

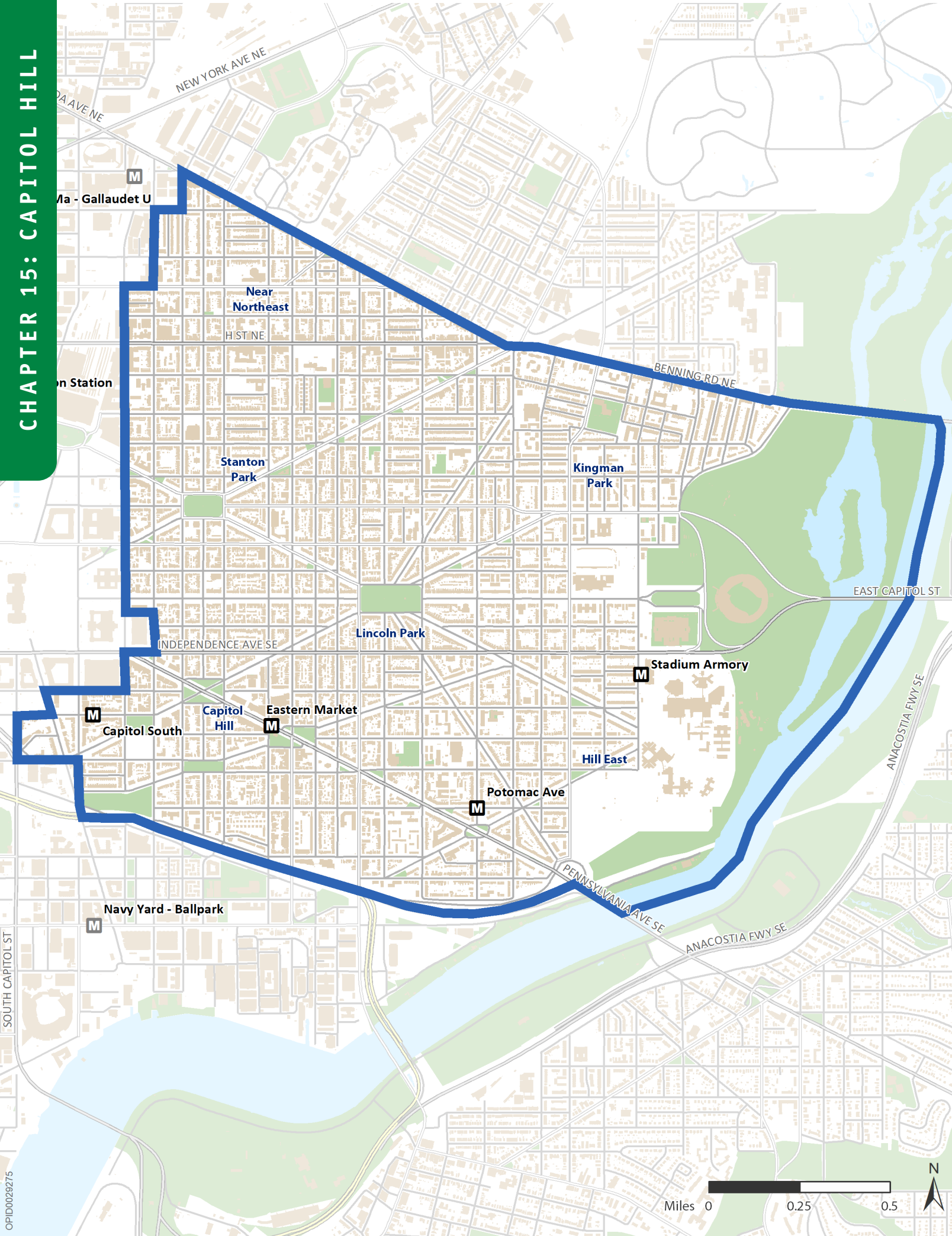
# **Volume II**

## **Area Elements**

### **Chapter 15**

#### **Capitol Hill**

#### **Area Element**



# Capitol Hill Area Element

## Overview 1500

**T**HE CAPITOL HILL PLANNING AREA ENCOMPASSES THE 3.1 SQUARE MILES located east of the U.S. Capitol, north of I-695, and south of Florida Avenue NE and Benning Road NE. Boundaries of the Planning Area are shown on the Capitol Hill map. Most of this area has historically been Ward 6 and is now partially in Ward 7, although in past decades parts have been included in Wards 2 and 5. 1500.1

The Planning Area is bounded on the west by Central Washington and on the south by the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Planning Area. Because plans for this area is of particular concern to Capitol Hill residents, this chapter includes cross-references to relevant sections of the Central Washington and Lower Anacostia Waterfront /Near Southwest Planning Area Elements. Changes along the waterfront—particularly at Reservation 13 and in the Near Southeast—are extremely important to the future of Capitol Hill. The Planning Area is bounded to the north by Florida Avenue NE and Benning Road NE. To the south, the area is bounded by Southeast Boulevard. To the west, the area is bounded generally by 1st Street NE. The Anacostia River provides a natural border to the east. 1500.2

In many respects, Capitol Hill is a city within the city. The community has well-defined physical boundaries that enhance its sense of identity. Its neighborhoods are united by history, architectural tradition, and relatively consistent urban form, including a grid system of diagonal streets that has remained faithful to the 1791 L'Enfant Plan for Washington, DC. Much of the community has the feel of a small historic town, with block upon block of attractive late 19th century and early 20th century row houses, well-maintained public spaces, historic schoolhouses and corner stores, alleys, and traditional neighborhood shopping districts. The community's attractive housing stock, living history, low scale, and proximity to the U.S. Capitol Building make the Hill one of the District's most sought-after communities. 1500.3

The Capitol Hill Planning Area is comprised of several distinct neighborhoods. The original Capitol Hill neighborhood was developed on the high ground just east of the U.S. Capitol Building during the 1800s and is still the historic heart of the community. The Lincoln Park and Stanton Park neighborhoods developed around their namesake squares, with similar housing stock and street patterns. Other areas, such as the H Street residential neighborhood, are defined both by historic row houses adjacent to the corridor and also by the new, higher-density residential buildings developed on infill sites along the corridor. Since the H Street Revitalization Plan was completed in 2003, over 1,500 residential units have been constructed or are in the planning stages along the H Street corridor. Areas



*Capitol Hill is the largest residential historic district in the city.*

such as Hill East, Northeast Capitol Hill, Kingman Park, and Rosedale have their own sense of identity, shaped by such factors as geography, housing stock, architecture, public schools and parks, and commercial centers. Kingman Park was designated a Historic District in 2018. Rosedale is characterized by wood-frame row houses (rather than brick), smaller lots, and less uniform architecture. Other parts of the Hill include concentrations of flats and small apartments, including publicly subsidized housing complexes, such as Potomac Gardens. <sup>1500.4</sup>

The major business districts in the Capitol Hill Planning Area are located along the east-west avenues that cross the community, particularly Pennsylvania Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and H Street NE. Historically, some of the north-south streets also supported neighborhood commercial districts, including 8th Street SE, 11th Street NE/SE, and 15th Street NE/SE. Among these, only the 7th Street/8th Street SE (Barracks Row) business district remains active today; the others have changed uses or been replaced by housing, as shopping patterns and transportation conditions have changed. Eighth Street SE, the spine of the Barracks Row Main Street, has grown into a District-wide destination due to several nationally acclaimed restaurants. As an older urban neighborhood, there continue to be small neighborhood commercial uses, such as dry cleaners, beauty salons, and corner stores, across the Planning Area. Capitol Hill is also home to Eastern Market, a lively and historic public market where independent vendors sell fresh meats, vegetables, flowers, and other goods to customers from across Washington, DC. On any given weekend, thousands of residents and visitors frequent the market. <sup>1500.5</sup>

