DOWN TOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY

District of Columbia Office of Planning

WE ARE WASHINGTON

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR
Dear Residents and Stakeholders:

As Mayor of Washington, DC, I am pleased to present our Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy. Located on the iconic doorstep of Union Station and the crossroads of our Downtown, Mount Vernon Triangle, and NoMa neighborhoods, Downtown East represents a bustling gateway to our city’s geographic heart.

Over the past few decades, much of our center city area has witnessed a resurgence of investment and opportunity, while Downtown East has largely lagged. Now, however, the area is poised to bloom, with renewed interest, a growing population, large-scale development (complete or under construction), and transformative public space projects—like the New Jersey/New York Avenue Streetscape project—which attempts to heal physical barriers and is expected to provide safe pedestrian connections and a vibrant place for all our residents and visitors to enjoy.

As we continue to make strides toward improving and reactivating our city’s most prominent areas, we must be proactive and intentional in our investment towards equitable, inclusive and welcoming public places alongside private developments as they emerge. This Strategy for Downtown East builds upon that vision and celebrates the area’s rich social infrastructure and cultural history. Ultimately, through this Strategy, we have a sound roadmap to reestablish Downtown East as a livable, vibrant community that offers greater connectivity, safety and accessibility; more job opportunities; housing options covering the spectrum of affordability; and a network of great urban places designed for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors both near and far.

In addition to thanking the residents who contributed to this plan, I would like to acknowledge the DC Office of Planning for leading the effort along with several District agencies, including the District Department of Transportation, the District Department of Parks and Recreation, the District Department of General Services, and the District Department of Energy and the Environment. This core team of partner agencies has, over the past several years, engaged with residents, partners in the federal government, and community stakeholders to establish this future for Downtown East. Moving forward, this Strategy will require a range of implementers across many sectors. The District government, the Mt. Vernon Triangle Community Improvement District (CID), the NoMA Business Improvement District (BID), the Downtown BID, property owners, developers, civic associations, institutions such as Georgetown University, and community stakeholders each have an important role to play. We must actively work together, taking a holistic approach to partnership. As a priority, the District of Columbia will align our resources to implement the plan by identifying programs and resources to achieve both short- and long-term goals.

We look forward to seeing this exciting vision for Downtown East become a reality!

Sincerely,

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
This document outlines an urban design vision for a livable Downtown East neighborhood and provides specific planning recommendations on how best to bring it to fruition. It also seeks to guide public and private investment strategies for the area to best shape a cohesive community for the residents, workers, and visitors who inhabit the area.

A Re-Urbanization Strategy is intended to be a high-level strategic planning effort and is specifically reserved for an area such as Downtown East where substantial gaps exist in the physical urban fabric. Through targeted stakeholder outreach and in-depth data analysis, this strategy document seeks to shape incoming investment to infill or repair these gaps in infrastructure and development to better serve the surrounding communities.

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT INTENDED FOR?

• Residents, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and other community groups within Downtown East
• Business Improvement Districts: the Downtown BID, Mt. Vernon Triangle CID, & NoMA BID
• Federal government agencies in the area: General Services Administration, Architect of the Capitol, National Capital Planning Commission, National Parks Service
• Other major institutional and private sector stakeholders
Executive Summary

Why Downtown East & Why Now?

- Over the past two decades, much of Washington, DC’s urban core has undergone transformation, reinventing itself as a place of opportunity in the 21st Century. The Downtown East neighborhood, however, did not experience the same pace of reinvestment... until now. The area is poised to bloom again with renewed interest and investment pushing opportunity forward.

- As more residents are anticipated to move into the area, the building blocks for a strong and vibrant neighborhood already exist within Downtown East: an emerging destination retail scene at Walmart and proposed at Capitol Crossing

- With so many large-scale projects anticipated in the coming decade, the existing identity and character of the area will shift as well, making public-private coordination all the more crucial to address issues of equity and livability for members of the community. The public space is a canvas on which the neighborhood can paint its image itself, a message communicated to the outside world from within the community.

- And yet, as renewed investment returns to the neighborhood, the emerging destination retail scene, the vital, national transportation hub at Union Station and transit connections throughout the city and region, the emerging destination retail scene at Walmart and proposed at Capitol Crossing

Downtown East is currently undergoing rapid transformation and change. It is an area that once stood as the commercial and institutional center of Washington, DC largely due to its close proximity to the US Capitol and seat of federal government, but lost much of this status as the city’s business core innovated and drifted to the west. In the past two decades, nearby neighborhoods – NoMa, Mount Vernon Triangle, Gallery Place, Penn Quarter – have all experienced an economic resurgence that has not been similarly felt in the Downtown East area.

That is, until recently.

The Challenges and Opportunities

- The construction of the I-395 freeway severed much of the street grid, cutting off the most efficient routes between Union Station and Downtown. There is limited traffic and transit connectivity to and through Downtown East.

- The existing 9-to-5 office market dominates, with relatively few options for neighborhood-serving retail, especially in the evenings and on weekends. The entire area lacks a sense of place.

- The public space is a canvas on which the neighborhood can paint its image itself, a message communicated to the outside world from within the community.

- The question before us in this document is: how do we best capture the neighborhood’s untapped potential, and ensure its transition will best serve the existing and future population?

As renewed investment returns to the neighborhood, the building blocks for a strong and vibrant neighborhood already exist within Downtown East:

- a diverse and engaged residential population that is growing rapidly
- a concentration of influential stakeholders with a demonstrated interest in better communities (as showcased by the several Business Improvement Districts)
- a strong office market and access to professional and service jobs
- a large number of residential units to be delivered within the next five years
- proximity to prominent institutions like the US Capitol, Georgetown Law School, and the Federal courts of Judiciary Square
- a vital, national transportation hub at Union Station and transit connections throughout the city and region
- the emerging destination retail scene at Walmart and proposed at Capitol Crossing

And the thread that stitches these values together and links a shared foundation is the public space. The public space is a canvas on which the neighborhood can paint its image itself, a message communicated to the outside world from within the community.

STITCHING TOGETHER A VIBRANT AND LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Based on discussions held with area stakeholders, the following themes emerged as the most important goals to strive towards:

- Neighborhoods that promote and enhance their public spaces...: the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces – the streets and roads, the public gathering spaces and parks, the building frontages that define them – thrive. Businesses benefit from the expansion of sidewalks cafes or the display of merchandise on a street that further activates a setting, letting others know a space is an attractive destination. Residents benefit from having greater options of retail spaces and public places alongside private developments to better shape a livable neighborhood.

- Major investments and large scale developments have broken ground, altering the existing physical character of the area. Capitol Crossing, currently under construction, will bring 2.2 million square feet of office and retail development in air rights above the Center Leg Freeway (I-395). The expansion of Union Station, set to triple the capacity of the transit hub, and Burnham Place, a 1.6 million square foot development built over the existing railroad infrastructure, will invite a greater density of workers, residents, and visitors to the area. The shifting nature of the federal workforce has inspired the Government Services Administration, the primary land-owning arm of the US government, to consider their long-term options and holdings in the area, potentially opening up redevelopment opportunities at a number of sites.

- As more residents are anticipated to move into Downtown East, there is a dearth of public parks and community gathering spaces. Many existing public spaces are too often empty, especially in the evenings and on weekends. The entire area lacks a sense of place.

- The public space is a canvas on which the neighborhood can paint its image itself, a message communicated to the outside world from within the community.

- And yet, as renewed investment returns to the neighborhood, the building blocks for a strong and vibrant neighborhood already exist within Downtown East: an emerging destination retail scene at Walmart and proposed at Capitol Crossing

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VISION GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 – A FULLY CONNECTED DOWNTOWN:
   Restore street grid between Union Station and Downtown

2 – ACCESSIBLE TO REST OF THE CITY AND REGION:
   Improve access to all modes of transportation to and through Downtown East

3 – EXPANDING ROLE AS A REGIONAL GATEWAY:
   Emphasize Union Station and its connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods

4 – A PREEMINENT CENTER FOR JOBS:
   Anticipate shifting needs of office & emerging markets to bolster job growth

5 – HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING:
   Prioritize human-centered and inclusive design in new affordable housing

6 – A LIVABLE, URBAN COMMUNITY:
   Guide new development to create livable community-serving urban spaces

7 – A CENTRAL COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE:
   Design a public space to serve as heart of a growing residential neighborhood

8 – A NETWORK OF PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACES:
   Support a range of new and renovated public spaces for a variety of users

9 – A COMMUNITY-DEFINING PUBLIC REALM:
   Activate a safe and attractive public realm through placemaking
Downtown East lies at the heart of some of the most vibrant and loved neighborhoods in Washington, DC and represents a great opportunity for the city and its residents to shape a livable community. These surrounding neighborhoods – Downtown, Mount Vernon Triangle, and NoMA – have all witnessed increasing residential and commercial development and market revitalization over the past decade. Yet, in this same span of time, Downtown East has not captured the same level of excitement and investment. As a result, the area is now ripe with opportunity. This is the time to shape a neighborhood that is loved by the people who inhabit it.

To reach the goal of a livable and lovable neighborhood, however, there are some substantial challenges that must be overcome. First, the I-395 Center Leg Freeway, originally constructed in the late 1960s, sever the street grid and presents an obstruction to much east-west connectivity through the area, cutting off Union Station from Downtown.

Second, bland or staid architecture with little or no ground floor retail serve to dehumanize the public realm and discourage streetlife. And third, despite the growing residential population in the area, Downtown East lacks community identifiers or gathering spaces such as parks.

