
Outlook for the District's Next Comprehensive Plan

In 2025, the Office of Planning (OP) will embark on the first full rewrite of the District's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) in nearly 20 years. The Comp Plan is a long-term vision and roadmap for the District's future. The Comp Plan guides city decisions on where we locate housing and jobs and where and how we invest in transportation, utilities, parks, and other public resources. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to collectively imagine a future that reflects our values. With a strong economy and increasing population, a new kind of Comp Plan is needed to make sure that our city grows equitably, with vibrant and resilient neighborhoods.

The 2006 Comp Plan guided the city through a period of significant change. The Navy Yard/Buzzard Point area has welcomed thousands of new residents and employees, hundreds of new retailers, and two stadiums. Congress Heights is adding thousands of new jobs, mixed-income housing, shops, and a state-of-the-art hospital. These are just two examples of the growth and change envisioned by that plan.

The 2021 Comp Plan Update layered on important values like housing affordability and racial equity. However, as a Comp Plan update rather than a rewrite, it builds off policies established almost two decades ago.

The Comp Plan rewrite process will identify the challenges and opportunities the District faces and consider how to meet them in the next twenty years. OP will work with residents, advocacy groups, elected officials, District agencies, and other community leaders to develop policies and priorities to guide the investments in growth and development in the District over the next two decades. Through an inclusive and robust public process, the District's diverse communities will be invited to imagine the kind of city they want for themselves and their children. The outcome will be DC 2050, the District's next Comp Plan.

Roadmap to 2050

From **September 2024 to December 2024**, OP will identify conditions, trends, and issues to inform community conversations, and develop a racial equity framework to guide the development of DC 2050.

From **January 2025 to September 2025**, OP will engage with residents citywide to identify goals and priorities for DC 2050.

From **October 2025 to September 2026**, OP will engage residents on future land use scenarios that reflect racial equity goals and account for expected trends and drivers of change.

From **October 2026 to June 2027**, OP will collect public input, refine DC 2050, and prepare the plan for Mayor Bowser to transmit to Council for approval.

From **July 2027 to December 2027**, Council will consider approval of DC 2050.

From **2028 to 2050**, District agencies will work with federal and community partners to implement the policies and track progress on DC 2050.

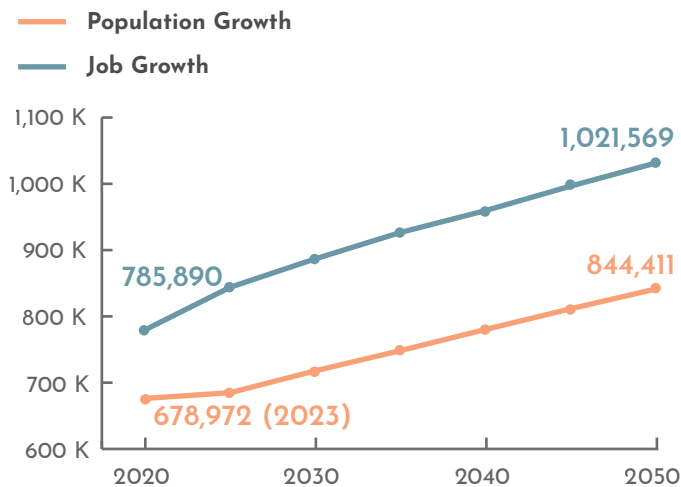
Towards an Equitable Future

OP will evaluate the most recent data and trends and work with community stakeholders to center important values like racial equity, affordability, and resilience in DC 2050.

Future Growth

Today, nearly 680,000 people call Washington, DC home. This is an increase of 120,000 residents since 2006, and our population is expected to grow to 845,000 by 2050. The District is also expected to add 235,000 jobs over that same period. As the city grows, we must meet the increased demand for housing, transportation, civic facilities, and environmental conservation. DC 2050 will focus on policies that increase access to housing along with the essential services that make neighborhoods healthy, livable, and walkable. In addition, DC 2050 will help prioritize and align investments in transportation, utilities, and civic facilities with the city's growth and development goals.

Population & Jobs



Source: Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOG) Round 10.0 Growth Trends to 2050 and U.S. Census

Racial Equity

DC 2050 is an opportunity to strengthen the District's long-held commitment to racial equity. Residents have not benefited equally from the District's prosperity. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color still have less access to financial opportunity, quality healthcare, well-resourced schools, and reliable transit networks. The median income for Black households in the District is \$61,000 which is less than half of the median income for White households. Additionally, 21% of Black residents live in poverty compared to 6% of White residents.

Repairing this enduring legacy of systemic racism requires targeted solutions. To do this, OP's racial equity approach will use data to uncover the root causes for racial inequities and understand current racial disparities. OP will also document the history of the District's diverse community. OP will use this information to develop outcome-oriented policies and tools that evaluate the new Comp Plan through a racial equity lens. DC 2050 will put the District on the path toward a future where race and ethnicity do not determine life outcomes.

