

1: INTRODUCTION

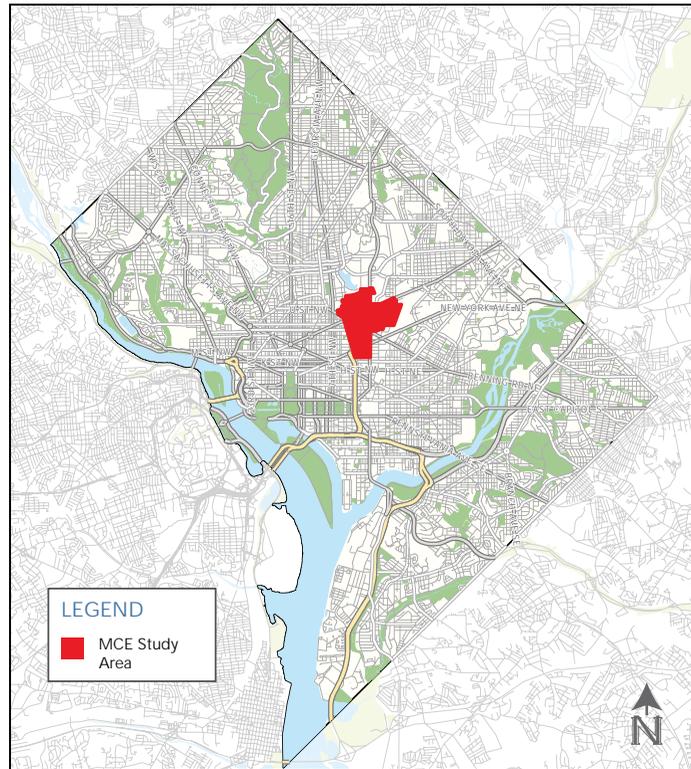


Fig. 1.1 Study Area in Context

OVERVIEW

Mid City East is the name given to the planning area comprised of a group of neighborhoods including Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover, Bloomingdale, Eckington, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda, as well as portions of Edgewood and Stronghold. These architecturally rich, culturally diverse, and vibrant urban neighborhoods are rich with community, yet wrestling with concerns

including architecturally inconsistent development, struggling retail and commercial corridors, increasingly expensive housing, inadequate green space, traffic, and barriers to connectivity. The DC Office of Planning (OP), in collaboration with DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), residents, property and business owners, an Advisory Committee, District agencies, and a consultant team, led an interactive community-based process to develop recommendations for the Mid City East Small Area Plan, a framework for the preserving of historic resources, revitalizing commercial corridors and retail, increasing diverse housing options, integrating green infrastructure, cultivating development opportunities, and improving the connectivity.

WHAT IS A SMALL AREA PLAN?

Small Area Plans provide a framework for the strategic development, redevelopment and/or preservation of neighborhoods and corridors. They address the District's planning goals on a more localized level and supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for the development of city blocks, corridors, and neighborhoods. They allow citizens to develop strategic priorities that will shape future development in their neighborhoods, identify gaps and opportunities in city services and resources deployed at the neighborhood level, and shape critical capital budget decisions and agency investment priorities. Small Area Plans are submitted to the DC Council for approval. The community vision, existing conditions and market analysis, recommendations, and implementation strategy of the Mid City East Small Area Plan are outlined in this report. The DC Department of

Transportation (DDOT) concurrently developed the Mid City East Livability Study. The Small Area Plan team coordinated with the Livability Study team throughout the process. The Mid City East plan supports the implementation of DDOT's Livability Study and its recommendations have been integrated into the Small Area Plan.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Mid City East planning area is centrally located in the District of Columbia, just north of the Capitol and northeast of downtown. **See Fig. 1.1.** The neighborhoods of Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover, Bloomingdale, Eckington, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda, form the Mid City East planning area which all have edges along North Capitol Street and include parts of Ward 1, Ward 5 and Ward 6. **See Fig. 1.2.** The planning area encompasses approximately 480 acres and is traversed by 5 major vehicular corridors including approximately 1¼ miles of North Capitol Street, approximately 1 mile of Rhode Island Avenue, approximately 1 mile of New Jersey Avenue, approximately 1/2 mile of Florida Avenue, and approximately 1/4 mile of New York Avenue. **See Fig. 1.3.**

