



Chevy Chase Small Area Plan – Public Kick Off Meeting Summary Thursday, March 04, 2021 6:30-8:30pm

The Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Public Kick-Off Meeting was hosted by the DC Office Planning using the Public Input platform, and streamed live at [www.publicinput.com/chevychase](https://publicinput.com/chevychase) between 6:30pm – 8:30pm on Thursday, March 4, 2021. Participants were able to view the meeting and engage in the chat function without requiring a pre-registration or log in. Participants were also able to call in to the project phone number to both listen to the meeting offline or ask a question during the Question and Answer period during the second half of the meeting. The meeting video and slides are posted on the project webpage under “Past Events”. <https://publicinput.com/chevychase>

The meeting recorded **196** registrants, **218** participants, and a peak of about **320** viewers.

The meeting chat was open from February 10 through March 9. A total of **497** messages were posted to the chat, with the majority during and following the meeting. Some of the messages included posts by OP staff responding in real time to questions and comments during the meeting.

Meeting participants shared various issues with the technology and experience before, during, and after the meeting, including:

- Posting under a different name in the chat function (notably, multiple participants were posting as DC Office of Planning project manager Erkin Ozberk).
- Participants were also able to post chat messages anonymously.
- The chat function and meeting video would sometimes freeze and require the page to be refreshed.

DC Office of Planning staff is addressing these issues and exploring solutions with the software vendor.

This Meeting Summary includes:

1. Meeting Agenda and Presentation
2. Participant responses to the prompt:
3. Summary of Questions and responses from the Chat

1. Meeting Agenda and Presentation

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, the project team members, project timeline and major milestones, and discuss how the projects fits within the broader planning and land use regulatory framework in DC and connects with ongoing projects in and around Chevy Chase.

Opening Remarks were provided by:

- Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh
- Commissioner Randy Speck, ANC 3/4G SMD07

DC Government representatives in attendance were introduced:

- Anita Cozart, Deputy Director, DC Office of Planning
- Melissa Bird, Acting Associate Director, DC Office of Planning
- Erkin Ozberk, Project Manager, DC Office of Planning
- Heba ElGawish, DC Office of Planning
- Ashley Stephens, DC Office of Planning
- Faith Broderick, DC Office of Planning
- Danilo Pelletiere, DC Department of Housing and Community Development
- Jaspreet Pahwa, DC Public Library

Erkin Ozberk and Heba ElGawish led a presentation covering:

- What is a Small Area Plan and what role it will play in the future of Chevy Chase.
- What topics are focal to the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan.
- How to participate in the planning process and stay involved.

Some questions from the chat or by phone were highlighted or addressed throughout the presentation. The meeting concluded with a more structured “Question and Answer” period alternating between phone-in questions and questions from the chat.

2. Participant Responses to the Prompt: “What Does Equity Mean to You?”

On slide 19/32, the definition of equity from the Comprehensive Plan was shared: “equity exists where all people share equal rights, access, choice, opportunities and outcomes, regardless of characteristics such as race, class, or gender,” and participants were asked what equity means to them, and encouraged to post in the chat. Nine comments were recorded in response to this prompt:

1. “If we are going to center around equity in this work (which we absolutely should), I think we (the neighborhood) need to have better frameworks to understanding equity (particularly as it needs to show up in planning/development) and language to

collectively talk about equity to help form the vision for this small area plan. To what extent is that type of work planned for this process? And whatever it is, I'm going to take a guess that it might not be enough. Is there the opportunity to expand the engagement around this planning process?" – Ann Willemsen

2. "Equity: How will SAP show that more housing in CC contribute to greater equity?" - Robert Gordon
3. "Equity would allow people of all means (not just "workforce") to live in Ward 3. Equity would deliver the kinds of services (schools, retail, transportation, health) to all wards, not just Ward 3." – Andrea Rosen
4. "One great equitable improvement would be to have dedicated housing for DC employees, teachers, police, firemen etc. who work in CC. Transferring billions of dollars of increased property values to out of state developers for nothing in return does not serve any equitable goals." – Jonathan Guy
5. "Equity means to me that more POC will be welcome and included in this area." – Rachel Gibson
6. "Equity both in terms of race and income level. I deeply believe it is important to provide for both. I think diversity give neighborhood more vitality and interest." – Susan
7. "Equity means a people-centered, not developer/corporate-centered approach. The city must subsidize production of a higher proportion of affordable housing in residences rather than a token percentage of affordable and the rest typical market rate." – Marelise Voss
8. "What is going to be done about the sidewalks? Diversity and equity also means that the elderly and those with a physical disability are able to walk with ease. There are sections of sidewalk that are jutting upward, making it very dangerous, and quite frankly, embarrassing. We need to take care of the basics first. Thank you." – Anthony Bugeja
9. "Equity for me means access for all to good neighborhood public schools that are not overcrowded." - Tim Abrams