The Capitol Hill Planning Area has an excellent transportation network, making auto ownership an option rather than a need for many households. The scale and topography of the neighborhood, as well as wide sidewalks and street trees, create ideal conditions for walking. The southeast portion of the Hill is served by the Capitol South, Eastern Market, Potomac Avenue, and Stadium-Armory Metro stations. The northern area is served by the Union Station Metro station and the DC streetcar, which operates an east-west line from Union Station to Benning Road. The entire Planning Area is served by multiple bus lines connecting the District. Additionally, there are 30 Capital Bikeshare stations located throughout the Planning Area. Arterials like Pennsylvania Avenue SE and East Capitol Street NE provide excellent east-west circulation. The downside, however, is that Capitol Hill neighborhoods suffer from heavy volumes of commuter traffic going between downtown (or Central Washington) and areas in Wards 7 and 8. The community is also easily accessed by I-295 and the Southeast/Southwest Freeway (I-695). <sup>1500.6</sup>

The Capitol Hill Planning Area is home to several parks, including Lincoln Park and Stanton Park, Rosedale and Sherwood Recreation Centers, and many smaller pocket and triangle parks. It is also home to the 25-acre Congressional Cemetery, a national historic landmark. The largest parks serving the Hill's neighborhoods are along the Anacostia River, including West Anacostia Park and the lands north of RFK Stadium. <sup>1500.7</sup>

Kingman Island, located in the Anacostia River, is the largest park owned by the District. Its unique natural setting creates a peaceful setting in the District. It continues to grow in popularity, with its access to hiking, fishing, biking, and boating. In January 2018, the site was designated as a State Conservation Area, and the southern portion of Kingman Island is a Critical Wildlife Area. Additionally, it is now home to the DC Bluegrass and Folk Festival, attracting thousands of visitors annually to the event. Future plans for Kingman Island include a nature center and additional educational programming to serve all District residents. <sup>1500.8</sup>

The Planning Area is served by multiple public schools, including elementary and middle schools, and one high school, along with several private and charter schools. The growing number of families in the Planning Area, coupled with improvements in public schools, have increased the interest and enrollment in local public schools. Major modernization efforts have been completed or are planned for Stuart-Hobson, Elliot-Hine, Watkins, Jefferson, Brent, and Eastern schools to better accommodate growth and a modern educational system. As part of the District's ongoing effort to renovate and modernize libraries, both the Rosedale and Northeast Libraries have undergone significant renovation to better serve Capitol Hill Planning Area neighborhoods, and significant renovations are planned for the Southeast Library. <sup>1500.9</sup>

Much of the community's distinctive character is protected as a historic district that is also included in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. In fact, Capitol Hill is the largest residential historic district in Washington, DC and includes some 8,000 structures, mostly dating from the early 1800s to the 1940s. The collection of buildings portrays a rich community history in all its aspects: civic, institutional, economic, technological, spiritual, and domestic. Residential buildings range from Federal-era manors and town houses, to small frame dwellings and alley houses, to grand Italianate homes and picturesque apartment buildings. Perhaps the most numerous are the pressed-brick row houses, many of which have whimsical decorative elements. Many of the row houses have rentable English basement units, contributing to neighborhood diversity and affordability. Increased home values and an influx of higher-income professionals have increased the buying power of area residents and have helped to revitalize commercial corridors. But housing options for lower- and middle-income families have been shrinking, especially in the last decade. <sup>1500.10</sup>



Capitol Hill has always had active and involved citizenry. The Capitol Hill Restoration Society was founded in 1955 to protect the historic fabric of the Hill neighborhood. Their efforts led to the designation of the Capitol Hill Historic District in 1976 and its later expansions.

Capitol Hill has always had active and involved citizenry. The Capitol Hill Restoration Society was founded in 1955 to protect the historic fabric of the Hill neighborhood. Their efforts led to the designation of the Capitol Hill Historic District in 1976 and its later expansions. Other neighborhood groups, like the North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, the Barney Circle Neighborhood Association, Moms on the Hill (MOTH), and the Kingman Park Civic Association are committed to ensuring the livability of their neighborhoods. Business organizations like the Capitol Hill Association for Merchants and Professionals, Barracks Row Main Street, H Street Main Street, Capitol Hill Business Improvement District (BID), and Penn East Alliance all work to ensure that the Hill is a great place to shop, work, visit, and live. <sup>1500.11</sup>

## History <sup>1501</sup>

The Capitol Hill Planning Area has played an important role in the growth of the nation's capital since the 1700s. The neighborhood itself takes its name from what was once called Jenkins Hill. It was here that Pierre L'Enfant sought to locate the Congress House (as the Capitol Building was called). L'Enfant's original vision was that Washington, DC's major commercial street would extend eastward from the Capitol to the Anacostia River. A deep-water port on the river would become the District's center of commerce. The eastern section of L'Enfant's grand design failed to materialize, however, and the District developed to the west. However, the Hill was to achieve its own unique identity. <sup>1501.1</sup>

During the District's early years, privately owned buildings were constructed close to the Capitol and occupied by artisans and craftsmen. The Navy Yard, to the south of the Capitol, also attracted development. By the time the British burned the Capitol building in 1814, a small community had been established on the Hill. Capitol Hill had cemeteries, an outdoor market, places of worship, hotels, and taverns. Boarding houses were constructed for members of Congress. <sup>1501.2</sup>

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, only a few blocks east of the Capitol and south near the Navy Yard had been developed. Most streets were unpaved. Shanties stood side by side with more substantial wood frame and brick dwellings. Horse-drawn streetcars served the Hill and the Navy Yard and connected these areas to the Capitol and downtown. <sup>1501.3</sup>

The neighborhood began to expand after the Civil War. The District had endured and prospered, and investment increased. During the last quarter of the 19th century, brick row houses were built north and east of the Capitol, new stores and banks were established, and streets were graded and paved. A major public works program gave the District—and Capitol Hill—a municipal water supply and sewage system. An ethnically diverse community settled there, including Italians, Germans, and African Americans. <sup>1501.4</sup>

By the late 1800s, there were houses as far east as Lincoln Park, where the Emancipation statue was erected in 1876. Philadelphia Row, completed in 1866 on 11th Street SE, was one of the first large-scale developments in the area. Senators, congressmen, and other public officials lived in the elegant homes around Lincoln Park and along East Capitol Street. More modest homes supported a growing middle class, employed at the Navy Yard and at the federal buildings around the U.S. Capitol. The area's growth was spurred by the construction of electric streetcar lines in the early 1900s, which gave rise to commercial districts like H Street NE. 1501.5