These challenges are far from insurmountable, and they disguise the fact that Downtown East is already home to many of ingredients of a great place: educational institutions; major public and private employment anchors; close proximity to transit options and cultural/civic spaces including libraries, churches, recreational facilities and homeless support services. The area also has a tradition of housing affordability to preserve. And while these strengths must be valued and protected, they can also be used to leverage a more complete, vibrant and connected community that best serves the residents, workers, visitors, students, and institutions that inhabit this crossroads neighborhood.

Many key stakeholders already have a foothold in Downtown East and bring their unique skills and experiences to improving the space on a daily basis. The area hosts three Business Improvement Districts, a clear indicator that that area business owners, residents, and other stakeholders saw a strong value in further shaping and enhancing the character and identity here.

Further, the area has already begun to see an uptick in reinvestment. A distinctly urban Walmart opened in 2013 and as a result doubled the square footage of retail. Capitol Crossing, currently under construction, promises to reconnect F and G Streets NW over the freeway and add up to 2.2 million square feet of office, retail and hotel space on three newly created city blocks. These and similar ventures offer a glimpse of Downtown East as an emerging neighborhood that reconnects several disjointed communities into a re-invigorated center of urban life in downtown Washington, DC.
The oldest BID in DC, the BID spans the traditional downtown center of the city, spanning 138 blocks. It provides capital improvements to the area, helps diversify the economy, and enhances the Downtown experience for users in the area.

**MOUNT VERNON TRIANGLE CID (2004)**
As the Triangle is a growing mixed-use community, it is represented by the only Community Improvement District in DC directly including residents into the decision-making process. As such, it focuses on assets that provide benefits for its residents, including clean and safe streets, local retail, and advocating for new parks.

**NOMA BID (2007)**
The NoMA BID provides beautification, community outreach, economic development and urban planning services and hosts over 50 free events each year. In partnership with the NoMA Parks Foundation, it advocates for and has built new parks and public art in recent years.

What is a Business/Community Improvement District?
A BID/CID is a nonprofit, public-private partnership in which property and business owners in a defined area elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development, and marketing/promotion of that area. Though typically found in commercial districts, they can include residential and institutional areas as well. Every BID/CID is driven by community support and requires legislative authorization in order to be established. The goals that are typically focused on are:

- Clean and Safe Streets
- Streetscape Improvements
- Ongoing Maintenance of Public Realm
- Economic Development
- Business Well-Being
- Planning and Transit Enhancements
- Advocacy with Decision-makers
- Community Building and Events
- Homeless Services
- Branding and Marketing
- Wayfinding
- Placemaking

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY**

**SELECT MAJOR SITES WITHIN AND NEAR DOWNTOWN EAST**

**EDUCATION**
1. Walker Jones Campus
2. Gonzaga College HS
3. Georgetown University Law School
4. Federal City Shelter
5. Union Station
6. Labor Department
7. Northwest One site

**PRIVATE DEVELOPMENTS**
1. Walmart / 77H
2. Capitol Crossing
3. Sursum Corda
4. Burns Place
5. DC Bar
6. 6th and G
7. Gardens

**GOVERNMENT**
1. Government Publishing Office (GPO)
2. Federal City Shelter
3. Union Station
4. Labor Department
5. 11th Street Bridge

**HOUSES OF WORSHIP & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**
1. Architect of the Capitol
2. National Mall
3. Tidal Basin
4. Constitution Avenue
5. Pennsylvania Avenue
6. Massachusetts Avenue
7. New York Avenue
8. Constitution Avenue
9. New Jersey Avenue
10. Pennsylvania Avenue
11. Constitution Avenue
12. New York Avenue
13. Massachusetts Avenue
14. Tidal Basin
15. National Mall
**DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY**

**COMPETITIVE STRENGTHS**
- Proximity to US Capitol strong driver for office and hospitality uses.
- Development pressure from adjacent areas.
- Large, stable daytime population.
- Momentum from recent development activity.
- Existing retail amenity base.

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**
- Transformative potential from large opportunity sites including expansion of Union Station and government-conant parcels to solidify a livable, mixed use neighborhood.
- Potential for planned residential development to support more retail opportunities.
- Affordable housing preservation and creation.

**COMPETITIVE WEAKNESSES**
- High concentration of employment in government sector.
- Limited diversity in office population that may impact less competitive office.
- Lack of sense of place and neighborhood identity.
- Lack of a diverse retail amenities.
- Limited walkability and connectivity.

**POTENTIAL THREAT**
- Competition from adjacent neighborhoods.
- Lack of existing retail amenity base.
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**Shifting Demographics Closer to Downtown**

Downtown East hosts many diverse communities, each one shifting in makeup and layout over time. This area has changed rapidly in the past several decades—moving to pressures from an expanding downtown commercial district in adjacent areas. In the closing years of the 20th Century, the demographic makeup of Downtown East closely resembled that of the rest of the city. However, since 2000, the neighborhood has shifted to align more closely to downtown. Specifically, the size of its households and the number of children living in the area have decreased significantly since 2000, as has the average age of residents. In that same time span, median income and educational attainment rates have increased. The result, fewer families and a larger influx of young, childless professionals more closely resembles that of the rest of the city. However, since 2000, the neighborhood has shifted to align more closely to downtown. 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Mapping Daily Routes: Workers

The daily workforce is more than five times the size of the residential population in Downtown East, primarily made up of office workers but also made up of retailers and service workers. Nearly half of the total workforce is employed in the public sector, compared with only a third of workers across the rest of the city, largely due to the high concentration of federal government buildings in the vicinity. More than half of private sector workers are in lobbying and legal firms or in non-profit advocacy organizations, linked directly to jobs in the federal government who choose to be located close to Judiciary Square and the US Capitol.

Mapping Daily Routes: Residents

With a growth rate of more than 88%, Downtown East has seen its residential population bloom from just over 2,500 in 2000 to more than 5,000 by 2018, far outpacing the rate in Downtown (51%) and the rest of Washington DC (16.5%) over the same time. Over 10% of residents live in group quarters (seniors in assisted living centers, student dormitories, homeless shelters, etc) - in contrast to the 6% across DC.

Families and households with children make up a smaller portion of the total than they did two decades ago, largely due to an influx of younger singles. However, the percent of families and households with children are expected to tick up in the next several years as much of the Northwest One housing plan and many other residential projects are completed.

Mapping Daily Routes: Visitors

Visitors constitute a significant and difficult to measure element of the daily population. A majority of those who stay in the area are business travelers, many of whom arrive at Union Station on their way to the Capitol, courts, or offices in the area. Tourists, shoppers and diners add a much-needed layer of activity at all hours of the day, an important source of streetlife in an area composed primarily of office buildings. The several houses of worship routinely host large congregations on the weekends, many of whom arrive from outside the area.

Mapping Daily Routes: Students

Students make up a small but significant portion of the population, spread across several different campuses at high school and university levels. Georgetown Law and Gonzaga College High School sit within the area, but the Walker Jones public school, GU’s School of Continuing Education, and University of DC-Community College (UDC-CC) are within the immediate vicinity. Several other universities also occupy office space near the Capitol and several satellite offices for nationally recognized higher learning institutions as well. The integration of these campuses into the larger community and the needs of their students will greatly impact the area in the foreseeable future.
In the morning, office workers make up the largest group of people on the streets of Downtown East as they travel to work. Residents, many of whom work in other parts of the city, visitors (primarily those arriving for judicial services and work-related travel), and students on their way to class make up a smaller portion of those on the street. As the day progresses, more visitors (an increasing number of whom are tourists) flock to the area or pass through.

Over the weekend most offices are closed, and so there is no daily influx of office workers like during the week. The streets are noticeably less packed throughout the day and are primarily populated with residents a majority of the weekend. The remaining workers are primarily involved in retail or other services and few office workers remain long after the typical work day. The area is predominately visitors with some residents enjoying the scene.

A small trickle of students remain from late morning to early evening as students travel to the law campus, a result of the demanding schedule law school entails. Residents remain a large portion of those on the street into the evening, alongside visitors and workers traveling to nearby restaurants or passengers arriving to Union Station. Similarly to weekdays, there is a small but consistent group of nighttime workers traveling to and from work in the early morning.

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Urban Realm

In The Age of Rail

- Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Jersey remained prominent. The neighborhood of ‘Swampoodle’ had recently been cleared away to make way for Daniel Burnham’s design for Union Station.

Large Scale Civic Investments

- Though automobile use is increasing, männer and even the facades of buildings in line city streets are all part of a democratic space and may be occupied by any member of or visitor to a neighborhood. It can be experienced and can welcome or hinder certain activities in the urban realm.

Resurgent Downtown

- After decades of decline, the population begins rising in DC. Between 2010 and today, the population is growing by nearly 1,000 residents a month. Downtown witnesses a resurgence as retail, entertainment, hospitality, and limited residential uses return to the city center. The MCI Center (now Capital One Arena) and Gallery Place are built. As better transit options proliferate, most parking lots are converted to residential uses.

Streets

- The street right of way in Downtown East, originating from the historic 1870s, has been updated for modern needs, consists of these distinct parts:
  - The sidewalk: the primary pedestrian path, consists of a curbside zone for street trees and a path between the street curb lines.
  - The cart path or roadway: the primary vehicle path between the street curb lines.
  - The public parking: legally part of the city’s public realm, treated as public spaces. Examples include the art arcades along Union Station and the Post Office

Defining the Urban Realm

- The urban realm is the space that is experienced by and accessible to the public. It is a democratic space and may be occupied by any member or visitor to a neighborhood. It can be a destination in its own right, such as a public park, but is also the space that forms the connections between all other points of interest in a city.

