

The District of Columbia  
Office of Planning  
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## Racial Equity in Comprehensive Plan Implementation

September 18, 2021

# What is the Comprehensive Plan?



The Comp Plan is a high-level guiding document that sets a positive, long-term vision for the District through the lens of physical growth and change.

**An update to the Comp Plan has recently taken effect.** This update will enable the District to meet challenges and harness opportunities in critical areas, such as housing, equity, and resilience.

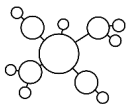
## Major Themes of the Comp Plan Update



# Comp Plan Elements



## Context Elements



Framework



Introduction



Implementation

## Citywide Elements



Land Use



Economic  
Development



Housing



Arts &  
Culture



Environmental  
Protection



Transportation



Community  
Services &  
Facilities



Educational  
Facilities



Urban Design



Historic  
Preservation

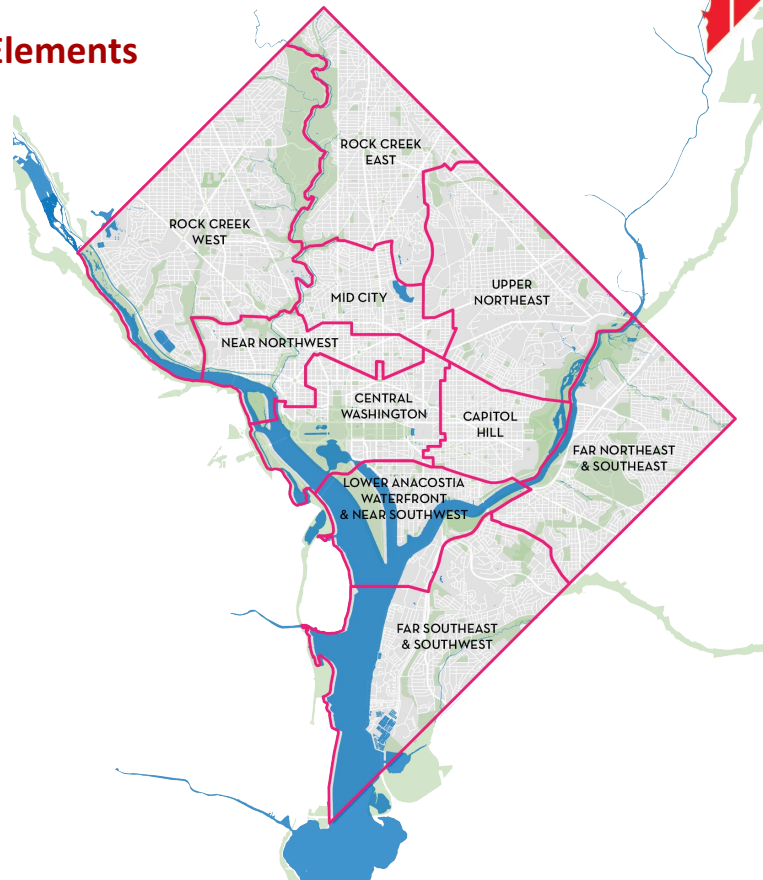


Infrastructure



Parks,  
Recreation &  
Open Space

## Area Elements



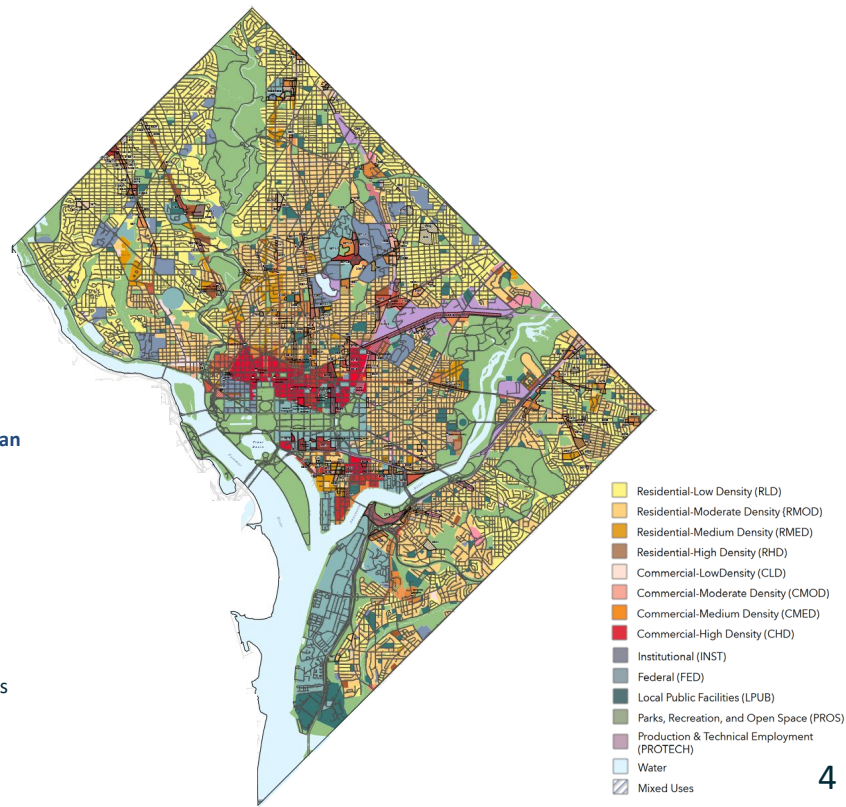
# Comp Plan Maps



## Generalized Policy Map



## Future Land Use Map



# What Does Implementation Look Like?



The Comp Plan provides high-level, long-term policy guidance for many District plans and processes, including:

- Zoning
- Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)
- Executive & Legislative Decisions
- Small Area Plans

OP is one of many District agencies assigned responsibility for Comp Plan actions in the Implementation Element.



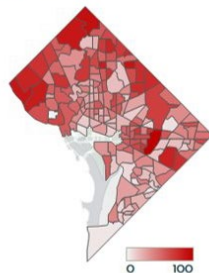
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## Historic Policies Drive Outcomes for Residents

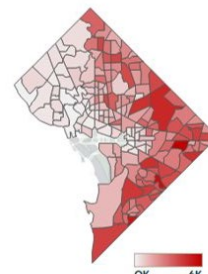
**\$77,649**  
Districtwide

\$15K \$24K

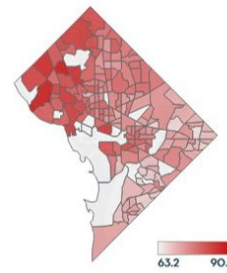
### Homeownership Rate



### Black Population



### Life Expectancy



Source: CDC Neighborhood Life Expectancy Project, 2010-2015.

