acreage is contained within federal complexes such as the Naval Security Center and the Naval Observatory. Only about one percent of the Planning Area consists of private, undeveloped (vacant) land. 2302.4

Figure 23.1:
Land Use Composition in Rock Creek West 2302.5



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2006

The area was one of the only parts of the city to experience an increase in population during the 1990s.

Demographics 2303

Basic demographic data for the Rock Creek West Planning Area is shown in Table 23.1. The area was one of the only parts of the city to experience an increase in population during the 1990s, adding about 2,000 residents while the city as a whole lost over 30,000 people. Population has continued to increase since 2000. The 2005 population is estimated at 85,800, or about 15 percent of the city's total. 2303.1

In 2005, the average household size is estimated to be 1.86. This is well below the citywide median of 2.12, although household size has not fallen as fast in this Planning Area as it has in other parts of the city. Whereas household size in the District as a whole dropped from 2.42 in 1990 to 2.12 in 2005, it only dropped from 1.91 to 1.86 in Rock Creek West. The area continues to sustain a large population of one-person households in apartment buildings, and a large number of families in single family homes. 2303.2

Approximately 83 percent of the area's residents are white, which is significantly higher than the citywide average of 30 percent. Only about six percent of the area's residents are black, and only about six percent are of Hispanic origin. Nearly 20 percent of the residents are foreign born, which is substantially higher than the citywide average. The area has a lower percentage of children and a higher percentage of seniors relative to the city as a whole. About 12 percent of the residents are under 18, compared to a citywide average of 20 percent. About 15 percent are over 65, compared to the citywide average of 12 percent. The percentage of seniors has declined since 1990, when it was 17 percent. 2303.3

More than 30 percent of the housing units in Rock Creek West are single family detached homes—more than twice the citywide percentage.

Housing Characteristics 2304

The 2000 Census reported that 30 percent of the housing units in Rock Creek West were single family detached homes, and 10 percent were single family attached homes (row houses, semi-detached homes, and townhouses). The percent of single family detached housing is more than twice the citywide percentage. At the same time, the Planning Area also contains almost twice the percentage of units in large multi-family buildings compared to the city as a whole. More than 42 percent of the housing units in Rock Creek West are contained in multi-family buildings of 50 units of more, compared to 23 percent citywide. 2304.1

The 2000 Census reported that 52 percent of the households in the Planning Area were homeowners and 47 percent were renters. This compares to citywide figures of 41 percent and 59 percent respectively. The percentage of homeowners in the Planning Area has been increasing; whereas renters outnumbered homeowners in 1990, the reverse was true by 2000. The percentage of vacant housing units in the Planning Area is low—standing at less than four percent in 2000 compared to a citywide average of almost 10 percent. 2304.2

Table 23.1:

Rock Creek West at a Glance 2303.4

Basic Statistics	
Land Area (square miles—excl. water)	12.5
Population	
1990	82,428
2000	84,119
2005 (estimated)*	85,800
2025 (projected)*	91,200
Households (2005)*	42,400
Household Population (2005)* (excludes group quarters)	78,900
Persons Per Household (2005)*	1.86
Jobs (2005)*	48,500
Density (persons per sq mile) (2005)*	6,900

Year 2000 Census Data Profile	Rock Creek West Planning Area**		Citywide
	Total	% of Total	% of Total
Age			
Under 18	10,448	12.4%	20.0%
18-65	60,966	72.4%	67.8%
Over 65	12,705	15.2%	12.2%
Residents Below Poverty Level	5,829	6.9%	20.2%
Racial Composition			
White	70,132	83.4%	30.4%
Black	5,401	6.4%	60.3%
Native American	197	0.2%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4,398	5.2%	2.6%
Other	1,746	2.1%	2.8%
Multi-Racial	2,246	2.7%	5.2%
Hispanic Origin	5,397	6.4%	7.8%
Foreign-Born Residents	15,804	18.8%	12.8%
Tenure			
Owner Households	21,488	52.1%	40.7%
Renter Households	19,784	47.9%	59.3%
Population 5+ yrs in same house in 2000 as in 1995	37,112	46.0%	46.9%
Housing Occupancy			
Occupied Units	41,272	96.2%	90.4%
Vacant Units	1,646	3.8%	9.6%
Housing by Unit Type			
1-unit detached	12,866	30.3%	13.1%
1-unit attached	4,511	10.5%	26.4%
2-4 units	1,238	2.9%	11.0%
5-9 units	1,631	3.8%	8.0%
10-19 units	1,346	3.1%	10.3%
20-49 units	3,149	7.3%	7.4%
50+ units	18,157	42.3%	23.3%
Mobile/other	20	0.1%	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.*

Income and Employment 2305

Data from the Department of Employment Services and the Office of Planning indicates there were 48,500 jobs in Rock Creek West in 2005, primarily in professional offices, international organizations, local-serving businesses, public schools, universities, and government. This represents approximately 6.5 percent of the city's job base. According to Census "journey to work" data, about 34 percent of the jobs in the Planning Area are filled by District residents, about 42 percent by Maryland residents, and about 18 percent by Virginia residents. This same data indicates that 39 percent of employed Rock Creek West residents commute to Downtown Washington, 13 percent work within the Rock Creek West Area, 22 percent commute elsewhere in the District, and 26 percent commute to the suburbs. 2305.1

The Rock Creek West Planning Area has the highest median income in the city. The 2000 Census reported the median at $80,802, compared to a citywide median of $45,927. The area's stability and affluence benefit the city by significantly contributing to the tax base while requiring a lower level of publicly subsidized services. Nonetheless, approximately seven percent of the area's residents lived below the federal poverty level in 2000. Many were elderly, with special housing and transportation needs. 2305.2