Buildings

- Though most buildings are privately-owned, they can take on many forms and can spill out into the public sidewalk activating adjacent spaces.

Parks & Plazas

- Passive recreation spaces such as those considered the typical park, a green space, ornamental plantings, shade trees, benches, or even a fountain. Can be predominantly planted or landscaped.

- Programmed open spaces such as athletic fields, tracks, courts or cultivation spaces such as gardens, or spaces for reflection such as monuments and memorials.
URBAN REALM: STREETS

Observations

1. On average, connectivity is high for vehicle movements and bikeways, primarily due to the downtown setting and street grid. Bidirectional flow spreads out traffic volumes well, though not without some major challenges.

2. Gaps in infrastructure in key areas limit pedestrian access and create bottlenecks and slow travel for all modes east-west through the area. These gaps fall into three general categories:

   - Interruptions Caused by Interstate: Some green-on-green design of the interstate caused the removal of certain road segments, such as Pennsylvania Avenue between 2nd and 3rd Streets NW.
   - Interruptions Caused by Development: Large-scale developments were constructed across or over former public rights-of-way. At some locations, the roadway has been completely removed. For locations such as the Labor Department, the building was constructed in part as a bridge over 3rd Street NW.
   - Temporary Interruptions: Temporary barriers were placed across several streets to block the roadway, or for security reasons.

3. Uncomfortable pedestrian paths run for short distances on streets and do not number a number of other paths. Roads may be too wide and too busy for comfort; others present rows of loading docks, parking on the sidewalk, or missing sidewalk links. Freeway on-ramps and exit ramps often lack signalized controls or crosswalks and present hazardous conditions for pedestrians.

4. Auto-centric and expansive intersection design emphasizes vehicle movement over safety for pedestrians.

5. Access to transit is generally high though not without some major challenges.

   - Observations

   - Connectivity is high in route options spreads out traffic volumes well.
   - The downtown setting and street grid. Redundancy in route options spreads out traffic volumes well.
   - Freeway on-ramps and exit ramps often lack signalized controls or crosswalks and present hazardous conditions for pedestrians.

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- Non-comfortable pedestrian paths run for short distances on streets and do not number a number of other paths. Roads may be too wide and too busy for comfort; others present rows of loading docks, parking on the sidewalk, or missing sidewalk links. Freeway on-ramps and exit ramps often lack signalized controls or crosswalks and present hazardous conditions for pedestrians.

Street Hierarchy

Though each street that crosses through Downtown East provides for an individual experience, a hierarchy across several predominant types emerges. Some streets act as arterials, cross-city routes (such as Massachusetts Avenue), while others link the centers of important nearby neighborhoods (such as K Street), while others primarily serve as local streets for the immediate area (such as F and G Streets).

Downtown East provides for an individual experience, a hierarchy across several predominant types emerges. Some streets act as arterials, cross-city routes (such as Massachusetts Avenue), while others link the centers of important nearby neighborhoods (such as K Street), while others primarily serve as local streets for the immediate area (such as F and G Streets) Grounds. A greater proportion of space is dedicated to pedestrian walkways and ample public green spaces. These streets have an untapped potential to be defining greenspaces within the Downtown East area, especially New Jersey Avenue. It creates a direct link between the Capitol and the Shaw neighborhood to the north.

K & North Capitol Streets are grand, tree-lined boulevards that span several miles across the city, serving as important thoroughfares. Massachusetts Avenue, a major bus route, connects Downtown East into its northern and southern portions. It links Union Station to Mount Vernon Square and several other green spaces including Scott, Dupont, and Dumbarton Circles, and eventually up to Rock Creek Park. Massachusetts Avenue was designed as an iconic boulevard and pedestrian path, though unfortunately this pattern breaks down as it crosses into Downtown East. Over some blocks, the second row of trees have been passed over, while on other blocks this line is median.

Massachusetts & New York Avenues are  grand, tree-lined boulevards that span several miles across the city, serving as important thoroughfares. Massachusett Avenue, a major bus route, connects Downtown East into its northern and southern portions. It links Union Station to Mount Vernon Square and several other green spaces including Scott, Dupont, and Dumbarton Circles, and eventually up to Rock Creek Park. Massachusetts Avenue was designed as an iconic boulevard and pedestrian path, though unfortunately this pattern breaks down as it crosses into Downtown East. Over some blocks, the second row of trees have been passed over, while on other blocks this line is median.

Louisiana & Pennsylvania Avenues, a set of two streets, are boulevards similar in size and stature to Massachusetts Avenue, but are differentiated by the important ceremonial roles they play in the public sphere. These streets act as ceremonial boulevards designed to the same ceremonial standard of boulevards like Pennsylvania Avenue. North Capitol Street does have a grand view of the Capitol, but lacks the space for sizable trees and abundant sidewalks. K Street connects the Mount Vernon Triangle and NOMA neighborhoods and creates a linear park through each. In the Triangle, this Main Street is lined with many shops, restaurants, and lobby entrances. These broken paths limit the number of streets that link the east and west sides of the area, break up a redundant street grid, create transportation bottlenecks, and generally add to congestion.

Some of these broken streets will be reconstructed, as part of the Capitol Crossing project, new bridges atop the freeway will serve to connect F and G Streets between 2nd and 3rd Streets NW; L Street between 1st Street NW and North Carolina Street will be rebuilt as part of the larger Sursum Corda and Housing Authority redevelopments.
URBAN REALM: BUILDINGS

Observations

1. Impressive and memorable views of iconic landmarks including the US Capitol, Union Station, and the National Mall frame many views throughout the Downtown East area, bracketed by large street trees. These views create special moments at key intersections and help define the architectural significance of the area.

2. Some examples of standout architecture, both historic and new, such as the City Post Office building, National Association of Realtors building, and the Government Publishing Office can be found in the area. However, these are broken up by numerous examples of bland or uninteresting infill developments that detract from the general streetscape and neighborhood character.

3. A lack of accessible or interesting ground floors dominate many areas, particularly in government or private office buildings. Many large buildings have no ground floor retail or other spaces with scalable visual interest to attract streetlife, and many that do close up outside of typical office hours. Several notable exceptions exist and do craft inviting urban spaces for pedestrians, including areas near Mt. Vernon Triangle, along the Walmart frontage of H Street NW, and around the cluster of hotels and restaurants near Louisiana Avenue. The development of Capitol Crossing is anticipated to add considerable ground floor retail and pedestrian space near the center of the Downtown East area and the Government Publishing Office can be moved to a new site.

4. Massive buildings that span the entire block, particularly at federally-owned sites, create monotonous street walls. While this can promote a grandiosity of design for buildings such as the Capitol or Union Station, it can limit vibrancy and vitality in the busy and dense downtown setting. When coupled with a lack of interesting ground-floor uses, this can strip an area of meaningful streetlife.

Residential Character

This area can largely be characterized by residential buildings, though commercial buildings are scattered throughout, particularly near Massachusetts Avenue at the transition. Most properties have spacious front and side yards, and streets are lined with large shade trees. Roadways tend to be narrow, accommodating fewer travel lanes for vehicles, but most have wide parking lanes. Brick masonry is the most common building material used with some buildings, though more contemporary designs also incorporate glass/metal, concrete, and some masonry. Tree boxes or garden space at the ground level. Most buildings have few entry points that are concentrated around office lobbies, with the occasional ground floor food retailer. Buildings occupy the full extent of the lot with few or no front or side yards. Where street trees exist, their canopies are considerably smaller than sites north of Massachusetts Avenue. Buildings incorporate a wider mix of materials, though primarily consist of glass/metal, concrete, and some masonry. An iconic and formal design with many classical architectural elements such as arcades, columns, and plinths. In general, the area is open and accessible, though many buildings maintain security perimeters with or adjacent to the sidewalk zone.

Commercial Office Character

Predominantly made up of large scale commercial office buildings, many of which are owned and occupied by federal agencies, this area caters to the area's office workforce. Most streets have wide expanses of hardscape, though many more contemporary buildings make room for large street tree boxes or garden space at the ground level. Most buildings have few entry points that are concentrated around office lobbies, with the occasional ground floor food retailer. Buildings occupy the full extent of the lot. Sidewalks are wide, accommodating fewer travel lanes for vehicles, but most have wide parking lanes. Brick masonry is the most common building material used with some buildings, though more contemporary designs also incorporate glass/metal, concrete, and some masonry. Building articulation is handled primarily at the ground floor in the form of canopies, awnings, and oriel windows and balconies tend to rise the full height of the building.

Monumental Grounds

Containing portions of the National Mall, the US Capitol Grounds, and Union Station, this area is primarily characterized by the large scale and monumental architecture. The grand boulevards of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues have mature street trees that provide ample shade and comfortable walks for pedestrians. Buildings tend to be surrounded on all sides with planted spaces, formal gardens, or fountains, and the wide expanse of Senate Park is well maintained and intricately landscaped. There are multiple spaces occupied by memorials or other statues, especially along Louisiana Avenue between the Mall and Union Station. Sidewalk areas are particularly wide to accommodate crowds of tourists during major events. Buildings largely maintain an iconic and formal design with many classical architectural elements such as arcades, columns, and plinths. In general, the area is open and accessible, though many buildings maintain security perimeters within or adjacent to the sidewalk zone.
DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY

URBAN REALM: PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Observations

1. Highly walkable and comfortable streetscapes abound in the southern portion of the area and generally resemble the downtown core – wide sidewalks, tree lined streets. Streetscapes in northern residential area have a larger tree canopy while maintaining wide sidewalks.

