

Planning in the District

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A Growing City

The District of Columbia gained another 12,392 residents between July 1, 2014 and July 1, 2015. The District's 2015 population estimate is now at 672,228, a 1.9 percent increase over the revised 2014 population number of 659,836. These numbers mean the District is again adding just over 1,000 residents a month after decreasing to 815 persons per month in the 2013-2014 time period. The continued growth in residents demonstrates that the District remains an attractive place to live and work. The District has added more than 70,000 residents since the 2010 census and just over 100,000 residents in the 15 years since the census in 2000. This trend puts the District on track to bypass its previous peak population in 1950 of 802,000 within the next two decades.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the main driver of the increase was domestic and international migration—people moving to the District from other parts of the United States, and from abroad. While net international migration made a greater contribution to the District's population growth than net domestic migration over the past year, net domestic migration expanded four times its previous year total and demonstrates that the District continues to attract residents from other U.S. states. The District's baby boom also continued into 2015. More than 9,000 babies were born to District resident mothers each year since 2008.

Over the past five years the District has averaged over 4,100 residential units filing for new construction permits with 2015 adding the most at 4,956 units. Similarly, in 2015 office experienced the absorption of over 1 million square feet, an 80 percent increase over 2014. This tremendous growth in population, and the complementary expansion in real estate, offer the potential for continued economic development and rising prosperity, but also demand that the District government is proactive in ensuring the benefits of our success reach all eight wards.

Planning For the Future - DC Office of Planning

The mission of the DC Office of Planning (OP) is to guide development of the District of Columbia, including the preservation and revitalization of our distinctive neighborhoods, by informing decisions, advancing strategic goals, encouraging the highest quality outcomes and engaging all communities. OP performs planning for historic preservation, public facilities, parks and open spaces and individual sites. In addition, OP engages in urban design, land use, and historic preservation review. OP also conducts historic resources research and community visioning, and manages, analyzes, maps and disseminates spatial and U.S. Census data. OP's role is to be the steward of the Comprehensive Plan, small area and other neighborhood-level plans and system plans ensuring that development within the District is in line with these plans and with District policies and priorities. The Office also serves to ensure that District interests are represented in the decision making of federal and independent bodies such as the National Capital Planning Commission, Commission on Fine Arts, Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment and Historic Preservation Review Board. Success in this role requires ongoing engagement with the community, stakeholders and elected officials, educating them on the elements of these plans, being responsive to concerns and recommending adjustments to development policies to ensure that short and long term development take place in a manner that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

OP is organized into seven divisions: Neighborhood Planning; Citywide Planning; Design Division; Historic Preservation, Development Review; State Data Center; and Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems. For more information on the DC Office of Planning and its divisions, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov>.

Comprehensive Plan of the National Capital: District Elements

The Home Rule Act requires the District government to develop a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital is comprised of two parts—the District Elements and the Federal Elements. The District's Comprehensive Plan, developed and managed by OP, constitutes the District Elements. The National Capital Planning Commission, a federal agency, develops the Federal Elements. The District's Comprehensive Plan establishes a 20-year vision and framework for the future development of the District of Columbia and includes goals, policies and action items as well as two maps. The District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan are available on OP's website at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

In 2006 a new Comprehensive Plan for the District was approved, which was the first major overhaul of the Plan. Subsequently, the first Amendment Cycle for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan was initiated in 2009. After concluding the approval process, the amendments officially became effective in 2011. The development of a new Comprehensive Plan for the District or amendments to the Plan requires approval by the Council of the District of Columbia (DC Council) and federal review and approval by the National Capital Planning Commission and the US Congress.

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements is organized around five core themes to guide planning in the District and support balancing an Inclusive City:

- Managing Growth and Change
- Creating Successful Neighborhoods
- Increasing Access to Education and Employment
- Connecting the Whole City
- Building Green and Healthy Communities

The District's Comprehensive Plan contains 13 Citywide Elements (chapters) that provide goals, policies and action items for land use issues that impact the entire city. The first Citywide Element is the Framework Element, which describes the District of Columbia's current conditions, data, trends and challenges. The 12 additional Citywide Elements are: Land Use; Transportation; Housing; Environmental Protection; Economic Development; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Urban Design; Historic Preservation; Community Services and Facilities; Educational Facilities; Infrastructure; and Arts and Culture. As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan serves to integrate the city's long-range land use planning and the District government's policies and initiatives over a wide range of topic areas—transportation, housing, recreation, community facilities, etc.—that directly impact residents' lives and fall under the purview of multiple District agencies.

There are also 10 Area Elements which provide goals, policies and action items that are specific to geographic areas of the city. Ward boundaries are not used because they can change during decennial redistricting. The Area Elements are: Capitol Hill; Central Washington; Far Northeast and Southeast; Far Southeast/Southwest; Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest; Mid-City East; Near Northwest; Rock Creek East; Rock Creek West; and Upper Northeast.

The Comprehensive Plan closes with an Implementation Element which discusses tools such as zoning and capital budgeting to implement the Plan. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan includes a Future Land Use Map and a Generalized Policy Map, which serve as geographical companions to the policies in the Comprehensive Plan document. The Future Land Use Map provides land use designations to show how land in the District is intended to be used. It does not necessarily show existing land use nor does it show zoning information. The Generalized Policy Map provides a visual representation of how the District is expected to change over twenty years and highlights areas where future growth and

change are expected to occur. Because they are also adopted by legislation, both maps carry the same legal weight as the text of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Implementation Element of the Comprehensive Plan directs the District to conduct periodic amendment cycles every four years and a complete rewrite every 12 years keep the Plan alive and relevant. With the first amendment cycle being completed in 2011, the Office of Planning is launching the second Amendment cycle to the District's Comprehensive Plan in spring 2016. This second Amendment cycle is intended to be responsive to the dynamic environment that the city is experiencing—including population, demographic and physical changes—faster than the 20-year timeframe of the Plan and to incorporate recommendations and other key content from Office of Planning and other recent District government plans and initiatives completed since the last set of amendments were submitted to the DC Council in 2010. Additionally, OP will create a new Resilience Element with policies and actions to advance the concept of resilience in the District as it impacts land use and community quality of life.

Family of Plans

The Comprehensive Plan can be thought of as the centerpiece of a “Family of Plans” that guide public policy in the District. Under the DC Code, the Comprehensive Plan is the one plan that guides the District's development, both broadly and in detail. Thus it carries special importance in that it provides overall direction and shapes all other physical plans that the District government adopts. In fact, all plans relating to the city's physical development should take their lead from the Comprehensive Plan, building on common goals and shared assumptions about the future. As the guide for all District planning, the Comprehensive Plan establishes the priorities and key actions that other plans address in greater detail. The broad direction it provides may be implemented through agency strategic plans, operational plans, and long-range systems plans on specific topics (such as parks or housing) and focused plans for small areas of the city.

The Comprehensive Plan is not intended to be a substitute for more detailed plans nor dictate precisely what other plans must cover. Rather, it is the one document that bridges all topics and is cross-cutting in its focus. It alone is the plan that looks at the “big picture” of how change will be managed in the District in the years ahead.

Land Use Planning Tools

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the DC Office of Planning creates other types of land use plans, informed and shaped by robust community engagement, that provide a vision and guidance for how the District's built environment should be developed or preserved into the future. OP's Neighborhood Planning division develops small area plans and other planning studies; coordinates and tracks plan implementation; provides neighborhood perspectives or neighborhood goals in citywide planning initiatives; produces and disseminates summaries of major public and private development and investment by ward; and acts as a liaison to elected officials and community stakeholders on land use, development, and planning issues. OP assigns planners to each ward of the District to work in collaboration with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, citizen associations, residents, businesses, elected officials, District agencies and Ward Councilmembers.

Since 2000, OP has completed more than 20 Small Area Plans (SAPs), adopted by the DC Council, with residents and stakeholders across District neighborhoods and commercial corridors. SAPs provide detailed recommendations for a specific neighborhood in support of the guidelines and strategies laid out in the Comprehensive Plan and its Area Elements. In addition to SAPs, more recently OP has created neighborhood-level Vision Frameworks. A Small Area Plan is an in-depth plan submitted to and adopted by the DC Council and typically includes recommendations to change land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan. By comparison, Vision Frameworks were conceived as a lighter, briefer, strategic planning effort which through targeted public outreach and data analysis would deliver a high level

vision for a neighborhood and identify key implementation items to direct public investment and private actions. As of spring 2016, OP is completing three Vision Frameworks for Adams Morgan; Van Ness; and Buzzard Point. Additionally, OP, through its Design Division, is completing the Downtown East Re-urbanization Study. This study lays out a set of strategies focused on the area on the doorstep of Union Station and at the crossroads of the downtown, Mount Vernon Triangle, and NoMA neighborhoods. This area also includes the large-scale Capitol Crossing air-rights development currently being constructed over the I-395 Center Leg Freeway which divided this area several decades ago as well as the future Union Station expansion.

For a complete list of all Office of Planning Small Area Plans and other neighborhood-level plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/small-area-plans-studies-and-reports>.

Planning by Ward

Ward 1

Introduction

Some of the District's best known residential neighborhoods can be found in Ward 1, many of which have great historic significance for the local African-American and Latino populations. While most of these neighborhoods are dominated by row houses, they are all distinct. Columbia Heights sits right in the middle of the ward, boasting beautiful historic townhomes, a major new commercial core and landmarks such as the Tivoli Theater. Adams Morgan is home to an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and bars, and has long been a center for city nightlife. This activity extends along the U Street Corridor, much of which serves as the southern boundary of the ward. Mount Pleasant is known for its unique townhouses, strong international cultural mix and leafy streets against the National Zoo and Rock Creek Park. The Pleasant Plains neighborhood is home to Howard University, which also abuts the townhouses and gracious Victorian homes of LeDroit Park and portions of the Shaw neighborhood. Sixteenth Street,

NW serves as a grand boulevard running through the center of the ward, lined with impressive apartment buildings, embassies, churches, and Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park. Ward 1 is a culturally rich section of the city that serves many functions for many different people.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that fall within Ward 1 include:

- **Mid-City** – The vast majority of Ward 1 is concurrent with this Area Element.
- **Rock Creek West** – This Area Element covers most of the Upper Northwest quadrant west of Rock Creek Park, including the small portion of the Woodley Park neighborhood belonging to Ward 1.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed a number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 1 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Mount Pleasant Street Revitalization Framework Plan:** A Small Area Plan adopted by the DC Council in 2010.
- **DUKE: Development Framework for a Cultural Destination District Within Washington, DC's Greater Shaw/U Street:** A Small Area Plan adopted by the DC Council in 2005.
- **Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metro Station Area and Corridor Plan:** A Small Area Plan adopted by the DC Council in 2006 and includes portions of Wards 1 and 4.
- **Convention Center Area Strategic Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan adopted by the DC Council in 2006 and covering areas of Ward 2 and Ward 6.

- **Mid City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study:** A Small Area Plan adopted by the DC Council in 2014 and provides a strategic framework for revitalization of Bates/Truxton Circle, Bloomingdale, Eckington, Hanover, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda, as well as sections of Edgewood and Stronghold. The study area is predominately in Ward 5, with portions of Wards 1 and 6.
- **Adams Morgan Vision Framework:** to be completed in spring 2016.