Projections 2306

Given its largely built out character, Rock Creek West is projected to be among the slowest growing areas of the city during the next 20 years. Fewer than 3,000 additional households are forecast for the 2005-2025 period, which is comparable to the annual growth rate experienced during 1990-2005. A six percent increase in population, from 85,800 to about 91,000, is projected. Most of the growth is expected to consist of multi-family housing in mixed use projects along the avenues, and single family homes on scattered vacant sites such as the 17-acre St. Patrick's property on Foxhall Road. 2306.1

The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 48,500 today to 51,600 in 2025. Most of the increase is likely to take place in proximity to the Metro stations as additional retail and local-serving office development occurs. 2306.2

Planning and Development Priorities 2307

Three large Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in Rock Creek West during 2005 and 2006. These meetings provided a chance for residents and local businesses to discuss both citywide and neighborhood planning issues. Many smaller meetings on the Comprehensive Plan also took place in the community, including briefings and workshops with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and neighborhood organizations. 2307.1

There have also been many meetings in the community not directly connected to the Comprehensive Plan, but focusing on related long-range planning issues. These meetings have covered topics such as the future development of Upper Wisconsin Avenue, streetscape improvements along the Glover Park commercial corridor, and proposals for individual properties. 2307.2

The community delivered several key messages during these meetings, summarized below. 2307.3

a. Residents of the Rock Creek West Planning Area remain deeply concerned about growth. While there is support for development on underutilized sites along the major corridors, issues of height, scale, character, and density remain a source of concern as well as a source of debate within the community. The relatively low-density commercial zoning on most of the corridors has not provided the predictability that many residents seek. The reliance on planned unit developments (PUDs) has brought neighborhood amenities but has also resulted in density "bonuses" that are beyond what many residents find acceptable. The potential impact of density increases on schools, emergency response and safety, infrastructure, traffic, parking, environmental health and neighborhood character lead residents to conclude that the only acceptable growth rate is one which matches infrastructure capacity.

b. Rock Creek West has the unique characteristic of containing some of the city's most dense and least dense neighborhoods—sometimes side by side. Along parts of Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, multi-story apartment buildings abut single family homes along rear lot lines. These uses successfully co-exist in part because of the significant buffering effects of open space, parking lots, alleys, mature trees and shrubbery, changes in topography, and other screening and site planning measures. Neighborhoods seek assurances that existing buffers will be maintained and that additional buffers, setbacks, and a "stepping down" in building heights will be provided if and when infill development occurs along the corridors.

c. Like the rest of the District of Columbia, Rock Creek West is facing an affordable housing crisis. Home prices here are the highest in the city and many residents could not afford the homes they live in now if they were first-time buyers today. The conversion of formerly modest apartments to upscale condominiums has created a burden for low- and moderate-income renters, seniors, and young workers just entering the job market. On the other hand, these conversions have provided a more affordable alternative to individuals and families that would otherwise have been priced out of the community entirely. There is broad support for requirements to

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Woodley Park row houses

include affordable or "workforce" housing units within new market-rate projects, but the prospect of "density bonuses" and other zoning flexibility in exchange for these units continues to raise objections.

d. A better variety of retail choices is needed in some parts of the Planning Area. It is acknowledged that the area does not need public action or the involvement of non-profit community development corporations to attract retail in the same way that other parts of the District do. However, some neighborhoods still lack the range of goods and services needed to support the basic needs of local residents. High costs are having a negative effect on some of the area's small businesses, leading to a loss of small "mom and pop" businesses and family-owned neighborhood institutions. The community continues to favor neighborhood-serving retail rather than office space along the corridors, both to meet community needs and to avoid uses that would generate commuter traffic.

e. Some of the area's commercial streets lack the vitality and elegance of great pedestrian-oriented neighborhood shopping streets. Recent efforts to renovate existing commercial buildings in Friendship Heights have generally been well-received and have created a more vibrant pedestrian environment. There is support for development that emphasizes walkability over auto-orientation, provided that height, scale, parking, infrastructure capacity, and other issues can be reconciled.

f. Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety are also major problems. The radial street pattern results in very high volumes along major corridors, particularly Connecticut, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Western Avenues, MacArthur Boulevard, Military Road, River Road, and Canal Road. Local trips combine with commuter traffic to and from the Maryland suburbs and I-495, pushing many intersections beyond their design capacities. As is the case in many parts of the city, major arterials are at Level of Service "D" or "E" during the peak hours, with stop and go traffic. The prior Ward Plan for this area suggested that traffic be restored to Level of Service "B" or "C"—yet such conditions could never be attained without massive road reconstruction and removal of major trip generators. This is neither a realistic or desirable solution. Consequently, more integrated solutions to traffic control, including bus improvements, bicycle improvements, transportation demand management programs for new development, and more efficient use of existing roadways (such as synchronized traffic signals), are needed.

g. Parking is also an issue. On-street parking has been removed in some locations to facilitate traffic flow, which has exacerbated parking needs on side streets. Residential permit parking has helped, but additional parking management measures are needed.

Some residents have suggested municipal parking garages. Others have called for limits on development as a way to control parking demand. Still others have suggested that developers build more parking spaces than are required by law, or that the District limit the issuance of residential parking permits. There are clearly pros and cons to these options. One downside of building more parking garages is that they may attract yet more non-local traffic to the area, particularly near Metro stations.

h. The community's public facilities are experiencing the strains of age and increased demand. While enrollment has fallen at DC Public Schools in other parts of the city, many of the schools in Rock Creek West are over capacity. Some of these schools are experiencing physical deterioration and are in need of modernization. The Tenley-Friendship Library has been closed since December 2004, depriving the community of a vital gathering spot. There continue to be concerns about fire and rescue services, and the difficulties associated with renovating historic fire stations to modern standards. The projected addition of nearly 3,000 households in Rock Creek West by 2025 will likely mean that additional fire and emergency management services may be needed, and that library services may need to be expanded. Some of the recreation centers in the area are also substandard and amenities found in other parts of the city are lacking or are insufficient. The planned new recreation center at Stoddert will provide a much needed facility not only for the community, but for children at Stoddert Elementary.