2. Disjointed streetscapes create gaps between adjacent areas, particularly along major avenues. In particular, the streetscape design of Massachusetts Avenue is different across four consecutive blocks toward Union Station. Similarly, Mt. Vernon Triangle and NoMA areas provide streetscape design guidelines for K Street NW, however this streetscape does not continue between North Capitol and New Jersey Avenue.

3. Lack of public amenities or access to parks on some streets provide for uncomfortable or purposeless walks from block to block. Many buildings have long blank walls, multiple loading bays in a row, and other detractors to the urban street life.

4. Public gardens and open spaces at the Capitol and other sites such as the National Building Museum and Marshall Park help beautify the neighborhood where they exist. However, these types of spaces are infrequent enough through the rest of the area that they create a more mundane or subdued atmosphere, limiting opportunity for pedestrian interest.

5. Several well kept parks and open spaces nearby:
   - National Mall, Senate Park, Law Enforcement Memorial
   - Several athletic fields with limited or no public access
   - Groupings of lesser known memorials: Victims of Communism, Victims of the Holodomor Man-made Ukrainian Famine-Genocide, National Japanese American Memorial
   - Limited access to large gathering spaces or programmed space. BIDs have provided some programmed space. BIDs have provided some programmed, and used. And no two within the Downtown East area serve the exact same purpose. Each serves distinct needs and users based on its layout, location, size, and a number of various other factors. Some fall under local jurisdiction while some are federal. Others are privately held spaces that provide for public access.

6. Memorials and Monumental Greens:
   - Sites that feature memorials, statuary, or other forms of public art as a central element of the design, or that are a part of the National Mall or Capitol Grounds. Spaces can be largely unprogrammed, such as the National Mall, or have spaces designed for specific uses such as formal garden space, seating areas, or space for reflection.
   - • National Mall
   - • Senate Park
   - • Law Enforcement Memorial
   - • National Japanese American Memorial
   - • Memorial to the Victims of Communism
   - • Holodomor Memorial to Victims of the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide

7. Athletic Fields and Courts:
   - Fields and courts provided for use for organized sports. Specific use is generally determined by size, with smaller sites dedicated to basketball or tennis courts and larger sites for baseball or football fields. Many are located within school grounds or can be reserved for league-hosted matches or for pick up games.
   - • Gonzaga HS athletic field (private)
   - • Walker Jones School and Recreation Center athletic field and court
   - • Springfield College

8. Parks come in many shapes and sizes. They can also differ in terms of how they are designed, programmed, and used. And no two within the Downtown East area serve the exact same purpose. Each serves distinct needs and users based on its layout, location, size, and a number of various other factors. Some fall under local jurisdiction while some are federal. Others are privately held spaces that provide for public access.

9. Unprogrammed or passive recreational spaces that are predominantly hardscape or paved, but provide various pedestrian amenities such as benches, fountains, or public art. These spaces can be a central design feature of an area, such as at Columbus Circle in front of Union Station or as infill spaces between buildings such as on G Place NE.
   - • Columbus Circle
   - • 5th and K Street NW intersection
   - • G Place Plaza
   - • Daly Building Plaza

10. Gardens and Urban Agriculture:
   - Programmed spaces that may be of public or semi-public use that allow for the growing of fruit and vegetables, flowers, or other vegetation. More common in highly residential areas, Downtown East offers few examples of urban gardens.
   - • Walker Jones Farm

11. Unprogrammed Grass or Leftover Spaces:
   - Often underutilized or leftover spaces between buildings, or small triangle parks at the intersections of major avenues, these sites may be maintained as small grassy spaces or be left bare. Many are under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, but may be excellent opportunities for incorporating new small neighborhood parks in the future.
   - • John Marshall Park

Parks and Open Space Typology

Parks in Downtown East offer a variety of spaces for public enjoyment and access. Each serves distinct needs and users based on its layout, location, size, and a number of various other factors. Some are maintained by the National Park Service, but may be excellent opportunities for incorporating new small neighborhood parks in the future.
DOWNTOWN EAST TODAY is largely disconnected and filled with undeveloped or underdeveloped lots but is transitioning into a fuller neighborhood. Union Station, the U.S. Capitol, and Downtown provide significant locational advantages to help spur investment while maintaining the existing cultural core.

DOWNTOWN EAST TOMORROW is a vibrant, mixed-use community, reconnected to the rest of downtown and the city along high quality, active public spaces and serving as a proud gateway to the heart of Washington, DC. New residential buildings and retail fill in the gaps between office buildings.

VISION:
THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN EAST

CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE...
• where pedestrians can cross seamlessly between neighborhoods and into downtown
• that is interlinked with the broader city
• that celebrates its role as a gateway into the city from the surrounding region

VIBRANT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL...
• where redevelopment sites enhance the quality of place
• where buildings contribute to an interesting and lively urban street life
• that enables existing and emerging markets to grow and thrive

GREEN AND ACTIVE...
• with ample, interconnected parks and gathering spaces integrated into the community
• where the streets are attractive, lush, comfortable, walkable, and safe
• that encourages residents, workers, and visitors to linger and enjoy themselves
For decades the Center Leg Freeway (I-395) has bifurcated Downtown East from the greater downtown core of the city. By establishing new connections that bridge the interstate for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as vehicles where appropriate, Downtown East can more easily connect to and integrate with the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.

Many of the most highly trafficked roadways that lead into the downtown core from the rest of the city, such as Massachusetts Avenue and North Capitol Street, pass through Downtown East. These major avenues should be emphasized not just as ways to travel through Downtown East, but also as places that define the special character of each neighborhood in the area as the geographic center of Washington, DC and as a true crossroads of the city.

Increased connectivity will serve to blend the accessibility and walkable nature of neighborhoods such as Mount Vernon Triangle, NoMA and Capitol Hill with downtown Washington, DC. Improved connections better link people to jobs, housing, retailers, parks and other places they desire to go that serve to increase the vibrancy of these neighborhoods.

DOWNTOWN EAST WILL BE A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER THAT DIRECTLY LINKS THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES AND EMBRACES ITS POSITION AS A REGIONAL GATEWAY

HOW DO WE DEFINE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS?

Physical connections are about access - about prioritizing pedestrian, cyclist, driver, bus riders and everyone else the ability to get from where they are to where they want to go in an intuitive and straightforward manner. And while physical pathways must prioritize safe and efficient travel for all users, in urban settings they also play a large role in defining the character of a place and providing connections to points of interest along the way. They must work on many levels, connecting the workforce to their jobs across the city, residents to nearby shops or services, tourists with the landmarks they seek out - but they must also allow for users to meander and wander, providing the opportunity to discover something or someone new.

Whether people are just passing through or seeking out a restaurant, shop, or place of business in Downtown East, ease of access and intuitive wayfinding are key components to connect the areas with surrounding neighborhoods. By bridging new routes over the Center Leg Freeway, opening up more paths into and out of Union Station, and reinforcing the local pathways through the area, Downtown East can emerge as a destination of its own.

Making Physical Connections

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As two of the biggest economic drivers for the city, Union Station and the greater downtown area have reduced options for direct travel between the two. Much of the historic street grid was removed for the I-395 freeway in the 1960s, creating a barrier to east-west travel. A restored street grid will make travel into the downtown area more efficient, reduce pressure on bottlenecked routes, and expand the capacity of the road network to better serve the rapidly growing population.

1A. RESTORE STREET SEGMENTS THAT BETTER CONNECT DOWNTOWN TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

The ongoing construction of Capitol Crossing will see the full restoration of F and G Streets to the freeway between 2nd and 3rd Streets for pedestrians and a partial restoration for vehicles, significantly enhancing access to retail and offices at the site, as well as across access into downtown. The street grid should be fully restored at these points:

- Extend F and G Streets east beyond Capitol Crossing through the Georgetown Law Campus as the most direct connections between Union Station and downtown. F Street as a vehicular path and G Street as a pedestrian/cyclist path.
- L Street between North Capitol Street and 1st Street NW is proposed to be restored as part of ongoing development at Sussex Conda and Northeast One. This street should be a true DDOT right-of-way, complete with sidewalks and a street tree canopy.
- Pedestrian access should be explored at the former I Street right-of-way between 2nd and 3rd Streets NW, when the adjacent parking garage site is reprogrammed or redeveloped.

1B. PRIORITIZE SAFE AND DIRECT PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AT HIGH-VOLUME INTERSECTIONS

Access for pedestrians between important retail, park, and other points of interest will be vital to the area’s continued development as a walkable and livable neighborhood. Traffic calming measures such as curb bump outs that lessen the crossing distance at intersections should be explored to increase pedestrian safety. Priority locations for this exploration include:

- Cobb Park: 2nd, 3rd, and H Streets and Massachusetts Avenue NW.
- Walmont and GPO. 1st and G Streets NW.
- Union Station: 1st Street and G Place NE, and John Marshall Park to National Building Museum: Pennsylvania Avenue, C, D, E, and F Streets NW.
- L Street between North Capitol Street and 1st Street NW is proposed to be restored as part of ongoing development at Sussex Conda and Northeast One.

