



**Adams Morgan Vision Framework
Executive Summary of Revisions
July 8, 2016**

The purpose of this memo is to provide a general summary of the comments received during the public comment period and the revisions to the Draft Adams Morgan Vision Framework (“Draft Framework”) as a result of this input and other information. The DC Office of Planning (“OP”) released the Draft Adams Morgan Vision Framework for a 30 day public comment period on November 9, 2015. The Draft Vision Framework was posted for viewing and download on the OP [project webpage](http://planning.dc.gov/adamsmorgan) (planning.dc.gov/adamsmorgan) and [ANC 1C website](http://anc1c.org). The public comment period was announced in a posting to the community listserv; an announcement made by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C (ANC) Public Services and Environment Committee; an announcement on ANC 1C’s website; and the project webpage. At the request of the ANC, the public comment period was extended for an additional 60 days to afford time for individual ANC 1C committees to review the plan and provide comment before consideration by the full ANC at their regularly scheduled meeting on February 3, 2016. The public comment period concluded on February 8, 2016.

Background on Process

The Adams Morgan Vision Framework was developed through a community-based planning process. The Vision Framework document also builds upon the early work completed by ANC 1C through an effort called Envision Adams Morgan (EAM). Robust community engagement was conducted at every stage in the Vision Framework process including: 1) a neighborhood walking tour; 2) a half-day public workshop held in February 2015; 3) a project website; 4) three community “office hours” events; 5) an online engagement forum; and 6) Latino business outreach through direct canvassing. A community open house was held on September 30, 2015, where community stakeholders were invited to review the plan’s draft goals and recommendations. An Advisory Committee comprised of ANC Commissioners, business owners, commercial property owners, civic organization members and representatives from the Business Improvement District provided detailed feedback and guidance on a regular basis throughout the entire process both as a group and individually. Specifically, the Advisory Committee provided guidance on the project’s goals and objectives, public meetings, outreach, interpretation of community feedback, and refinement of goals and recommendations. The Advisory Committee’s feedback on goals and recommendations was incorporated into the Draft Adams Morgan Vision Framework released for public comment on November 9, 2015. See page 2 of the Vision Framework for additional information on the process used to develop specific goals and recommendations.

Comment and Revision Summary

Approximately 25 individuals and/or organizations submitted written comments during the public comment period. In addition to the written comments received, the Draft Framework was also featured on local blogs, in neighborhood newsletters/papers and on social media. All of these parties expressed general support for the Draft Framework. The only exception was from a few individuals offering their personal opinions on the neighborhood and less about the plan specifically. Additionally, ANC 1C passed

a unanimous resolution, 8–0, in support of the Vision Framework but opposing recommendation 4A at their February 3, 2016 meeting.

The following is a summary of comments and revisions.

Corrections/Entire Document

- Typographic, punctuation, grammatical and formatting errors were corrected throughout the document, along with minor editorial changes per comments received.

The following sections include a comment summary and revisions OP incorporated organized by the 5 core categories identified in the plan.