For more information on any of these plans, visit OP's website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 1 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 2

Introduction

Ward 2 is perhaps best known as the home of National Mall, the White House, monuments and museums. It is the place where many tourists and other visitors spend the bulk of their time, and includes the images most associated with Washington, DC in the national and international psyches. It also includes the Central Business District and the Federal Triangle where the highest concentration of office and jobs are in the city. However, Ward 2 is much more than this, encompassing some of the oldest residential neighborhoods in the city. To the west, is the neighborhood of Georgetown, a village older than the District of Columbia itself with one of the best restaurant and shopping areas in the city and home to Georgetown University. Foggy Bottom and the West End sit between Georgetown and Downtown, and include a mix of historic townhouses, apartment and office buildings. Sheridan-Kalorama and Dupont Circle are home to grand Victorian townhomes and stand-alone mansions, many of which are occupied by foreign embassies and chanceries. The Logan Circle, Mount Vernon Square, and Shaw neighborhoods have undergone significant changes in the last few years as houses are renovated and new multi-family and commercial development are

completed, particularly along the 14th Street corridor. Finally, most of Downtown DC sits within Ward 2. This area has seen tremendous growth and redevelopment as vacant buildings have been renovated, vacant lots built upon, and empty storefronts filled with new retail, restaurants, entertainment venues and museums.



CityCenterDC

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that fall within Ward 2 include:

- Central Washington – Ward 2 covers all but the northeastern portion of this Area Element, including neighborhoods such as Downtown, Penn Quarter, Chinatown and Mount Vernon Square.
- Near Northwest – covering the neighborhoods immediately north and west of Downtown, this Area Element includes most of the established residential neighborhoods in Ward 2 including Georgetown, Foggy Bottom, Kalorama, Dupont Circle, Logan Circle and Shaw.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed a number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 2 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Chinatown Cultural Redevelopment Strategy:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- **Convention Center Area Strategic Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2006 and covering

areas of Ward 2 and Ward 6 with a special focus on the Shaw neighborhood.

- **Mount Vernon Square District Project:** completed in 2010 in partnership with the District Department of Transportation and covers Wards 2 and 6.
- **Downtown East Reurbanization Strategy:** to be completed in spring 2016.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 2 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 3

Introduction

Ward 3 is a largely residential area located in the upper northwest quadrant of the city. In many ways, its neighborhoods are a series of villages clustered around local commercial centers. Some of these neighborhoods evolved along the former Connecticut Avenue streetcar line that connected DC with Chevy Chase in suburban Maryland. Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, Van Ness and the DC-portion of Chevy Chase all follow a similar pattern of a commercial core with local shops and restaurants, surrounded by a cluster of dense apartment buildings and/or townhouses, and spreading out into single-family homes. Glover Park, Tenleytown, and Friendship Heights follow a similar pattern along Wisconsin Avenue anchored by a high end shopping district in Friendship Heights that is a regional draw. The Palisades and Spring Valley, straddling MacArthur Boulevard and Massachusetts Avenue respectively, generally follow this development pattern but with a more defined single-family home design. The large residential areas between the major corridors in the Ward have many single-family homes set among tall trees and parks. Some are modest in size, while others are veritable mansions, home to some of the wealthiest DC residents and a large number of foreign ambassador residences. The character of these residential areas is more suburban

in nature, with a greater concentration of cul-de-sacs than anywhere else in the city.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Element that falls within Ward 3 includes:

- Rock Creek West – This area element completely encompasses Ward 3, as well as the neighborhoods in Ward 4 west of Rock Creek Park.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of planning initiatives for Ward 3 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Pilot Project:** In September 2009, the DC Office of Planning launched a unique and innovative pilot initiative called the Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Project (NSIP). A targeted subsection of Ward 3 was selected according to building typology, natural resources and planning configuration. Through this Pilot Project the District learned more about the process of defining



Connecticut Avenue, NW in Woodley Park

sustainability at the local level, tracking it and enlisting private homeowners and the private sector to achieve environmental goals.

- **Glover Park Commercial District Study:** completed in 2006.
- **Van Ness Commercial Corridor Action Strategy:** to be completed in spring 2016.
- **Shades of Green Infrastructure & Pavement Removal Strategy for Van Ness:** to be completed in spring 2016.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 3 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 4

Introduction

Ward 4 is a largely residential area located in the northernmost portion of the city, straddling the northwest and northeast quadrants. Georgia Avenue bisects the ward, and serves as its major commercial spine, extending from the Petworth neighborhood into downtown Silver Spring, Maryland to the north. Smaller, local commercial areas include 4th Street, NW in Takoma, Kennedy Street, NW in Brightwood and portions of 14th Street throughout the Ward. Petworth is the southernmost neighborhood in Ward 4, notable for its rich architectural variety of townhouses, broad boulevards and circles. Brightwood, one of the largest neighborhoods in the city, sits in the middle of the ward, and is made up of a variety of townhouses, small apartment buildings, comfortable single-family homes and the amazing Walter Reed Campus. Grand and gracious buildings line 16th Street, NW, including churches, schools, ambassadorial residences and private homes. Fort Totten and Lamond-Riggs are both solid, middle-class neighborhoods of apartments, townhouses, and single-family detached homes. The neighborhoods along 16th Street, such

as Crestwood, 16th Street Heights, Colonial Village and Shepherd Park, contain large single-family detached homes and townhouses, nestled against Rock Creek Park and its tributary parks. The Takoma neighborhood abuts the City of Takoma Park, Maryland – together they made up a late 19th-century streetcar suburb, and now share a commercial center that straddles the DC/Maryland border and an architectural heritage emphasizing Victorian and bungalow style single-family homes. Ward 4 also includes the neighborhoods of Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne and portions of the Chevy Chase neighborhood west of Rock Creek Park. This area is dominated by single-family detached homes.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that falls within Ward 4 include:

- **Rock Creek East** – This area element covers all of Ward 4 east of Rock Creek Park, plus the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home.
- **Rock Creek West** – This area element completely encompasses the neighborhoods in Ward 4 west of Rock Creek Park, along with all of Ward 3.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 4 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue Area Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- **Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metro Station Area and Corridor Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2006.
- **Kennedy Street Corridor Revitalization Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.

- **Takoma Central District Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2002.
- **Upper Georgia Avenue Area Land Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.
- **Central 14th Street Vision and Revitalization Strategy:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2012.
- **Greater Walter Reed Army Medical Center Small Area Plan (WRAMC-SAP):** approved by the DC Council in 2013.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 4 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 5

Introduction

Ward 5 is extremely diverse in character and history, ranging from quiet residential areas and local shopping nodes, to new moderate density mixed-use development and industrial uses. The Brookland neighborhood sits in the middle of the ward in the northeast quadrant. Developed as a commuter rail village in the late 19th century, it is full of charming Victorian homes and a number of religious institutions such as the Howard University School of Divinity, Trinity University, Catholic University of America, Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Saint John Paul II National Shrine, and the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America. Further north are the early 20th century bungalow neighborhoods of Queens Chapel, Michigan Park, North Michigan Park and University Heights. Woodridge lies to the east with stylish bungalows. Edgewood and Stronghold to the west are homes to District icons such as the McMillan Sand Filtration Site, Children's National Medical Center, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. To the west, neighborhoods such as Bloomingdale, Eckington and Truxton Circle, situated along North Capitol Street, are more typical of the row house neighborhoods of central Washington, DC. Brentwood and

Landon are in the central portion of the Ward where the Chuck Brown Memorial Park can be found. The revitalized Rhode Island Avenue corridor dissects the Ward, placing Ivy City and Trinidad along the active New York Avenue corridor

with Carver Terrace and Langston Dwellings to the south anchored by Benning Road and the Hechinger Mall. These neighborhoods are dominated by 20th century porch-front townhouses as well as garden style apartments. The Arboretum neighborhood, named for the National Arboretum, is home to quaint single-family homes. Just to the east are the neighborhoods of Woodridge South and Gateway. Further to the east is Fort Lincoln, a modern "new town" development with a mix of townhouses, apartments and retail. Development here began in the 1960s and continues today with a contemporary mix of uses. Ward 5 has a great deal of open



Community Open House for Department of Public Works West Virginia Avenue Campus Master Plan. Photo Courtesy of Deborah L. Crain-Kemp



Florida Avenue Mural in Mid City East. Photo Courtesy of Deborah L. Crain-Kemp

green space reminiscent of its early turn of the century bucolic character. Additionally, this ward is the home of slightly more than half of the District's industrially zoned land. Florida Avenue Market is

the city's wholesale center, with other industrial zones in Eckington and Fort Totten and along the CSX railroad tracks, New York Avenue and Bladensburg Road. The northern portion of the NoMA neighborhood sits within Ward 5, and a number of mixed-use, high-rise developments have been completed or are under construction, bringing a bit of the hustle and bustle of downtown to the Ward.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that falls within Ward 5 include:

- **Mid-City** – This area element covers the southwestern corner of Ward 5, including neighborhoods such as Bloomingdale and Eckington.
- **Rock Creek East** – This area element covers the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home, which is a part of Ward 5.
- **Upper Northeast** – This area element covers most of Ward 5, and includes all of the ward's northeast quadrant neighborhoods except Eckington.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 5 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Benning Road Corridor Redevelopment Framework:** Approved by the DC Council 2008. Only a small portion of Ward 5 is included in this plan.
- **Brookland/CUA Metro Station Small Area Plan:** Approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- **Florida Avenue Market Small Area Plan:** Approved by the DC Council in 2009.

- **Mid City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study:** Approved by the DC Council in 2014. The study boundaries of this Plan include parts of Wards 1, 5 and 6.
- **NoMA Vision Plan and Development Strategy:** Approved by the DC Council in 2009. The study boundaries include the area running north of Union Station to the intersection of Florida and New York Avenues, in Wards 5 and 6.
- **The Northeast Gateway Revitalization Strategy and Implementation Plan:** Completed in 2008.
- **Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue Area Development Plan:** approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- **Rhode Island Avenue “Diamond of the District” Small Area Plan:** Approved by the DC Council in 2010. Developed in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED).
- **Ward 5 Works:** Ward 5 Industrial Land Transformation Study: Published in August 2014.
- **Department of Public Works West Virginia Avenue Campus Master Plan:** Created in partnership with the Department of Public Works and Department of General Services. To be completed in 2016.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 5 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 6

Introduction

Ward 6 is located in the heart of Washington, DC, and is the only Ward to include portions of each of the four quadrants of the city. As a consequence, it has a highly diverse population and housing stock, and a myriad of neighborhood characteristics. Ward 6 is home to a mix



Arena Stage

of office buildings, major retail and restaurants, hotels, museums and theaters, Federal buildings, historic rowhouse neighborhoods, and, particularly over the past ten years, a growing number of residential buildings. To the south are the

Modern high-rises and townhouses of the Southwest Waterfront, and the major new development of the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood, anchored by the Nationals Stadium, the Yards Park, Canal Park and a variety of housing, retail and office buildings. The center of the Ward is the historic Capitol Hill neighborhood, with its townhouses and local commercial corridors. Ward 6 also includes the Shaw neighborhood to the north. While this area includes major national symbols such as the United States Capitol Building and the Library of Congress, it is also a tight-knit community with local resources such as Eastern Market and the fully renovated Old Naval Hospital.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that falls within Ward 6 include:

- Capitol Hill - Located in the greater Capitol Hill area and completely inside Ward 6.
- Central Washington - The northeastern portion of this Area Element covers Ward 6, including neighborhoods such as Downtown, Penn Quarter, Chinatown, Mt. Vernon Triangle and NoMa.

- Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest - Located on both sides of the Washington Canal and the lower Anacostia River, the Ward 6 portions include the Southwest Waterfront, Buzzard Point and the Capitol Riverfront.
- Near Northwest - covering the neighborhoods immediately north and west of Downtown, only the very small “chimney stack” of Ward 6, located north of New York Avenue along New Jersey Avenue, is situated within this Area Element.

The District’s Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 6 neighborhoods and corridors:



Blue Jacket, Navy Yard

- **Southwest Neighborhood Plan: A Small Area Plan:** Approved by DC Council in 2015.
- **Mid City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study:** Approved by the DC Council in 2014. The study boundaries of this Plan include parts of Wards 1, 5 and 6.
- **Benning Road Corridor Redevelopment Framework:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.
- **Boathouse Row Planning Study:** Completed in 2009.
- **H Street Corridor Strategic Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2004.