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Mid City East study area is surrounded by a number of neighborhoods for which plans and studies have been developed in the last decade. These plans and studies include Howard University's 2011 Campus Master Plan, the 2006 Northwest One Redevelopment Plan, the 2009 ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report for the North Capitol

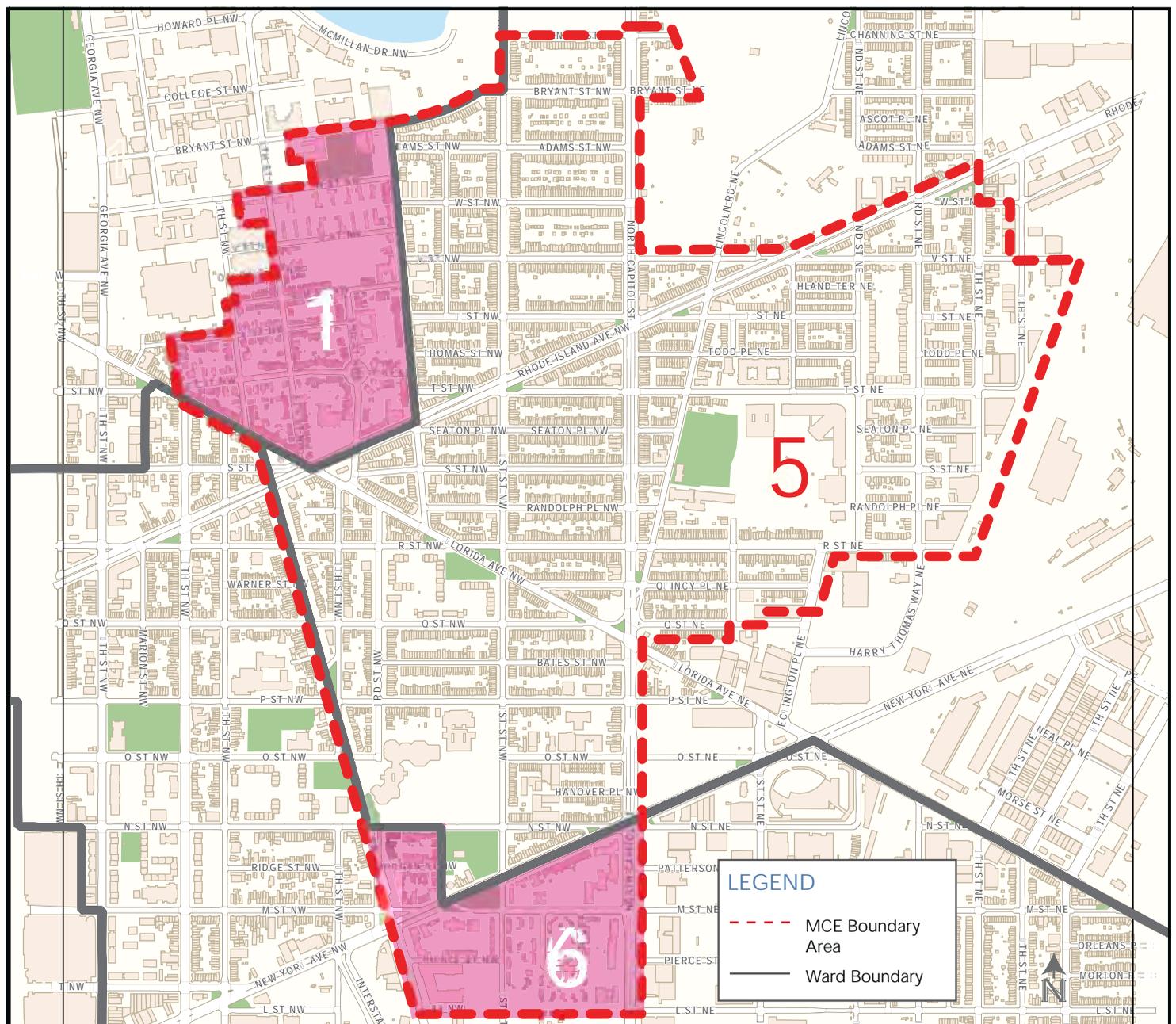


Fig. 1.2 Ward Boundary Map

Main Street, and the NoMa Vision Plan and Development Strategy. In addition to these planning efforts for nearby areas, the Mid City East Small Area Plan is also guided by city-wide initiatives including the Comprehensive Plan as the foundation, the Mayor’s One City Action Agenda, the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit, the Mayor’s Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, the Sustainable DC Plan, and DDOT’s Public Realm Design Manual. Recognizing the ongoing evolution of the District’s neighborhoods and the rapid changes facing them, residents of the Mid City East study area proactively led the charge to initiate this planning process.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The Mid City East Small Area Plan was developed through an extensive on-the-ground and creative online community engagement and public participation process. This process ensured that residents and stakeholders developed the vision and goals of the plan, and had numerous opportunities to engage, provide ideas, participate, and give feedback throughout the planning process.

OP directed the consultants in developing the plan through field work, observation, documentation, review of relevant plans and studies, analysis, public meetings, discussions with residents, and feedback from the project’s online engagement site. The consultant team studied existing physical conditions within Mid City East, including the urban design of neighborhoods and corridors, the public realm, parks and green space, and sustainability. Findings were documented through mapping tools and the analyses illustrated with drawings and diagrams.

Alternative concepts for achieving the goals of the plan were developed to test and vet ideas. Plans, supporting diagrams, and 3-D models were utilized to graphically illustrate ideas and recommendations of the Plan.