1C. EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF GORING ROADS AT LABOR FEDERAL SITES: LABOR DEPT AND GPO

Should the Labor Department site be redeveloped, the feasibility of restoring C and 2nd Streets to the L’Enfant Plan should be explored. Likewise, the view corridor between the Capitol and Judiciary Square along the former Indiana Avenue NW right-of-way should be restored. The site’s existing tangle of freeway ramps should be better integrated into the re-established street grid. 3rd Street NW should be daylighted and the existing building removed from the right-of-way. Explore reopening the pedestrian path underneath the GPO building west of North Capitol Street.

1D. FULLY CONNECTED DOWNTOWN:

A restored street grid will make travel into downtown. The street grid should be fully restored at these points:

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GOAL 1 – A FULLY CONNECTED DOWNTOWN:
ESTABLISH A SEAMLESS URBAN STREET GRID BETWEEN UNION STATION AND DOWNTOWN

As a major center for jobs, retail, culture and entertainment, it is vital that the downtown area remain well connected to the rest of the city via road and transit infrastructure. Many of the busiest thoroughfares in the city pass through or run tangent to the edges of Downtown East and should better link the area and city together.

2A. ENHANCE ARENAS AT METRO ENTRANCES TO PROMOTE BETTER ACCESS

Linking the broader city to the downtown core is key to ensuring that residents from all wards have access to the wide array of jobs and services available. The existing Metrorail and Metromobius network in Downtown East is the primary means of linking residents to jobs, businesses to their customers, and attractions to the area attractions. Maximizing the efficiency of existing mass transit services and ensuring infrastructure is adequately maintained or expanded to meet future demand should remain top priorities. As Downtown East expands and Union Station and Metromobius safety corridors between 2nd and 3rd Streets NW is proposed to be restored as part of ongoing development at Sussex Conda and Northeast One.

2B. ENCLOSE AND SUPPORT THE FUTURE STREETCAR EXTENSION

The existing H Street/Benning Road streetcar line will be extended west from the H Street Bridge to Georgetown. As this future line is plotted through Downtown East, streetcar stops should be prioritized near existing and future retail, residential and office buildings to better facilitate the line as a priority transit and economic development tool. Sites adjacent to the proposed line should promote higher levels of density, amenities and other services to activate the area.

2C. ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE FUTURE STREETCAR EXTENSION

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2D. CONNECT THE MET BRANCH TRAIL TO A ROBUST CITY CYCLING NETWORK

Support the progress and development of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) network as part of the Union Station 2nd Century Master Plan. Provide a cycle track on Louisiana Avenue from Columbus Circle to the National Mall to complete the MBT plan, celebrating this critical and highly visible link of the missing pieces of the city’s bicycle network within the study area.
DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY

DC Circulator, and DC Streetcar more efficient, other forms of mass transit such as Metrobus, or Columbus Circle. To make transfers between cross a busy road such as Massachusetts Avenue to other forms of transit must exit the station and Union Station, passengers who wish to transfer neighborhoods.

GOAL 3 – EXPANDED ROLE AS A REGIONAL GATEWAY:
INTEGRATE UNION STATION WITH THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

An historic treasure and functioning transit hub, Union Station continues to be one of the most important regional, multi-modal transportation and commercial centers in the nation. And with ongoing plans to triple passenger capacity and double train capacity by 2030, it will continue to be as vital to the District and the nation in the coming decades, connecting to places as far away south as Florida and as far north as Maine. 3A. DESIGN NEW ENTRANCES TO UNION STATION FOR ACCESSIBILITY IN ALL DIRECTIONS

Maximize every opportunity to make pedestrian connections to Union Station from all sides, including from H Street bridge and the future Burnham Place development above the tracks, while still preserving the iconic design of the front entrance along Columbus Circle. Numerous opportunities may exist to collaborate with both public and private owners to insert physical connections at grade or above 1st Street NE. As a true gateway to D.C., Union Station should open access to all sides of the downtown core to enhance porosity and its impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

3B. STREAMLINE TRANSFERS BETWEEN UNION STATION & THE NATIONAL MALL

With relatively minor adjustments, the current car-centric design of Louisiana Avenue can be improved to better highlight the direct access it provides between Union Station and the National Mall:

- Remove the in-street angled parking between North Capitol Street and Columbus Circle, reduce the dimension of the curbs, and expand sidewalks and park space.
- Support the installation of curb bump outs and other pedestrian safety measures at intersections with North Capitol Street, and New Jersey and Constitution Avenues.
- Highlight the route with improved wayfinding signage and additional sites of interest such as public art and memorials adjacent to the right of way.

3C. ENHANCE LOUISIANA AVENUE TO BETTER SERVE AS THE MOST DIRECT ROUTE BETWEEN UNION STATION & THE NATIONAL MALL

As part of an ongoing master plan process and expansion, led by a partnership between Amtrak, the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, and Akridge, passenger rail capacity will triple and train service will double in the next few decades. Union Station transfers between rail and other modes of transportation will be made more efficient, and over 1.6 million square feet of office, retail, and residential will be constructed on top of the tracks behind the station. Burnham Place, as the future development is known, will add 14 blocks of newly connected space, complete with parks, plazas, and roadways between Union Station and H Street to the north.

3D. SUPPORT RAIL INVESTMENT IDENTIFIED IN DDOT’S STATE RAIL PLAN

The District’s State Rail Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the District’s rail system with a distinct focus on the economy, environment, and transportation. The rail system vision encompasses the following goals:
1) ensure safety and security, 2) increase operational flexibility, 3) provide added rail capacity, 4) grow economic opportunity, and 5) enhance quality of life. The expansion of Union Station and development projects around the station should be designed to conform to these goals.

UNION STATION: GATEWAY TO THE CAPITAL CITY

Thou rail ridership has declined across the country since WWII, Union Station still hosts 20 million travelers each year, or 60,000 a day, half of which also use the accompanying Metrotrolley. As part of an ongoing master plan process and expansion, led by a partnership between Amtrak, the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, and Akridge, passenger rail capacity will triple and train service will double in the next few decades. As part of an ongoing master plan process and expansion, led by a partnership between Amtrak, the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation, and Akridge, passenger rail capacity will triple and train service will double in the next few decades.
Despite a lag in the office market across the region over the past several years, Downtown East has outpaced the rest of Washington, DC and surrounding counties in office demand, with below average vacancies driving better valuations per square foot. This is in large part due to the continued demand for many professional offices that benefit from close proximity to the US Capitol, Judiciary Square, and Union Station. In this regard, Downtown East will likely remain one of the more important office markets in the city for the foreseeable future.

However, the idea of successful downtowns as primarily office enclaves is outdated and leads to missed opportunities outside of the typical 9-to-5 workday. For Downtown East to rise to the position of a first-class downtown and a destination worthy of its location, it must diversify its economy and provide greater support for community building to attract a broader range of users. Downtown East is on the cusp of evolution from a typical office downtown to a truly livable crossroads community that thrives with vibrant streetlife all hours of the day.
DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY

GOAL 4 – A PREEMINENT CENTER FOR JOBS: ANTICIPATE THE SHIFTING NEEDS OF OFFICE & EMERGING MARKETS TO BOLSTER JOB GROWTH

4A. PARTNER WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF THEIR WORKFORCE

Long-term, national trends point to a changing federal workforce over the coming decades, something that is important to consider close by as nearly 30% of the total workforce in Downtown East is federal. This indicates that more of the workload once considered exclusive to federal government will be offloaded onto a private consultant workforce, and that external pressures will continue to push the decentralization of federal agencies out of high-priced real estate markets. Adoption of new technologies will also allow for flexible and telework options for federal workers, decreasing the need to be centrally located or in proximity to other agencies.

However, Downtown East presents one of the best examples of a neighborhood that can balance the needs of its federal workers, decreasing the need to be centrally located while maintaining the close proximity to the US Capitol and the lobbying, legal, and government relations sectors. Downtown East should act as a regional hub for its edge in federal or federal-related employment in the region as long as the shifting needs of the federal workforce are met.

The District should continue to foster and develop relationships with local firms, such as GSA, AOC, and NCPP to best understand and anticipate the changing needs of federal property owners and the broader workforce. The District should encourage the lobbying, legal, and government relations sectors. Downtown East is a place worth visiting.

4B. BUILD CAPACITY FOR PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH IN DOWNTOWN EAST

With the understanding that much of the private sector located within Downtown East is oriented to respond directly to the needs of the federal government (lobbyists, lawyers, non-profit advocacy groups), the District should prioritize working with the BIDs to build capacity for private sector growth and better position existing industries within the area. Close partnership with existing firms, thought-leaders, industry organizations, the BIDs, property owners, and the federal government will be key to maintaining the existing strength of the business center and advancing its role in the near future.

4C. FOSTER CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF AN EMERGING KNOWLEDGE HUB

A higher concentration of knowledge-based firms has emerged within Downtown East than nearly anywhere else in the District. This includes some of the top lobbying firms in the nation, several major law firms, trade associations, media firms, state governments, liaisons, universities, and the government-relations wings of major corporations. With such variety of firms all directly linked through their need for interaction with the legislative and judicial branches, it is clear that Downtown East create an environment where these firms feel they can thrive. Strong growth in this sector will be vital to building a resilient economy for the entire District.