Creating Great Places

- Several commenters stated they concur with the recommendations to improve the southeast and northeast corners of 18th Street and Columbia Road.
 - Note that recommendations 1A, 1B, and 9B support the comments received. (Pages 8 and 19)
- One commenter stated that (page 8, paragraphs 3 and 4) and (page 9) refer to the sidewalk (Square 2580, Lot 0511) on the northwest corner of the intersection of 18th Street and Columbia Road.
 - The sidewalk area is actually on the northeast corner. The text has been updated to reflect the correct orientation.
- One commenter stated goal 1 (page 8) and goal 2 (page 10) should be combined and the SunTrust Bank Plaza integrated conceptually to suggest a coordinated design for the three spaces. Recommendation 1A is now Recommendation 1B (Page 8).
 - A new recommendation (now Recommendation 1A) has been added to address this statement as follows: “Key open spaces and existing and potential public gathering spaces along 18th Street and Columbia Road (e.g., spaces around the intersection of 18th Street and Columbia Road, Unity Park) should be approached collectively as a network of public spaces when improvements or redevelopment are proposed. Specific attention should be given to the use and programming of these spaces.”
- Goal 2, (page 10) “Redefine Unity Park as multicultural park through events and programming” has been updated as follows: **“Redefine Unity Park as a place for multicultural events and programming.”**
- One commenter stated it was not clear to them that Unity Park was intended to celebrate the Latino community more than other communities within Adams Morgan and asked if there was a historical source to substantiate the statement.
 - Through direct business canvassing of Latino-owned and -operated businesses, interviews of Latinos in the study area’s commercial areas, and conversations with the Mayor’s Office on Latino Affairs, it was found that Latinos in the neighborhood and vicinity maintain some type of connection with Unity Park. The Vision Framework does not endorse the singular cultural presence of any one part of the community over another; community success and vibrancy should be inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities. See (page 10), Goal 2, Recommendation 2B.

- On page 9, paragraph 3, the words “in the southwest corner” in reference to continuing to grow the farmers’ market in the southwest corner at 18th Street and Columbia Road NW has been deleted from the plan.
 - A private developer has purchased the SunTrust Bank property at the southwest corner of 18th Street and Columbia Road. The developer has proposed to relocate the farmers’ market to a new site in the neighborhood. The annotation has been deleted from the plan for accuracy.
- Commenters stated they had not heard any calls from within the community for activating alleys or making them more attractive and animated, in line with the movement towards “living” alleys.
 - Recommendation 3A (page 10) is consistent with the guidance found in the DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey prepared by the Office of Planning’s Historic Preservation Office, which recommends increasing visibility of alleyways and ideas for reinventing them. The recommendation is suggesting enhancements to alleys through artwork or improved lighting to promote cleaner and safer spaces through temporary activation and/or programming only.

Redefining Retail

- Both ANC 1C and the Adams Morgan Business Improvement District opposed the inclusion of Recommendation 4A (page 14) which proposed the creation of merchant committees for each subdistrict.
 - Recommendation 4A has been deleted in full as written in the Draft Framework. A new recommendation has replaced that recommendation as follows:
“Approach commercial district management comprehensively and holistically as a unified operation while also developing targeted marketing and localized strategies that enhance and reinforce the unique identity and needs of each neighborhood retail cluster.” This nuanced approach will help reinforce the distinctive characteristics and retail variety that make the Adams Morgan commercial district as a whole appealing, eclectic and richly textured.
- Text and graphics on page 13 were updated to remove mention of “subdistricts”; language was changed to “clusters” to better emphasize that there is only one Adams Morgan commercial district that is made of a composite of unique retail clusters.
- One commenter would like to see more retail diversity (“mixed use store, with more than one retail offering in the same business”) within the neighborhood.
 - Note that Recommendations 4D and 5C (pages 14 and 15) support the comment received.
- One commenter stated the plan needed to redefine what is ‘historic’ and that Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) review is extremely expensive. The commenter suggested that the 9 percent commercial vacancy rate was due to the added cost burden of HPRB review causing Adams Morgan small commercial property owners to forgo renovating or redeveloping their buildings. There were also several comments received surrounding the issues of Class C retail space including the difficulty of converting and upgrading, community capacity, and data availability.
 - Much of Adams Morgan’s commercial areas are designated historic and regulated through the District’s historic preservation regulations and adopted guidelines. As the Vision Framework states and its companion document, the Adams Morgan Neighborhood Profile details, there are several reasons why the commercial district has

a relatively high vacancy rate of 9 percent. Factors include emerging market competition in proximity to the neighborhood and a high percentage of Class C office space, which impacts the retail-readiness of commercial buildings in the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Profile also lays out current retail conditions, including strengths and weaknesses of the commercial area, and was used as a baseline for informing the Framework recommendations.