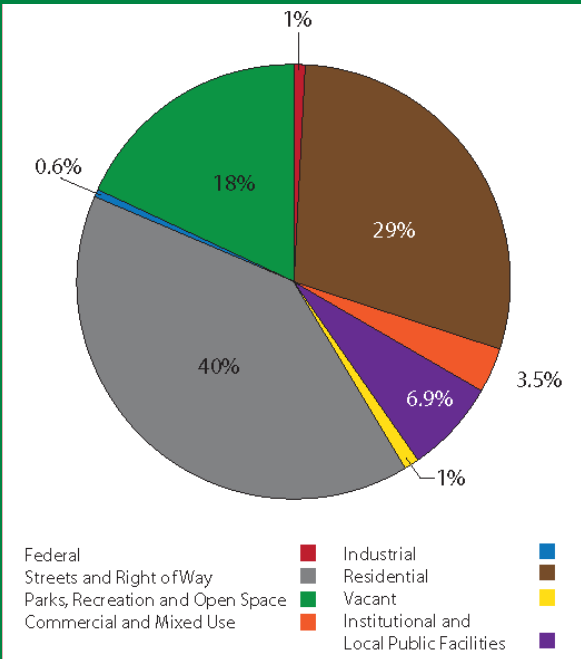
*Lincoln Park*

The Hill has gone through several cycles of reinvestment and renewal during the last century. During the 1920s, the federal government began renting out many of the houses on Capitol Hill. The neighborhood became less fashionable than the burgeoning area northwest of downtown, and some of its more prominent residents relocated. By the late 1920s, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission had developed plans for an eastward extension of the National Mall, extending from the Capitol to the Anacostia River. While these plans were not carried out, housing conditions on the Hill continued to deteriorate through the Great Depression and World War II. The 1950 Comprehensive Plan identified much of the neighborhood as underinvested in or vacant. Congress funded public housing construction in response, and additional blocks around the Capitol were replaced with new federal offices. 1501.6

Parts of Capitol Hill were already changing by the 1950s. Many turn-of-the-century row homes on the blocks just east of the Capitol were restored, bringing a renaissance to close-in neighborhoods. However, the recovery was uneven and slower to arrive on the eastern edge of the Hill. Parts of the area continued to experience economic challenges through the 1960s, and H Street NE was heavily impacted by the 1968 unrest. Most of Capitol Hill remained an established, diverse, and economically and racially mixed community through the 1980s and 1990s. Since the early 2000s, the population in the Capitol Hill Planning Area has steadily increased. More young professionals and families with young children are moving to the Hill neighborhood for the family-size row houses, high-quality schools, and access to transit and other community amenities. Neighborhoods to the north of Capitol Hill, particularly in the areas around the H Street NE corridor, experienced growth due to the popularity of H Street amenities and significant infill residential development that has been built in the last 10 years. 1501.7

Land Use <sup>1502</sup>

Figure 15.1:  
Land Use Composition  
in Capitol Hill <sup>1502.1</sup>



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2006

Statistics on existing land uses are estimated from the current lot-by-lot property tax data together with District and federal land ownership, parks roads, bodies of water, etc. They are not comparable to statistics originally included in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, which were based on a much simpler method. Even large differences between older and newer statistics may reflect differences in the modeling approaches used to generate the 2006 and current data. Land use statistics for the Capitol Hill Planning Area appear in Figure 15.1. Capitol Hill comprises 1,959 acres, or about five percent, of the District’s land area. <sup>1502.2</sup>

Approximately 40 percent of Capitol Hill land is within transportation rights-of-way. This is due to the broad avenues of the L’Enfant Plan, the regularity of the street grid, the extensive system of alleys, and the wide street rights-of-way. <sup>1502.3</sup>

Residential uses account for 29 percent of the total, which is approximately 582 acres of residential land use in the Capitol Hill Planning Area. <sup>1502.4</sup>

Commercial and mixed-uses represent 3.5 percent of the total area, which is smaller than the District-wide total of 3.7 percent. Major commercial areas include H Street NE, Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Benning Road NE, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE. There is almost no industrial development in the Planning Area. <sup>1502.5</sup>

Parks, recreation, and open spaces comprise 18 percent of the Planning Area. The larger open spaces serving the neighborhood are along the Anacostia River, including Congressional Cemetery and the land north of RFK Stadium. Public facilities—primarily local public schools, public charter schools, recreation centers, the DC Central Correctional Facility, and former DC General Hospital complex—comprise four percent of the area. Institutional uses comprise less than two percent of the total area. In 2016, approximately one percent of the Planning Area consisted of vacant, developable land. <sup>1502.6</sup>



## Demographics <sup>1503</sup>

Basic demographic data for the Capitol Hill Planning Area is shown in Figure 15.2. In 2017, the Planning Area had a population of 60,313. Between 2000 and 2017, it grew by over 11,000 residents, a significant increase in population, largely due to new construction of multi-family buildings throughout the Planning Area. The number of households is projected to increase from 25,082 in 2010 to 33,387 in 2045, with an attendant 52 percent increase in population during that same time frame, from 53,099 to about 86,146. The Capitol Hill Planning Area's population growth represents about nine percent of the total growth expected in the District over the next 25 years. <sup>1503.1</sup>

Since 2000, there are slightly fewer children and older adults living in the Planning Area, with a majority of the population (73 percent) between the ages of 18 and 65. This is slightly higher than the District-wide total of 70 percent. <sup>1503.2</sup>

According to U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data, approximately 30 percent of the Planning Area's residents are Black, and approximately 59 percent are white, compared to 62 percent black and 36 percent white in 2000. About three percent of the Planning Area's residents are Asian, and another three percent are two or more races. Only six percent of the Planning Area's residents are foreign-born, and around six percent are of Hispanic/Latino origin. The Hispanic/Latino population increased, from two percent in 2000 to just under six percent in 2017. Both of these figures are lower than District-wide averages. Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, the Capitol Hill Planning Area is expected to have continued growth. <sup>1503.4</sup>

## Housing Characteristics <sup>1504</sup>

ACS data shows that in 2017, just over half of the homes (50.4 percent) in the Capitol Hill Planning Area were row houses. This is more than double the District-wide average of 25 percent. Only four percent of the housing units were single-family detached homes, compared to 12 percent for the District as a whole. The area also contained fewer units in large apartment buildings than Washington, DC as a whole. Eighteen percent of Capitol Hill's housing units were in buildings with more than 20 units, compared to 35 percent District-wide. Conversely, Capitol Hill has more 2- to 4-unit buildings than the District as a whole—more than 15 percent in 2017 (compared to a District-wide average of 10 percent). <sup>1504.1</sup>

The 2017 ACS data reported that less than eleven percent of the housing units in the Planning Area were vacant. The 2017 vacancy rate is slightly higher than the District-wide rate of nine percent. <sup>1504.2</sup>



*Just over half of the homes in the Capitol Hill Planning Area are row houses.*

Figure 15.2:

**Capitol Hill at a Glance** 1503.3

Basic Statistics and Projections						
	2000	2010	2017*	2025	2035	2045
<b>Population</b>	48,584	53,099	60,313	69,565	79,763	86,146
<b>Households</b>	21,894	23,200	24,473	29,172	32,433	33,387
<b>Household Population</b>	45,290	47,942	56,028	63,281	73,395	79,674
<b>Persons Per Household</b>	2.07	2.07	2.29	2.17	2.26	2.39
<b>Jobs</b>	34,560	23,519	24,623	25,763	31,086	37,207
<b>Density (persons per sq mile)</b>	15,672	17,129	19,456	22,440	25,730	27,789
<b>Land Area (square miles)</b>	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1