- **Maryland Avenue SW Small Area Plan:** approved by the DC Council in 2012.
- **Mt. Vernon Triangle Action Agenda:** completed in 2003 in partnership with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).
- **NoMA Vision Plan and Development Strategy:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2009.
- **Northwest One Redevelopment Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2006.
- **Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Corridor Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008. The plan follows Pennsylvania Avenue, SE through Wards 6, 7 and 8.
- **Southeast Boulevard Planning Study:** completed in 2015 in partnership with DDOT.
- **Buzzard Point Vision Framework:** to be completed in spring 2016.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 6 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 7

Introduction

Ward 7 is located east of the Anacostia River covering the northeast and some of the southeast section of the District bound by the Maryland border. Ward 7 was a part of Prince Georges County until 1790. It is home to a number of Civil War fort sites that have since been turned into parkland, including: Fort Mahan Park, Fort Davis Park, Fort Chaplin Park and Fort Dupont Park, the largest city-owned park in the District. Ward 7 is also home to other natural or green assets such as the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Watts Branch Tributary, also known today as Marvin Gaye Park, Kingman

Island, the Anacostia waterfront and the Woodlawn Cemetery. Development slowly came to Ward 7 spurred by streetcar expansion along major corridors like Pennsylvania and Minnesota Avenue. Neighborhoods in Ward 7 are defined by streets lined with majestic trees, a mix of housing types including single-family, duplexes, row homes and multi-family units, small commercial nodes and employment centers.



The Nannie Helen Burroughs Apartment at 4800, Deborah Crain Kemp

The neighborhoods of Ward 7 are proud, distinct and numerous. Deanwood, situated on the north end of the ward, is one of the oldest communities in the northeast quadrant and has a pleasant small-town character with its many wood-frame and brick houses. To the south of Deanwood are neighborhoods such as Capitol View, Benning Heights, Burrville, Grant Park, Lincoln Heights/Richardson



Riverside Center, Washington Parks and People

Dwellings, NE Boundary and Marshall Heights, characterized by a variety of single-family homes, garden apartments and apartment buildings. Further south, neighborhoods including Greenway, Hillcrest, Ft. Dupont Park, Penn Branch and Randle Highlands have a very

suburban character, dominated by single-family homes with large yards and lawns. Also proximate to Pennsylvania Avenue are the neighborhoods of Twining, Fairlawn, Fairfax Village and Ft. Davis Park. Ward 7 also has an extensive waterfront along the Anacostia River, and riverfront neighborhoods have their own unique identities. Kenilworth, Parkside, River Terrace, Mayfair and Eastland Gardens lie along the east side of the river, while Kingman Park and Hill East are found to the west. The most southern part of the Ward is the home to the Skyland and Naylor Gardens neighborhoods.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that falls within Ward 7 include:

- **Capitol Hill** – This area element includes the Kingman Park neighborhood and other portions of Ward 7 west of the Anacostia River.
- **Far Northeast and Southeast** – This area element covers all of Ward 7 east of the Anacostia River, as well as the Ward 8 portion of the Fairlawn neighborhood.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of Small Area Plans and other plans for Ward 7 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Benning Road Corridor Redevelopment Framework:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.
- **Deanwood Strategic Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.
- **Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Corridor Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008. The plan follows Pennsylvania Avenue, SE through Wards 6, 7 and 8.

- **Lincoln Heights & Richardson Dwellings New Communities Revitalization Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2006.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 7 Neighborhood Planner.

Ward 8

Introduction

Much of what is now Ward 8 was farmland during the early history of Washington, DC, and a rural character is still sometimes evident among the houses, apartment buildings and institutions of the ward. The historic Anacostia neighborhood is the oldest in the ward, having been founded as Uniontown, one of Washington's first suburbs, in 1854. It has a variety of wood frame and brick houses and townhouses, as well as grander homes such as Cedar Hill, the Frederick Douglass House. Further south is the neighborhood of Congress Heights, which has the largest commercial area in the ward, running along Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X Avenues, as well as a number of garden apartments and single-family bungalows. Washington Highlands is located further south, and is home to many apartment complexes, as well as new single-family homes at Walter Washington Estates. The neighborhood of Bellevue sits at the far southern end of the District and has many garden apartments, one high-rise apartment building and some 1940s-era detached homes with yards. Ward 8 also has



Anacostia Gateway, Intersection of Good Hope Road & Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE

several large federal and local institutions. Bolling Air Force Base, for example, is in many ways a small town of its own, stretching along the Anacostia riverfront. Saint Elizabeths Hospital is a large campus with sweeping views of the city.

The Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant and DC Village both take up significant acreage at the southern tip of the city.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan Area Elements that falls within Ward 8 include:

- **Far Northeast and Southeast** – This area element covers the Ward 8 portion of the Fairlawn neighborhood.
- **Lower Anacostia Riverfront/Near Southwest** – This area element includes Ward 8's riverfront north of Bolling Air Force Base, including Anacostia Park and Poplar Point.
- **Far Southeast and Southwest** – This area element covers the rest of Ward 8, including a majority of its neighborhoods.

The District's Comprehensive Plan is available at <http://planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan>.

Neighborhood Plans: OP has developed number of Small Area Plans and other planning initiatives for Ward 8 neighborhoods and corridors:

- **Anacostia Transit Area Strategic Investment and Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan completed in 2004 and approved by the DC Council in 2006.
- **Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008.
- **Saint Elizabeths East Master Plan and Design Guidelines:** A joint master plan developed by OP, DMPED and DDOT; completed in 2012.

- **Pennsylvania Avenue, SE Corridor Development Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2008. The plan follows Pennsylvania Avenue, SE through Wards 6, 7 and 8.
- **Barry Farm/Park Chester/Wade Road Redevelopment Plan:** A Small Area Plan approved by the DC Council in 2006.
- **Bellevue Small Area Plan:** Approved by the DC Council in March 2010.
- **Poplar Point Environmental Impact Statement and Small Area Plan:** To be reinitiated in 2016 in partnership with the National Park Service.
- **Congress Heights, Anacostia, Saint Elizabeths (CHASE) Action Agenda:** Completed in May 2014.
- **St. Elizabeths-Congress Heights EcoDistrict:** To meet the goals of the Sustainable DC Plan, Washington, D.C. has joined the 'Target Cities Initiative', a two-year pilot program to create new models for sustainable neighborhood revitalization through innovative projects called 'EcoDistricts'. The St. Elizabeths-Congress Heights EcoDistrict represents a multi-agency effort to implement innovative projects that will create an economically vibrant, socially equitable and environmentally responsible community.

For more information on any of these plans, please visit the OP website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or call the DC Office of Planning at 202-442-7600 and ask for the Ward 8 Neighborhood Planner.

Neighborhood Retail Development & Vibrant Places

Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit

Washington DC has many of the ingredients of a premier retail destination – a highly walkable city with increasing multi-modal transit access that is needed for urban shopping success; a strong customer

base of residents, workers and visitors with disposable income growth; outstanding cultural amenities that help attract almost 20 million visitors a year; a center of regional economic activity that brings more than 400,000 additional workers into the city each day; and an evolving base of diverse retailers and vibrant retail districts. In many ways, the District is undergoing a retail transformation. Investments in emerging commercial corridors such as Petworth, NoMA, and Anacostia are bringing new retail energy and amenities to neighborhoods. However, there is still progress to be made; residents continue to purchase goods and services outside of the District, and many neighborhoods could benefit from improved retail options.

The District's retail economy is an opportunity for the city to grow its tax and employment base, as well as provide convenient access to goods and services for residents. In order to take advantage of the renewed interest in urban markets by retailers, as well as the District's growing population that is choosing the city's increasing number of walkable, bikeable and transit-rich neighborhoods to shop and access services, OP developed the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit. Released in 2012, the Toolkit is an innovative approach towards retail analysis and practice that draws on groundbreaking research and establishes a framework for retail streets to truly thrive. The Toolkit allows neighborhoods to assess their starting point on an eight-step 'retail vibrancy scale' and offers solutions for helping retail areas progress on the scale and achieve more vibrancy. The toolkit incorporates research on best practices and innovative approaches to managing successful commercial districts and offers guidance on key retail issues such as retailers' site location considerations and decision-making processes.

Following its release, OP developed a Toolkit Technical Assistance Program and proceeded with its application to neighborhoods across the city. The Program focuses on: understanding retail economics ('Retail 101'); communicating this understanding ('Train the Translator'), and identifying a reality-based approach to tackling retail issues within each community (Implementation). Starting in 2013, OP has worked with a total of eleven neighborhoods. The first phase was a pilot

initiative in Anacostia and Congress Heights, and the second phase included nine neighborhoods across the city (Mount Pleasant; Adams Morgan; Central 14th Street; Brightwood; Deanwood; Fairlawn/Pennsylvania Avenue SE; Golden Triangle; Van Ness (UDC area); and Rhode Island Avenue NE). In 2015, OP partnered with an additional eight neighborhoods for the 3rd phase of the technical assistance program: Kennedy Street, NW; North Capitol Street; Downtown Ward 7 (Minnesota Avenue/Benning Road); Bellevue; Lower Georgia Avenue; Dupont Circle; and Fort Totten.

The Toolkit is a follow-up to OP's Retail Action Strategy, which examined twenty retail neighborhoods in the District with a view to promoting vibrant commercial districts that offer a broad range of businesses; matching retail opportunities with neighborhood needs; recapturing the spending leakage to other jurisdictions; creating expanded opportunities for small and local retailers; building upon and supporting other public efforts; and helping guide private retail investments.

Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking is the intentional use of arts and cultural to shape the physical, social and economic future of communities. OP promotes 'placemaking' in diverse neighborhoods across the District in order to catalyze economic development, strengthen civic engagement and contribute to the quality of life. As part of this, OP seeks opportunities to transform vacant and underutilized spaces into vibrant destinations and animated showcases through unique creative uses, including public and private sites that may be



Central 14th ArtPlace Project

experiencing a delay in the completion of a planned redevelopment or construction project. OP has undertaken more than 10 placemaking projects, including: ‘temporiums’ or pop-up cultural and arts showcases in emerging neighborhoods, with projects ranging from LUMEN8Anacostia, a lighting and arts festival in the Anacostia neighborhood; a dance festival in Brookland; temporary street furniture along Central 14th Street; a pop-up digital arts lab in a former library kiosk on H Street, NE; a ‘Third Place’ project that activated an underutilized office lobby through temporary art installations and events; and retail pop-ups. OP’s creative placemaking program has been recognized and supported by various national organizations such as ArtPlace America and the Kresge Foundation, with grant funding awarded to OP totaling \$1.2 million.

Crossing the Street: Building DC’s Inclusive Future Through Creative Placemaking

In late 2014, OP received a grant from the Kresge Foundation to undertake a variety of creative placemaking activities that: 1) promote community building in neighborhoods that are experiencing rapid demographic and social change; 2) engage residents in a conversation on the future of the District as OP embarks on an update of DC’s Comprehensive Plan; and 3) demonstrate or test select placemaking recommendations articulated in OP’s neighborhood plans and DDOT transit corridor studies and livability studies.

OP’s initiative is grounded in an understanding that the District has experienced rapid growth and an influx of new residents in what were once underinvested neighborhoods. New buildings and large redevelopment projects are taking place or planned all over the city, dramatically changing built and social landscapes. New services, good design and great placemaking alone, though, are not always enough to encourage interaction among new and old residents in meaningful ways; often, instead of participating in the benefits that these new investments bring to neighborhoods, long-term residents

may feel uncomfortable “crossing the street” to these new projects, and similarly newer residents are sometimes reluctant to spend time in older parts of the neighborhood. OP’s proposed activities are intended to encourage people to connect and ‘cross the street’ both literally and figuratively.

OP will work with various neighborhoods over a two-year period implementing projects that will entail a broad range of creative temporary placemaking interventions.

