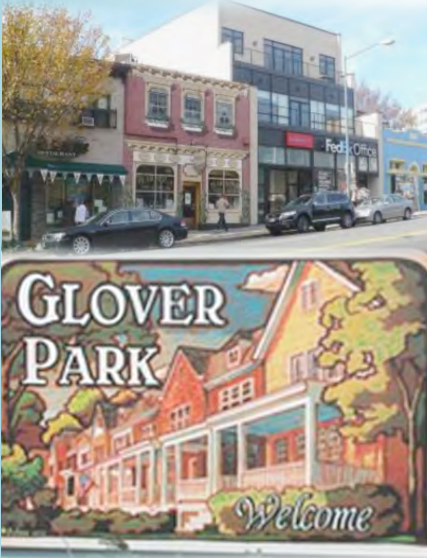




AFTER THE SMALL AREA PLANS

## After the Glover Park

### Commercial District Analysis Snapshots of Progress Made Since the Adoption of the Plan...



In the spring of 2006 the District of Columbia's Office of Planning (OP) engaged HNTB Corporation to study retail, public realm, mobility and parking improvement strategies for the Glover Park Commercial District along Wisconsin Avenue in Northwest Washington. This action was taken in response to community requests for a study that would list implementable solutions to a perceived high turn-over and vacancy rate in the neighborhood retail strip, as well as, a general sense that the corridor was underperforming compared to the high purchasing power and average incomes of its residents.

OP and HNTB's main objective of the Glover Park Commercial District Analysis (the Analysis) was to develop a strategy that would promote commercial vibrancy while protecting residential character, promote walkability, maximize the use of existing parking resources, and improve the sense of place.

The study process included two public meetings, consultation with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, and interagency coordination. OP released the Glover Park Commercial District Analysis in October of 2006.



Government of the District of Columbia  
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor

### WHAT' IS "asap"?

This document, *After Small Area Plan* report (asap) has been created to help report the progress made and to assess implementation efforts since completion of the Analysis in 2006. Although the analysis is not officially a Small Area Plan (SAP), OP decided to use the ASAP format to provide an update on the progress made.