Through historic research, surveys, consultation with the DC Historic Preservation Office, and discussions with residents, the consultant team conducted an analysis of existing historic and cultural resources. This analysis included the identification of potential landmarks and historic districts and the examination of neighborhood-specific preservation planning tools that could maintain and enhance neighborhood character.

The consultant team also conducted an analysis of market conditions, and utilized the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit to assess existing retail within the study area. Based on these methods, and in collaboration with the Office of Planning, recommendations for commercial revitalization, redevelopment and housing opportunities were developed. Recommendations are grounded in a quantitative analysis of existing demographic and real estate market conditions in Mid City East, as well as a qualitative evaluation of the neighborhood's relative strengths and weaknesses in comparison to competing commercial districts. Through discussions with neighborhood residents, business operators, and property owners, the team developed specific strategies on how to fill market voids, address current operational deficiencies, and create a shared vision for future economic diversification and commercial vitality.



Fig. 1.3 Mid City East Study Area



US Capitol View from North Capitol Street at Rhode Island Avenue

A HIGH COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Mid City East Small Area Plan at its core is a community-based plan guided by market centered solutions and a shared vision and principles. To ensure a successful and comprehensive planning process for the Mid City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study, the DC Office of Planning (OP) and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) developed an extensive, multi-faceted engagement strategy that placed an emphasis on both traditional and innovative methods of outreach. Both agencies were committed to thinking “outside the box” and launching a public engagement process that would attract and involve the greatest number of community residents and stakeholders within the study area.

Prior to kicking off the planning effort, the Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation actively attended Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and Single Member District (SMD) meetings as well as civic association and Advisory Committee meetings to get the word out about the unique joint planning effort which would result in a Small Area Plan and a Livability Study.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