# Equity & Racial Equity in the Comp Plan



**The Framework Element provides a vision for...**

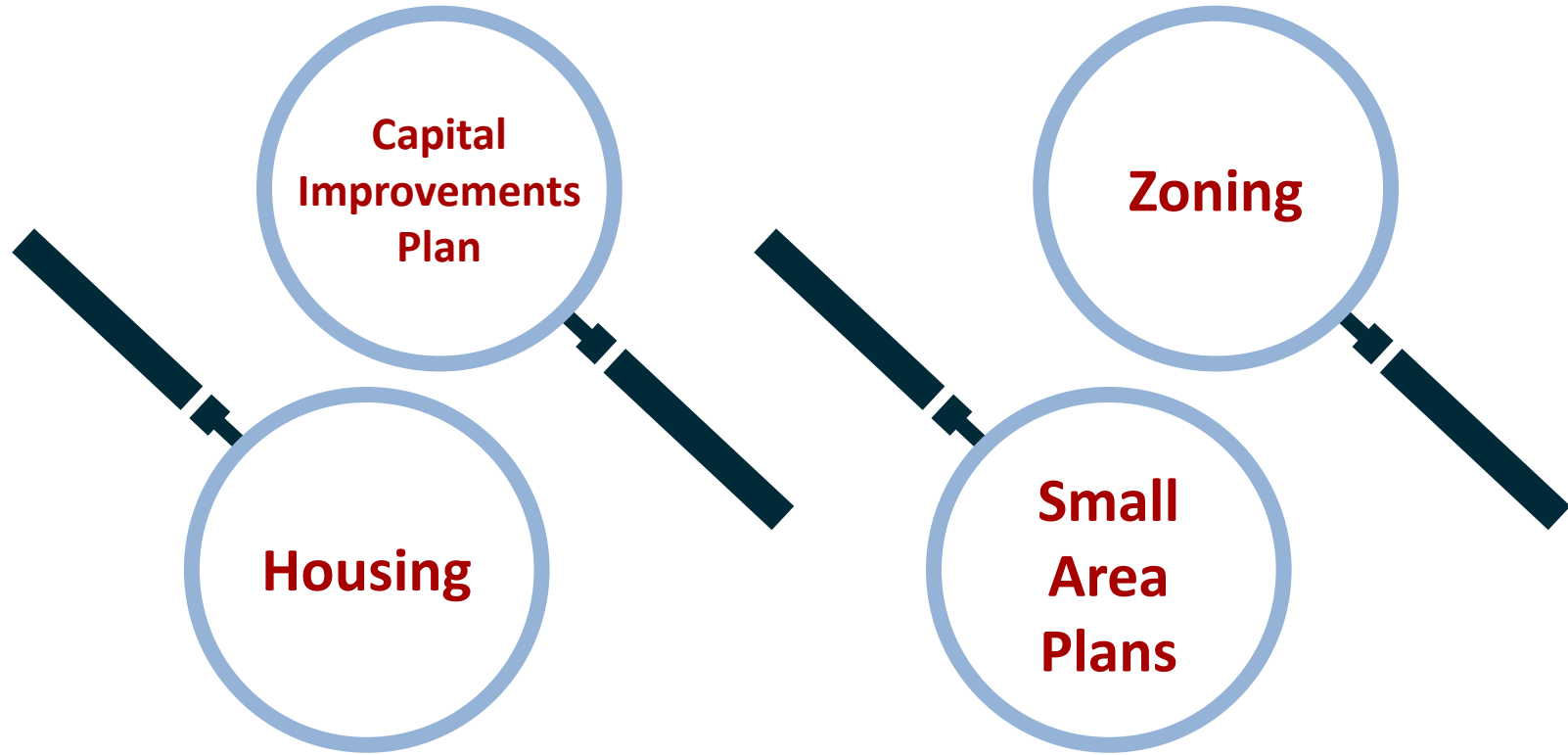
## **...An equitable District:**

“Equity exists where all people share equal rights, access, choice, opportunities, and outcomes, regardless of characteristics such as race, class, or gender. Equity is achieved by targeted actions and investments to meet residents where they are, to create equitable opportunities.” 213.6

## **...Racial Equity:**

“As an outcome, the District achieves racial equity when race no longer determines one’s socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or their socioeconomic status; and when racial divides no longer exist between people of color and their white counterparts.” 213.9

# Racial Equity Lenses in the Comp Plan



...and many more!



# Zoning Racial Equity Lens

OP reviews proposals to the Zoning Commission and provides guidance on consistency with the Comp Plan.

Scope of OP's racial equity review will depend on the nature of the proposed action. For example, a map amendment would be reviewed differently than a Planned Unit Development (PUD) due to different levels of information about what will be built on a property.

PUD Site Information Includes Use, Size, Bulk, Design, & Benefits



“...specifically include a process for the Zoning Commission to **evaluate all actions through a racial equity lens** as part of its Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis.”  
2501.8

# Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Racial Equity Lens

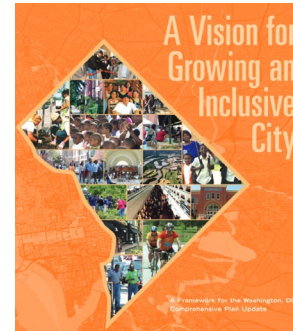


## The Comp Plan & CIP are linked in the District's Home Rule Act

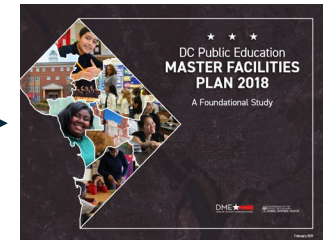
- The Comp Plan includes policies to strengthen links between the Comp Plan, facilities & infrastructure master plans, & the CIP
- Comp Plan criteria evaluate CIP projects for consistency with the Comp Plan, including through a racial equity lens

“...must use a **racial equity lens to evaluate how the District’s major capital projects advance or detract from the goal of advancing equitable development.**” 2507.3