2000 and 2017 Census Data Profile					
	2000		2017*		Citywide
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Percentage
<b>Age</b>					
Under 18	7,934	16.3%	8,836	14.7%	17.6%
18-64	35,621	73.3%	45,994	76.3%	70.6%
18-34	15,699	32.3%	23,551	39.0%	34.6%
35-64	19,922	41.0%	22,443	37.2%	35.9%
65 and over	5,026	10.3%	5,483	9.1%	11.9%
<b>Residents Below Poverty Level</b>	7,560	15.9%	5,967	10.5%	17.4%
<b>Racial Composition</b>					
White	17,350	36.4%	37,581	62.3%	40.7%
Black	28,091	59.0%	18,155	30.1%	47.7%
Native American	147	0.3%	145	0.2%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	804	1.7%	1,834	3.0%	3.8%
Other	514	1.1%	709	1.2%	4.6%
Multi-Racial	699	1.5%	1,889	3.1%	2.9%
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	1,375	1.9%	3,432	5.7%	10.7%
<b>Foreign-Born Residents</b>	2,528	5.3%	3,740	6.2%	14.0%
<b>Tenure</b>					
Owner Households	10,812	50.3%	12,465	50.9%	41.7%
Renter Households	10,685	49.7%	12,008	49.1%	58.3%
<b>Housing Occupancy</b>					
Occupied Units	21,497	89.2%	24,473	89.6%	90.4%
Vacant Units	2,591	10.8%	2,845	10.4%	9.6%
<b>Housing by Unit Type</b>					
1-unit, detached	1,019	4.2%	1,145	4.2%	11.9%
1-unit, attached	12,922	53.6%	13,756	50.4%	25.1%
2-4 units	4,885	20.3%	4,224	15.5%	10.3%
5-9 units	1,347	5.6%	1,608	5.9%	6.8%
10-19 units	1,576	6.5%	1,731	6.3%	10.5%
20 or more	3,364	9.2%	4,854	17.8%	35.4%
Mobile/other	133	0.6%	0	0.0%	0.1%

\* Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

About half of all Capitol Hill households are homeowners, and half are renters, with percentages almost identical to the year 2000. The homeownership rate is higher than the District as a whole (41.2 percent). <sup>1504.3</sup>

## Income and Employment <sup>1505</sup>

Data from the District Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the Office of Planning (OP) indicate there were about 24,107 jobs in the Capitol Hill Planning Area in 2015. This represents just three percent of Washington, DC's job base. However, the Planning Area is surrounded on the west and south by large employment centers, including the Capitol Complex, and the Capitol Riverfront/Navy Yard area. The number of jobs is projected to increase from about 24,107 today to about 37,207 in 2045. Most of the increase is expected to take place on Reservation 13 on the Anacostia waterfront south of RFK Stadium, and along H Street NE, as new retail and cultural uses locate on the revitalized corridor. Additional job growth may also take place on Pennsylvania Avenue SE. <sup>1505.1</sup>

*Please see the Economic Development Element for guidance on coworking location facilities in neighborhood commercial areas.*

The 2017 ACS data indicated the median income in the Planning Area was \$110,208. This is higher than the District-wide average of \$70,848. Today, 10.5 percent of the residents live below the federal poverty level, and the percentage of residents living in poverty decreased from 15.7 percent in 2000 and is less than the District average of 18 percent. <sup>1505.2</sup>

## Planning and Development Priorities <sup>1506</sup>

This section summarizes the opportunities and challenges residents and stakeholders prioritized during the 2006 Comprehensive Plan revision. During large community workshops, residents shared their feedback on District-wide and neighborhood specific issues. Since the 2006 community workshops, however, some of the challenges and opportunities facing the community have evolved. The following summary does not reflect new community priorities or feedback from either amendment cycle but summarizes the most important issues during the 2006 Comprehensive Plan revision. <sup>1506.1</sup>

Several Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in the Capitol Hill Planning Area during 2005 and 2006. These meetings provided an opportunity for residents to discuss both District-wide and neighborhood planning issues. There were also well-attended briefings to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, the Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals, and the local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). In addition, recent Small Area Plans—including the H Street Planning program and the Reservation 13 planning process—involved many Hill

residents and addressed long-range planning issues such as land use, traffic, housing needs, and public facilities. <sup>1506.2</sup>

The community delivered several key messages during these meetings. These are summarized below:

- Capitol Hill residents are concerned about the effects of growth on quality of life and community character. One resident described the neighborhood as being in the “vise grip” of development, noting that large-scale changes were planned on the northwest flank (in NoMa), the eastern flank (at Reservation 13), and the southern flank (the Near Southeast and Stadium Areas). Although changes in the heart of Capitol Hill during the next 20 years will be limited, development on the perimeter will generate traffic, increased demand for community services, and the potential for land use conflicts. These issues should be dealt with proactively, recognizing that the Hill is a fine-grained 19th century neighborhood that has evolved over two centuries. In some respects, this is a testament to its endurance, but in other respects the neighborhood faces challenges that come with change. Conflicts between the booming NoMa area and nearby row house neighborhoods are of particular concern.
- In addition to concerns about development on the perimeter, there is unease about the effects of future infill development within the neighborhood itself. Over the next 20 years, additional measures may be needed to conserve the moderate-density row house character that defines most Capitol Hill neighborhoods. This could include the designation of additional areas as historic districts and further limits on alley closures. Future development should be directed to the H Street corridor and to a limited number of Metro-accessible sites along the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor. These areas are already zoned for commercial use and their redevelopment could reinforce the fabric of the neighborhood and provide needed housing and retail services. The renewal of H Street, in particular, has been long awaited. Conversely, the upzoning of developed residential land should be avoided, recognizing that Capitol Hill is already one of the densest communities in the District.
- Historically, Capitol Hill has had a large number of older schoolhouses and public works buildings. Some of these facilities, like the Bryan School on Independence Avenue and the streetcar barn on East Capitol Street, have been adaptively reused for housing. Such reuse has preserved important architectural landmarks; however, there are concerns that surplus schools and public buildings will be demolished and replaced with much higher-density housing in the future. Residents at Comprehensive Plan meetings were clear that any future development on surplus public property should conform

to the prevailing density and architectural fabric of the surrounding community. There is a particular interest in retaining row houses and building new row houses to keep Capitol Hill sought-after by families. The redevelopment of the Ellen Wilson and Kentucky Courts public housing projects were both cited as positive examples, to be emulated elsewhere.