Design

In late 2015 OP launched a fully operational design-focused unit within the agency with programs and tools in place to better shape great neighborhoods, buildings, and public spaces using design to address problems and improve outcomes. This is achieved by reinforcing the unique design character of the District through the update of the District’s Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element in FY16; design guidance on District government policies and projects; urban design analysis and services for other OP divisions and District agencies; and the promotion of a public conversation around the District’s design aesthetic. The Design Division, in partnership with OP divisions, District and federal agencies and others, provides leadership on specific topics ranging from high-profile local and federal projects to the design of open space networks and streetscapes. Services include spatial analysis, scoping, strategies and guidelines; internal support and sister agency support on development projects and civic and infrastructure investments; facilitating community engagement around design topics; and developing plans and projects in collaboration with District agencies for sites, districts and development areas throughout the city. The Design Division also manages OP’s Public Space Program to enhance the quality of the city’s public spaces and serves on the District’s Public Space Committee led by DDOT. OP staff review more than 350 public space/projection applications annually, work with developers on the design of streetscapes associated with more than 20 major projects throughout the city, and conduct original research into

the development of the city's remarkable street design and park-like character. Current projects include:

- Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative:** The Design Division is participating as a subcommittee member in the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, in partnership with the National Capital Planning Commission, General Services Administration, DDOT, the Downtown BID and NPS. The initiative is studying the near-and long-term needs of the Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods and developing a vision for how the Avenue can be transformed to meet local and national needs and achieve greater vitality and real estate value. To support this initiative, the Design Division also developed the Pennsylvania Avenue Public Life Study in collaboration with NCPC to study the public realm and pedestrian vitality of Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Buzzard Point Vision Framework & Streetscape Guidelines:** The Design Division is leading, partnership with DMPED, DDOT and the Department of Energy and the Environment (DDOE), the development of the plan and urban design framework to shape the future redevelopment of this waterfront neighborhood that will be home to the future soccer stadium and a potential 10 million square feet of development served by a new South Capitol Street bridge, currently in design. This effort also included developing streetscape standards that will be implemented by the public and private sector. These standards, developed by the Design Division and DDOT, will be first implemented by the District of Columbia as it prepares the site for the DC United Soccer Stadium and by PEPCO as they construct their new distribution facility on the site north of the stadium. These standards establish a hierarchy of streets that include a formal promenade on Potomac Avenue between South Capitol Street and the soccer stadium, a vibrant commercial district on Half Street, and a pedestrian/bike friendly transportation corridor on 2nd Street.
- FBI Site Redevelopment:** The Design Division, the State Historic Preservation Officer within OP and other OP staff are partnering in a process led by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) to prepared guidance for the redevelopment of the FBI Headquarters site in downtown DC. An Amendment to the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation Plan has the site was completed in December 2015. OP is currently assisting NCPC in developing Square Guidelines with final Commission action anticipated in fall/winter 2016.
- Franklin Park Vision and Transformation Plan:** Franklin Park, located between K and I Streets, NW and 13th and 14th Streets, NW, is owned by the National Park Service (NPS) and is the second largest park in Downtown D.C. The park is deteriorating, which negatively impacts neighboring property values and lease rates. Its poor condition and lack of useful facilities and programs also contribute to the poor access to park space in Downtown DC. The DC Office of Planning, NPS and the Downtown DC Business Improvement District have completed a Franklin Park Vision and Transformation Plan to realize a great park that can attract and serve users, as well as engage financial support from multiple partners for long-term maintenance and operation and become one of our nation's premier urban parks. In June 2015, NPS signed the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impacts) - the official document that signifies NPS approval for further design and construction - and construction of the park improvements is anticipated to begin in 2017.
- Downtown East Re-urbanization Strategy:** The Design Division has led the development of a Re-Urbanization Strategy for Downtown East that will serve as a roadmap for future investment towards reconnecting the area to the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader city. The Strategy document highlights key opportunities for re-established physical connections, economic development, and place making

that directly respond to the needs of users. This document, scheduled for completion in May 2016, is primarily intended for use by District and Federal agencies, the downtown area Business Improvement Districts, and property owners and developers as a resource for future coordination efforts.

- **Poplar Point:** The Design Division is partnering with OP's Neighborhood Planning division to create a Small Area Plan (SAP) for Poplar Point in partnership with DMPED and the National Park Service (NPS). The District's SAP process and the NPS environmental assessment process will be coordinated and occur concurrently to ensure the most productive and efficient result in order to facilitate the 130-acre land transfer from NPS to the District.
- **PLACE DC:** OP has launched PLACE DC, a one-year pilot program launched in December 2015 to beautify targeted commercial corridors in Ward 7 and 8 through a series of creative and design-based interventions. OP, in partnership with community members and District agencies, will identify priorities and develop impactful solutions to clean up litter, abate graffiti, add landscaping and apply other improvements to enhance the attractiveness and vitality of the corridors. This project will enhance neighborhood livability through urban design and "clean and safe" projects while also contributing to neighborhood leadership capacity and retail vitality.
- **Small Parks:** The Design Division is taking the lead on creating a vision for the more than 500 small parks and open spaces located throughout the District of Columbia. Many of these small parks are at the intersections of avenues and streets or medians in the center of prominent streets. Before a shared vision can take place, all of the small parks and open spaces need to be fully documented and mapped - an exercise that requires the coordination of three District agencies: DDOT, DGS and Department of Parks and Recreation. OP has completed a thorough evaluation of all information maintained

by these agencies and is currently creating one coordinated inventory and map. The inventory is anticipated to be complete in Spring 2016.

- **Playable Art DC:** Playable Art DC is a national play space design competition administered by OP's Design Division in partnership with the District of Columbia Commission on Arts and Humanities with grant funding from ArtPlace America. The intent is to develop innovative art-based play space designs for DC neighborhoods that lack access to traditional playgrounds or suitable sites for building new ones. Playable Art DC promotes the use of art as a means of creating new types of play spaces that are more compatible with constrained sites, proximity to busy streets, and topography. Playable Art DC also seeks to engage the whole community in play and as way to promote fitness and exercise and create community landmarks and neighborhood gathering spots. Through the competition the Design Division will commission sculptural or environmental art works on various themes of play including creative play, physical play and fitness, social interaction, and games for three neighborhood sites in Anacostia, Kennedy Street NW, and Mount Vernon Triangle.

For more information about these projects, please visit the Office of Planning website at <http://planning.dc.gov>.

Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) promotes stewardship of the District of Columbia's historic and cultural resources through planning, protection and public education. HPO is part of the Office of Planning (OP) and serves as the staff to the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) and Mayor's Agent for historic preservation. HPO also implements federal historic preservation programs as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the District of Columbia.

Effective historic preservation programs enhance the city's cultural heritage, beauty, and vibrancy. They protect the scale and character

of Washington's historic neighborhoods and downtown, promote civic pride and economic growth, and attract both visitors and new residents to the city.

HPRB, HPO, and OP collectively implement the public policies established by local and federal preservation laws. HPRB designates historic landmarks and districts, makes recommendations to the Mayor on construction projects affecting those properties, and serves as a forum for community involvement in historic preservation. HPRB's nine professional members and private citizens, appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council, provide expertise and community perspective in the historic preservation process. HPRB also acts as the State Review Board for the District of Columbia, under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

HPO serves as the staff to HPRB and provides professional expertise on historic preservation matters to government agencies, businesses, and the public. HPO reviews the vast majority of construction projects in historic districts under delegation from HPRB. As the DC SHPO, its federal responsibilities include historic preservation planning, survey and identification of historic properties, public education, review of government projects, archaeological resource protection, and promotion of federal preservation tax incentives. These functions are supported by an annual appropriation (averaging about \$500,000) from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service.

The Director of the Office of Planning serves as the Mayor's Agent for historic preservation, helping to balance preservation with other public goals. The Director also ensures overall coordination between the city's preservation and planning programs. For more information about the Historic Preservation Office and historic preservation in the District of Columbia, please visit <http://preservation.dc.gov> or OP's website at <http://planning.dc.gov>.

Supporting Communities

Preservation Planning

Preservation of historic resources begins with sound planning. As part of OP, HPO leads this effort in coordination with overall comprehensive planning for the city. HPO also implements the federal requirement for an approved District of Columbia historic preservation plan. The current plan, "Enriching Our Heritage," sets out specific policies and targets through the year 2016.

Neighborhood Engagement

Active neighborhoods play a vital role in the District's historic preservation program. HPO and HPRB promote a dialogue with neighborhood partners about projects that affect residents, businesses, and communities. To broaden citywide involvement, HPO's community outreach coordinator helps neighborhood groups with local heritage projects, and promotes familiarity with cultural resources through public seminars and events. Other customer service efforts include hands-on assistance, training opportunities, community forums, and informational publications.

HPRB meetings serve as a key public forum for review and discussion of neighborhood development issues involving historic preservation. Anyone is welcome to participate without signing up in advance, and the meetings are broadcast on live video over the Internet. Members of the public can also request regular announcements about HPRB meetings and other HPO activities through HPO's self-service email list of more than 1,600 persons.



Explore the Historic Preservation Plan at preservation.dc.gov

HPO staff provide one-on-one consultation and technical assistance to any property owner seeking a building permit for construction affecting historic property. In a typical year, this service supports about 5,000 permit applicants. HPO staff also participates in dozens of community meetings and events each year, attended by several thousand persons.

DC Community Heritage Project

Since 2005, HPO and its partner HumanitiesDC have helped local voices emerge through the DC Community Heritage Project. In this program, preservation professionals present educational symposia and award small grants of up to \$2,500 for community projects that build awareness of DC heritage and support for its protection. The partnership encourages grass-roots organizing and youth participation in recording local history. Innovative ideas are welcomed to push the envelope of traditional historic preservation concerns.

Grant recipients showcase their projects at an annual community forum. The neighborhood brochures, oral histories, videos, and other products produced by these grants remain accessible on the HumanitiesDC and HPO websites. In FY 2013 and FY 2014, the program awarded 33 small grants totaling \$74,000 to community organizations citywide.

Historic Homeowner Grants

Keeping up with critical home repairs is especially challenging for homeowners with limited financial means. To help prevent small problems from turning into major deterioration, the District offers financial assistance to low- and moderate-income homeowners in targeted areas of the city. These non-taxable grants help DC residents in need with the cost of repairing their historic homes. They also support local construction jobs and strengthen the fabric of communities.

The historic homeowner grant program is available in twelve historic districts: Blagden Alley/Naylor Court, Capitol Hill, Fourteenth Street, U Street, LeDroit Park, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon Square, Mount Vernon Triangle, Shaw, Strivers' Section and Takoma Park. Grants may be used for structural repairs and exterior or site restoration. The grant limit is \$25,000 in all districts except Anacostia, where the limit is \$35,000. Recipients in the middle and upper range of income eligibility must provide a progressively greater percentage of matching funds. Work is undertaken by District-licensed general contractors selected by the homeowners.

Grant awards are made competitively after screening by an awards committee of DC officials and professionals with preservation expertise. Selection criteria include the urgency of preservation need, consistency with preservation standards, quality of the application, potential benefit to the neighborhood, and geographic distribution. In FY 2013 and FY 2014, 22 grant projects were undertaken with a distribution of \$475,000 in DC funds.

Preservation Partnerships

HPO cooperative agreements with non-profit partners help to produce educational events, maintain information on preservation websites, and host a DC preservation awards program. HPO uses disbursements from the federal Historic Preservation Fund to support partnerships with the DC Preservation League, Cultural Tourism DC, Georgetown University Law Center, and HumanitiesDC. If funds are available, the SHPO also awards competitive grants to community organizations and professionals for historic survey, documentation, and public education projects. Selection priorities are



Archaeology learning table at the 2014 DC "Park"ing Day

based on goals expressed in the Historic Preservation Plan. During FY 2013 and 2014, these grants supported archaeological and outreach services, as well as mapping of DC historic resources using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology.