- Recommendation 4D (page 14) was specifically included in the Framework to encourage the activation of vacant Class C spaces as more affordable spaces for start-up retailers.
- Commenters suggested modifying recommendation 5B (page 15) to better reflect that residents are already working with the BID.
 - Recommendation 5B was revised as follows: **“Utilizing existing BID committees and the BID Board, develop joint resident and retailer objectives.** Work with retailer and resident liaisons involved in the BID to carry out some joint initiatives to enhance the neighborhood retail experience.”
- One commenter stated the need to make additional investments in rodent control.
 - Note that Goal 7, Recommendations 7A and B (page 15) support the comment received.

Embracing Sustainability

- Page 17: Recommendation 8H has been updated to accurately reflect community aspirations to encourage increased sustainability in new developments.

Strengthening Identity Through Arts, History and Culture

- Text on page 18 references a zoning application to downzone select properties within the Lanier Heights section of Adams Morgan as currently in the Zoning Commission review process. The application was considered by the Zoning Commission on March 21, 2016. The Zoning Commission took proposed action to approve the application to downzone select properties, but requested additional information prior to taking final action.
 - The text has been updated to accurately reflect the current status of the application. Per public comment other text in this section has been updated for consistency with the new 2016 Zoning Regulations.
- One commenter stated that Adams Morgan has more than 349 subsidized affordable housing units. (Page 18)
 - The number 349 is from the DC Preservation Network Database, which maintains data on affordable housing units. The total number of affordable housing units is subject to periodic updates. At the time of publication, the number 349 was accurate according to the DC Preservation Network.
- Goal 9 (page 19), “Recognize and reinforce the importance of maintaining neighborhood character in residential and commercial buildings and key open spaces in the neighborhood.” has been updated as follows: **“Recognize and reinforce the importance of maintaining neighborhood architectural character and urban form in residential and commercial buildings and key open spaces.”**
- Recommendation 9A (page 19), has been updated as follows: **“Develop design guidelines for Adams Morgan including commercial, residential and open space areas.** Highlight and identify the principles of compatible design and protecting neighborhood character.”

- Recommendation 9B (page 19), has been updated as follows: “Ensure existing publicly accessible open spaces and plazas within the commercial corridors of the neighborhood serve as functional community gathering spaces. Future design and enhancements of these spaces should take into consideration longstanding community use and opportunities for enhanced programming.”
- Goal 10 (page 19), “Reinforce Adams Morgan’s identity as a place for arts and culture.” has been update as follows: **“Reinforce Adams Morgan as a place for arts, culture and entertainment.”**
- Recommendation 10B has been updated as follows: **“Foster Adams Morgan as a laboratory for new and innovative art through performance, events and programming.** Collaborate with and support existing community-based arts organizations such as the District of Columbia Arts Center to activate the public realm to test new ideas, projects and technologies that express diversity and Adams Morgan’s eclectic and artistic identity.”
- Recommendation 10C has been updated as follows: **“10C Commission and install artworks for public sites throughout the neighborhood. Form a neighborhood arts group in conjunction with the District of Columbia Arts Center.** This group would serve as a community liaison between stakeholders, the arts community and District agencies responsible for commissioning public art.”
 - One commenter expressed interest in more public art in the alleyways and offered his building as a possible location for a neighborhood mural. Note that Recommendations 10C support the comment received. (Page 19)
- One commenter requested changes to Recommendation 13A to better reflect ANC 1C’s input.
 - Recommendation 13A (Page 20) has been updated to “Support targets that exceed current inclusionary zoning thresholds for development projects that require discretionary approvals. For example, as part of community benefits package through the PUD process for new construction, prioritize additional affordable units above the Inclusionary Zoning requirement or fewer affordable units, but larger in size (e.g., three bedrooms) to better serve families of varying size.”
- Several comments noted the desire to enhance public art throughout the neighborhood.
 - Strengthening Identity Through Arts, History and Culture, Recommendations 10B and 10C (page 19) support these comments.