- Compared to neighborhoods in Northwest Washington, DC, Capitol Hill is underserved by retail stores and services. Basic neighborhood services, like groceries, hardware stores, clothing stores, drug stores, movie theaters, banks, and restaurants, are in short supply in the commercial districts, and many residents travel to Pentagon City or elsewhere to shop. On the other hand, the community has long sought to control the proliferation of drive-through fast food restaurants and mini-marts along thoroughfares like Pennsylvania Avenue. As much-needed retail is finally arriving on Capitol Hill, new issues have emerged. For example, Barracks Row is seeking to balance its role as a local-serving shopping district with its potential to draw from a regional market attracted by its historic ambiance. On H Street, there are tensions as long-time businesses feel the pressure of changing consumer tastes and expectations. At Potomac Avenue, a new upscale grocery store will provide a needed retail anchor but also has raised fears of change. On the other hand, some of Capitol Hill's commercial districts, such as Benning Road, have yet to see significant reinvestment but present opportunity for additional infill residential and commercial development.
- While the upgrading of retail services in established commercial districts is a positive sign, there continue to be fears about the encroachment of non-residential uses into row house neighborhoods. This has historically been an issue around the U.S. Capitol, where many small row houses have been converted to offices, national associations, and non-profits. More recently, other issues related to the federal presence have emerged—such as street closures and new security measures around government buildings. Commercial encroachment has also become a concern along 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets northeast of Union Station.
- A different but related issue has emerged along 11th Street and 15th Street. In the early 20th century, these streets were active neighborhood commercial districts, with many small shops and businesses. These districts are now primarily residential in character, with only a few small businesses and corner stores remaining. There is some interest among the ANCs and residents in rezoning these areas from commercial to residential use. This would provide assurance that future development is compatible with surrounding



uses, but it could also create non-conforming commercial uses. As the future of these commercial areas is considered, however, attention should also be given to preserving the small businesses and corner stores that now serve the community.

- Capitol Hill's parks and open spaces contribute to neighborhood stability and are an important amenity. But there are too few parks to meet neighborhood needs. Some of the community's open spaces, like Lincoln Park and Stanton Park, were designed to be ornamental squares rather than active recreational areas. Many of the parks are small triangles with no room for recreational facilities. The new Sherwood Recreation Center has been a much-needed improvement but primarily serves the northwest part of Capitol Hill. Similar improvements are needed elsewhere. The community needs to be better connected to the Anacostia River, with its vast open spaces and waterfront amenities. As Reservation 13 is redeveloped and as the future of the RFK Stadium complex is debated, opportunities for new large parks serving Capitol Hill should be recognized. The community should be provided with a high level of access to the planned network of shoreline parks and trails, and to existing and planned boating facilities.
- As a historic community, Capitol Hill faces unique urban design issues. These issues relate to the design of new buildings and infill development, the alteration of existing structures, and the treatment of public spaces like Metro plazas and streets. As noted in the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, contemporary architecture can fit within the fabric of an historic community, but issues relating to scale, texture, materials, and context should be reconciled. Historic places like Eastern Market, the Sewell-Belmont House, and Friendship House should be preserved from nearby development that would reduce their architectural and design integrity. Elsewhere, greater steps may be needed to avoid demolition by neglect and so that historic preservation regulations are enforced to the greatest extent possible. The public realm also needs improvement, particularly along H Street, Benning Road, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Detailed guidelines may be needed so that lighting, building materials, street furniture, signage, sidewalk materials, street trees, landscaping, trash containers, and other aspects of the streetscape are appropriately designed.
- Issues of housing affordability and displacement are present in Capitol Hill, as they are in many other parts of the District. The pressures are particularly significant in the Near Northeast area (between H Street and Florida Avenue), where home prices tripled between 2000 and 2005. In some respects, Capitol Hill may be

better equipped to handle rising housing costs than other parts of Washington, DC—the prevalence of row houses with rentable basements creates affordable housing options for renters and extra income for owners. Nonetheless, some longtime homeowners have cashed out while some renters have moved elsewhere in search of more affordable housing. The 208-unit Potomac Gardens public housing project has been identified as a possible new community site, raising further fears of displacement and the loss of one of the few remaining affordable housing developments in the area. If the site is redeveloped, one-for-one replacement of the public housing units will be an important prerequisite.

- Parking remains an issue on Capitol Hill, especially on the western edge of the area near the U.S. Capitol and in the Eastern Market/Barracks Row area. The reopening of RFK Stadium has created parking problems on nearby residential streets in Hill East, and the prospect of a revitalized H Street and emerging NoMa business district may bring future parking problems to nearby residential side streets. These problems are complicated by the fact that many of the homes and apartments on Capitol Hill do not have dedicated off-street parking spaces. Curb cuts serving new development have further reduced the supply of on-street spaces. Residential permit parking has achieved some success in the area, but there are issues related to enforcement and abuse of parking privileges.
- As already noted, Capitol Hill is intersected by major commuter routes serving the Maryland suburbs and areas in Wards 7 and 8. Its neighborhoods are also vulnerable to overflow traffic when the freeways are congested. Residential north-south streets are often clogged with cut-through traffic as commuters weave between the east-west arterials. This creates noise, air pollution, and safety issues for residents. One-way streets have been established to facilitate traffic flow, but the streets are not always paired, leading to circuitous travel and high volumes of fast-moving commuter traffic. Street and lane closures, illegal parking, and poorly timed signals contribute to congestion problems. At one time, a freeway link was proposed between I-295 and I-395 via Barney Circle, but this project was cancelled in the 1990s. A more recent proposal calls for removal of a portion of the Southeast/Southwest Freeway, its replacement with an at-grade roadway between Barney Circle and 8th Street, and a tunnel in lieu of the elevated freeway between 8th Street and South Capitol Street. While this would remove a barrier between Capitol Hill and the waterfront, there are many questions yet to be answered about the effects on traffic and adjacent land uses. <sup>1506.3</sup>



Row House near Eastern Market

## Policies and Actions

### CH-1 General Policies

#### CH-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation <sup>1507</sup>

The following general policies and actions should guide growth and neighborhood conservation decisions in Capitol Hill. These policies and actions should be considered in tandem with those in the District-wide elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Element should be consulted for policies relating to the future of the adjoining Southeast Waterfront Area. <sup>1507.1</sup>

##### *Policy CH-1.1.1: Conserving Residential Uses*

Maintain the integrity and quality of Capitol Hill's residential uses and recognize the importance of its historic architecture and housing stock to the entire District. Ensure that Comprehensive Plan and zoning designations for Capitol Hill neighborhoods sustain its moderate density land use pattern. <sup>1507.2</sup>

##### *Policy CH-1.1.2: Renovation of Housing Stock*

Encourage the rehabilitation and renovation of the building stock throughout the Capitol Hill Planning Area, taking steps to acknowledge and enhance its unique neighborhood character both within and outside historic districts. Where infill development occurs, its scale and character should be compatible with prevailing neighborhood densities, and its design should contribute to neighborhood continuity and quality. When evaluating compatibility of improvements designed to either enhance energy efficiency or to create more affordable housing, consideration should be given to weighing the benefits to the community and District against the benefits of preserving historic features. <sup>1507.3</sup>

##### *Policy CH-1.1.3: Upgrading Commercial Districts*

Reinforce and upgrade the major commercial districts of Capitol Hill, including the H Street NE and Benning Road NE corridors, the Pennsylvania Avenue SE corridor, 7th Street SE, 8th Street SE, and Massachusetts Avenue NE between Union Station and Stanton Park. Support the further development of these areas with corridor-appropriate retail services, provided that such uses are compatible with surrounding land uses and the historic architecture and scale of the shopping districts themselves. Support the retention of existing neighborhood-serving businesses in these areas through programs that provide technical and financial assistance to small, locally owned establishments. <sup>1507.4</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.4: Directing Growth***

Direct growth in the Capitol Hill Planning Area to commercially zoned land, with a particular emphasis on the H Street NE/Benning Road NE corridor and to infill opportunities in residential zones. Along the commercial corridors in this area, mixed-use development combining ground floor retail and upper story residential uses should be supported, along with streetscape improvements that improve visual and urban design qualities and enhance pedestrian, bus, and auto circulation. In the residential zones, the scale of development should be sensitive to adjacent buildings and uses. All development should reflect the capacity of roads, infrastructure, and services to absorb additional growth. <sup>1507.5</sup>