3. Summary of Questions from the Chat with Responses.

Below is a summary of questions that have been identified out of the 497 comments posted in the chat. These questions were grouped in categories with a response outlined under each question. If your question was posted to the chat and is not reflected here, email the project team at ChevyChasePlan@dc.gov. Also, sign up for Virtual Office Hours to connect with the project team directly at <https://publicinput.com/chevychase>.

Zoning and Land Use

What are the specifics of zoning changes based on the proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map?

On the Connecticut Avenue corridor, the proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designation of Moderate Density Residential/Low Density Commercial would be not inconsistent with an MU-4 Zone, a common mixed use zone in the District. In order to modify an existing zoning designation, a property owner must petition the Zoning Commission, part of a public process where ANCs and community members may testify at a public hearing.

What is the framework for additional density for affordable housing? What is the impact on height and density?

Two ways that affordable housing can be produced with additional density incentives are through the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) (IZ) program or through a Planned Unit Development (PUD). For IZ, the additional height (measured in feet) and density (measured in Floor Area Ratio and percentage of lot coverage) incentivized for the inclusion of dedicated affordable units are outlined for each individual zone. In a PUD, additional height and density, at the discretion of the Zoning Commission, are reviewed as a part of a public process where ANCs and community members may testify at a public hearing.

Learn more about IZ: <https://dhcd.dc.gov/service/inclusionary-zoning-iz-affordable-housing-program> and PUDs: <https://handbook.dcoz.dc.gov/zoning-rules/general-procedures/planned-unit-developments/>).

Will zoning only change along Connecticut Ave or will the Small Area Plan also look at zoning changes for the adjacent areas within the study boundary?

While the Small Area Plan land use and zoning recommendations will be focused on Connecticut Ave, land use recommendations may also be proposed for adjacent areas based on community input. However, the Small Area Plan in and of itself, does not change zoning. Zoning Map Amendments (ZMA) are typically initiated by property owners and are subject to Zoning Commission review, part of a public process where ANCs and community members may testify at a public hearing.

Is the Zoning Commission required to look at the Small Area Plans when making zoning decisions?

Yes. Small Area Plans supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for areas to manage growth, promote revitalization, or achieve other long-range planning goals. Together they guide zoning decisions made by the Zoning Commission after a public hearing. [See this one-pager on how a Small Area Plan relates to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and Future Redevelopment.](#)

Where in this process will we identify locations for new parking garages?

New construction is subject to Minimum Vehicle Parking Requirements outlined in Chapter 11-C7 Vehicle Parking of the Zoning Regulations: https://dcoz.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcoz/publication/attachments/Subtitle%20C_16.pdf

Infrastructure

What are the plans to match infrastructure needs to this increased density?

This planning process offers an opportunity to assess infrastructure needs likely to be associated with the anticipated growth in Chevy Chase. As the Small Area Plan goals and recommendations are developed, infrastructure implementation strategies may be outlined to inform capital investment and ensure alignment with other District agencies around infrastructure needs.

How does the Conn Ave Reversible Lanes study mesh with this Small Area plan?

Through the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan process, the Office of Planning project team is coordinating with various District agencies on other ongoing initiatives within the study area, including the Connecticut Avenue Reversible Lane Study. OP has convened an Interagency Working Group for the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan which includes representatives from District Department of Transportation (DDOT).

Will DCPS be speaking at any of these public meetings? There seems to be a fair bit of concern about the future of already overcrowded Ward 3 schools.

The OP project team is coordinating with the office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) and District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) for the Small Area Plan. Staff from these agencies will be invited to participate in future meetings and plan activities.

Will the plan include Transportation issues such as complete streets modifications, or shuttles to Metro and other commercial areas on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues?