i. The character of new development is an issue, particularly as more modest homes are expanded or torn down and replaced with larger homes. While many decry "tear downs" and "mansionization," others believe the District should not overly restrict the scale or design of new homes. Communities like the Palisades have expressed interest in the "conservation district" concept—preserving neighborhood identity without regulating each detailed aspect of architectural design. Related issues confront the older apartment buildings along Connecticut Avenue and some of the historic estates in the community. These properties may have the capacity for additional development under zoning, but such development could reduce the integrity of the sites or structures and compromise the features that allow them to coexist so well with adjoining single family homes.

j. The preservation of the natural environment and improvement of environmental health remain top priorities. Like the rest of the city, Rock Creek West includes areas where storm sewers and sanitary sewers are combined, leading to sewage overflow problems during heavy rains. Tree removal and development on steep slopes in areas

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such as the Palisades and Forest Hills continues to cause erosion, despite tree and slope overlay regulations. Spring Valley continues to contend with the effects of discarded chemicals and munitions from World War I-era weapons testing. Residents in the westernmost part of the Planning Area are concerned about proposed dewatering facilities at Dalecarlia Reservoir, while those in Tenleytown are concerned about the health effects of communication antennas. Residents in Friendship Heights continue to be concerned about emissions and ground pollutants from the WMATA Western Bus Garage. Along major corridors throughout the Planning Area, residents contend with air and noise pollution due to cut-through traffic and idling vehicles.

k. Aesthetic improvements are needed along some of the area's roadways so that they can become the gracious gateways to the nation's capital they were intended to be. In other areas, aesthetic qualities are already outstanding, and must be protected from future degradation. This is true on roads traversing national parklands such as Canal Road, Dalecarlia Parkway, and Rock Creek Parkway.

l. There are far fewer community-based residential facilities (CBRFs) in Rock Creek West than other parts of the city. There is no question that the community must share in the social challenges of the city, but the high cost of land and limited availability of sites continues to make this difficult. There is support in the community for scattering small-scale homeless shelters (which is actively being promoted in churches), providing social service facilities on the commercial corridors, and accepting small community residence facilities within single family neighborhoods.

m. Institutional uses, including private schools, non-profits, large nursing homes, colleges, hospitals, and religious establishments, are part of the fabric of the Rock Creek West community. In fact, they comprise almost 660 acres in the Planning Area, almost one-third of the citywide total. Local institutions provide a resource for local families, and include some of the most architecturally distinctive buildings and attractive settings in the community. Yet many of these facilities have structures that do not conform to the underlying zoning. In some instances, tensions have arisen between institutions and surrounding neighbors due to noise, parking, traffic, and other issues. Pursuant to the District's zoning regulations, the compatibility of these uses must be maintained, their expansion carefully controlled, and conversion to other non-conforming uses avoided. Solutions to traffic, parking, and other issues must continue to be developed so that the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods is not diminished.

Policies and Actions

RCW-1 General Policies

Neighborhood retail along Connecticut Avenue

RCW-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation 2308

The following general policies and actions should guide growth and neighborhood conservation decisions in Rock Creek West. These policies and actions should be considered in tandem with those in the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan. 2308.1

Policy RCW-1.1.1: Neighborhood Conservation

Protect the low density, stable residential neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park and recognize the contribution they make to the character, economy, and fiscal stability of the District of Columbia. Future development in both residential and commercial areas must be carefully managed to address infrastructure constraints and protect and enhance the existing scale, function, and character of these neighborhoods. 2308.2

Policy RCW-1.1.2: Economic Development

Given the strength of the private market within Rock Creek West, generally discourage public sector initiatives that would stimulate additional development in the area. Economic development and growth in this area can be achieved without the leveraging of public dollars that may be needed in other parts of the city. 2308.3

Policy RCW-1.1.3: Conserving Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Support and sustain local retail uses and small businesses in the area's neighborhood commercial centers. These centers should be protected from encroachment by large office buildings and other non-neighborhood serving uses. Compatible new uses such as multi-family housing or limited low-cost neighborhood-serving office space (above local-serving ground-floor retail uses) should be considered within the area's commercial centers to meet affordable housing needs, sustain new neighborhood-serving retail and small businesses, and bring families back to the District. 2308.4

Policy RCW-1.1.4: Infill Development

Recognize the opportunity for infill development within the areas designated for commercial land use on the Future Land Use Map. When such development is proposed, work with ANCs, residents, and community organizations to encourage projects that combine housing and commercial uses rather than projects than contain single uses. Heights and densities for such development should be appropriate to the scale and character of

Woodley Park-Zoo/Adams Morgan is one of five Metrorail stations in Rock Creek West.

adjoining communities. Buffers should be adequate to protect existing residential areas from noise, odors, shadows, and other impacts. 2308.5

Policy RCW-1.1.5: Preference for Local-Serving Retail

Support new commercial development in the Planning Area that provides the range of goods and services necessary to meet the needs of local residents. Such uses are preferable to the development of new larger-scale or "big-box" retail uses that serve a regional market. "Destination" retail uses are not appropriate in smaller-scale commercial areas, especially those without Metrorail access. Regardless of scale, retail development must be planned and designed to mitigate traffic, parking, and other impacts on adjacent residential areas. 2308.6

Policy RCW-1.1.6: Metro Station Areas

Recognize the importance of the area's five Metrorail stations to the land use pattern and transportation network of Northwest Washington and the entire District of Columbia. Each station should be treated as a unique place and an integral part of the neighborhood around it. The development of large office buildings at the area's metro stations should be discouraged. The preference is to use available and underutilized sites for housing and retail uses in a manner consistent with the Future Land Use Map, the Generalized Policies Map, and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Careful transitions from development along the avenues to nearby low-scale neighborhoods must be provided. 2308.7