*Streetcar on H Street*

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.5: North of Massachusetts Avenue/Capitol Hill Transition Areas***

Improve buffering and urban design transitions between the emerging office and high-density residential corridor north of Union Station (North of Massachusetts Avenue, or NoMa) and the adjacent row house neighborhoods of Capitol Hill. Use zoning, design guidelines, historic preservation review, and other measures to avoid sharp contrasts in scale and character where high-density and moderate-density areas abut one another. <sup>1507.6</sup>



*Eastern Market Main Street*

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.6: Inappropriate Commercial Uses***

Prevent the proliferation of fast-food outlets, self-service gas stations, convenience mini-marts, and other drive-through businesses along Capitol Hill's commercial corridors. The commercial corridors of Capitol Hill are part of the historic L'Enfant Plan, and they contribute to the national image of the nation's capital and provide a walkable neighborhood environment; inappropriate and automobile-oriented uses should be prohibited. <sup>1507.7</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.7: Alleys***

Preserve Capitol Hill's system of historic alleys and develop plans for the use of large block interior spaces where appropriate. These plans should be developed in coordination with the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs), residents, and community groups. <sup>1507.8</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.8: Encroachment of Non-Residential Uses***

Strictly limit and enforce the conversion of housing to non-residential uses and the replacement of housing with non-residential uses in the Capitol Hill Planning Area. This includes the development of private clubs, museums, colleges, and universities within the Capitol Hill Historic District. <sup>1507.9</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-1.1.9: Conversion of Non-Residential Structures***

Allow the conversion of obsolete or vacant non-residential structures (including schools, places of worship, warehouses, and institutional uses) to housing, provided that important architectural resources are conserved. <sup>1507.10</sup>

Continue to evaluate the transportation and land use opportunities and impacts associated with the freeway's redesign of the Southeast Boulevard as an at-grade boulevard to better connect Capitol Hill residents to the Anacostia waterfront by reconnecting parts of the street grid to the north.

***Policy CH-1.1.10: Public Housing***

Rehabilitate public housing projects on Capitol Hill, ensuring that any units that are removed are replaced in-kind by new public housing units within the community. Where feasible, rehabilitation projects should provide home ownership opportunities for public housing residents. <sup>1507.11</sup>

***Policy CH-1.1.11: 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE Commercial District***

Encourage the preservation and moderate expansion of commercial uses along 15th Street SE that are primarily neighborhood serving. This corridor should retain its mix of light commercial and moderate-density residential to allow it to retain the existing corner stores and small businesses that serve the community. <sup>1507.12</sup>

***Policy CH-1.1.12: RFK Stadium Area***

Provide improved buffering and landscaping screening along 19th Street NE/SE and elsewhere in the vicinity of RFK Stadium in order to reduce the effects of noise, dust, vibration, and air pollution on the adjacent Hill East community. Work collaboratively with the National Park Service (NPS), District agencies, EventsDC, National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), and the community on long-range plans and through a future planning analysis for the stadium and adjacent parkland and parking lots. Waterfront open space in this area should be retained and improved for the benefit of Hill East, Kingman Park, and Rosedale residents. Improvements should include the creation and maintenance of a pedestrian and cyclist shoreline access path and well-designed public spaces. Recreational and green spaces should include features for people with disabilities and older adults. Reduce the amount of land occupied by surface parking and maximize activity along the waterfront. See the Urban Design Element for additional policies related to parks and open spaces. <sup>1507.13</sup>

***Policy CH-1.1.13: Traffic Management Strategies***

Establish traffic management strategies to reduce commuter traffic on East Capitol Street NE, Independence Avenue SE, C Street NE, 17th Street SE, and other predominantly residential streets that also function as through-streets. These strategies should include limiting additional one-way streets on Capitol Hill (and possibly restoring existing one-way streets to two-way traffic), improving signal timing on Benning Road NE and Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. Measures should also be implemented to route through-traffic around residential neighborhoods and to restrict trucks and heavy vehicles on local streets. <sup>1507.14</sup>

***Policy CH-1.1.14: Southeast Boulevard***

Continue to evaluate the transportation and land use opportunities and impacts associated with the freeway's redesign of the Southeast Boulevard as an at-grade boulevard to better connect Capitol Hill residents to the



Anacostia waterfront by reconnecting parts of the street grid to the north. Add new residential development, where possible, along a newly designed boulevard. New pathways should safely serve both pedestrians and cyclists. Future planning efforts should reflect the importance of connecting neighborhoods to the river. <sup>1507.15</sup>

***Policy CH-1.1.15: Transit Service***

Maintain and improve mass transit service in the Near Northeast section of the Planning Area, particularly along the corridor extending from Union Station along H Street NE to Hechinger Mall and continuing on Benning Road NE to the Minnesota Avenue Metro station. <sup>1507.16</sup>

***Action CH-1.1.A: Façade Improvements***

Support urban design and façade improvements along H Street NE, Benning Road NE, Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and Barracks Row. Such improvements should preserve and enhance the historic features, scale, and texture of existing structures. Urban design improvements should be applied to 11<sup>th</sup> Street SE as it approaches the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in order to accommodate increased pedestrian traffic toward the 11th Street Bridge Park. <sup>1507.17</sup>

***Action CH-1.1.B: 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE Rezoning***

Rezone the 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE commercial district for residential uses, consistent with the corridor’s designation on the Comprehensive Plan. <sup>1507.18</sup>

***Action CH-1.1.C: Transportation Studies***

Continue to implement the DC Department of Transportation’s (DDOT) Capitol Hill Transportation Study and implement its major recommendations. Also, implement the Middle Anacostia and H Street transportation study recommendations, aimed at reducing through-traffic on neighborhood streets within Capitol Hill, limiting truck traffic, and improving conditions for Capitol Hill pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. Ongoing livability studies should continue to be implemented at the neighborhood level. <sup>1507.19</sup>

***Action CH-1.1.D: H Street Streetcar***

Implement proposed streetscape improvements for the H Street NE/Benning Road NE corridor, including the development of a streetcar line between the Minnesota Avenue Metro station and Oklahoma Avenue NE. <sup>1507.20</sup>



*Barracks Row*

**CH-1.2 Conserving and Enhancing Community Resources <sup>1508</sup>**

***Policy CH-1.2.1: Recognition of Historic Resources***

Protect and preserve historic structures, places, and landmarks on Capitol Hill, including the Congressional Cemetery. Recognize the neighborhood’s

defining physical features—including the L’Enfant street plan—as important and nationally significant cultural resources. <sup>1508.1</sup>

***Policy CH-1.2.2: Implementation of Preservation Programs***

Consistently implement and enforce historic preservation laws and guidelines for new construction, alterations, and public space uses. Expand public access to surveys and evaluations of properties and areas eligible for historic designation in the Planning Area. Solicit additional community input on historic preservation needs and opportunities. The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) should concentrate on Capitol Hill, including the surveying of additional areas, considering expansion of existing historic districts, and potentially increasing the number of landmarked buildings in the District’s current inventory. The HPO should concentrate its efforts in the areas north and east of the Capitol Hill Historic District. Clarify and consistently implement zoning incentives intended to preserve structures along H Street NE. <sup>1508.2</sup>