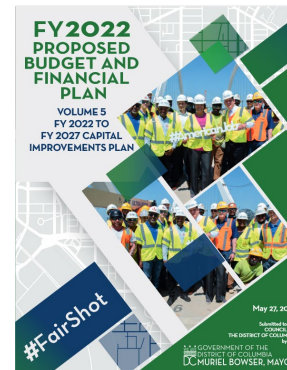
## Comp Plan



## MFPs



## CIP



# Housing Racial Equity Lens

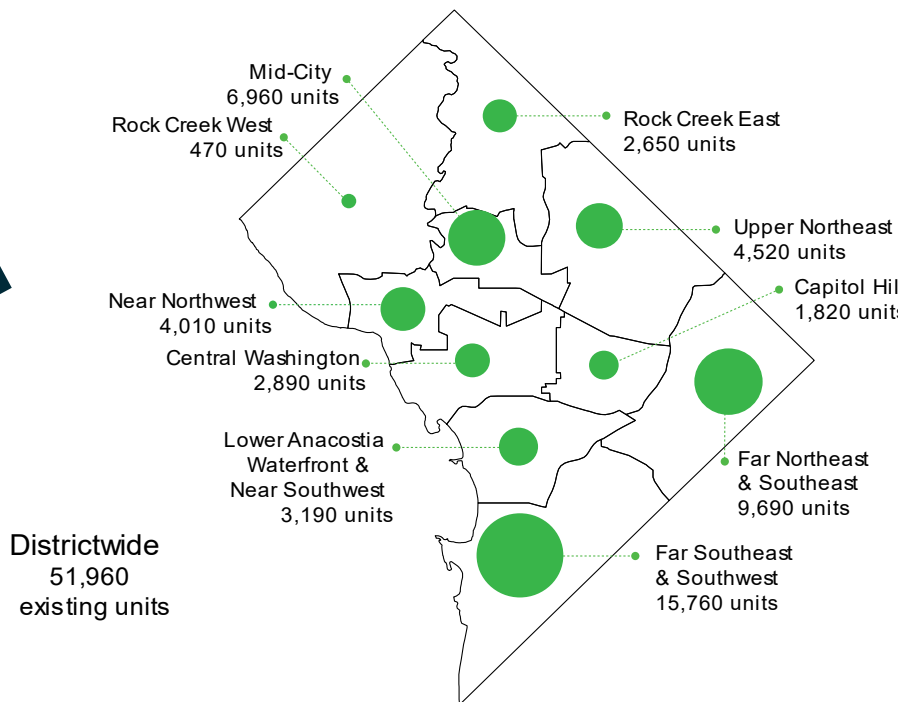


## Housing Element Sections

- Housing Production
- Housing Preservation
- Homeownership & Fair Housing Laws
- Needs of Vulnerable Populations & Persons with Disabilities

**"Housing in the District must also be understood through a racial equity lens... At the most basic level, it is the availability of safe, decent, affordable housing across all neighborhoods that will determine whether the vision for an inclusive District will be realized." 2514.3**