Policy RCW-1.1.7: Housing for Seniors and Disabled Residents

Maintain and increase housing for elderly and disabled residents, especially along the major transportation and commercial corridors of Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. 2308.8

Policy RCW-1.1.8: Managing Institutional Land Uses

Manage institutional land uses in the Rock Creek West Planning Area in a way that ensures that their operations are harmonious with surrounding uses, that expansion is carefully controlled, and that potential adverse effects on neighboring properties are minimized. Ensure that any redevelopment of institutional land is compatible with the physical character of the community and is consistent with all provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and the underlying zoning rules and regulations. Densities and intensities of any future development on such sites should reflect surrounding land uses as well as infrastructure constraints and input from the local community. 2308.9

See the Land Use Element for policies on the expansion of institutional uses and the neighborhood impacts of private schools and other institutional uses.

Policy RCW-1.1.9: Protecting Common Open Space

Protect the large areas of green space and interior open spaces that are common in and around the community's institutional uses and its older apartment buildings, such as Cathedral Mansions and the Broadmoor. Where these open spaces are recognized to contribute to the integrity of the site or structure, stringent protection from inappropriate infill shall be maintained. 2308.10

Policy RCW-1.1.10: Conservation of Historic Estates

Conserve the historic estates in the neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park, including those that are formally landmarked and those that may be eligible for landmark status. Require that the future use of these sites is compatible with their landmark status and protects the integrity of their architectural and landscape design. In the event development does occur, it must be sensitive to surrounding natural areas and adjacent low density residential uses, and not harm historic resources on the site. The use of conservation easements to protect open space on these properties should be considered. 2308.11

Policy RCW-1.1.11: Managing Transportation Demand

Improve traffic service levels on the area's thoroughfares by developing transportation systems management programs, transportation demand management programs, and other measures to more efficiently use the area's road network and reduce the volume of vehicle trips generated by new development. Ensure that new development does not unreasonably degrade traffic conditions, and that traffic calming measures are required to reduce development impacts. This policy is essential to protect and improve the quality of life and the residential character of the area. 2308.12

Policy RCW-1.1.12: Congestion Management Measures

Ensure that land use decisions do not exacerbate congestion and parking problems in already congested areas such as the Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, and Connecticut/Van Ness Metro stations. When planned unit developments are proposed in these areas, require traffic studies which identify the mitigation measures that must occur to maintain acceptable transportation service levels—and secure a commitment to implement these measures through transportation management plans. Traffic studies and mitigation plans should consider not only the impacts of the project under consideration but the cumulative impact of other projects which also may impact the community, as well as the impact of non-resident drivers using local streets. Car-sharing, bicycle facilities, and designs which promote transit use should be encouraged as mitigation measures, in addition to measures addressing passenger and service vehicles. 2308.13

Please consult the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan for policies on traffic levels of service and transportation demand management programs.

Ensure that land use decisions do not exacerbate congestion and parking problems in already congested areas such as the Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, and Connecticut/Van Ness Metro stations.

Spring Valley Shopping Center

Policy RCW-1.1.13: Parking

Consider the use of easements with private developers to provide additional public parking in the area's commercial districts. On-street public parking should not be removed within these districts. 2308.14

Policy RCW-1.1.14: Bicycle Facilities

Improve facilities for bicyclists, to the extent feasible and consistent with traffic safety considerations, along Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts Avenues, along MacArthur Boulevard, along Calvert Street (to Rock Creek Park), and at each of the Metrorail stations. 2308.15

Policy RCW-1.1.15: Metro Access

Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access to the five Metro Station areas, and improve their visual and urban design qualities. Space for car-share vehicles should be provided near the stations where feasible to reduce parking congestion in neighborhoods and encourage car-sharing as an alternative to vehicle ownership. 2308.16

Action RCW-1.1.A: Commercial Zoning Assessment

Conduct an evaluation of commercial zoning designations throughout the Rock Creek West Planning Area. Consider the creation of additional neighborhood commercial overlay zones at the Van Ness/UDC, Tenleytown, and Friendship Heights Metro stations, and at neighborhood commercial centers and "main streets" throughout the area. Such overlays should ensure that new development is pedestrian-oriented, achieves neighborhood compatibility, and is responsive to community concerns about building height, buffers, and transitions between uses. 2308.17

Action RCW-1.1.B: Protection of Neighborhood Architecture and Aesthetics

Consider new tools such as Conservation Districts and changes to the Zoning Regulations to reduce the incidence of "teardowns" in Rock Creek West's single family and row house neighborhoods. While this is a citywide issue (see Policy LU-2.1.6 and Action LU-2.1.D), it is a particular concern in this part of the city. 2308.18

Action RCW-1.1.C: Joint Planning Agreement with Montgomery County

Develop a joint planning agreement with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission/Montgomery County to coordinate the mutual review of projects and area plans on both sides of the District/ Maryland line. 2308.19

Action RCW-1.1.D: Traffic Flow Improvements

Conduct and regularly update transportation studies for the area's major corridors to identify possible traffic flow and safety improvements. These studies should also identify improvements to diminish "cut-through" traffic, reduce speeding, and ensure pedestrian safety on smaller neighborhood

side streets, especially in residential areas adjacent to Wisconsin Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, Western Avenue, River Road and Military Road. 2308.20

Action RCW-1.1.E: Transportation Management Association

Consider creation of a Transportation Management Association to provide professional assistance in trip reduction strategies for employers and new residential development in the Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenue corridors, and to develop new programs to reduce parking conflicts. Parking changes such as the extension of meter hours and residential permit parking restriction hours could be considered as part of this effort. 2308.21

The Norman-style water tower at Fort Reno is located near Tenley Hill, highest point in the District of Columbia.