***Policy CH-1.2.3: L’Enfant Avenues***

Protect and preserve the special character, scale, and historic features of the major L’Enfant Plan avenues that cross Capitol Hill, especially Massachusetts Avenue NE/SE, Pennsylvania Avenue SE, and East Capitol Street NE. <sup>1508.3</sup>

***Policy CH-1.2.4: Community Facilities***

Promote continued investment in, and maintenance and modernization of, important community public facilities in the Capitol Hill Planning Area, including schools, libraries, and social services facilities. Particular attention should be given to sustaining the renovated Eastern High School, the William H. Ramsey Aquatic Center, and the Hill Center as community anchors. Existing community spaces should be flexible to accommodate and support a wide range of users and activities. Renovate the Southeast Library to create more efficient and usable spaces reflecting a modern library. <sup>1508.4</sup>

***Policy CH-1.2.5: Riverfront Parks***

Ensure that the proposed Anacostia waterfront parks are designed and planned to benefit Capitol Hill residents, enhance waterfront resilience, and promote access. Create safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to the shoreline, and provide park facilities and services that respond to the needs of Hill East neighborhoods. Pedestrian paths should accommodate users of all ages and abilities. Benches should be available for users with limited mobility and older adults. <sup>1508.5</sup>

***Policy CH-1.2.6: Improved Park and Recreation Services***

Improve parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities throughout Capitol Hill, with a priority on the Near Northeast neighborhood (between H Street NE and Florida Avenue NE). Continue efforts to improve safety, security,

and maintenance levels at all parks in the Capitol Hill Planning Area. Optimize use of the many triangle parks throughout Capitol Hill. Explore design features that might include senior fitness equipment and pedestrian paths that serve a wide range of users, such as older adults and persons with limited mobility. Determine if there is a need for additional or expanded recreational spaces such as courts and fields, or additional aquatic centers.

1508.6

### ***Policy CH-1.2.7: NPS Coordination***

Recognize that most of the parkland in and around the Capitol Hill Planning Area is owned and operated by NPS, and consequently that a high level of coordination is required between the District and federal governments to ensure that this land is managed in the best interest of Capitol Hill residents. NPS parks include Lincoln Park, Stanton Park, Folger Park, Garfield Park, Seward Square, Marion Park, and the Virginia Avenue playground, as well as the RFK Stadium area. These spaces should be conserved and improved with a focus on aesthetics, recreational uses, sustainability, and resilient design. 1508.7

### ***Policy CH-1.2.8: Streets as Open Space***

Maintain and enhance functional open space within Capitol Hill, particularly the landscaped areas contained within street rights-of-way. These areas include the Pennsylvania Avenue SE esplanade, East Capitol Street, the numerous triangle parks along diagonal avenues, public plazas such as the area around Eastern Market Metro, and the front yards of most Capitol Hill row houses, portions of which are located within the public right-of-way. 1508.8

### ***Action CH-1.2.A: Historic Surveys***

Complete historic surveys for the portion of Stanton Park not currently in the Capitol Hill Historic District, and for the Near Northeast, Hill East, Rosedale, and Kingman Park neighborhoods. Based on the findings of those surveys and additional community input and recommendations, prepare nominations to the National Register as appropriate. Consideration should be given to extending the Capitol Hill Historic District eastward to the boundary of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan. 1508.9

### ***Action CH-1.2.B: Capitol Hill Design Guidelines***

Develop graphic design guidelines for the Capitol Hill Historic District, illustrating appropriate architectural design features for new construction, renovation, and alterations. 1508.10

### ***Action CH-1.2.C: RFK Stadium Area***

Actively participate in efforts by NCPC, NPS, District agencies, Events DC, local ANCs, residents, and neighborhood groups to develop a long-range plan for the RFK Stadium complex, extending from the DC Armory north to Benning Road NE. The plan should include provisions for a substantial



*Multi purpose streets around Eastern Market*

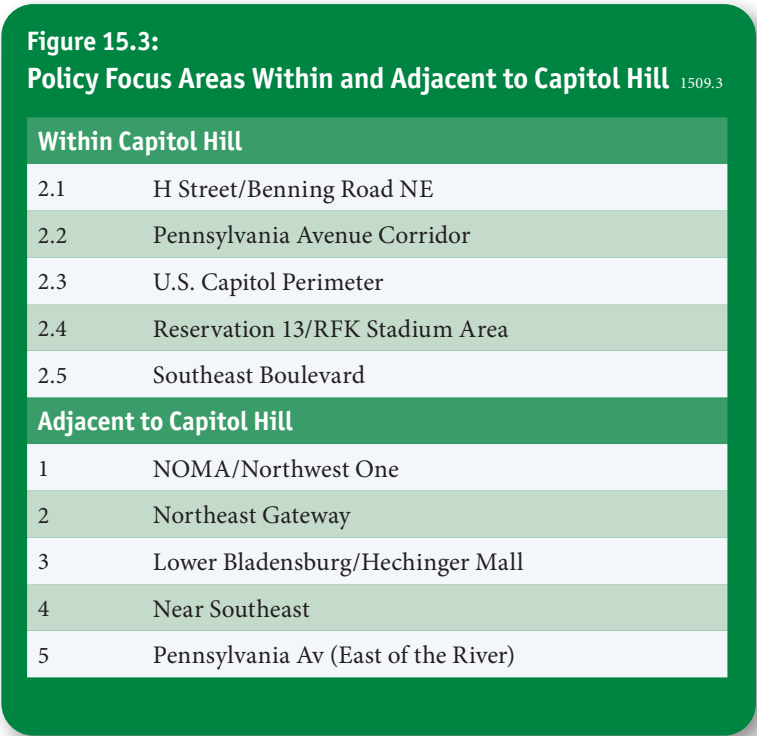
amount of waterfront open space, as well as measures to enhance and restore the natural environment in this area. Improve shoreline access where possible, reduce land occupied by surface parking, and encourage new land uses that maximize access and activity at the waterfront. Recreational spaces and pedestrian and cycling paths should accommodate a wide range of users and abilities. <sup>1508.11</sup>

### CH-2 Policy Focus Areas <sup>1509</sup>

The Comprehensive Plan has identified five areas within the Capitol Hill Planning Area as Policy Focus Areas, indicating that they require a level of direction and guidance above that provided in the prior section of this element and in the Citywide Elements (see Map 15.1 and Figure 15.3). These areas are:

- H Street/Benning Road NE;
- Pennsylvania Avenue SE Corridor;
- U.S. Capitol perimeter;
- Reservation 13/RFK Stadium Complex; and
- Southeast Boulevard. <sup>1509.1</sup>