## 2018 Estimated Distribution of Dedicated Affordable Housing Units



# Executive Actions: Housing Equity



## Mayor Bowser's Housing Goals

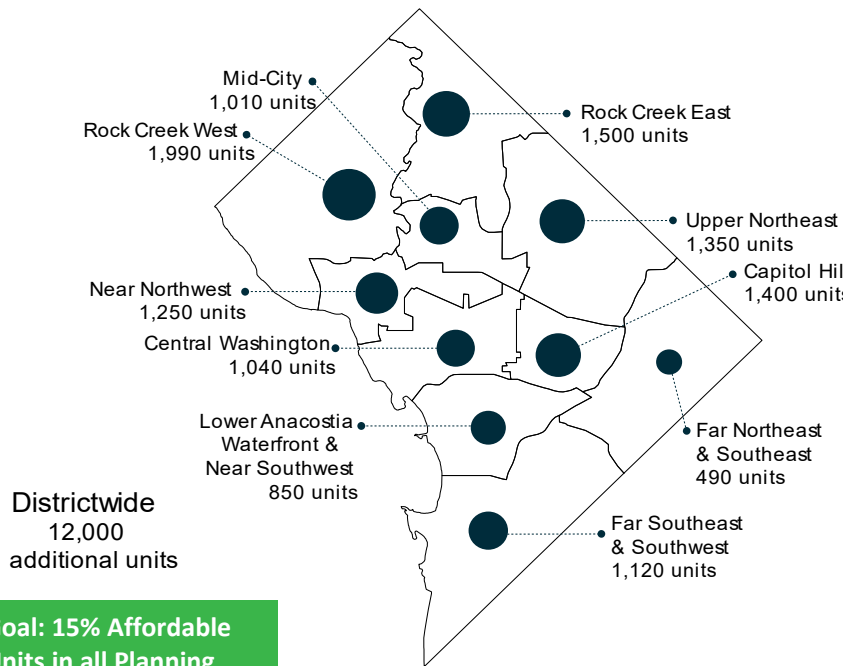
36,000 new units by 2025

12,000 new affordable units



Mayor's Order on Housing signed May 10, 2019

## 2025 Dedicated Affordable Housing Production Goals



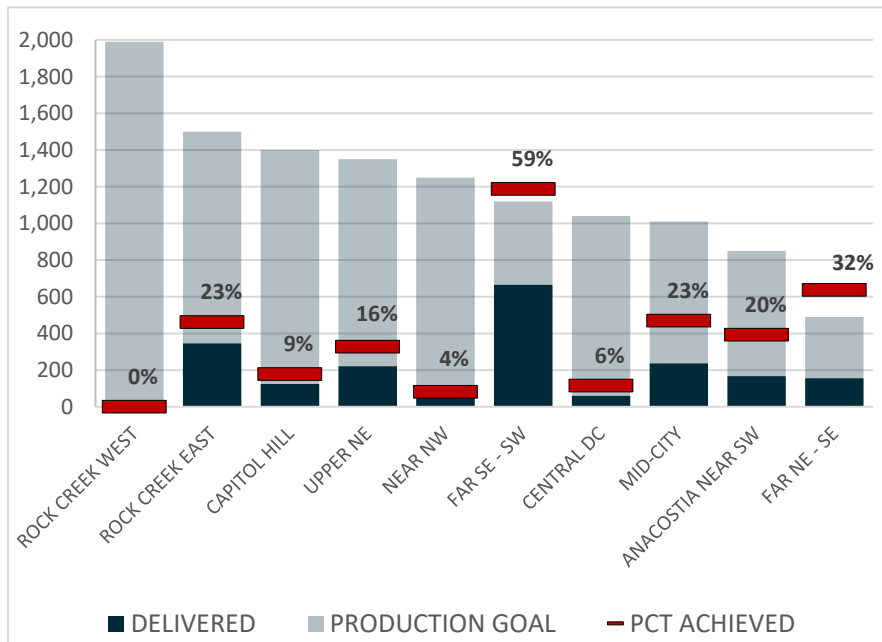
**Goal: 15% Affordable  
Units in all Planning  
Areas by 2050**

# Progress Toward Housing Equity



2019-2020

Affordable Housing Deliveries by Planning Area



Source: DMPED; Office of Planning.

## New Tools & Resources

- Targeted Tax Abatement for Affordable Housing
- Expanded Inclusionary Zoning - IZ+ & XL
- Local Rent Supplement Voucher
  - Increased to \$14 million per year
  - Sub-market fair market rate to support choice in high-cost areas
- Historic Investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund (\$400m)