RCW-1.2 Conserving and Enhancing Community Resources 2309

Policy RCW-1.2.1: Urban Design Focus

Focus urban design efforts in the Rock Creek West Planning Area on its commercial centers and major avenues, historic landmarks, historic districts, and areas with significant environmental and topographical features. 2309.1

See the Urban Design Element for policies on preserving and enhancing architectural character, including guidelines for height, scale, massing, setbacks, and materials.

Policy RCW-1.2.2: Scenic Resource Protection

Conserve the important scenic and visual resources of Rock Creek West, including:

a. Views from Fort Reno National Park, which is the highest point of land in the city and a place of historic significance;

b. The Potomac Palisades, which should be protected as a low density, wooded area above the Potomac River and C&O Canal, with future improvements along the river limited to passive open space, trails, and natural parkland;

c. Dalecarlia Reservoir, which is environmentally important because of its large land area and proximity to the Potomac River;

d. The US Naval Observatory Grounds, which contain abundant woodlands, are proximate to parkland, and are vulnerable to light and heat pollution;

e. Stream valleys, including Rock Creek Park and its tributaries, and Glover Archbold Park;

f. Neighborhoods developed on hilly terrain on or near stream valleys such as Barnaby Woods, Forest Hills, Hawthorne, Spring Valley, and Woodland-Normanstone; and

g. The Fort Circle Parks, including Fort Bayard Park, and Whitehaven Parkway. 2309.2

The National Cathedral is one of the best known cultural and visitor attractions west of Rock Creek Park.

Any future development adjacent to these areas must be designed to respect and maintain their parklike settings, and conserve their environmental quality. 2309.3

Policy RCW-1.2.3: National Park Service Areas

Conserve and improve the more than 2,000 acres of natural open space in the forested neighborhoods that lie between the Potomac River and Rock Creek Park, including Battery Kemble Park, Glover Archbold Park, the Potomac National Heritage Scenic Area, and the Fort Circle Parks. Support efforts to restore water quality and improve natural habitat, along with capital improvements to improve trails and provide appropriate recreational features. 2309.4

Policy RCW-1.2.4: Cultural and Tourist Attractions

Protect and enhance the cultural and visitor attractions west of Rock Creek Park, including the National Cathedral, the C&O Canal, the Capital Crescent Trail, Peirce Mill, the Hillwood Estate, and the National Zoo. Encourage broader recognition of other attractions in the area, such as the Naval Observatory and the Fort Circle Parks. Ensure that tourist activity does not disrupt the quality of life for nearby residents by requiring strict adherence to traffic routing, transportation and parking management plans, and reasonable visitation hours. 2309.5

Policy RCW-1.2.5: Historic Resources

Conserve the important historic resources of the neighborhoods west of Rock Creek, including but not limited to the Glover, Taft, and Ellington bridges; the Washington National Cathedral; mansions such as the Tregaron, Twin Oaks, Cloverdale, and Rosedale Estates, and the Babcock-Macomb House, the Rest, and Owl's Nest; the Pine Crest/Greystone/Klingle Mansion cluster of houses near Rock Creek; the historic districts such as Cleveland Park, Woodley Park, and Grant Road; historic apartment buildings such as the Kennedy-Warren, Cathedral Mansions, the Ponce de Leon, 3901 Connecticut, and Alban Towers; the Chevy Chase arcade and Avalon and Uptown Theaters; the Spring Valley Shopping Center; and the sites of significance inventoried in the Historic Resources Survey conducted by the Tenleytown Historical Society and the National Park System. 2309.6

Policy RCW-1.2.6: Naval Observatory

Ensure that planning decisions in the vicinity of the Naval Observatory consider the possible effects of light pollution and take appropriate steps to avoid adverse impacts. 2309.7

Policy RCW-1.2.7: Fire and EMS Services

Renovate and enlarge fire stations while remaining sensitive to their historic architectural qualities and avoiding the loss of adjacent open space. Ensure that there are a sufficient number of fire stations to serve the needs of area residents and businesses.2309.8

Policy RCW-1.2.8: Schools and Libraries

Place a very high priority on the renovation and improvement of schools and libraries. The fact that a majority of the schools in this Planning Area are operating at or above capacity should be considered in DCPS facility planning, and in the approval of any residential development that could further exacerbate school overcrowding. Changes to school service boundaries and the development of additional school facilities should be aggressively pursued to ensure that school overcrowding is proactively addressed. 2309.9

Policy RCW-1.2.9: Recreation Centers and Aquatic Facilities

Expand recreation grounds where and when feasible, with a particular emphasis on athletic fields for activities such as soccer, softball, and regulation baseball. Expand aquatic facilities to a level of service that is comparable to the level provided in other parts of the District. 2309.10

Policy RCW-1.2.10: Community Based Residential Facilities

Encourage the development of small-scale community-based residential facilities on scattered sites within the Planning Area, and social service counseling and referral facilities on the commercial corridors. Additional group homes and community based residential facilities should be accommodated, provided that such facilities are consistent with the area's low-density character. Local religious institutions should be encouraged to host small shelters to provide for the homeless, taking into consideration issues of liability, security, and adequacy of facilities. 2309.11

See the Environmental Protection Element for additional policies on stream valley parks, limits on impervious surface coverage, expansion of the tree and slope overlay zone, urban forestry, air quality, aircraft noise, and development adjacent to parkland. See the Urban Design Element for policies on conserving natural landform and topography. See the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element for policies discouraging the placement of buildings on parkland.