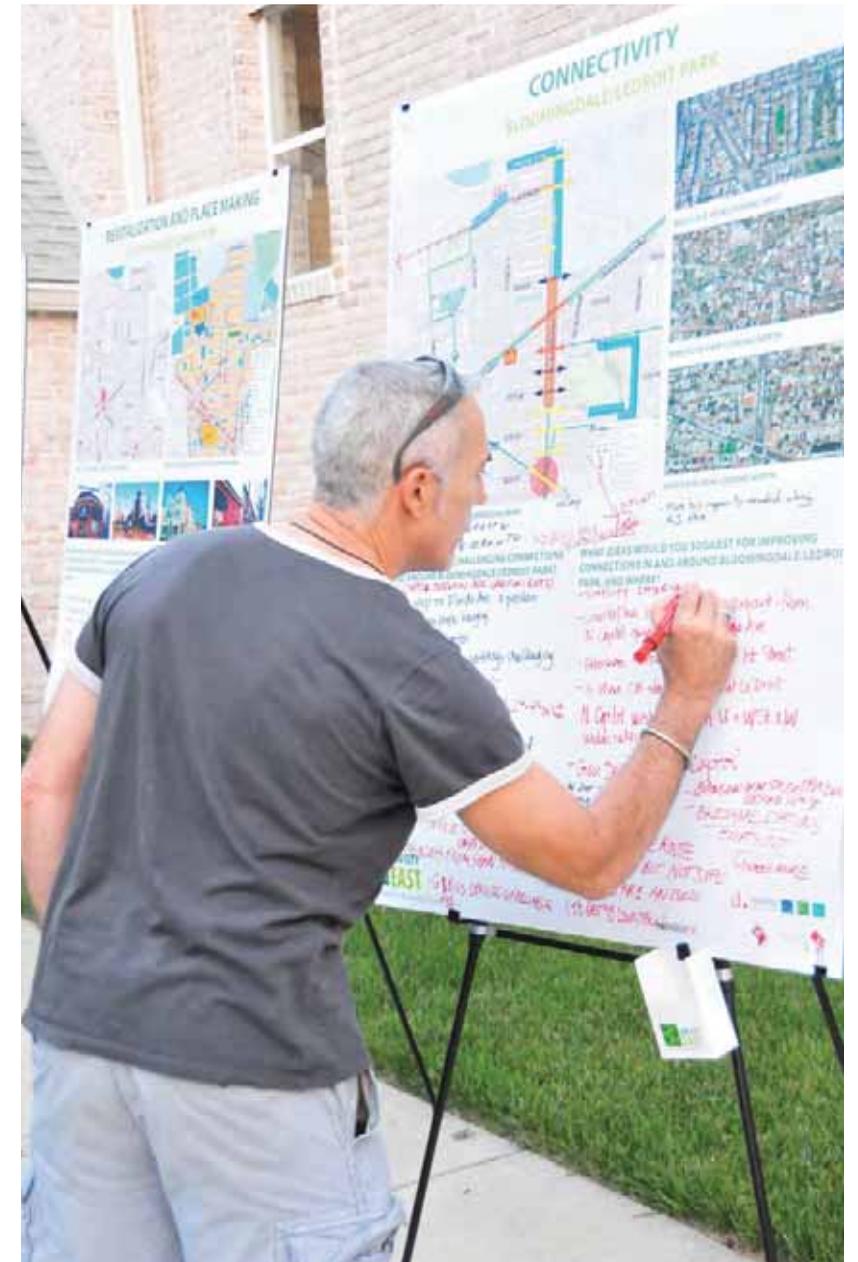
An Advisory Committee was established at the beginning of the process with approximately 20 members meeting for the first time on February 28, 2013 at the Fab Lab located on North Capitol Street NW. The Advisory Committee was comprised of representatives from the councilmembers of Wards

1, 5, and 6, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, leaders of civic associations and local businesses within the study area. Howard University, the NoMa BID, and Common Good City Farm were also members of the Advisory Committee.

Prior to each public meeting, the Advisory Committee was convened to preview completed components of the study and provide feedback. In total, the Advisory Committee met four times, with additional meetings held by a subgroup consisting of business owners. The role of the Advisory Committee was to provide guidance and feedback about elements of the plan from the perspective of their constituencies.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

To ensure a collaborative process that resulted in an implementable plan, an Interagency Committee was formed. Representatives from the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), District Department of the Environment (DDOE), DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), the Department of General Services (DGS), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and DC Water met to discuss the Mid City East planning area and develop coordinated, actionable solutions, and agreement on recommendations.



Focus Area Meeting Three for Bloomingdale/LeDroit Neighborhood
June 20, 2014, St. George's Episcopal Church

ON-THE-GROUND

During the course of the planning effort, public meetings and interactive open houses were convened to engage community members and inform them of Small Area Plan progress. Each public meeting included a presentation which provided an update on the findings of the planning process as well as a series of topic-specific, facilitated, and interactive stations. Public meetings were important to the planning process as opportunities for participants to express ideas, provide feedback and build consensus around the draft plan.

A **Kick-off Public Meeting** and **Open House** was held on April 27, 2013 at the Community Academy Public Charter School located at First and P Streets NW.

Focus Area Meetings were tailored to emphasize the specific characteristics of a targeted segment of the study area and to convey findings of technical analyses. A total of four focus area meetings were held:

- #1 - Sursum Corda - 06/08/2013
- #2 - Eckington - 06/12/2013
- #3 - LeDroit Park/ Bloomingdale - 06/20/2013
- #4 - Truxton Circle/Bates/Hanover - 06/24/2013

Business Focus Group Meetings engaged local business and property owners to discuss issues, opportunities and build consensus around recommendations for the Mid City East study area.