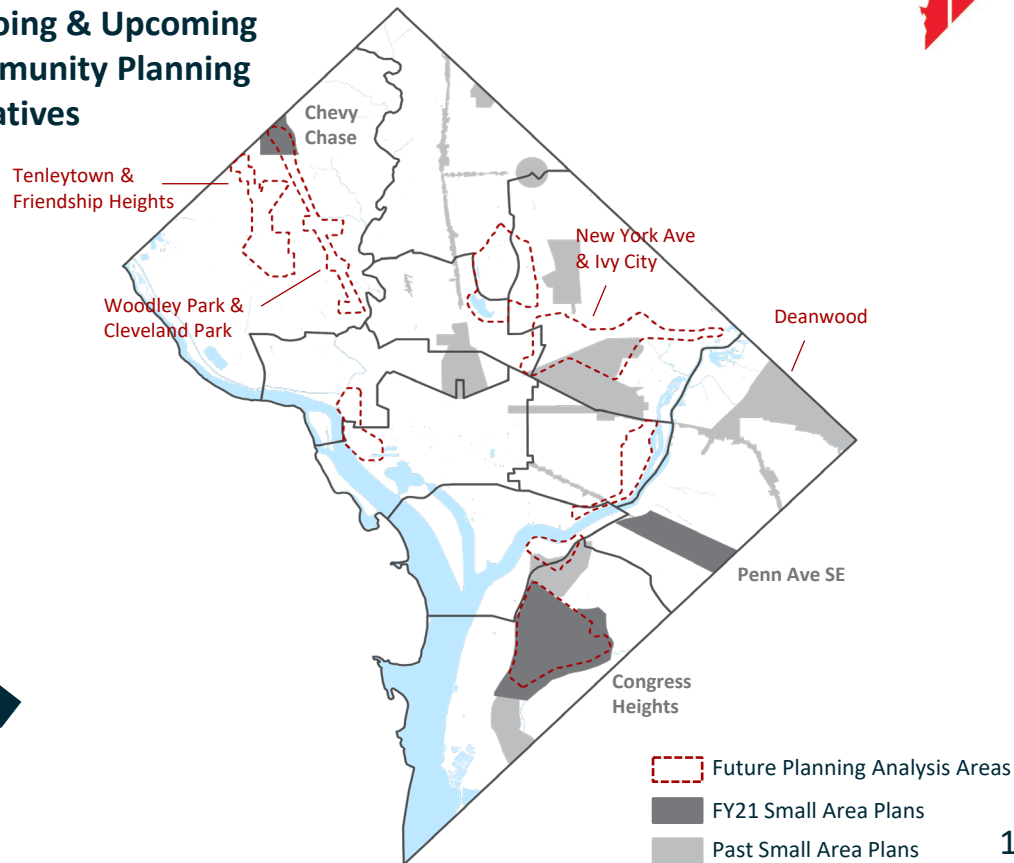
# Community Planning Racial Equity Lens



## Ongoing & Upcoming Community Planning Initiatives



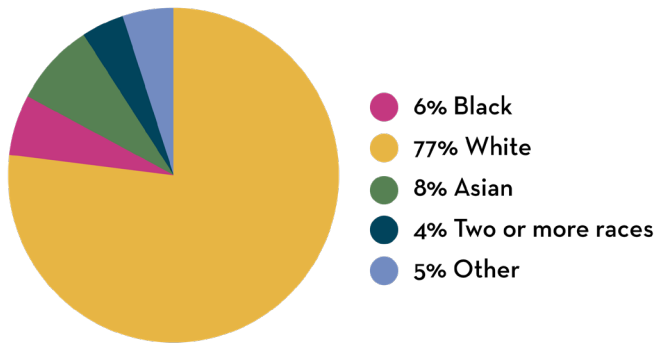
...must be conducted using a racial equity lens and consider use of a racial equity impact analysis or similar tools. (Excerpted from 2503.4)



# Equity in Place: Chevy Chase



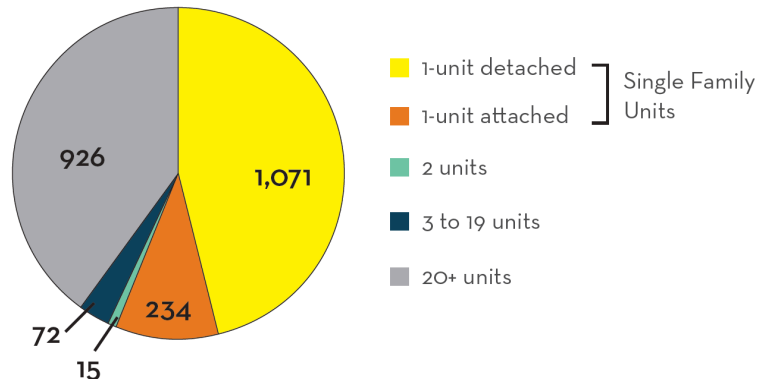
## Demographics



Less than 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

The median household income is **147,143** which is **170%** of the District-wide median income

## Housing



With the current land use pattern, the District's 2020-2045 growth forecast expects the number of households will increase by **29%** in the city as a whole and **19%** in Ward 3. In Chevy Chase, no new households are forecasted **(0%)**.

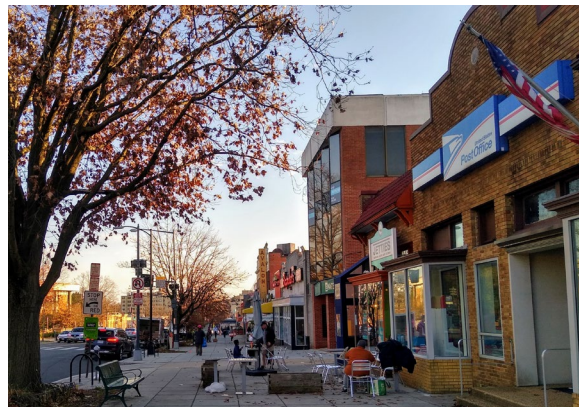
Almost **60%** of homes in the area are valued above **\$1M**