Action RCW-1.2.A: Combined Sewer Separation

Continue efforts to separate storm sewers and sanitary sewers within the area's stream valleys, with a priority on the combined sewer in Glover Archbold Park (conveying Foundry Branch). 2309.12

Palisades gateway signage on MacArthur Boulevard

Action RCW-1.2.B: Recreation Center and Pools

Develop a new recreation center and community pool in the eastern part of the Planning Area. An analysis conducted as part of the District's 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan determined a shortage of such facilities in the Tenleytown/North Cleveland Park/Forest Hills area and suggested that immediate planning begin to select appropriate sites. 2309.13

Action RCW-1.2.C: Palisades Open Space Protection

Protect the historic linear open space that once supported the Palisades/Glen Echo trolley line. 2309.14

Action RCW-1.2.D: Senior Center Development

Develop an additional senior center in the Rock Creek West Planning Area, in order to improve the delivery of services to the area's large elderly population. 2309.15

Action RCW-1.2.E: Tenley-Friendship Library

Complete the renovation/reconstruction of the Tenley-Friendship Library as a community gathering space and repository for books and media serving the surrounding community. 2309.16

Action RCW-1.2.F: Façade Improvements

Encourage urban design and façade improvements in the established commercial districts along Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue. 2309.17

Action RCW-1.2.G: Spring Valley Remediation Program

Continue the public health evaluation for the Spring Valley community and take appropriate follow-up actions to remediate any hazards that are identified. This evaluation is being conducted to determine if residents who live in the vicinity of the former American University Experiment Station have elevated exposure to arsenic or other contaminants. 2309.18

Table 23.2:
Policy Focus Areas Within And Adjacent to Rock Creek West 2310.2

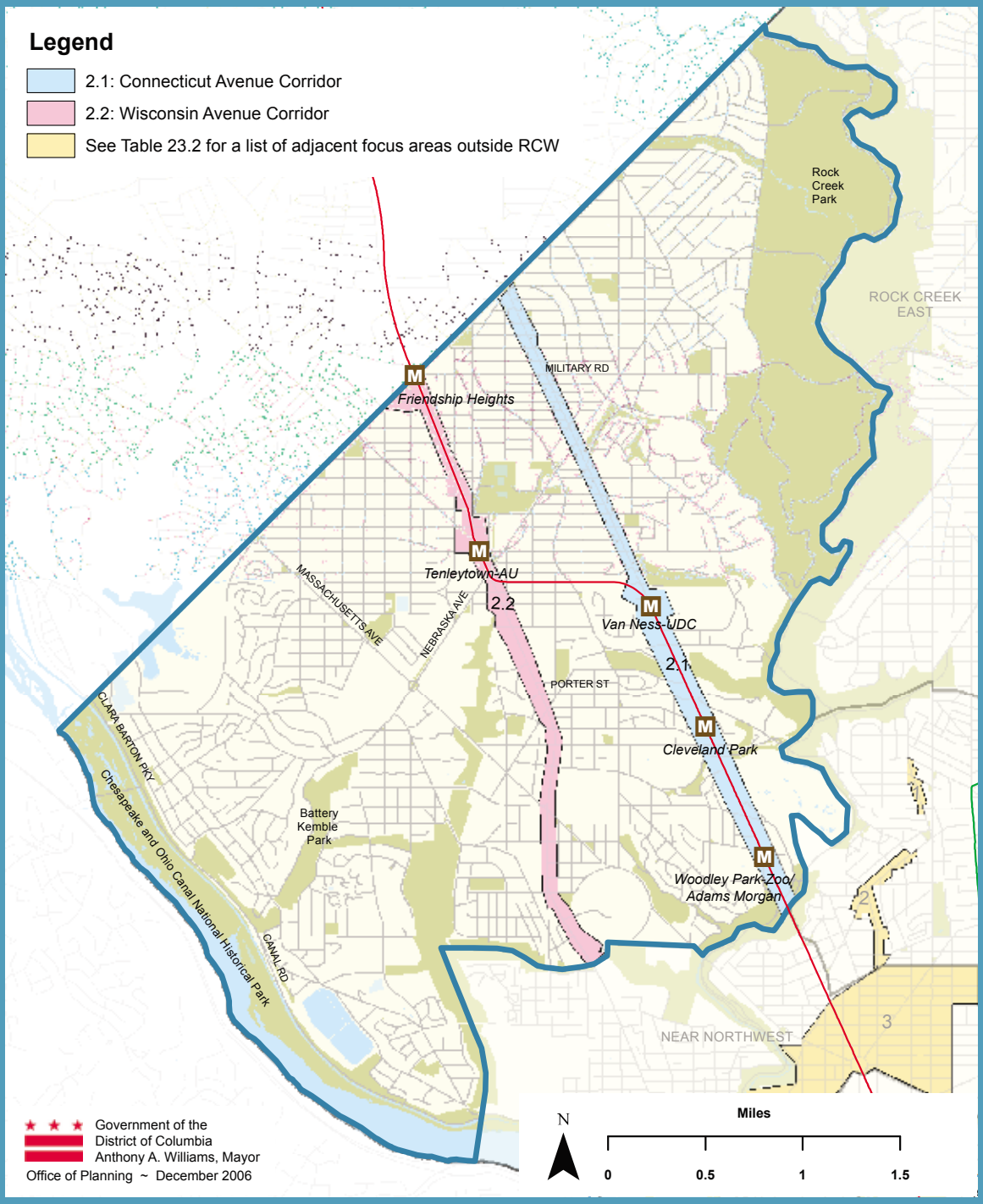
Within Rock Creek West	
2.1	Connecticut Avenue Corridor (see p. 23-22)
2.2	Wisconsin Avenue Corridor (see p. 23-24)
Adjacent to Rock Creek West	
1	Mount Pleasant Street (see p.20-27)
2	18th and Columbia Road (see p. 20-25)
3	Dupont Circle (see p. 21-24)

RCW-2 Policy Focus Areas 2310

The Comprehensive Plan has identified two areas in Rock Creek West as "policy focus areas," indicating that they require a level of direction and guidance above that in the prior section of this Area Element and in the citywide elements. These areas are shown in Map 23.1 and are listed in Table 23.2. The policy focus areas include the Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue corridors. Each corridor is addressed below. 2310.1