An **Early Implementation Committee** was established to assist in planning for early implementation of some recommendations introduced in the Small Area Plan.

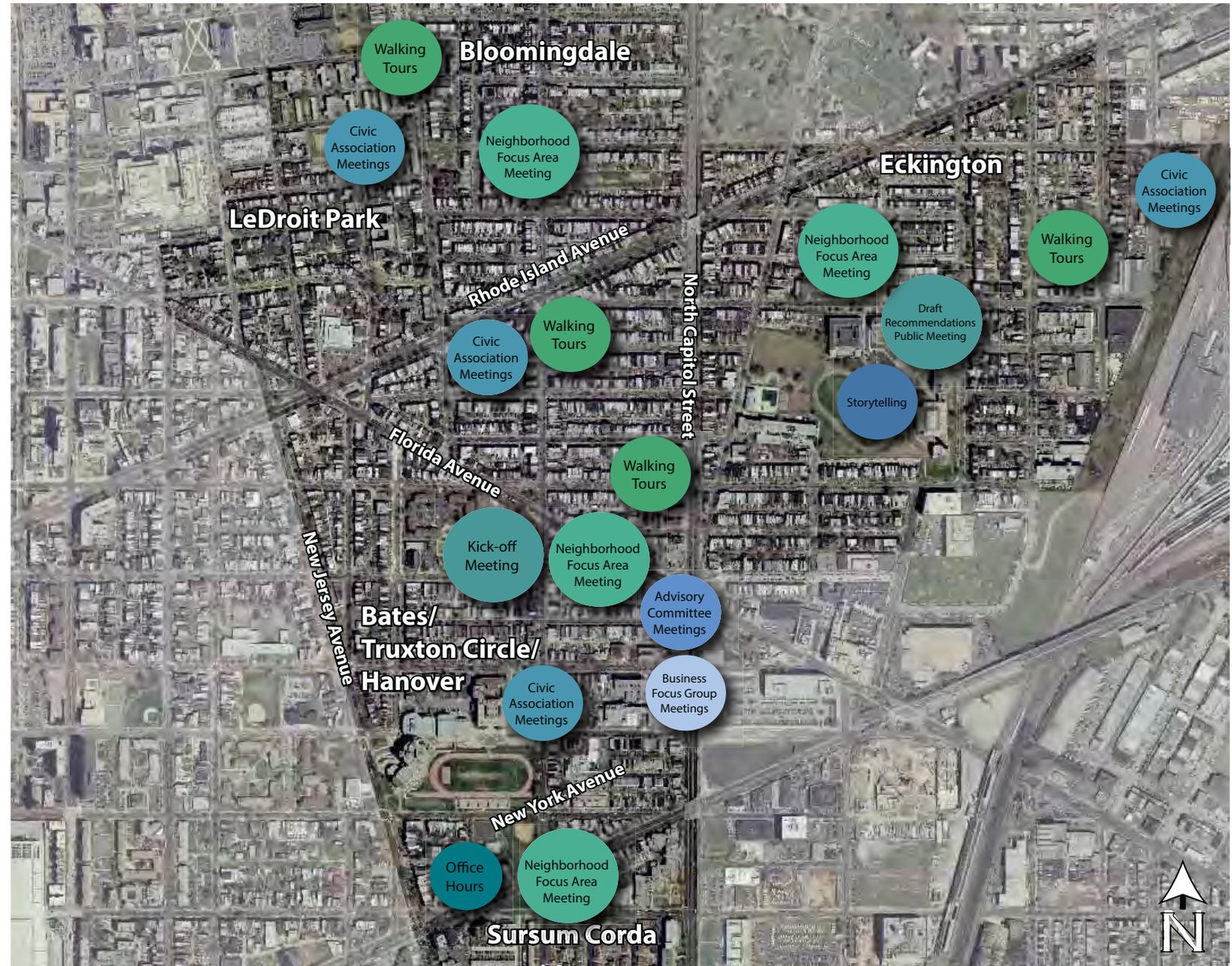


Fig. 1.4 - Community Engagement Map