COVID-19 Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the nature of the workplace and accelerated trends that were already in motion. Innovations in technology enable fast remote communication and new ways of working and getting around the city. The number of people who work from home has dramatically increased, leaving many office buildings downtown nearly empty. The District’s office vacancy rate sits at 17%, the highest rate on record and nearly twice as high as it was a decade ago.

DC 2050 will establish new land use policies that will help make every neighborhood opportunity-rich. This means transitioning downtown to a place where people enjoy living, working, and gathering. Making opportunity-rich neighborhoods also means closing the gaps in access to housing options, healthy food, community services, transit, and green space across the District. Finally, DC 2050 will leverage new technologies in telecommunications, electrified transportation, and clean energy, to make the District a more equitable and resilient place for all residents.

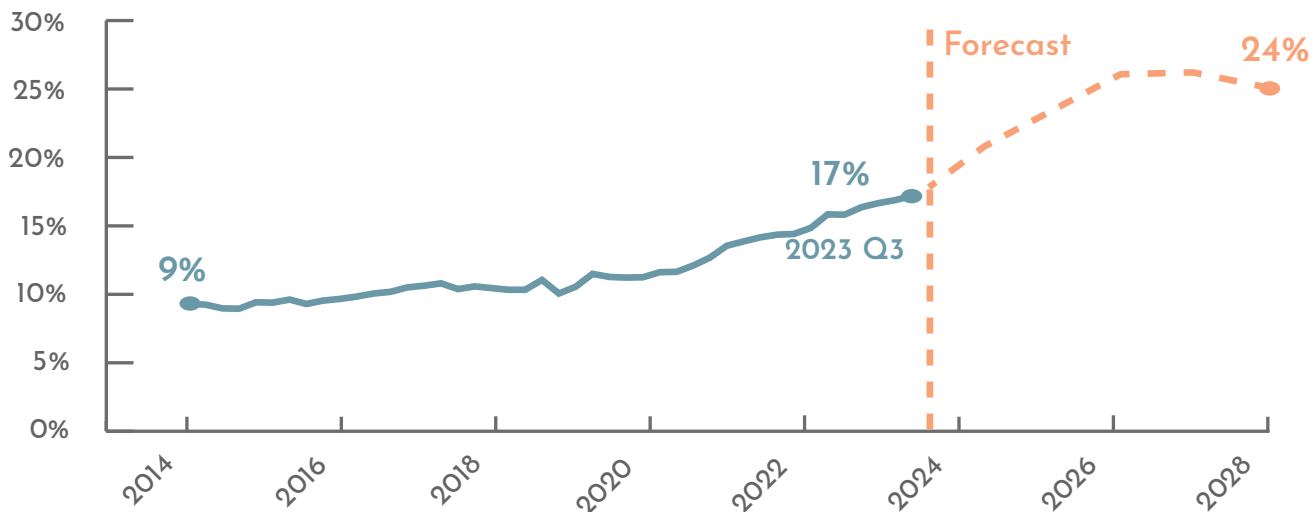
Climate Resilience

Like other cities across the country and around the world, Washington, DC will continue to experience the impact of climate change. Sea level rise and extreme weather events are expected to increase in the next two decades. In DC, the number of days per year with extreme rain events are projected to increase from an average of 10 days to 13 days and the number of extreme hot days is expected to increase from an average of 11 days to 30 to 45 days by 2050. Warming temperatures put vulnerable populations at risk of heat-related illnesses. Higher water levels threaten the District’s infrastructure like power lines and transportation networks. Resilience will be an important component of DC 2050. This focus will prioritize the needs of residents who are most likely to be impacted by climate change.

Regional Alignment

Finally, DC 2050 will be informed by the latest regional trends and future projections. The District is a regional leader in sustainable land use and transportation practices. These practices elevate the quality of life for all residents, workers, and visitors. DC 2050 will build on this leadership to make the region’s housing more affordable, its jobs more accessible, and its cultural opportunities more equitable.

Office Vacancy



Source: CoStar

DC 2050: A New Kind of Comp Plan


One of the primary functions of the Comp Plan is to establish land use policies. This involves determining where housing, offices, retail, parks, and industrial areas should be located. DC 2050's land use map will reflect the way people live, work, and shop by guiding future zoning and development in District neighborhoods. OP's data and visualization tools will inform the land use maps and graphics that help people imagine future growth and development in neighborhoods across the District. DC 2050 will represent an evolution from previous comp plans by featuring easy-to-read land use maps that show the desired scale of housing, commercial, and other spaces in the District.

As we prepare to launch the Comp Plan rewrite, OP will survey recently adopted comp plans from major cities across the country to identify ways to organize and format DC 2050 with a focus on a user-friendly, data-informed, and outcome-oriented Comp Plan. Additionally, OP is evaluating the District's housing needs and identifying forces that cause displacement and contribute to racial inequities. This evaluation will inform policy options to improve access to housing for families at different income levels and mitigate displacement pressures. Furthermore, OP is developing a District-wide communications and engagement strategy. The strategy will identify outreach activities to meaningfully engage residents and stakeholders in developing DC 2050.




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