Map 23.1:

Rock Creek West Policy Focus Areas 2310.3



RCW-2.1 Connecticut Avenue Corridor 2311

From the Taft Bridge across Rock Creek, Connecticut Avenue extends 3.5 miles northwest to the Maryland State Line. Along the way, the avenue passes through the Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, and Van Ness/UDC commercial districts (with Metro stations of the same name at each location), as well as the Chevy Chase commercial district at its northern end. The avenue is a broad, attractive boulevard for most of its length, handling over 35,000 vehicles on an average day. The areas between the commercial districts are generally developed with mid- to high-rise apartments and condominiums, although there are pockets of less dense development as well. In many respects, Connecticut Avenue epitomizes the model of a "great street" that the city seeks to emulate in other parts of the District. 2311.1

Land use issues vary from one segment of the corridor to the next. The Woodley Park and Cleveland Park segments are historic districts and contain almost no undeveloped land. In Woodley Park, there are ongoing parking and traffic issues relating to the presence of two large hotels with a combined total of over 2,100 rooms. Proposals to convert rooms to condominiums and develop additional units at one of the hotels could generate the need for additional traffic and parking improvements during the coming years. 2311.2

Further north, the Van Ness commercial district includes a multi-neighborhood shopping district (with a supermarket, several national retailers, and smaller businesses), office buildings, and several mid- to high-rise residential buildings. Intelsat and the International Chancery Complex are located here. The area also includes the campus of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), enrolling 6,000 students from across the city. 2311.3

While the Van Ness area functions as an important community shopping district, it suffers from a harsh street environment, an excessive amount of hardscaped surfaces, parking problems, a lack of distinctive facades and storefronts, a limited range of retail goods and services, and a loss of ground floor retail space to institutional and school uses. The area does not create the same welcoming appearance that is present in the older commercial districts to the south. The UDC plazas, in particular, could be redesigned to provide a more inviting civic space for students and area residents. 2311.4

Complementary uses such as public art, greenery, and additional local-serving ground floor retail space could help make this center a more attractive gathering place. If and when private redevelopment of older commercial properties is proposed in the vicinity, every effort should be made to achieve more attractive architecture, and a mixing of residential and pedestrian-oriented retail uses rather than further concentration of office space and ground floor institutional/school space. 2311.5

A Campus Plan for UDC was completed in September 2005 to guide campus growth and development for the next 20 years. As the Plan is implemented, efforts should be made to improve the public space around the Metro station and ensure that any future facility development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. 2311.6

Policy RCW-2.1.1: Connecticut Avenue Corridor

Sustain the high quality of the Connecticut Avenue corridor. The positive qualities of the corridor, particularly its attractive older apartment buildings, green spaces, trees, and walkable neighborhood shopping districts, should be conserved and enhanced. Continued efforts to improve traffic flow and parking should be pursued, especially in the commercial districts. 2311.7

Policy RCW-2.1.2: Infill Development

Recognize the opportunity for additional housing with some retail and limited office space along the Connecticut Avenue corridor. Any development along the corridor should be consistent with the designations of these areas on the Future Land Use Map, zoning overlay requirements, and the scale of adjoining uses. 2311.8

Policy RCW-2.1.3: Van Ness/UDC Station Area

Improve the design and appearance of the Van Ness/UDC Station area, particularly the "hardscaped" portion of the UDC Campus. 2311.9

Policy RCW-2.1.4: Coordination Between Community and UDC

Support greater coordination and communication between UDC officials and the surrounding community on issues such as parking, traffic, property maintenance, and facility development. Establish complementary goals between the University and the community at large, so that the university becomes even more of a community asset and resource than it is today. 2311.10

Action RCW-2.1.A: Improving the UDC Plazas

Work with UDC and with local community groups and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission in the "greening" of public open space on the UDC Campus. 2311.11

Action RCW-2.1.B: Large Hotel Sites

Carefully monitor future proposals for the Omni-Shoreham and Marriott Wardman Park hotels to ensure compliance with the Zone regulations and prevent adverse effects on the adjacent residential community. Proactively address ongoing issues at the hotels, such as tour bus and visitor parking. 2311.12

Wisconsin Avenue pre-dates the 1791 L'Enfant Plan, and at one time was one of the main commercial routes serving the Port of Georgetown. Today, the avenue serves as the "Main Street" of several District neighborhoods, including Glover Park, Cathedral Heights, Tenleytown, and Friendship Heights.

RCW-2.2 Wisconsin Avenue Corridor 2312

Wisconsin Avenue extends north from the Georgetown waterfront approximately 4.5 miles to the Maryland state line. The road pre-dates the 1791 L'Enfant Plan. At one time it was one of the main commercial routes serving the Port of Georgetown and was lined with houses and estates, some of which remain today. Today, the avenue serves as the "Main Street" of several District neighborhoods, including Glover Park, Cathedral Heights, Tenleytown, and Friendship Heights. 2312.1

The current mix of uses along the avenue is eclectic. Its lower portions include pedestrian-oriented shopping, mid- and high-rise apartment buildings, and prominent institutional uses including the Russian Embassy and the National Cathedral. Further north, the avenue passes through relatively low-density single family neighborhoods, with a mix of retail uses, mid-rise office buildings including the national headquarters of Fannie Mae, churches, private schools, and other institutional uses. For several blocks on either side of the Maryland line, the Avenue passes through a regional commercial center at Friendship Heights. The regional center includes large department stores, office buildings, and hotels on both the Maryland and District sides. 2312.2