Archaeology Outreach

Archaeology is popular with a wide audience and has become an effective way to engage DC residents in the exploration of local history. During FY 2013 and FY 2014, HPO archaeology outreach included presentations at DC public libraries, the DC Historical Studies Conference, the annual Day of Archaeology, 11th Street Bridge festival, and other events. Non-profit partners included the Urban Archaeology Corps and Veterans Curation Program. HPO also sponsored student archaeology interns each year.

Recognizing Our Heritage

A primary function of the District's historic preservation program is to identify, document, and recognize properties significant to DC's architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural heritage. The DC SHPO is responsible for managing this function. While an impressive number of historic landmarks and districts are already protected in the District, many other properties go unrecognized either because their history has been forgotten or their significance is not yet understood.

Historic Resource Survey and Documentation

Preservation of the District's historic resources begins with survey and identification. Most historic properties are first evaluated through historic resource surveys and scholarly research. The DC Historic Preservation Plan establishes priorities to guide this work. HPO undertakes some survey projects in-house or with contracted assistance, and also offers grants to help private entities pursue research. Recent survey and research products include:

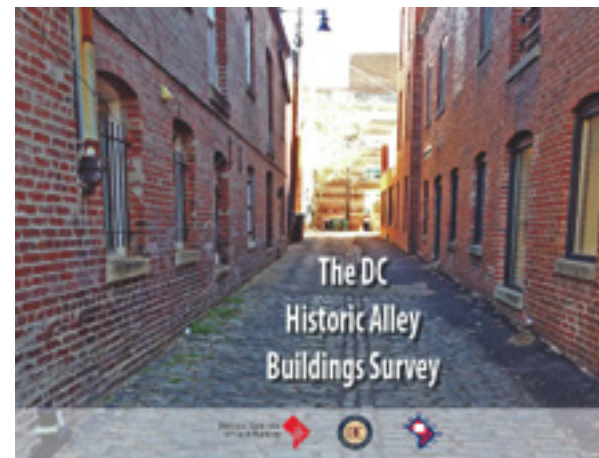
- Historic Resources Mapping: Evaluative maps of all historic districts, as part of multi-year effort to create GIS mapping for all DC historic resources.

- Farms and Estates Survey: A complete survey documenting 86 structures remaining from the farmsteads and estates that predated suburbanization of DC's outlying wards;
- Historic Alley Buildings Survey: Complete survey of 1,249 buildings in the original city and Georgetown, and 231 in nearby neighborhoods; and
- Neighborhood Surveys: Complete survey of Bloomingdale, as part of OP's Mid-City planning effort for the Bates-Hanover, Bloomingdale, Eckington, and Le Droit Park neighborhoods.

Archaeological Resources and Collections

Identification is also the first step toward preservation of the District's significant archaeological sites and artifacts. Archival and map research are key parts of this process, but investigations in the field are also required. Once a field investigation occurs, archaeologists complete an analytical report documenting the site investigation and describing any features observed and artifacts collected. These reports provide crucial information that helps to understand the archaeological record. Artifacts uncovered during site investigations must also be curated. HPO is the custodian of DC's archaeological collections, which are retained for the benefit of scholars and the public.

The District currently lacks a curation facility adequate to ensure long-term preservation of the archaeological collections cared for by the District government. DC's archaeological collections continue to be stored across



several locations. In 2010, HPO started a project to assess the collections and lay out a plan to create an archaeological curation facility meeting professional standards. Initial collections work has focused on several activities: compiling an inventory of all collections and artifacts, monitoring the physical conditions of current collections storage, and improving the collections database in preparation for management according to curatorial standards.

Designation of Historic Landmarks and Districts

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) evaluates and designates properties for inclusion in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. Historic landmarks and districts are judged worthy of preservation for their contribution to the city's cultural and historic heritage, and are protected by the district's historic preservation law, the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978. At present, the Inventory includes more than 650 historic landmarks and 59 historic districts, of which 30 are neighborhoods. In all, there are more than 27,000 properties included.

HPRB confers designation through an open public hearing process. Nominations may be made by property owners, government entities, community groups, or preservation organizations. In each case, HPO works with applicants, owners, and residents to facilitate the process before a hearing occurs. One benefit of this engagement is a low rate of owner objection to historic designations, averaging only 3% over ten years. In 2013 and 2014, HPRB designated the Meridian Hill, Walter Reed, and



Van View, one of the District's last remaining farmhouses

George Washington University/Old West End historic districts, as well as 23 historic landmarks, including:

- Public Buildings: The DC War Memorial, Blanche K. Bruce and J.O. Wilson Normal schools, Park View Playground, and the former DC Pound;
- Downtown Commercial Buildings: The Real Estate Trust Company, Ethelhurst, and Hill buildings;
- Industrial Facilities: Bond Bread Bakery, Central Bus Garage, Chapman Stables, Gyro Motor Company, and Terminal Refrigerating Warehouse;
- Apartment Buildings: Town Center East, Harbour Square, and Capitol Park Towers in Southwest, and the Metropolitan Apartments in Eckington;
- Religious Buildings: Grace Lutheran Church in Crestwood, First Church of Christ Scientist in Adams Morgan, and Park View Christian Church;
- Social Services: the Hebrew Home for the Aged and Jewish Social Service Agency; and
- Notable Residences: General George Scriven House in Dupont Circle and Van View in Shepherd Park.

National Register Listings

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of resources worthy of preservation and commemoration. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and ensures review of federal government undertakings that might affect the property's historic characteristics or setting. It also makes the property eligible for federal preservation tax incentives and preferential consideration in federal leasing.

The State Historic Preservation Officer nominates properties to the National Register. The SHPO routinely forwards properties that have been designated in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites to the Register,

since the listing criteria are substantially the same. In 2013 and 2014, the National Register listed three DC historic districts and 26 DC historic landmarks.



New Gateway Pavilion at historic Saint Elizabeths Hospital

Encouraging Good Stewardship

The District and federal governments undertake some of the most important historic preservation projects in Washington. Not only do government agencies occupy some of the finest historic properties in the city, but the quality of government projects sets an example for civic design.

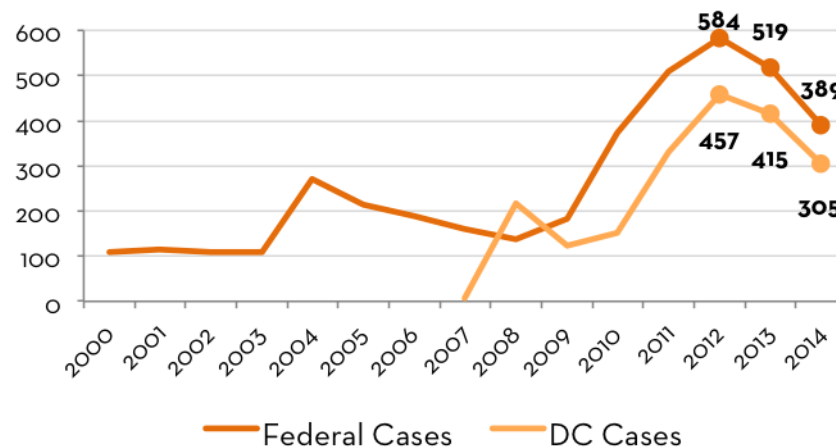
District Government Projects

Like the federal government, the District government is a major owner of historic property in Washington. To help protect these assets, District agencies must consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer before project design and permitting, and take into account the effects on listed and eligible historic properties. This review is modeled on the requirement for federal government agencies.

The SHPO typically reviews District agency projects for historic preservation impacts at the conceptual design stage, in coordination with mandatory reviews by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission. Some District projects (such as transportation improvements) are federally funded or licensed, and are handled under the federal review process.

After peaking in 2013 during the federal government's economic stimulus program, the number of DC projects submitted for review has slowly moderated. The SHPO reviewed 415 District projects in FY 2013 and 305 in FY 2014. These projects include such activities as roadway

Figure 4.1. State Historic Preservation Office Review of Federal and DC Government Projects



Source: DC Office of Planning, Historic Preservation

improvement, public schools modernization, and upgrading of libraries, recreation centers, and public utilities.

Federal Government Projects

In its role as the State Historic Preservation Office for the District, HPO reviews federal government projects to ensure that historic and archaeological resources are adequately protected. This process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act also applies to projects on federal land, as well as federally funded or licensed projects. The aim of the reviews is to identify designated or potential historic properties that might be affected, and to ensure that possible adverse effects to these properties are avoided, minimized, or properly mitigated.

Section 106 reviews are typically coordinated with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Capital Planning Commission, and US Commission of Fine Arts. The public is invited to participate, and civic groups may be consulting parties on major projects. The results of consultation are typically recorded in a

binding Memorandum of Agreement, or a Programmatic Agreement for a phased multi-year plan involving a sequence of separate construction projects.

The decline in federal economic stimulus spending after a peak of 584 project reviews in FY 2012 led to a more moderate pace of 519 reviews in FY 2013, and 389 in FY 2014. Notable projects during that period included earthquake repairs at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, plans for rehabilitation of Franklin Park, conservation of the 1791 DC Boundary Stones, rehabilitation of the Carter G. Woodson Home, and master planning for the repair, upgrading, and expansion of Union Station.

Promoting High Quality Reinvestment

The District's historic preservation law establishes review procedures to protect historic properties from demolition, and to ensure that physical changes are compatible with their historic and architectural character. It also encourages the adaptation of historic properties for current use. The public benefits of this design review process are evident in the city's revitalized historic downtown, restored historic landmarks, and vibrant main streets in historic neighborhoods.

Because of overlapping federal laws, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts conducts comparable design reviews for historic properties in Georgetown, parts of downtown, and opposite the Mall, Pennsylvania Avenue, Rock Creek Park, and other major federal properties. The District's preservation process is fully coordinated with these other mandatory reviews.



Hecht's Warehouse converted to apartments

HPRB Review of Major Projects

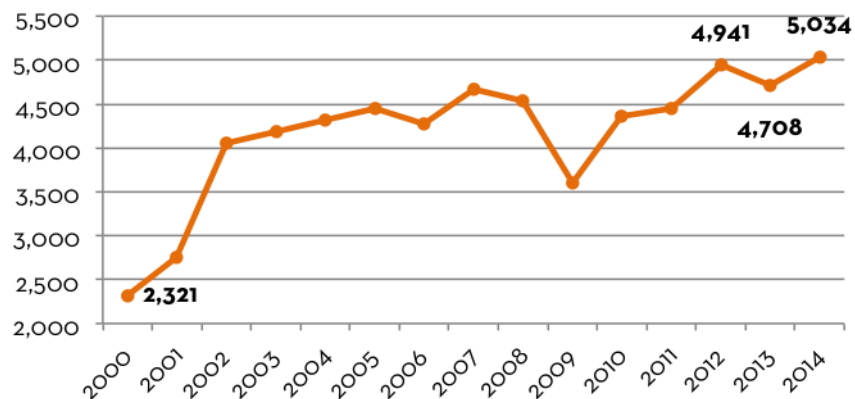
Under the preservation law, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) advises the designated Mayor's Agent on proposed construction affecting historic landmarks and districts. The Board meets monthly to consider project proposals at an open public meeting. As a rule, HPRB considers major projects while delegating to HPO the processing of more routine applications. Most HPRB reviews occur at the conceptual design stage, after an initial consultation with the HPO staff. Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and civic groups typically review these projects at the same time, providing comments for HPRB consideration.

In FY 2013 and FY 2014, HPRB reviewed more than 200 major projects each year. Notable projects included:

- Adaptations of the Hecht Company Warehouse, Uline Arena, Patterson House at Dupont Circle, Terminal Refrigerating Warehouse (Museum of the Bible), Randall School, and Town Center East in Southwest;
- New apartment buildings in the Chinatown, 14th and U Streets, Shaw, and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods;
- Residential infill projects in Anacostia, Capitol Hill, Shaw, Takoma Park, and other historic districts;
- A new retail pavilion at Saint Elizabeths and a streetcar maintenance facility at Spingarn High School;
- New hotels near the Convention Center and dormitories for George Washington University; and
- Master plans for the McMillan Sand Filtration Site.