The District should continue to foster and develop relationships with local firms, such as Carnegie Mellon, Stanford University, and the law school campus in the nearby market and should partner closely with Georgetown University in the Raleigh-Durham Tech Triangle. The District should partner closely with Georgetown University to co-develop plans to expand the role and impact of the law school campus in the nearby market and the community and to provide knowledge firms with access to a pool of educated and skilled local talent and proximity to some of the strongest, globally renowned assets for the formation of a Downtown East Knowledge Hub – similar to the roles of Stanford University in Silicon Valley, the University of North Carolina and Duke University in the Raleigh-Durham Tech Triangle. The District should partner closely with Georgetown University to co-develop plans to expand the role and impact of the law school campus in the nearby market and the community and to provide knowledge firms with access to a pool of educated and skilled local talent and proximity to some of the strongest, globally renowned assets for the formation of a Downtown East Knowledge Hub – similar to the roles of Stanford University in Silicon Valley, the University of North Carolina and Duke University in the Raleigh-Durham Tech Triangle. The District should partner closely with Georgetown University to co-develop plans to expand the role and impact of the law school campus in the nearby market and the community and to provide knowledge firms

WHAT IS THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY?

• an economy based on the use, generation, and application of knowledge (such as new forms of production) to generate growth and value.

KNOWLEDGE-BASED FIRMS IN AREA:

- Lobbying: Van Scoyoc & Associates; Alpaca Group
- Legal: Jones Day; McDermott Will & Emery
- Government Relations for Major Corporations: Google, Embry-Farrer; Clerk; Goldman Sachs
- Media: CNN; MSNBC; Fox News
- Trade Groups: American Gas Association; Association for Psychological Association
- State Governments: Florida; Delaware; New York, Office of Governor
- Government Relations for Universities: Princeton, Carnegie-Mellon, California State University

4D. CREATE CONDITIONS THAT WILL ALLOW THE HOSPITALITY AND RETAIL SECTORS TO BLOSSOM

The hotel market in Downtown East has long been stable and is set to expand with several new hotels planned for the area, primarily serving business travelers. Likewise, the retail market has proven stable but underwhelming, primarily catering to office workers and closing early at 5pm. With the emergence of major destination retail at Walmart and more proposed at Capitol Crossing, the existing hospitality and retail sectors will need to find known areas in the District. The District should expand planning partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to help support this growth, the District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should expand its efforts to integrate the street life during the day and evening that provide greater volumes of customer to these businesses. The District, in partnership with the BIDs should continue to prioritize clean and safe streets near places of interest and adjacent neighborhoods.

With incoming retail developments near Cobb Park and Union Station. As tourists, residents and workers remain in the area after typical office hours, retailers and hotels will witness increased activity, reinforcing the notion that Downtown East is a place worth visiting.
GOAL 5 – HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING:
PRIORITY HUMAN-CENTERED AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN IN NEW HOUSING

If neighborhoods are the building blocks of healthy cities, then housing is the linchpin. But too often, the physical aspects of housing are developed separately from the social and economic aspects, leading to neighborhoods that fall short of their full potential. When the physical, social, and economic aspects are closely linked, neighborhoods can thrive. Quality housing should be beautifully designed, but it must also allow for a wide range of social and cultural diversity. As such, the District should closely consider social mobility, economic development, and the integration of families of different income levels into a community. When the physical, social, and economic aspects are developed separately, this can be an important resource for supporting resilient and healthful development. The use of such design standards can better link housing and supportive services to the needs of residents, both within and as well as entire neighborhoods by promoting equitable access to air and water, mitigating against harmful noises, and strategies for improving daily physical activity, mental health, and overall well-being. Sustainability can be achieved through the innovative use of natural light and ventilation of interior spaces, inclusion of recycled, rapidly renewable, and/or low-maintenance construction products throughout the scale of the building and across the entire site.

Likewise, programs such as the WELL Community Standard, which provides design guidance on aspects of the built environment that have impacts (both direct and indirect) on human health and well-being, can be an important resource for supporting sustainable and healthful development. The use of such design standards can better link housing and supportive services to the needs of residents, both within and as well as entire neighborhoods by promoting equitable access to air and water, mitigating against harmful noises, and strategies for improving daily physical activity, mental health, and overall well-being. Sustainability can be achieved through the innovative use of natural light and ventilation of interior spaces, inclusion of recycled, rapidly renewable, and/or low-maintenance construction products throughout the scale of the building and across the entire site.

Likewise, many of the existing retailers within Downtown East, including shops, restaurants, and markets, closely adhere to the schedules of the nearby office buildings south of Massachusetts Avenue. For instance, most of the food retailers in the area only serve breakfast and lunch and tend to close at 3 pm each weekday. While the recent opening of the nearby Walmart has remedied the limitation, the market-rental relationship to an extent, intergenerational opportunities should be explored for providing greater access and proximity between retail clusters and residential areas to better shape a market that can directly serve community needs.

Balconies provide direct exterior access and light to interior spaces.

Balconies provide direct exterior access and light to interior spaces.

SO. ANCHOR NEIGHBORHOODS AROUND RETAIL AND PLACES THAT SERVE A CIVIC OR COMMUNITY FUNCTION

Buildings such as churches, libraries, recreation centers, and houses of worship help shape a neighborhood’s identity and round out community interests. They also play a critical role in fostering community cohesion and engagement. As such, the District should closely integrate these civic-serving places into the surrounding neighborhood to be accessible and inviting. Buildings that serve a civic function should be designed to be adaptable as the needs and desires of the community change season to season. The Walker Jones Campus, a combination public school, recreation center, and library is one such example of a high-quality, community-serving place that is used to foster an inclusive, diverse, and engaged community. Similarly, the District should work with the high concentration of parks and community centers within the Downtown East area to celebrate the rich history of these places and to allow for increased access to the neighborhood through placemaking initiatives.

The WELL Community Standard from the WELL Building Institute is one such rating system for determining how the design of a building impacts the health and wellness of its inhabitants. Typically, achieving WELL includes an exploration of the following topics:

- **Physical impacts**
  - ample opportunities for daily physical activity,
  - walkability across a neighborhood,
  - promoting physical safety through design, availability and affordability of healthy food options.

- **Psychological impacts**
  - spaces that promote meaningful experiences and for well-being.
  - outdoor sensory environments by limiting external noises; also promote access to mental healthcare and green spaces.

- **Social impacts**
  - highlight diversity and quality of interpersonal relationships and spaces that promote culturally rich and interconnected communities;
  - ample facilities that serve community and civic functions.

- **Ecological impacts**
  - considerations such as access to daylight, fresh air, clean water; access to well-maintained natural areas with flora and fauna.
GOAL 6 – A LIVABLE, URBAN COMMUNITY:
GUIDE NEW DEVELOPMENT TO CREATE LIVABLE URBAN PLACES THAT SERVE THE BROADER COMMUNITY

How can we best maximize the community-serving infrastructure, amenity spaces, and direct connections to the surrounding neighborhood at sites that are undergoing major change? The following list contains both sites that are currently slated for redevelopment and sites that may be conceptually explored for future reuse.

1. Sursum Corda: Currently being reviewed as a Planned Unit Development, the existing Sursum Corda housing area will be redeveloped from a mix of 200 residential units to more than 1,100 that mixes market rate and affordable housing. The new site will stitch Pierce Street and 1st Place NW back through the block and reconstruct L Street NW between North Capitol and 1st Street NW. A new community park will be created at the southwest corner of the site.

2. Northwest One: The Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) is in the process of reviewing this site in the context of the broader Northwest One strategy. This site is optimally high density residential that integrates public park and open space amenities in proximity to new apartments, with some ground floor, community-serving retail frontage on the east face of any new development with room for active or passive park uses.

3. Pepco Substation: The proposed Pepco substation on Pennsylvania Avenue to the southwest.

4. Capitol Crossing: A 2.1 million square foot development over the freeway to add trophy-class office space, a new hotel, and destination retail on 1st Street NW to create symmetry with the corner with 1st Street NW to create symmetry with Walmart. With the wide public right-of-way on New Jersey Avenue, NW and future plans for streetcar service, space internal to the site with an emerging retail hub. Space internal to the site with amenities along the Massachusetts Avenue entrance, weaving south between the glass and steel high rises.

5. GPO/Federal City Shelter: The Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) operates a shelter building located at 425 2nd St NW. The building was built in 1923 and has potential for ample outdoor seating and park space along New Jersey Avenue, NW.

6. 2nd and H Streets Parking Deck: A DMPED-owned parking deck over top of the freeway, the lower level of the deck is privately owned with air-rights above the upper deck owned by the District. Current plans to expand with large site is between 2 New Jersey Avenue and future plans for streetcar service, in the District to follow the ‘grandfamily model’ of support and includes on site amenities for both the children and older residents.

7. JBG, 801 New Jersey Avenue site: Slated for 400,000 square feet of office in the next few years, this site is ideal for the site, though if structural issues remain, it may be an ideal location for New Jersey Avenue, NW.

8. CCNV/Federal City Shelter: The Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) operates a shelter building located at 425 2nd St NW. The building was built in 1923 and has potential for ample outdoor seating and park space along New Jersey Avenue, NW.
A project conceived over decades, Capitol Crossing is set to bridge the gap from the freeway and parking decks that will be limiting the site’s need to tap into the city’s water and energy resources. The site will include a sub-grade co-generation plant that will provide residents and businesses with sustainable energy solutions.

The Capitol Crossing development also sets a new high bar for sustainable infrastructure planning in the United States. The site will include a sub-grade co-generation plant that will provide residents and businesses with sustainable energy solutions.