Most of the planning focus along the corridor has been on the portion of the Avenue north of Van Ness Street, particularly around the Metro stations at Tenleytown and Friendship Heights. During the past five years, land around the two Metro stations has been developing in a manner that is consistent with the previous Comprehensive Plan, with an 8-story residential building now under construction adjacent to the Friendship Heights station (Chase Point) and a new mixed use project combining condominiums and retail uses at the Tenleytown station (Cityline). There are other sites similar to Chase Point and Cityline in the vicinity of both stations, and along the mile-long stretch of the avenue in between the stations. Private proposals to redevelop several of these sites are currently under consideration. 2312.3

This Comprehensive Plan does not propose any significant departure in policy for the Upper Wisconsin Avenue corridor from the previous Comprehensive Plan. As stated in the prior plan, the Tenleytown and Friendship Heights metro stations continue to be opportunity areas for new housing. Friendship Heights continues to be a regional center, and Tenleytown continues to be a multi-neighborhood center, each with limited opportunities for new retail and residential uses. 2312.4

Between Jennifer and Brandywine Streets, there are a number of vacant commercial buildings on the corridor. Their reuse with new local-serving retail uses and housing is encouraged. Additional measures are needed to

upgrade the streetscape, improve traffic flow, and address parking problems. Some of these measures are laid out in a traffic study for the Wisconsin Avenue corridor completed in 2005. 2312.5

Friendship Heights and Tenleytown are stable, transit-oriented neighborhoods, and their conservation should be ensured during the coming years. Thus, several core issues must be addressed as plans for any of the sites around the Metro stations or along the corridor move forward. Any redevelopment along the corridor should respect the scale of existing neighborhoods, promote walkability, and create a more attractive street environment. The impact of new development on traffic, parking, infrastructure, and public services must be mitigated to the greatest extent feasible. The scale and height of new development on the corridor should reflect the proximity to single family homes, as well as the avenue's intended function as the neighborhood's main street. This means an emphasis on low- to mid-rise mixed use buildings rather than high-rise towers or auto-oriented strip development. 2312.6

Urban design improvements should make the Tenleytown Metro station a more attractive community hub in the future. The low density commercial area on the east side of Wisconsin between Albemarle and Brandywine would specifically benefit from streetscaping and façade improvements. The Metro station entrance located on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue at Albemarle Street is poorly designed and uninviting. Improving the public realm in this location would contribute to the vibrancy of the block as a whole and improve pedestrian safety and comfort. Amenities such as public art, more attractive facades, and street trees should be encouraged. Attention also should be paid to reducing pedestrian-vehicle conflicts along Albemarle Street and ensuring safe pedestrian access to the east side Metro entrance. 2312.7

Policy RCW-2.2.1: Housing Opportunities

Recognize the opportunity for additional housing with some retail and limited office space on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue between Albemarle and Brandywine Streets, on the Lord and Taylor parking lot, on the Metro (WMATA) bus garage site west of the Friendship Heights metro station, and on underutilized commercially zoned sites on Wisconsin Avenue. Any development in these areas should be compatible with the existing residential neighborhoods . 2312.8

Policy RCW-2.2.2: Tenleytown Metrorail Station Area

Stimulate a well-planned economic activity center at the Tenleytown Metrorail station area, generally defined as the area bounded by Albemarle, Brandywine, Fort Drive, and 42nd Street. This center should:

Any redevelopment along the corridor should respect the scale of existing neighborhoods, promote walkability, and create a more attractive street environment. The impact of new development on traffic, parking, infrastructure, and public services must be mitigated to the greatest extent feasible.

Friendship Heights

a. Utilize the public transit infrastructure and maximize Metrorail access;

b. Enable merchants to upgrade existing businesses, attract new customers and new business establishments, and give residents needed services;

c. Provide for the development of new housing;

d. Protect and preserve existing low density residences in the vicinity, and the surrounding institutions and local public facilities from the adverse effects of development; and

e. Maintain heights and densities at appropriate levels, with architectural design that is sensitive to the area's topography relative to the District. 2312.9

Policy RCW-2.2.3: National Cathedral

Protect the Washington National Cathedral from development that would despoil its setting or further exacerbate traffic on its perimeter. Ensure that traffic, parking, and activity impacts generated by the Cathedral do not diminish the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods. 2312.10

Policy RCW-2.2.4: Wisconsin and Western Avenues

Require that any changes to facilitate through-traffic on Wisconsin and Western Avenues include measures to minimize adverse affects on adjacent residential neighborhoods. 2312.11

Policy RCW-2.2.5: Land Use Compatibility Along Wisconsin Avenue

Ensure that future development along Wisconsin Avenue is physically compatible with and architecturally sensitive to adjoining residential neighborhoods and is appropriately scaled given the lot depths, widths, and parcel shapes. Use a variety of means to improve the interface between commercial districts and residential uses, such as architectural design, the stepping down of building heights away from the avenue, landscaping and screening, and additional green space improvements. 2312.12

Action RCW-2.2.A: Friendship Heights Task Force

Improve inter-jurisdictional cooperation to address transportation issues related to Friendship Heights. Continue the efforts of the Friendship Heights Task Force established in 1998 to review and coordinate land use and transportation decision-making in the Friendship Heights area. 2312.13

Action RCW-2.2.B: Implement Traffic Signal Improvements From WACTS

Implement the recommendations from the 2005 DDOT Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study regarding traffic light synchronization as well as semi-actuating lights at specific intersections along Wisconsin Avenue. Ensure that signal timing changes do not adversely affect neighborhoods by causing long queues of idling cars on side streets. 2312.14

Action RCW-2.2.C: Zoning and Design Measures

Continue to work with the community, the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and local property owners to address concerns regarding building density and height, planned unit developments and related density bonuses, and architectural design in the Planning Area. Zoning techniques should be considered to break up the auto-oriented commercial appearance of much of Wisconsin Avenue and instead create a more pedestrian-oriented street, distinct in function and visual character from adjacent residential areas. 2312.15