Bolstering Community

- The DC Bicycle Advisory Committee (DCBAC) submitted several comments suggesting ways to better connect Adams Morgan with the National Zoo and improve connectivity and access to the Rock Creek Park Trail network.
 - Goal 16, Recommendations 16A and 16 B (page 24) were developed in consultation with DCBAC after conducting a neighborhood bike ride to identify opportunities for improvement. The National Zoo is initiating a parking garage study to be followed by design and construction for their parking and access. As part of this plan, the National Zoo will be developing options for inclusion of a pedestrian/bike trail outside the perimeter to allow for 24-hour usage of the trail. In addition, pedestrian/bike access will be studied as part of the National Zoo’s redesign of the parking.

Outside of Scope

- One commenter stated “Adams Morgan BID taxes paid by property owners in part funded this study. However, Adams Morgan property owners were not targeted for their specific input. Please correct this problem.”
 - The Vision Framework was not funded by the Adams Morgan Partnership Business Improvement District. The Office of Planning funded this planning initiative. The planning process engaged all community stakeholders, including residential, commercial and service based organizations, in the study area. See page 2 for a full list of community outreach/engagement events associated with the project.
- One commenter stated the Vision Framework should include an analysis of mass transit in the neighborhood and how it can be improved due to overcrowding and service cuts.
 - A transportation analysis was not part of this planning initiative. Transportation analysis is conducted by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).
- One commenter stated the District should purchase the SunTrust Bank property and create a neighborhood library and community center.
 - The subject property has been purchased by a private owner, and a mixed-use development is proposed at the site.
- One commenter stated “We could use some help from the City to preserve the City’s longest standing community/neighborhood festival, Adams Morgan Day.”
 - Financial support for Adams Morgan Day is outside the scope of work for the Adams Morgan Vision Framework.

Process, Overview and Context

A few commenters noted the need for data and had questions about neighborhood data employed to develop policies.

- Text on Page 2 was updated to refer to the Adams Morgan Vision Framework Neighborhood Profile which contains data and technical analysis for the Draft Vision Framework as “Appendix A.” This addition is designed to guide readers to supporting information that answers some common questions.
- Pages 4 and 12: The words “active nightlife” has been replaced with “nighttime economy” (page 4) and deleted from page 12.
- One commenter stated they were glad the Vision Framework consulted the Comprehensive Plan as part of the planning initiative but also requested greater correlation between the Draft Framework Action Items and Comprehensive Plan policies, in particular as it relates how affordable housing is addressed, citing the need to employ specific housing-related actions and policies from the Comprehensive Plan. The commenter also noted the opportunity for the Draft Framework to inform updates to Comprehensive Plan policies.
 - Text on Page 2 was updated to include a new reference to the Comprehensive Plan, “Appendix B: Comprehensive Plan Analysis and Background.” An additional sentence was added to explain how the Draft Vision Framework can inform the next Update to the Comprehensive Plan. The process for updating the District’s Comprehensive Plan will begin in 2016.
 - For recommendation 13B (page 20), an additional sentence was added to reference specific Comprehensive Plan actions and policies that offer approaches to producing and

preserving affordable housing that may have applicability in Adams Morgan. Notably, these are citywide actions and policies.

- The following text has been added to Page 2 per community comments received: ‘The Adams Morgan Vision Framework is an aspirational document that reflects the input of community stakeholders in the study area’.
- One commenter stated the Vision Framework planning process is an opportunity to update the community on the “Action Plan” items from Chapter 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Vision Framework goals and recommendations will be considered for incorporation in the current Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle; where applicable, goals and recommendations will be included in the amended plan. Additionally, Chapter 5, the Housing Element, of the Comprehensive Plan contains policy guidance that applies to the District of Columbia as a whole.