While many of the recent conversion projects in the region have delivered condominiums, developers active in the market indicate that rental multifamily product is the more attractive option for central Washington. This reflects the relatively prohibitive permitting process and the preferences of key demographics for urban infill product, such as millennials, young professionals, and retirees seeking to downsize. In light of all these considerations, downtown Washington, DC, remains an attractive market for multifamily units, which reflects the increasing preference for urban amenities and lifestyle opportunities among prospective residents.

FEASIBILITY OF OFFICE CONVERSIONS

At present, promoting office to residential conversions, within the Downtown East area is a difficult lift. In light of the fundamental differences in the market for residential versus office space, most projects are probably better suited to residential conversion.

Conversion projects can also offer a relatively cost-efficient opportunity in many cases. With regard to parking in particular, older office buildings include parking at a ratio significantly higher than what is common in new multifamily developments. The ability to maintain parking facilities presents a significant cost-saving over new construction.

In addition, there may be the opportunity to convert the surplus office space from the US Department of Labor Building to the south, further intensifying the changing market conditions in the area in the coming decades.

City blocks, Capitol Crossing is set to include pedestrian walkways, mostly above grade on the site. The pedestrian walkways connect the site to other developments in the area, creating a seamless network of public spaces.

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HOW DO WE DEFINE PLACES FOR PEOPLE?

Many downtowns across the country do not appear to be particularly inviting places. They seem better designed for commuting, and seem to prioritize moving as many people through them as efficiently as possible, offering few incentives to linger. But must efficiency and the ability to linger be at odds with each other? Can a downtown be a pleasant place to take a leisurely stroll or to stop and have lunch in a park with coworkers or friends?

By focusing on the needs and desires of the diverse users who inhabit Downtown East – by shaping places for people – we can redefine the idea of the downtown as a place that is vibrant, dynamic, and alive. By providing activities and destinations, ensuring spaces are experienced as clean and safe, and inviting social interaction, we encourage passers-through to instead stop and linger. This goal can be reached by increasing access to both parks and open spaces, and through placemaking efforts within the streetscape and between destinations.

With a growing number of residents in the area, Downtown East will have a specific need to add ample park spaces that provide leisure and recreational activities. As Downtown East evolves, new parks and open spaces should be built to adequately meet the needs of new populations.

DOWNTOWN EAST WILL BE A PLACE WHERE USERS HAVE AMPLE ACCESS TO PARKS & OPEN SPACE ACROSS A COMFORTABLE, VIBRANT, AND ACTIVE PUBLIC REALM

At first glance, the Downtown East area appears to contain a large number of public spaces oriented towards pedestrians. However, upon closer inspection, these spaces are collectively inadequate to meet the needs and desires of a rapidly growing residential population in the Mount Vernon Triangle and NoMa neighborhoods. The area specifically lacks large-scale neighborhood-oriented parks, playgrounds, and accessible recreation fields. Many existing public spaces in the area take the form of small, federal memorials, with statues and plaques that are solemn in nature, dedicated to memorializing victims of atrocities committed in the 20th Century – such as the Japanese internment during WWII and the Holodomor genocide in Ukraine.

Other existing spaces that appear to offer park or recreation opportunities are not publicly accessible or are courtyards occupied by the adjacent office or residential building. And still others are poorly designed or maintained, giving off an unwelcoming face to would-be users.

However, the solution to adequate public spaces within Downtown East can be straightforward. The square footage exists within the neighborhood, and with minor investments to improve the access, maintenance and programming of these spaces, incoming and existing residents can have spaces that are dedicated to their enjoyment.

Places for People Goals:

7 – A Central Community Gathering Space:
(7A) Create an iconic neighborhood open space; (7B) Prioritize safe pedestrian access to it

8 – A Network of Public Parks and Open Spaces:
(8A) Revitalize and create variety in large parks; (8B) Create parks along green corridors; (8C) Re-imagine the parks between Judiciary Square and Pennsylvania Ave; (8D) Work with ADC to transform parking lots back into parks

9 – A Community-Defining Public Realm:
(9A) Establish a visual placemaking resource guide; (9B) Partner with BIDs to identify and implement placemaking interventions

Vision: Shaping Places for People
GOAL 7 – A CENTRAL COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE: DESIGN A PUBLIC OPEN SPACE TO SERVE AS THE HEART OF A GROWING NEIGHBORHOOD

7A. CREATE AN ICONIC OPEN SPACE TO SERVE THE GROWING COMMUNITY

Parks and open space fulfill important recreational and social functions in a community, allowing residents to interact with each another and meet new people. They can also enhance the identity of a surrounding neighborhood by serving as a landmark (similar to Dupont Circle). Downtown East currently lacks any large-scale parks (half acre or more) that are publicly accessible or where residents can program events. And though federal parks such as the National Mall and Senate Park are within close proximity, the tight restrictions on use at these parks make them insufficient as neighborhood amenities.

Leading U.S. park advocate groups such as the National Recreation and Park Association, the Trust for Public Land, and the American Planning Association recommend between 4 and 10 acres of public parkland be provided per 1,000 residents. Currently, a half-mile radius around Downtown East only provides 1 acre of parkland per 1,800 residents. And with a growing residential population, the need for parks will only become more urgent.

Ideally, a park or other gathering space would be located within walking distance of a large number of residents and occupy a site of approximately an acre or more. It should also be designed to serve a variety of area residents, including families with small children or more. It should also be designed to serve a variety of park users from different walks of life, from older adults. Careful consideration should be given to existing city-owned parkland within the area and other sites within the city’s portfolio that can readily be improved as park spaces. The District also works closely with the area BIDs and other community stakeholders to design the park and make it a pleasant oasis.

A successful and fully implemented transformation plan for the neighborhood park should incorporate an innovative and bold design, with a specific plan for how to program the site in a way that attracts a range of park users from different walks of life, from near and far. And just as important, any strategy for developing a new park must engage with private partners or non-profit groups for long-term funding and maintenance/operational costs of the park to ensure it remains a source of pride for locals.

7B. PRIORITIZE ACCESS, SAFETY, & COMFORT FOR PEDESTRIANS

The success of an urban park or open space, especially one located near busy streets, will hinge on the ability to provide safe and intuitive pedestrian access to the site. A first priority should be to design safe and accessible pedestrian crossings on all sides of the park accompanied by appropriate traffic-calming measures (similar to Dupont Circle). Mall and Senate Park are within close proximity to housing or retail and social functions in a community, allowing residents to interact with each another and meet new people. They can also enhance the identity of a surrounding neighborhood by serving as a landmark (similar to Dupont Circle). Downtown East currently lacks any large-scale parks (half acre or more) that are publicly accessible or where residents can program events. And though federal parks such as the National Mall and Senate Park are within close proximity, the tight restrictions on use at these parks make them insufficient as neighborhood amenities.

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OPEN SPACE SITING CRITERIA

• A location central to prospective users, in close proximity to housing or retail
• A property that offers a line of sight from the street and with pedestrian access from multiple directions.
• On existing parkland that can readily be re-purposed for park usage.
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DESIGN GOALS FOR AN ANCHOR PARK

• Respond to long-stated community need for open air recreation space that can incorporate such features as landscaping, playgrounds, artwork, lighting, seating, or other elements that are for public use and enrich the character and quality of life of the neighborhood.
• Establish direct and strong visual connection and relationship to the surrounding neighborhood and streetscape.
• Showcase innovative sustainable design and infrastructure strategies.
• Increase the sense of safety and security in the area and encourage walkable, active gathering space.
• Provide flexible space that can be readily programmed to respond and adapt to neighborhood needs.
8A. REVITALIZE LARGE PARKS TO FILL A WIDE ARRAY OF RECREATIONAL USES ACROSS A PARKS NETWORK

Many existing parks within the Downtown East area are under-designed and as such are underutilized. The District should work closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the BIDs and the public to identify unmet park needs in the area for a wide array of uses, including active or passive recreation, playgrounds, ball courts, sitting areas, memorials, gardens, or murals. Existing park spaces should be improved to act as anchors and work in tandem with one another. For many of these parks, small scale interventions, or deliberate programming by the community can spur new life in these spaces. Examples of spaces that should be explored for potential revitalization include Chinatown Park, Tax Court Park (over the freeway), the plaza adjacent to the Daly building, and the plaza on G Place. Explore options for long-term maintenance with the area BIDs and the ability to vary programming throughout the day as workers leave the area and residents return.

8B. LINK SATELLITE PARKS TO LARGER OPEN SPACES ALONG GREEN CORRIDORS TO FORM A COMPLETE PARKS NETWORK

A network of parks can only be as feasible as their connections to the neighborhood. A number of small parks and open spaces, often little more than grassy patches, can be redesigned to breathe new life into the neighborhood, but also to fill in the gaps by linking the larger, programmed park spaces. Across major street corridors (such as Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Louisiana Avenues, and K Street and North Capitol Streets) promote expanded tree canopy, comfortable sidewalk widths, enlarged planting strips, and ample street furniture to create a park-like atmosphere to link disparate parks both physically and thematically in a comprehensive network. Open space connections should link along retail frontages as well, such as Capitol Crossing, and should maximize the potential for beautification efforts, street furniture, and places to rest along these ‘green spines’.