Public Hearings by the Mayor's Agent

If HPRB finds that a proposal is not compatible with the stated purposes of the historic preservation law, the applicant may request a public hearing by the Mayor's Agent. The Mayor's Agent also holds public hearings on any proposed demolition of a historic building or

Figure 4.2. Historic Preservation Office Permit Reviews

Source: DC Office of Planning, Historic Preservation

subdivision that divides property from the site of a historic landmark. This allows the Mayor's Agent to balance important planning goals, community benefits, and undue economic hardship alongside HPRB's historic preservation findings. The Mayor's Agent may determine that a qualified "project of special merit" justifies approval in the public interest under the preservation law.

In a typical year, the Mayor's Agent reviews no more than a half dozen permit applications. In 2013 and 2014, the Mayor's Agent approved "special merit" projects at Randall School, Duke Ellington High School, McMillan Reservoir, and the "Big K" Liquor site in the Anacostia Historic District. Community arts uses, affordable housing, and increased capacity to address neighborhood stormwater flooding were among the public benefits obtained.

Building Permit Reviews

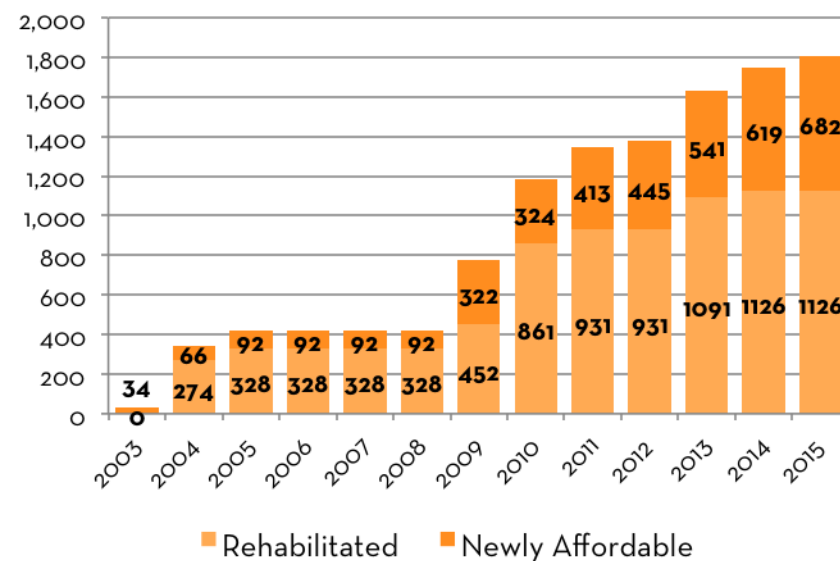
While HPRB considers major projects, HPO reviews more routine applications under delegated authority. The vast majority of construction permits for work affecting historic property are processed on an expedited basis "over the counter" by the HPO staff. HPO also reviews subdivision and raze applications citywide. To expedite

reviews and ensure walk-in customer service, an HPO staff member is assigned to DCRA's one-stop permit processing center during all business hours. In FY 2014, HPO reviewed more than 5,000 permit and related applications, accounting for 95% of the total applications received for historic preservation review.

Preservation Tax Incentives

Federal preservation tax credits are an important incentive for local reinvestment in historic buildings, and their value is often critical to the economic feasibility of preservation projects. The SHPO assists property owners seeking National Register listing to qualify for the credits, and helps owners obtain National Park Service approval for their rehabilitation plans.

The federal tax code offers two preservation incentives. The rehabilitation tax incentive allows a 20% tax credit for construction and development costs incurred in the substantial rehabilitation

Figure 4.3. Total Affordable Units Produced With Historic Tax Credit

Source: DC Office of Planning, Historic Preservation

of an income-producing property listed in the National Register of Historic Places. To be eligible, all work must be executed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as certified by the National Park Service.

Affordable Housing

In recent years, affordable housing providers have become the primary users of historic preservation tax credits in the District. By combining these credits with other incentive programs, they have produced more than 1,800 affordable housing units in historic buildings (1,126 rehabilitated units and 682 units newly established as affordable).

To expand on this success, HPO and OP housing staff worked with affordable housing developers, historic consultants, the National Park Service, and others to expand interest in combining the historic tax credits with other affordable housing subsidies. The effort culminated in a seminar co-sponsored by OP and the Coalition for Non-Profit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED), attended by more than 40 development professionals at a rehabilitated historic school converted to affordable senior housing. OP also published the report "Pairing Historic Tax Credits with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits in the District of Columbia." Major findings include that as many as 220 DC buildings fit the typical project profile for historic tax credits, and that credits can raise more than \$15,000

per unit of critical equity for affordable housing. The report provides suggestions and best practices from experienced practitioners on how to navigate the process of combining the historic and low-income



Deteriorated Anacostia house restored by the L'Enfant Trust

housing credits to provide needed affordable housing for District residents while helping to preserve the District's historic character.

Protecting Historic Assets

Property Maintenance

The historic preservation program protects local heritage and supports healthy communities by monitoring property deterioration before it turns to blight. HPO works with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and residents to identify problems and promote voluntary compliance with the property maintenance standards in the building code. HPO inspectors also respond with enforcement action as needed. In major cases of outright neglect, HPO coordinates progressive enforcement with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA).

Persistent HPO efforts to bring private property owners into compliance with maintenance standards can help to address cases of serious deterioration. A 2014 example of a neighborhood eyesore returned to useful service is shown here.

Inspections and Compliance

HPO works directly with owners and contractors to encourage voluntary compliance with the preservation law and permit requirements. Owners who come into compliance after receipt of a violation notice avoid further enforcement action.

During FY 2014, HPO inspectors conducted more than 500 inspections and took more than 200 enforcement actions. HPO inspectors can stop work and issue a notice of infraction and fine, which is typically \$2,000. The 133 tickets and stop work orders issued by HPO in FY 2014 resulted in a total of \$185,500 in fines. After suspension, reduction, or compounding of fines through adjudication by the Office of Administrative Hearings, the total fine amount for FY 2014 was reduced to \$156,170. Eleven liens totaling \$65,000 were placed on properties for non-payment of fines.



House of Lebanon Affordable Housing

Sustainability & Zoning

As a part of the first comprehensive update of the District's zoning regulations since 1958, OP made many recommendations to the Zoning Commission that highlight ways that the code can be made more sustainable. Areas addressed include, but are not limited to, increased energy efficiency; green roofs; stormwater management; transit-oriented development; renewable energy generation; water conservation; access to local and healthy food; existing tree cover protection; green-scape requirements for surface parking lots; waterfront development; landscape buffering of industrial developments; expanding green building expectations for Planned Unit Development; and protection of environmentally-sensitive areas such as streams and wetlands. These recommendations received conceptual approval from the Zoning Commission in June 2009 and were included in the first draft of the new zoning text submitted to the Zoning Commission in 2013. As such, they received extensive opportunity for community discussion through multiple public meeting and hearings. The Zoning Commission gave final action to approve these amendments in January 2016 and established September 6, 2016 as the date that the new regulations will be effective.

Additionally, OP recommended to the Zoning Commission a new zoning requirement called the Green Area Ratio (GAR) as a major addition to the District's zoning regulations. The GAR is an environmental site sustainability metric intended to set standards for landscape and site design that meets goals for stormwater runoff, air quality, and urban heat island impacts, while providing flexibility to meet the goals through allowing an applicant to select from optional elements in order to meet an overall GAR score. The GAR was developed by working directly with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and Department of Energy and the Environment to establish their joint administration of the requirement. The Zoning Commission gave final approval of the text on June 24, 2013. The requirement does not apply to public space or

single family homes in zones R-1 through R-4, where a pervious surface requirement was adopted at the same time to ensure that properties are not entirely paved.

Zoning

Mission

The mission of the DC Office of Zoning (DCOZ) is to provide administrative, professional, and technical assistance to the Zoning Commission (ZC) and the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) in support of their oversight and adjudication of zoning matters in the District of Columbia.

Summary of Services

DCOZ administers the zoning application process for the ZC and BZA. The agency reviews and accepts applications, schedules hearings to determine whether cases meet specified zoning criteria, schedules meetings to make determinations with respect to pending applications, and issues legal orders. Technology plays a critical role in support of this process by enhancing effectiveness and transparency. DCOZ also spearheads outreach to citizens of the District of Columbia to ensure a robust understanding of the zoning application process.

Goals

Objective 1: Create a convenient, easy to use, and understandable zoning process through website development, expansive outreach and educational programs for District residents and businesses.

Objective 2: Leverage new and existing technology to further ensure that the District of Columbia's zoning processes are easily understandable and accessible to the public.

Objective 3: Streamline zoning regulations to enhance efficiency and transparency of zoning processes.

Early History

1920 Zoning Ordinance



Washington was one of the first cities in the United States after New York (in 1916) to develop a comprehensive zoning ordinance. The Zoning Act of March 1, 1920 was adopted by the U.S. Congress, establishing zoning and the Zoning Commission in the District.

The Zoning Commission consisted of the three members of the Board of Commissioners, who were appointed executives who governed the District, each in charge of specific departments. In addition, two other statutory members of the federal government were appointed to the Zoning Commission, the officer in charge of the buildings and grounds of the District of Columbia (which in 1934 became the head of the National Park Service) and the Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds (later known as the Architect of the Capitol).

The original 1920 zoning ordinance had three types of controls with a map (or maps) depicting each one. The first map dealt with height districts and regulations pertaining to the heights within those districts. The second set of maps divided the city into four use districts -- residential, commercial one, commercial two, and industrial --with additional regulations added over time. The last set of maps depicted lot occupancy requirements by area districts.

Zoning Act of 1938

The Zoning Act of 1938 was the next major legislative step regarding zoning in the District. The Zoning Act established the police powers of the Zoning Commission to regulate the height and bulk, location, uses, lot occupancy of buildings, and to divide these districts into zoned

districts. Under the Act, Commissioners could also promulgate regulations in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan designed to lessen congestion in the street; secure safety from fire, panic, etc.; promote health and general welfare; provide adequate light and air; prevent undue concentration of population and overcrowding of land; advance health, safety, transportation, prosperity, civic activity, etc.; provide protection of property; and further economy and efficiency in the provision of public services.

Further, the Zoning Act provided that:

- Zone districts should be suitable to the character of the respective precincts and should encourage stability in districts and in land values;
- The Zoning Commission is required to hold a public hearing with at least 30 days' notice before adopting any amendments;
- A favorable vote of a full majority of the Zoning Commission is required;
- The building height limits of the Height Act of 1910 cannot be superseded in zoning;
- A building permit is required in all cases to construct a building in the District;
- The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, an arm of the executive branch, has enforcement responsibility pertaining to zoning matters; and
- Federal public buildings are exempt from District zoning controls, except that the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPCC) shall review and regulate such buildings.

Board of Zoning Adjustment

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) was created in 1938 to handle unusual situations regarding property and regulation. The five-member Board was established by law and consisted of three members residing in the District for at least three years (including at least one homeowner), one member of the National Capital

Planning Commission (or a staff designee), and one member of the Zoning Commission (or a staff designee). Under the law, the Zoning Commission was empowered to provide general rules for the BZA. Further, the Act authorized the BZA to process three basic types of cases that it continues to hear today: variances, special exceptions, and appeals from administrative decisions.

1950 Comprehensive Plan

The 1950 Comprehensive Plan was the next major change in zoning procedure. The Plan suggested that the zoning regulations and map be completely overhauled and that new modern comprehensive districts be created for all parts of the city. It also noted that large areas of the District were poorly zoned as to existing use and planning objectives for the future, creating the danger of incompatible building types and excessive population density. The Plan recommended changing the zoning for the majority of commercial strips and replacing them with business centers with greater depths of lots for major modern buildings. It also recommended establishing approval standards for off-street parking and loading and recommended special treatment for large-scale residential developments of more than 10 acres.