### STUDY AREA

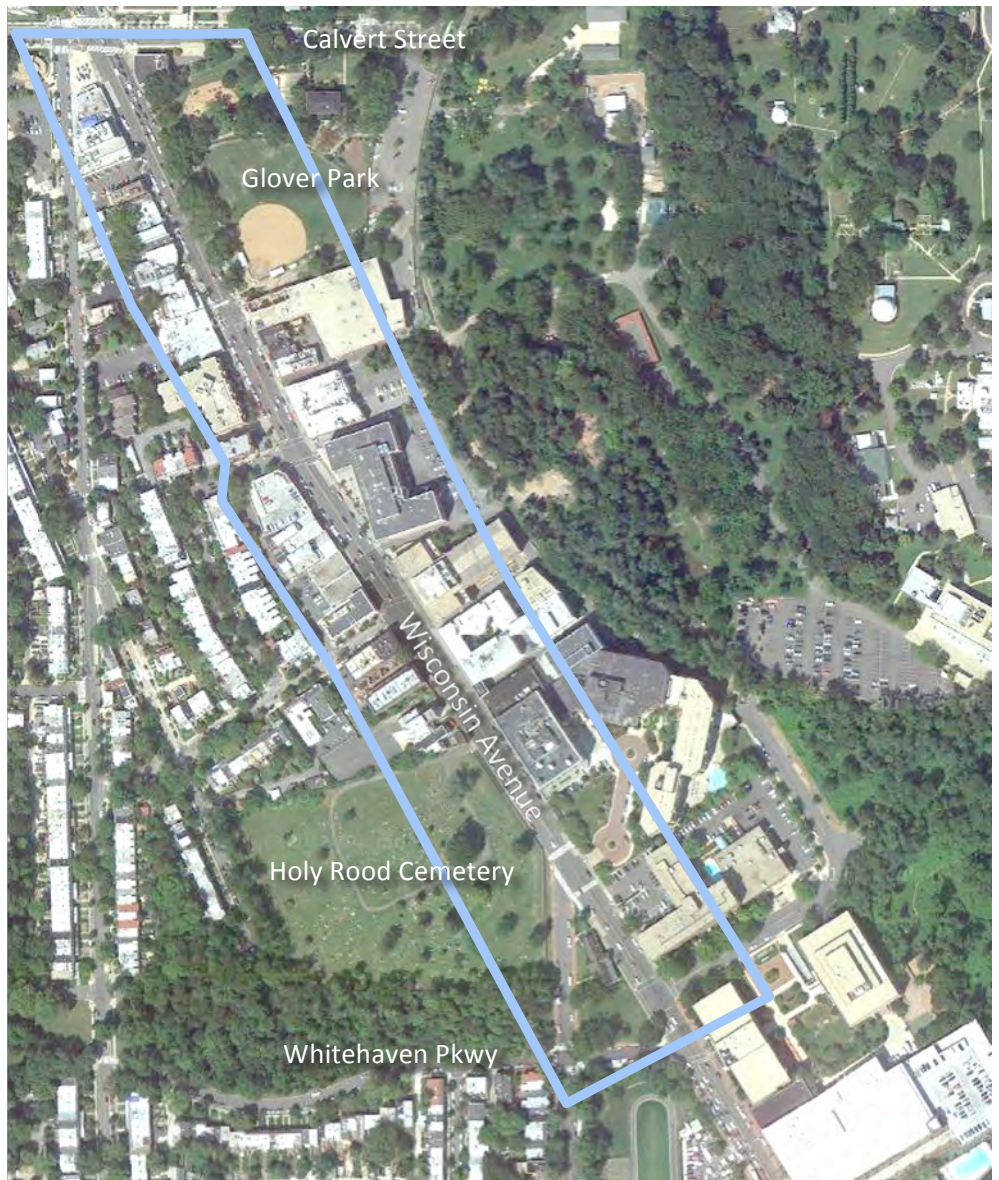
The original 2006 study area includes the buildings and lots that front on Wisconsin Avenue from Whitehaven Parkway to Calvert Street as well as the few businesses which have entrances on 37th Street near the intersection of Wisconsin and Calvert.

### GLOVER PARK-THEN AND NOW

The Glover Park Commercial District is surrounded by stable, well established neighborhoods including Glover Park, Massachusetts Avenue Heights, and Tunlaw. The residents of this area include a mix of older residents who have lived here for decades, families with young children, single professionals,

and students living in group houses. Census data from 2000 and 2010 show a stable neighborhood that has experienced population gains in the past ten years higher than the District average. This is mainly due to generational rejuvenation in the community with young families with children moving in. The total population in the Glover Park and Burleigh neighborhoods (Census Tracts 3, 4, 7.01 and 7.02) climbed to roughly 9,600 in 2010 from 9,000 in 2000—a 6.6% increase that outpaces D.C.'s overall rate of population growth of 5.2%. The population's median income is still well above the rest of the city.

The 2006 Analysis estimated the total retail floor area within the Glover Park Commercial District to be between 175,000 and 190,000 square feet – since no major commercial development has occurred since, those numbers would apply to 2011. The 2006 Analysis estimated the retail vacancy rate at 2.4% and, although today vacancies persist on the Avenue, recent years have seen some gains, especially in the numbers of restaurants (see further discussion in the next pages).



Study Area



Above, from top to bottom the Guy Mason fence before and after



New pay-and-display meters

### ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF THE GLOVER PARK COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND THE STUDY

The Glover Park commercial district is one of the most diversified, successful and resilient neighborhood-serving commercial corridors in Washington, DC. The commercial district offers a variety of quality neighborhood amenities including a wide range of restaurant varieties, a post office, a Whole-Foods market, a hardware store, gyms, a pharmacy, and more as well as a beautiful community park with a large playground, baseball field and recreation center. The commercial district has also seen a high retail turnover over the past few years, which has been a concern among residents.