8C. TRANSFORM THE SERIES OF PLAZAS AND PARKS BETWEEN JUDICIARY SQUARE & PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

Transform the two large, underutilized open spaces south of Judiciary Square (John Marshall Park and the Daly Building plaza) as inspiring examples of places to gather. Ample visitors and workers use the surrounding buildings on a daily basis and have need of well-designed and maintained spaces to rest or eat lunch. Provide spaces for passive recreation with furniture, art, shade trees, and features that create an attractive setting to the day-time workforce. These two parks can serve as the southern anchor for a Courts Parks Axis that continues from Pennsylvania Avenue north to the National Building Museum.

8D. WORK WITH THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL (AOC) TO TRANSFORM PARKING LOTS INTO PARKS

Formerly part of the beautifully maintained Senate Park on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, the two parking lot parcels across from Union Station on Columbus Circle were paved for vehicle parking for Capitol staff. As Union Station continues to expand and serve as a key gateway into the District, these lots present an important first impression of the city and can help set the standard for beautiful public spaces. If these parking lots are re-envisioned and returned to Senate Park, they can serve residents and visitors to the city and beautify the front door of the iconic Union Station.
GOAL 9 – A COMMUNITY-DEFINING PUBLIC REALM: ACTIVATE A SAFE & ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC REALM THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED PLACEMAKING

Downtown-East is a prime location for new and innovative thinking on placemaking, with all the basic ingredients that make temporary or permanent interventions successful: ample space on sidewalks in front of underutilized, uninteresting, or inaccessible buildings, a rapidly expanding retail scene, and an existing neighborhood identity that is open to further refinement by its old and new users.

With large developments anticipated to alter the physical makeup of the area, small interventions like pop-up retail or temporary monuments in unused triangle parks can further shape the neighborhood, provide for cultural or artistic outlets for residents, and serve to increase a sense of safety and community for residents and visitors. The District should partner with area BIDs to identify and activate these spaces with food vendors, pop-up shops, playgrounds, artistic performances, see-through games, murals, and interactive displays on the sidewalks and in front of buildings. Target areas should include the primary paths between Union Station and the BIDs, areas with emerging retail, places adjacent to programmable park spaces, and in residential areas that can benefit from additional community interaction such as the senior assisted living/residential buildings north of Massachusetts Avenue.

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9A. CREATE A VISUAL GUIDE THAT ENCOURAGES INNOVATIVE PLACEMAKING

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Business Tenant Zone: A zone specifically reserved on many commercial streets for activities directly related to and maintained by the adjacent business, including enclosed or unenclosed sidewalk cafes for restaurants, the display of merchandise for shops, or seating areas in front of building lobbies.

Resident Priority Public Space: Similar to the business tenant zone, this space is specifically for use by the adjacent residential building to maintain a publicly-oriented character. Low fencing or hedges, seating areas, gardens, patios, porches, and the like are encouraged outdoor activations. Building projections such as bay and oriel windows, balconies, cornices and roof overhangs help delineate public space and create articulation along a street frontage.

Public Amenity Zone: A space granting greater flexibility for activation, this zone shall more closely align with the character and use of the block rather than individual business or residential building owners. Activation in this zone should be reserved for public art, open seating areas, interactive displays, artistic performances, demonstrations and the like.

Clear Sidewalk Zone: Measured from the back of the street curb, this zone typically includes a 4’ tree box and a 6’ to 10’ sidewalk. Some level of street activation is encouraged in this area with strict requirements for how much of a pedestrian clear sidewalk must be maintained at all times. This is typically a 6’ minimum in residential areas and a 10’ minimum in downtown or in commercial areas.

Public Road Right of Way: A zone that is primarily utilitarian in purpose, moving traffic along city streets and keeping the city operating. No long-term public activation is permitted, however some short term street closures are possible for festivals, farmers’ markets and other activities, with ample lead time for adequate city review and consideration.
Today, Downtown East finds itself at a crossroads. Economic resurgence and an expanding housing market led by population growth all present opportunities and challenges to shaping the neighborhood’s vitality and well-being. With approximately 8.5 million square feet of untapped development potential there is considerable work moving forward on a path towards a thriving and vibrant neighborhood.

The Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy responds to these opportunities and challenges as an actionable road map that builds upon the neighborhood’s defining characteristics, its rich cultural history, and governmental and institutional assets. The Re-Urbanization Strategy is a holistic and unified vision for the future that identifies opportunity areas to improve the public realm, enhance retail and amenities, create economic opportunity, support sustainability, and further enhance the quality of life for the community.

COORDINATION WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Downtown East Re-Urbanization boundary area falls within a portion of the District of Columbia that is closely tied to the federal government, and agencies such as National Capital Planning Commission, the Architect of the Capitol, National Park Service, and the General Services Administration. The missions of these agencies, in part to advocate on behalf of the federal interest and maintain use of federal properties, will ensure they remain vital stakeholders and partners in the implementation process.

STEWARDSHIP

The goals prioritized in this report address concerns raised by stakeholders with recommendations that build upon the work already underway in the community. This report conveys a narrative of the community by unpacking its important social, cultural and historical aspects and building on them to ensure Downtown East retains relevancy and competitiveness in the context of a growing city. This is a reflection of listening to community and stakeholder priorities combined with the design, spatial, and technical analysis that the Office of Planning can provide, all of which have been distilled into a user-friendly, and easily-understood graphic framework to be used by all neighborhood stakeholders.

The Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy will be realized by a range of implementers across sectors. The District of Columbia government, the Mt. Vernon Triangle CID, the NoMA BID, the Downtown BID, property owners, developers, civic associations, institutions such as Georgetown University, and community stakeholders each have an important role to play. Each must actively work with the others, taking a holistic approach to partnership. As a priority, the District of Columbia will use the recommendations of this report to align its resources to support the vision in a number of ways, such as identifying programs and resources to achieve both short and long term goals. As with all planning initiatives, the DC Office of Planning (OP) will guide and track implementation, and work to ensure that District investments align with the neighborhood’s goals and the values laid out in this strategy plan. OP will reconvene stakeholders in the future to review completed work and identify additional implementation opportunities. Please see the implementation matrix beginning on page 64.

LINKED TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Many of the recommendations made in this document will serve to inform the Second Amendment Cycle of the District’s Comprehensive Plan and will be incorporated into both the citywide and area elements of the plan. Please follow http://plandc.dc.gov/ to learn more about the Comprehensive Plan process.

PLANNING POLICIES

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the District of Columbia policy frameworks that support and shape the Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy include the following:

• Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements
• Move DC
• Age-Friendly DC
• Sustainable DC
• Vision Zero
• DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit
• Homeward DC Plan
• District of Columbia Historic Preservation Law
• and others
## TIME & RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>BID and Local Business</th>
<th>Residents &amp; Prop. Owners</th>
<th>Short Term</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making Physical Connections</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. A Fully Connected Downtown: Establish a seamless urban street grid</td>
<td>Restore Street Segments that Better Connect Downtown to Surrounding Neighborhoods</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Accessible to Rest of the City and Region: Improve access to all</td>
<td>Enhance Street Segments that Better Connect Downtown to Surrounding Neighborhoods</td>
<td>DC/US X X $</td>
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<td>3. Expanded Role as a Regional Gateway: Integrate Union Station with</td>
<td>Design New Entrances to Union Station for Accessibility from All Directions</td>
<td>DC/US X $</td>
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<td>making the surrounding neighborhoods</td>
<td>Streamline Transfers Between Union Station and Transit</td>
<td>DC/US X $</td>
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<td><strong>Enhancing Neighborhood Vitality</strong></td>
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<td>4. A Preeminent Center for Jobs: Anticipate the shifting needs of</td>
<td>Partner with the Federal Government to Respond to the Evolving Needs of Their</td>
<td>DC/US</td>
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<td>office and emerging markets to bolster job growth</td>
<td>Build Capacity for Private Sector Growth in Downtown East</td>
<td>DC X X $</td>
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<td>5. High-Quality Design in Affordable Housing: Prioritize human-centered</td>
<td>Design Facades at Multi-Family Residential Buildings to Better Connect with the</td>
<td>DC X</td>
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<td>and inclusive design in new housing</td>
<td>Community</td>
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</table>

### IMPLEMENTATION

DOWNTOWN EAST RE-URBANIZATION STRATEGY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Government</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| A Central Community Gathering Space: Design a public open space to serve as the heart of a growing neighborhood | | DC X X $5
| Prioritize Access, Safety, and Comfort for Pedestrians to Parks | | DC X X $5
| A Network of Public Parks and Open Spaces: Support a range of new and renovated public open spaces for a wide variety of users | | DC X X $5
| Revitalize Large Parks to Fill a Wide Array of Recreational Uses Across a Parks Network | | DC X $5
| Link Satellite Parks to Larger Open Spaces Along Green Corridors to Form a Complete Parks Network | | DC X X $5
| Transform the Series of Plazas and Parks Between Judiciary Square & Pennsylvania Avenue | | DC/US $5
| Work with the Architect of the Capitol to Transform Existing Parking Lots into Parks | | DC/US $5
| A Community-Defining Public Realm: Activate a safe and attractive public realm through community-led placemaking | | DC $5
| Create a Visual Guide that Encourages Innovative Placemaking | | DC X
| Partner with Business Improvement Districts to Foster Better Placemaking Opportunities | | DC X X $5

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DC Department of Transportation
DC Department of Parks and Recreation
DC Department of General Services
DC Department of Energy and the Environment

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ENXU Law
tecnoVidal
Jon Stiver & Associates
Riengold Unit

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Gerry Widdicombe

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Georgetown University
General Services Administration
Architect of the Capitol
National Capital Planning Commission
National Parks Service
U.S. Courts

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