# Putting Equity into Practice

The District's small area planning work in Chevy Chase will consider the following:

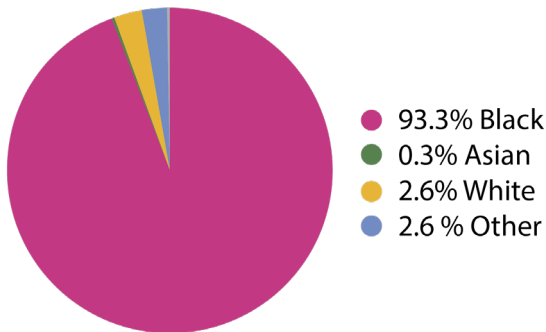
- How can facing the legacy of racialized land use policies help to overcome opposition to new development, and build support for housing equity?
- How can we leverage modest density increases to advance affordable housing goals, economic recovery, and racial justice?
- How can urban design be a tool to create inclusive civic spaces and contribute to the economic vibrancy of Connecticut Ave?



# Equity in Place: Congress Heights



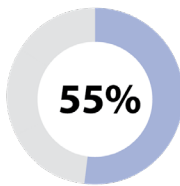
## Demographics



Less than **0.1%** American Indian and Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

The median household income is **36,422** which is **42%** of the District-wide median income

## Housing

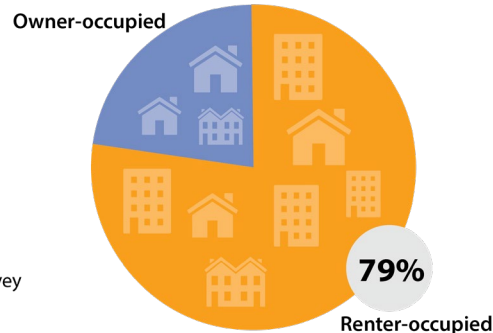


**55%** of Congress Heights residents spend over **35%\*** of their income on housing.

\* Industry recommendations cite that households should be spending no more than 30% of income on housing and related expenses

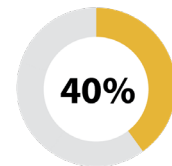
Source: 2018 American Community Survey

**87%** of housing units in Congress Heights are occupied; most of these are renter-occupied.



## Access to Resources

Ward 8 has 1 full-service grocer for 85,000 residents. This grocery store services 10x more residents than each grocery store in Ward 6.



**40%** of Congress Heights residents are living in poverty, compared to **18%** District-wide.

# Putting Equity into Practice



**OP's small area planning work in Congress Heights will consider the following:**

- How can we leverage new development in this community to advance the District's housing goals, while avoiding displacement?
- How can land use, public space activation, and urban design tools be used to improve quality of life for Congress Heights residents, who have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How can we build the capacity of community stakeholders to engage in planning and community development initiatives?



**Rec Center Redevelopment**



**Pop-up Alley Engagement**



**Mayoral Housing Announcement**

# Putting Equity into Practice



## Pennsylvania Avenue SE Small Area Plan

- **Community responsive.** Planning effort was initiated by community leaders in response to 2008 Small Area Plan. OP has partnered with community leaders and organizations (Penn Ave East Main Street, Soufside Market, and local artists) to build on existing planning efforts and deliver on early implementation.
- **Planning Focus.** Developed dedicated planning goals to improve quality of life indicators for existing residents.
- **Community Engagement.** Engagement, outreach, and pilots have built capacity with black-owned and operated artists, businesses, and organizations. New engagement techniques have been piloted in partnership with American University, The Game Lab to capture historically underrepresented voices.
- **Capacity Building.** Plan recommendations have emphasized uplifting existing community stakeholders, organizers, and advocates through early momentum building strategies.



# Reflections on Embedding an Equity Focus in Planning



- Reversing the impacts of a **century of inequitable land use systems and practices** is complicated and will take time with incremental improvements.
- Planning for equity requires looking across **systems**, from housing, infrastructure, land use and economics to health, environment and food.
- Planning for equity requires looking across **scales**, from national to regional to citywide to neighborhood to block.
- Successful outcomes require a **shared understanding of our history**, acknowledging inequities and the policies that shaped a racially segregated geography today.
- Planning is complicated by housing and affordable housing debates with new coalitions aligned around **different views of systems and change**.





## Thank You

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