Lewis Plan of 1956

The 1950 Comprehensive Plan was the impetus for the Lewis Plan of 1956, in which Harold Lewis, a planning and zoning consultant from New York, recommended a major zoning overhaul.

Among other things, Mr. Lewis was concerned that the BZA had been acting in a legislative capacity, adopting so many variances and special exceptions as to be virtually functioning as the Zoning Commission. In addition to expressing these concerns, he called for a unified set of zoned districts based on the 1950 Comprehensive Plan. He further proposed a floor area ratio (FAR) system, a density device that would provide better control over specific density than the previous system, as well as design flexibility for architects and developers. In addition, Mr. Lewis proposed stricter parking requirements.

With the exception of the parking requirements, which were approved in 1956, the Zoning Ordinance of 1958 adopted most of Mr. Lewis's recommendations. The ordinance also created the Special Purpose (SP) Zone District, which established transition zones around the edge of central districts. It also adopted new regulations addressing light and air in building standards. Most importantly, it established the present system of basic zone districts.

Today, the Zoning Commission and BZA still operate pursuant to the basic tenets of the Zoning Ordinance of 1958 (with a number of amendments).

Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1967

In 1967, the Board of Commissioners was abolished and a single appointed "Commissioner" and nine-member District of Columbia Council were established in its stead. The Commissioner, the Chairman of the Council, and the Vice-Chairman of the Council replaced the Board of Commissioners on the Zoning Commission. The officer in charge of the National Park Service (or staff member) and the Architect of the Capitol (or staff member) remained on the Zoning Commission.

Home Rule Act of 1973

Under the Home Rule Act, an elected Mayor and 13-member District of Columbia Council were established in lieu of the appointed Commissioner and nine-member Council. Further, the Zoning Commission was recognized as a Charter agency. The Home Rule Act established the Zoning Commission as a five-member body comprised of three local members appointed by the Mayor, the officer in charge of the National Park Service (or a staff member), and the Architect of the Capitol (or a staff member).

Office of Zoning Independence Act of 1990

In September of 1990, the D.C. Council passed the Office of Zoning Independence Act, which established the Office of Zoning, an independent agency responsible for providing professional, technical,

and administrative support to the Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustment. This Act became effective on October 1, 1991.

The Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map

The Zoning Regulations (codified in DCMR Title 11) of the District of Columbia control land use, density, height, and bulk characteristics of property in the city. The District of Columbia Zoning Map identifies the designated zoning for all parcels of land in the city. All construction or rehabilitation on private land must conform to the requirements imposed by the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map adopted by the Zoning Commission. Those pursuing projects that do not conform, however, may seek relief before either the Zoning Commission or the BZA.

The zoning controls of a particular zone district applicable to a property govern many aspects of use and development, including:

- Use of a property (e.g., home, store, office, industry, etc.);
- Maximum permitted building height;
- Maximum permitted building bulk or gross FAR, which is a general measure of building scale and intensity of use;
- Minimum lot area and width;
- Lot occupancy (i.e., the percentage of a lot that a building may cover);
- Size of the required side yards, rear yards, and courts; and
- Number of off-street parking spaces that are required to service the use, given its size and operating characteristics.

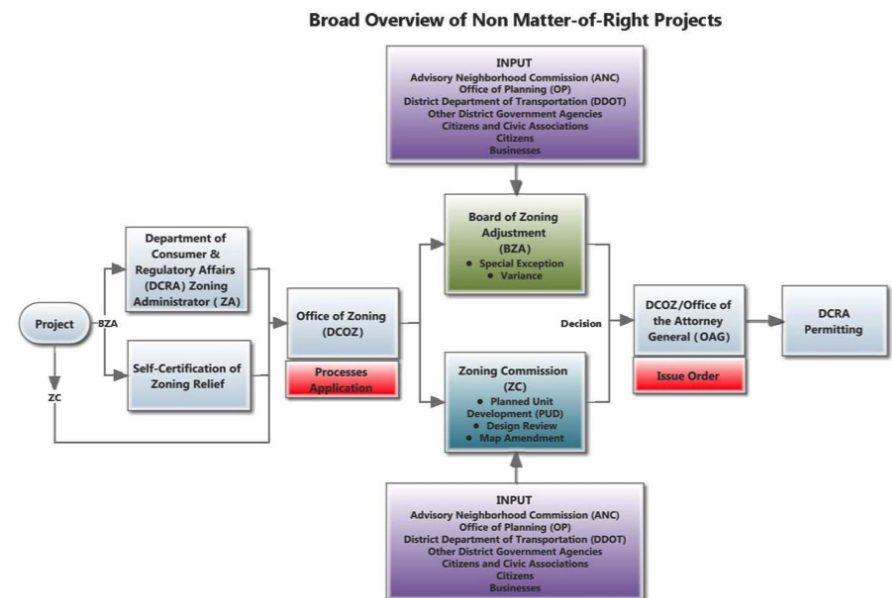
The Zoning Process

Any person or organization seeking to undertake new construction in the District of Columbia or to make repairs, alterations, or additions to existing buildings should consult with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to determine whether the proposed project conforms to the applicable zoning requirements. If the proposed project conflicts with the Zoning Regulations or the Zoning Map, the Zoning Administrator (ZA), who is part of DCRA and has

the authority to interpret and administer the Zoning Regulations as adopted by the Zoning Commission (ZC), will determine the required zoning relief. The person or organization may at that time: (1) modify the proposed project to conform to the Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map; (2) appeal the ZA's decision (with cause) to the BZA; or (3) apply for relief from the ZC or the BZA. Appropriate relief involving an amendment to the Zoning Regulations or the Zoning Map, an air rights development, or a Planned Unit Development (PUD) requires approval by the ZC, while variances, special exceptions, and appeals from administrative decisions regarding zoning are primarily handled by the BZA. The BZA also undertakes special reviews of proposed chancery development for facilities proposed to be located in certain mixed-use areas of the city.

Players in the Zoning Process

The Applicant seeking zoning relief is the key player in the zoning process. The applicant may be an individual, a business or corporation, or a community organization. Public agencies and the ZC itself may also initiate a zoning change.



Attorneys, architects, private planners, and other consultants (such as urban planners, landscape architects, traffic engineers, and real estate economists) often play important roles in the zoning process. Some zoning cases are relatively straightforward, and applicants may prepare and present their own case. Because zoning is often complex, however, Applicants typically hire professionals, such as architects or law firms who specializes in zoning and land development, to represent them.

The Zoning Commission (ZC) is a five-member quasi-judicial body created by the Zoning Act of 1920, as amended, and charged with preparing, adopting, and subsequently amending the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. The ZC also hears Planned Unit Development (PUD) cases -- a planning tool which allows a project greater development flexibility and other incentives, provided that the project offers a commendable number or quality of public benefits and that it protects and advances public health, safety, welfare, and convenience. In addition, the ZC hears air rights and campus plan cases. Three members of the ZC are residents of the District of Columbia appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. The fourth member of the ZC is the Architect of the Capitol (or his/her designee). The fifth member is the Director of the National Park Service (or his/her designee).

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) is a five-member quasi-judicial board created by the Zoning Enabling Act of 1938, as amended, and charged with hearing cases related to variances, special exceptions, and appeals of administrative decisions related to zoning. The BZA also hears Foreign Mission cases and civil infractions. Three members of the BZA are residents of the District of Columbia appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. The fourth member of the BZA is a designee of the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The fifth member is a rotating member of the ZC.

The Office of Zoning (OZ) is an independent District agency created by the Office of Zoning Independence Act of 1990 to provide professional, technical, and administrative assistance to the ZC

and the BZA in support of their oversight and adjudication of zoning matters in the District. OZ receives and processes zoning related applications, whether for a zoning change handled by the ZC or for relief from a zoning regulation provision handled by the BZA. OZ schedules ZC and BZA public meetings and hearings and provides follow-up information on their actions and decisions. OZ coordinates the zoning process with the Office of Planning and other District and Federal agencies. OZ maintains and updates the Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map. The agency prepares records of appealed ZC and BZA cases for the courts and handles all administrative matters associated with the daily functioning of the office.

OZ provides information to members of the public, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and community groups about District zoning procedures, the Zoning Regulations, the Zoning Map, the zoning of specific properties, and the status of cases pending before the ZC and the BZA. OZ also consults with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) regarding legal issues and monitors the District's legislative process to keep the ZC and the BZA apprised of matters affecting zoning.

The Office of Planning (OP) is the central planning agency for the District of Columbia. The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Section prepares zoning text and zoning map amendments for submission to the ZC in order to implement the Comprehensive Plan through the Zoning Consistency Program. This ongoing program, which began in 1992, is intended to make the zoning text and map not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Services section reviews applications for amendments to the Zoning Regulations or Zoning Map (which come before the ZC) or for variances or special exceptions (which come before the BZA). OP submits written recommendations to the ZC and BZA on these matters, which are given "great weight" by the ZC and BZA.

As part of the zoning process, OP may coordinate comments from other District agencies, including: the Department of Transportation (DDOT), Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Health

(DOH), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) are comprised of officials elected by their neighbors to provide formal citizen participation and review at the neighborhood level. All zoning applications to the ZC and the BZA are referred to the appropriate ANC and Single Member District Commissioners. In accordance with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Act, the recommendations of the ANCs are given “great weight” in the zoning process provided certain criteria are met.

The Office of the Zoning Administrator (ZA) (within the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA)) is responsible for administering and enforcing the Zoning Regulations as well as ZC and BZA orders. The ZA is responsible for zoning code compliance and assuring the correct permit(s) and certificate(s) of occupancy have been obtained. The ZA also handles illegal construction, certificates of occupancy, and code enforcement.

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), the central planning agency for the federal government, reviews amendments to the Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map, as well as PUDs, approved by the ZC to determine if they have an adverse effect on the “federal interest” or are inconsistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC), the federal government official in charge of the Capitol grounds, reviews special exception applications in the Capitol Interest Overlay District.

The Office of the Surveyor (within DCRA) maintains the legal records of all plats and subdivisions of private and District-owned property.

The Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) maintains information on real property values, tax assessments, and other real property information.

The Office of Foreign Missions of the United States Department of State determines the federal interest in its participation in proceedings relating to chanceries before the ZC and BZA.

The Zoning Commission Actions

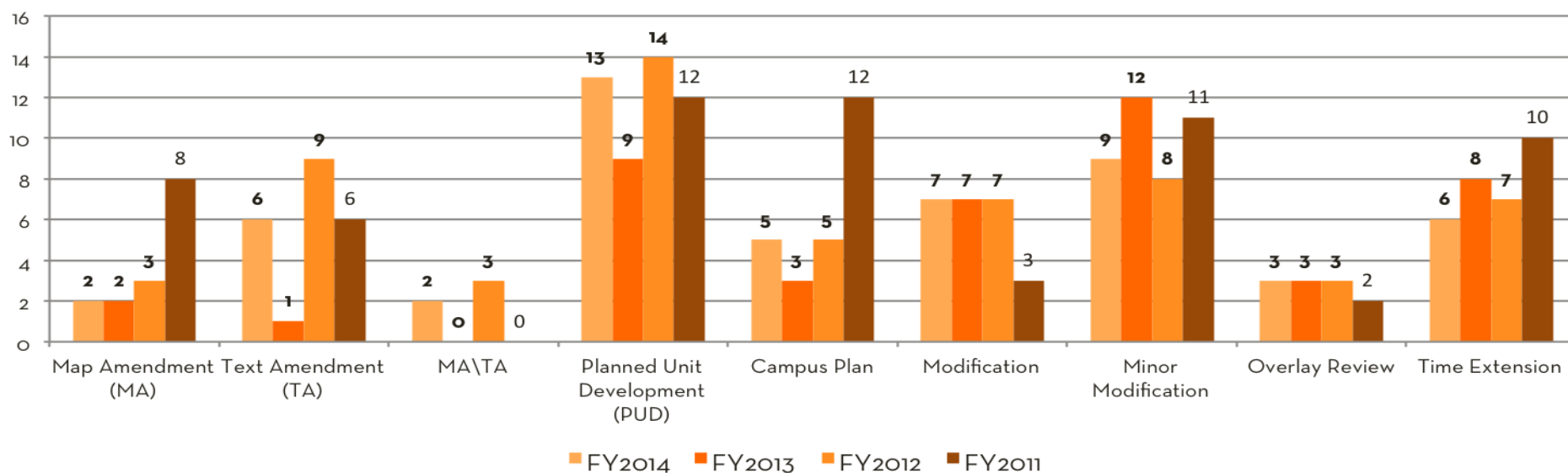
Map Amendments - Upon review of a proposed project, the ZA may determine that the project conflicts with the land use(s), height, density, bulk, etc. permitted by the zone district covering the site. In that event, the affected property owner may seek permission from the ZC to develop the proposed project by filing a Map Amendment application with the ZC. Because a Map Amendment often pertains to larger areas beyond one property, it may be initiated by petition from the public, including public agencies such as OP.