Transportation recommendations can be included in the Small Area Plan. Safe and comfortable mobility through the neighborhood and to the commercial district on Connecticut Avenue are a focus topic of the Small Area Plan with an emphasis on walkability and pedestrian safety.

Housing

Aside from private development, what other strategies and financing options for non-profits, cooperatives, and community land trusts are considered?

There are numerous approaches to property development in the District. Some common forms are fully private market rate development, public-private partnerships, and public-public partnerships. Market rate development is typically privately financed. Public-private partnerships are common in the District and they take many different forms including public financing, tax exempt bond financing, federal tax credits, and ground leases. Public-public partnerships are between separate governmental entities, such as the District Department of Parks and Recreation and DC Public Library. A listing of the range of public resources related to housing is available here: <https://housing.dc.gov/page/housing-dc-resident-resources>

Can the City work with developers who regularly tear down small historic homes, then build the biggest possible home on the lot that the law will allow; and instead have them build the same size structure with multiple units?

Within the Small Area Plan area, the current zoning (R-1-B and R2) and underlying low density residential land use in the Comprehensive Plan does not permit for conversion of single dwelling homes to multiple dwelling homes, with the exception of provisions for the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). An ADU is a dwelling unit that meets certain development standards but is owned by the primary property owner and can be rented (but not separately owned).

Does “affordable housing” just include income restricted housing, or can it also include housing at a range of price points (subsidized or market) that increases housing opportunities for the many who are priced out of the current housing market?

Dedicated affordable housing is defined as income- and rent-restricted housing supported or subsidized by local and federal programs for households ranging from extremely low-income earning less than 30 percent of the Median Family Income (MFI) up to households earning less than 80 percent of the MFI. **Naturally occurring affordable housing**, in contrast, is unsubsidized and not income-restricted but rather is privately-owned housing with market-based rents affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. Read more detailed definitions and examples in the 2019 Housing Equity Report:

https://housing.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/housingdc/page_content/attachments/Housing%20Equity%20Report%2010-15-19.pdf

Recreation Center and Library

Will the Small Area Plan consider combining the redevelopment of the Recreation Center and Library into a multi-purpose civic building?

Yes. The Small Area Plan process includes representatives from DC Public Library and the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Housing and Community Development to explore opportunities for a multi-purpose civic building.

What is "co-location?"

Co-location is the reuse of a publicly owned site in a manner that accommodates a combination of public and/or private uses. Presently, the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center are co-located facilities (though in separate buildings) on one District-owned property. The proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan Community Services and Facilities Element includes more policy language around co-location:

[https://plandc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/Comprehensiveplan/publication/attachments/Chapter%2011 Community-Service%26Facilities April2020.pdf](https://plandc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/Comprehensiveplan/publication/attachments/Chapter%2011%20Community-Service%26Facilities%20April2020.pdf)

Design

Will Visioning actually deal with physical attributes and modeling or just policies?

The Visioning phase will set a baseline on how the community views their neighborhood, start to generate high-level aspirations for the future, and develop a vision that will guide plan recommendations. Following the Visioning phase will be Plan Development where we will work with the community and the CAC on objectives and strategies to implement the plan vision. During this phase, there will be a focus on building form and urban design which we will explore through a Design Charrette currently anticipated to be held in late Spring/early Summer of 2021. The Design Charrette will be an opportunity to explore the elements of land use, housing, and any other recommendations that impact the built form and how those could fit within the fabric and context of Chevy Chase. See the [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Process](#) and [Spring Engagement Timeline](#).

Historic Preservation

Will the plan look into historic district protections?

The Ward 3 Heritage Guide recognizes that many buildings and collections of buildings in Chevy Chase are eligible for historic landmark and/or historic district designation as identified in its list of historically and architecturally notable and eligible properties. The Small Area Plan can encourage the community to pursue landmark designations of eligible properties and/or historic district designation as community desire and support warrant it. The Small Area Plan itself will not consider any alternative types of historic protection. Link to the Ward 3 Heritage Guide: <https://planning.dc.gov/publication/ward-3-heritage-guide>

Economic development

How will you protect the local small business owners?

Many small area plans make recommendations around the retention, support, and expansion of opportunities for existing and future small businesses. Building on policies and actions in the

Comprehensive Plan Update to support local small businesses, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan may include specific recommendations to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and other market forces on the retail mix in the study area. The OP project team is also coordinating with the newly established Chevy Chase Main Street and its funding agency, the District Department of Small and Local Business (DSLBD) throughout the planning process. A member of the Chevy Chase Main Street's Strategic Council is a member of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Community Advisory Committee.