**New Investment:** Overall, in the past 5 years, the Avenue has seen a steady flow of private investment, including new commercial building construction and renovations, which show investors' confidence in the viability of the commercial strip.

### Select Private Investment Since 2006

Surfside, Fed-Ex Kinko/Bank of America (new construction), Z-Burgers, 2412 Wisconsin new construction, Gin & Tonic, Kitchen, Bourbon, Blue Ridge, Chipotle, Bruggers Bagels, Body Smith Personal Trainer, 2128 Wisconsin new construction, Field English, Tennis Zone, Angelico Pizzeria, Breadsoda.

**Design and Architecture:** One of the persistent problems with the retail strip has to do with the mismatch of architecture and unfriendly design of some of its buildings. Most of the newer buildings on this commercial strip have been built with overly generous set-backs, dark porticos, elevated plazas and other architectural barriers that make a comfortable and enjoyable pedestrian and shopping experience much more difficult. Unsurprisingly, most of the vacant retail spaces and the highest retail turnover since 2006 seem to be clustered in these less than ideal retail spaces at the southeastern most end of the study area. Thus the recent recession might have affected more dramatically the retail that was already made vulnerable by design issues.

**Vacancy in perspective:** Even with the negative financial, lending, and consumer environment of the past years, when comparing today's retail supply and vacancy rates with those of pre-crisis 2006, Glover Park's relative low number of vacancies, present rate of private investment and still strong retail diversification, show a strong resilience and strength of the corridor.

**Study Implementation Summary:** Following the Analysis recommendations, District agencies have invested heavily in upgrading Glover Park's infrastructure in the past 5 years, with most of the investments actually going beyond what was recommended.

By summer of 2011, the District will have invested \$4.7 million to upgrade Guy Mason Park's Recreation Center. Previously, DPR changed the old fence along Wisconsin Avenue with a new ornamental fence (as recommended in OP's study) and installed a new Baseball Diamond barrier net. Recently, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has also added a new Capital Bikeshare Station in the neighborhood.

As per OP's Analysis, DDOT replaced most of the old coin meters along the Avenue with new pay-and-display meters in 2010. DDOT also conducted its own transportation study of the area between February 2007 and June 2009.

As a result DDOT will be investing \$3 million in streetscape improvements along the Avenue starting in fall 2011. This investment will include new ornamental street lights, sidewalk widening, new tree boxes and trees, new traffic lights, a painted median, and pedestrian safety improvements at the Chevron Station.

Although, the bulk of the public investment in Glover Park still has to materialize some of the smaller investments have already had some positive impact on the retail. For instance, the new parking meters created more parking spaces and make it easier for people to stop and shop in the area as they don't require coins.

### SUMMARY OF SUCCESS

By the end of the 2011 fall most of the Study recommendations that require capital improvement by District agencies will be implemented with a total public investment in the corridor of about \$10 million dollars. A few other recommendations that require monitoring and maintenance by the District will be ongoing into the future. The other remaining actions that require community initiative (e.g. establishing an association of retailers) will be implemented when the opportunity arises. In addition to public investment, in the face of a financial downturn, the private sector has kept on investing in Glover Park filling up most vacancies, creating new and more successful businesses making Glover Park a thriving retail strip."

### Public Investment Summary

#### 2006 to 2011 public investment to date

- Guy Mason park and recreation center: \$5 million (2006 - 2011 DPR)
- 2 Capital Bike Share Stations \$90,000 (2010 - 2011 DDOT)
- New pay-and-display parking meters: 18 meters x \$7,140 = \$128,520 (2009 DDOT)

**Next Steps and Future Outlook:** With the economy slowly recovering and the planned infrastructure improvements nearing construction, Glover Park's future is looking bright. Currently the ANC is surveying area residents for their opinions on parking solutions through a widespread survey and is working with DDOT on potential implementation strategies. A few more recommendations from the 2006 Study still need to be implemented especially as it relates to helping willing local businesses organize in an association of retailers. As opportunities to implement the few remaining recommendations arise, OP will be ready to lend support to the ANC, GPCA, private merchants and property owners to further them.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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