Text Amendments - Applications to change the text of the Zoning Regulations may be filed with the ZC. A text amendment may change the development standards in one or more zone districts, as well as any procedural items contained in the Zoning Regulations. A text amendment may be filed by an individual, a business or corporation, or a community organization. Public agencies may also petition for a text amendment.

Air Rights Development in Public Space - Requests for renting or otherwise using the space above or below streets and alleys in the District of Columbia, under specified conditions, are referred to the ZC by the Building and Land Regulation Administration within DCRA. The ZC follows the identical process used for consideration of a proposed Map Amendment when reviewing applications for air rights development.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) - A PUD is a planning tool that allows a developer greater flexibility in site planning and building design, provided the project offers a commendable number or quality of public benefits and that it protects and advances public health, safety, welfare, and convenience. This flexibility permits the developer to incorporate amenities in the project that exceed those that could have been achieved under the general provisions of the

Figure 4.4. Zoning Commission / Number of Applications by Case Type per Fiscal Year



Source: DC Office of Zoning

Zoning Regulations. When a project is designated a PUD, the ZC usually mandates the development of standards specifically tailored to the project.

Campus Plans - Large institutions, such as colleges and universities, are required to prepare and submit a plan to the ZC for approval. After a “campus plan” is approved, future development of the “campus” must be in accordance with the plan. A campus plan is treated in the same manner as a Special Exception.

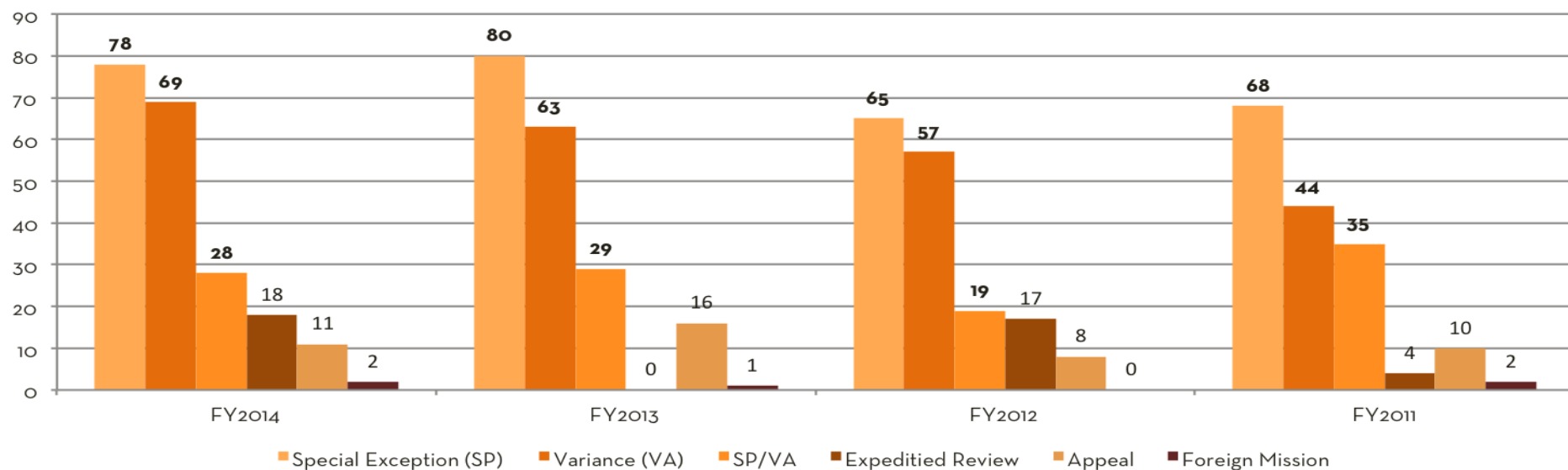
Board of Zoning Adjustment Actions

Variances - The BZA is authorized to waive strict application of any part of the Zoning Regulations where, due to an exceptional situation, adherence to the language of the Zoning Regulations results in “exceptional practical difficulties or exceptional and undue hardship” upon a property owner. In most cases, difficulty or hardship results from physical characteristics that make the property unique or difficult to use. The BZA must determine that

granting the request would not cause substantial detriment to the public good and would not be inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

Special Exceptions - A Special Exception may be granted for a particular use of land or for a particular building. In general, a Special Exception is a conditioned permitted use in a particular zone district. The use is permitted provided certain specific criteria are met. The Zoning Regulations contain standards for the BZA to consider when deciding whether or not a particular Special Exception should be granted. Expedited Review cases are a type of Special Exception.

Non-Conforming Uses - A Non-Conforming Use is an existing use of land or structure that was once permitted under the Zoning Regulations, or that pre-existed the Zoning Regulations, but is no longer permitted under current Zoning Regulations. Such a use may be continued but is controlled to a greater degree than a use affirmatively permitted by the Zoning Regulations. The Zoning Regulations give the BZA the authority to allow the expansion of such a use under certain

Figure 4.5. Board of Zoning Adjustment / Number of Applications by Case Type per Fiscal Year

Source: DC Office of Zoning

circumstances and to allow certain changes in the use itself. The substitution of a use may also be permitted.

Zoning Appeals - The BZA is authorized to hear an Appeal when it is alleged that the decision of any administrative officer or body related to the enforcement or administration of the Zoning Regulations erred or was otherwise incorrect. In most cases, it is the decision of the ZA that is appealed to the Board.

Foreign Missions - Under the Foreign Missions Act of 1982, chanceries are permitted as a matter-of-right use in Commercial, Industrial, Mixed Use, and Waterfront Districts. In all other areas, including the Mixed-Use Diplomatic Overlay District, the BZA has the authority to “disapprove” or veto a proposed chancery location or expansion.

Civil Infraction Appeals - Under the Civil Infractions Act of 1985, the BZA is authorized to hear administrative appeals from the decision of an administrative law judge involving the Zoning Act of 1938 or the Zoning Regulations.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology (IT)

Seeing key information about the District is a prerequisite for effective planning. Analyzing it effectively is essential as well. OP’s GIS/IT team makes sure that information necessary for planning is available not just within OP’s office, but to every participant in the planning process and to other District agencies as well. OP has long recognized the importance of high-quality maps and spatial information for the District of Columbia and has been a leader in developing tools to make this information available to everyone efficiently. OP provides high-quality maps and analyses – in hard copy, in reports, and online. OP’s award-winning GIS/IT team makes it possible for OP’s entire planning staff to be effective mapmakers as well as effective users of standard office software and agency databases. This group also assists other agencies with GIS tasks, provides maps directly to the public on request, and creates

interactive online mapping tools. They work particularly closely with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer's GIS team, sharing data and making the most of each other's resources.

Online Maps and Information

Sometimes you just have a simple question about the District such as "What's my ward?" You shouldn't need a fancy tool to answer that. OP created What's My Ward, a simple form on OP's website and others. It answers that question directly. Other times you'd like a lot more information about a place. OP's popular PropertyQuest <http://propertyquest.dc.gov> has been used over a third of a million times to show a variety of maps, photos, ward and property information for locations in the District. It is particularly useful for identifying places that include historic resources. OP is currently working on a second-generation product that will work as well on tablets and phones as it does on desktops and laptops. OP is also leveraging the commercial cloud-based GIS resources available to District government agencies to host a growing library of interactive versions of key maps such as OP's Comprehensive Plan maps.

Mapping for OP and Others

Sometimes you need a real map to show some important information. Ultimately, there is no substitute for maps and analyses created by experts. They know how to make the many small decisions that are the difference between a map that communicates key information clearly and easily, and one that doesn't. OP's GIS/IT team assists other agencies with sophisticated mapping and analysis tasks as needed, for example, for their facilities planning and other strategic initiatives. OP also post maps on the OP website and produces high-quality maps of all sizes for residents and other members of the public on request at nominal costs. A map request form is available on OP's website at <http://planning.dc.gov> or customers may call OP at (202) 442-7600. OP's IT/GIS team makes thousands of unique maps each year and tracks each one of them so that they can be retrieved and updated as needed over time.

Tools To Make the Maps

Off-the-shelf professional GIS software is powerful but time-consuming to use. Simpler products like Google Maps are great for what they do, but they don't do everything that public and government customers need to visualize and manage spatial information. The OP Tools GIS enhancement software created by OP staff makes it practical for OP's planners to use real GIS software effectively in their day-to-day work. Finding key information, displaying it well, and keeping track of the many maps OP makes are all much easier using OP Tools. The Office of the Chief Technology Officer's DCGIS program used these tools as the basis for the ones they distribute to all DC agencies. OP is now developing the next generation of its GIS tools for use with the next generation of professional GIS software - for the agency's needs and for other District agencies. OP continues to innovate, developing attractive and powerful tools that leverage the power of GIS for everyone. OP understands that technology never stands still and continues to take advantage of the best available tools for making information accessible for planning.

Integrating and Analyzing Data

Google Maps, Bing Maps, and the like make it easy to put dots on a map. This rarely tells the whole story. OP's dedicated GIS/IT team uses advanced analytical techniques to help evaluate neighborhood walkability and transit access, potential impacts of development on existing views, and more. OP's full-time cartographers (professional mapmakers) are expert at ensuring that the important information for every map is communicated clearly and accurately. Because the team does this work often and in detail, OP knows the limitations of the available data sets for the District and commonly help other agencies improve theirs. In addition to mapping Census and land use information, OP now integrates increasing amounts of agency operational data into centralized databases for mapping. The workflow tracking system OP's IT/GIS team built for the agency's Historic Preservation Office is one example of how information is being centralized so it can be analyzed and shared effectively.

Visualizing the City in 3D

Flat maps have long been the standard way to visualizing cities, but 3D views of Washington, DC as it is today and how it might be tomorrow are especially engaging – and all the more so when viewers can fly through them on demand. OP's GIS/IT team has been instrumental in ensuring that improved 3D building data are available for the District, and OP is working to develop the capability to create compelling 3D visualizations of planning data in-house.

Information Technology

OP's GIS/IT group leverages information technology resources to improve agency effectiveness and relies on centralized resources as appropriate. All of these efforts are guided by formal IT planning. OP's IT/GIS team uses tracking systems extensively – for the map requests, the maps that are produced, the work flowing within OP, and for progress by District agencies in implementing the recommendations of OP plans. OP maintains a detailed agency Intranet site hosted by Google as a shared knowledgebase for reference and for training. Because staff can access this site from anywhere with Internet access, this provides resilience for the agency in the event of natural or man-made disasters. OP also builds and hosts databases of information on historic resources, census data, land use and more.