What will be the relationship between the SAP and the Main Street Project?

The OP project team is coordinating with the newly established Chevy Chase Main Street and its funding agency, the District Department of Small and Local Business (DSLBD) for the Small Area Plan. A member of the Chevy Chase Main Street's Strategic Council is a member of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Community Advisory Committee.

Community Engagement

What is the set of activities interested residents can participate in, and the timeline? Will there be charrettes on different topics?

There are a variety of ways that interested residents can participate in this planning process. The Office of Planning project team will be scheduling a series of Virtual Office Hours and outdoor "Ask a Planner" events during the Spring. Dates and times will be posted on the project website and announced through newsletters, listservs, Nexdoor, and flyers. Also in the Spring, we will be launching an online Visioning Survey that is intended to set a baseline on how the community views their neighborhood and start to generate high-level aspirations for the future. Concurrent with the survey, there will be a number of smaller group virtual visioning workshops to provide an opportunity for more interactive participation and dialogue. See the [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Process](#) and [Spring Engagement Timeline](#).

How does the community have input from now on?

Following the Visioning phase, in late Spring/early Summer engagement activities will be more targeted toward certain topics and themes. Those will include a Design Charrette and other events focused on topics such as housing and economic development. See the Small Area Plan Process and Spring Engagement Timeline here: <https://publicinput.com/chevychase>. Finally, we welcome thoughts and ideas anytime via email at chevychaseplan@dc.gov.

Process

Will the Council Office of Racial Equity review the final recommendations and weigh in on the process?

OP will have to confer with the newly formed Council Office of Racial Equity on how they will review recommendations and weigh in on the Small Area Plan.

Can you provide a flow chart that shows the decision-making process for the growth of the SAP area and to any change to the rules governing density and height limitations? Who makes the decisions at each stage of the process?

There are a number of documents and processes that guide growth in the District. The Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) is a high-level guiding document that guides land use and sets a positive, long-term vision for the District, through the lens of its physical growth and change. Small Area Plans supplement the Comp Plan by providing detailed direction for areas to manage growth, promote revitalization, or achieve other long-range planning goals. Together they guide zoning decisions made by the Zoning Commission after a public hearing. All these processes involve community engagement and public input.

How are you conducting your analysis of conditions?

The existing conditions analysis is being conducted with input and support from other District agencies and WMATA. The analysis is a data driven process that will explore ongoing change in the neighborhood as a baseline for understanding the effects of proposed land use changes. Using a combination of Census data and spatial datasets developed by District agencies, the existing conditions report typically include data and analysis around demographics, housing, land use, zoning, economy, transportation, infrastructure, environmental, and civic infrastructure.

Where can we find small area plans that have been completed in the past to see what they look like? Were any of them done in a gateway area like Chevy Chase?

Completed small area plans and other neighborhood planning activities from the past 20 years are available online and organized by ward, here:

<https://planning.dc.gov/neighborhoodplanning>

See the Upper Georgia Avenue Area Land Development Plan for an example with gateway recommendations at Eastern Avenue: <https://planning.dc.gov/publication/upper-georgia-avenue-area-land-development-plan>

Will you look at Chevy Chase Pavilion, Mazza, the Lord and Taylor site, and areas around Friendship Heights Metro as part of this study?

This Small Area Plan does not include areas west of 41st Street NW. The Friendship Heights area that includes Chevy Chase Pavilion, Mazza, the Lord and Taylor site, and areas around Friendship Heights Metro are identified in the Comprehensive Plan as part of a separate planning area along Wisconsin Avenue. Any anticipated changes in nearby Friendship Heights will be considered in terms of their impacts on Chevy Chase for this planning process.

What would the city like to see from Chevy Chase at the end of this process? What would be a successful end goal?

The Office of Planning defines a successful goal for small area plans as one that has broad community support as a product of a collaborative process in the pursuit of building a more inclusive, sustainable, and thriving neighborhood. In particular, a successful plan would advance the goals of achieving housing affordability and greater equity in Chevy Chase where people of all backgrounds and incomes are able to access the opportunities presented in this neighborhood.