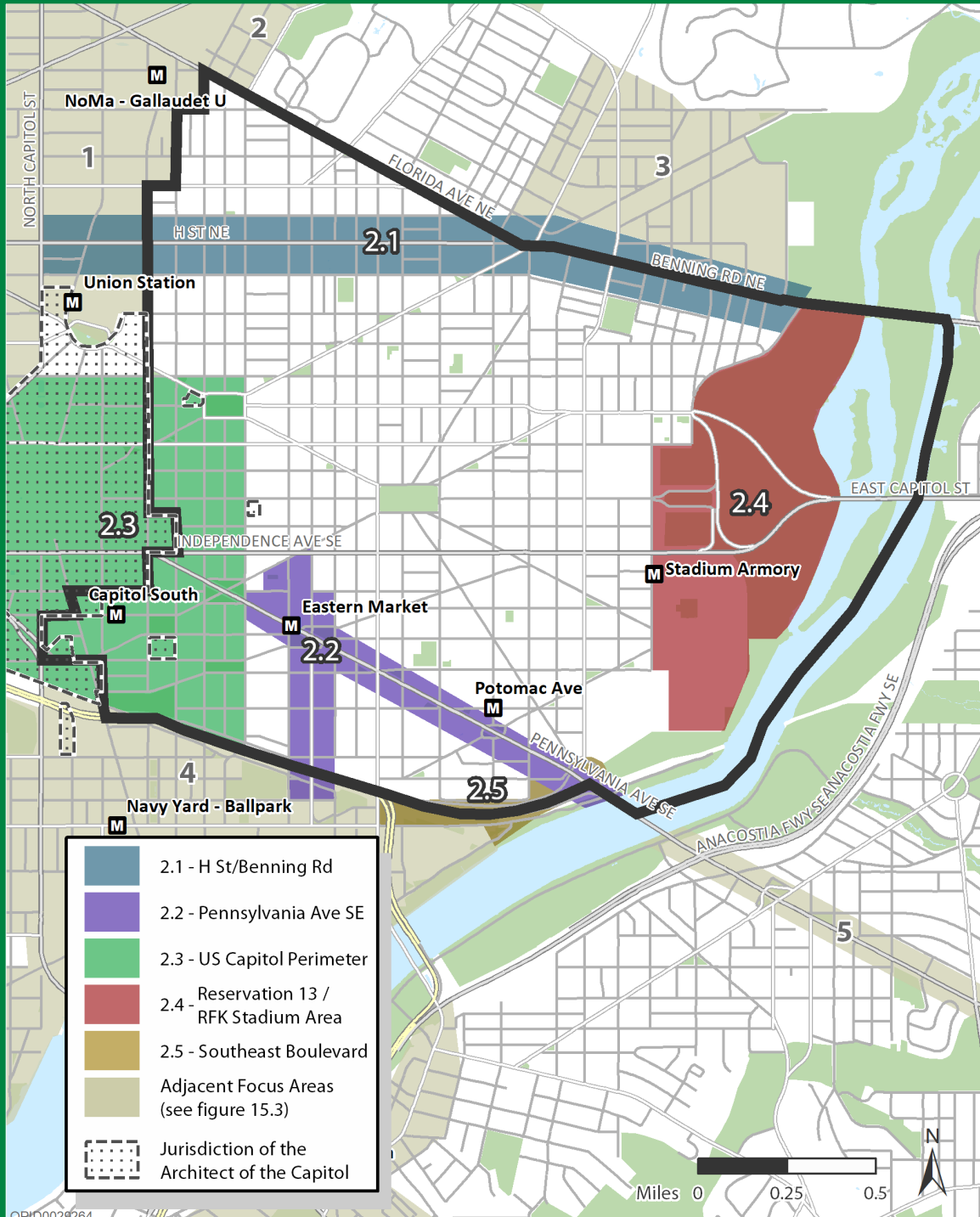
Each of these areas is addressed below. Other elements of the Comprehensive Plan may be consulted for additional policies affecting Capitol Hill, including



policies for NoMa (Central Washington Element) and the Near Southeast (Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Element). <sup>1509.2</sup>

Map 15.1:

# Capitol Hill Policy Focus Areas







H Street NE

### CH-2.1 H Street/Benning Road NE <sup>1510</sup>

At one time, the mile-long stretch of H Street NE between Union Station and the starburst intersection at Bladensburg and Benning Roads was the second busiest commercial area in the District. The area faced economic challenges during the 1950s and 1960s and was heavily damaged by the unrest in 1968. An Urban Renewal Plan sparked some reinvestment on the corridor in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Hechinger Mall development on the eastern end, but until recently, the corridor was slow to recover. H Street NE's retail space had not been keeping up with the rapidly expanding buying power of the surrounding neighborhoods or the burgeoning office market north and east of Union Station until the last five years. Millions of public and private dollars have been invested into new housing, grocery stores, retail, restaurants, and cultural facilities. <sup>1510.1</sup>

In 2003, OP completed a Small Area Plan for the H Street NE corridor, designed to guide community, private sector, and public agency action and investments. The plan lays out a vision for H Street NE as a great neighborhood shopping street, serving resident needs, providing connections to the larger District, and improving the livability of the surrounding community. The plan segmented the corridor into four parts, each with a unique identity and character (see Policy CH-2.1.1 below). The plan identified the potential for over 750 units of new housing, 200,000 square feet of new office space, and 300,000 square feet of retail space. However, these projections were too low. Since the plan's completion in 2003, 1,500 residential units have been constructed or are in the planning stages. The corridor now has a healthy and vibrant mix of full-size grocery stores, small-scale retail, restaurants, and housing. <sup>1510.2</sup>

Land use recommendations in the H Street NE Plan were accompanied by transportation recommendations, some of which are already being implemented. The first segment of the H Street streetcar began operation in winter of 2016 between Union Station and Benning Road, with plans to extend to Minnesota Avenue. Upon completion of this segment, the streetcar line will connect Union Station to Minnesota Avenue, providing a loop between Metro's Red Line and Orange Line and increasing transit access for Northeast Capitol Hill residents. The 2003 Plan also recommended the retention of on-street parking and development of new off-street parking structures. <sup>1510.3</sup>

Extensive streetscape, signage, and façade improvements have been completed along the H Street NE corridor, including new pedestrian crossings and a civic plaza at the eastern gateway intersection of H Street, Benning Road, and Bladensburg Road NE. This key intersection is adjacent to the 8.6-acre site locally referred to as the Hechinger Mall site, even though Hechinger has not occupied the site since the early 80s. The existing mall—a low-rise, car-centric shopping center built in 1981—is poised for future

redevelopment given its size and location on the streetcar line. H Street NE has truly been transformed since the adoption of the Small Area Plan in 2003. Over 1,500 new residential units, and over 60 new retail spaces, have opened up. H Street NE is an official DC Main Street and a nationally recognized corridor revitalization success story. Further new development is expected to continue west along Benning Road NE and potentially north on Bladensburg Road NE. <sup>1510.4</sup>

Oklahoma Avenue) includes a mix of residential uses and auto-oriented commercial uses. The character of the street changes considerably, with higher traffic volumes, a wider right-of-way, and a much less pedestrian-oriented atmosphere. The construction of the H Street-Benning streetcar, along with accompanying streetscape improvements such as new street trees and lighting, will create opportunities for revitalization and new businesses along Benning Road NE. This will provide a needed amenity for the adjoining Rosedale and Kingman Park neighborhoods, which currently lack convenient retail services. <sup>1510.5</sup>

### ***Policy CH-2.1.1: H Street NE Revitalization***

Support the revitalization of the H Street NE corridor between North Capitol Street and 17<sup>th</sup> Street NE in a manner that is consistent with the approved 2003 H Street NE Strategic Development Plan. This plan recommended the development of four thematic areas along the H Street NE corridor:

- **Western Gateway**, between North Capitol Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street NE. This area includes air rights development over the CSX railroad (Burnham Place) and an urban living district between 2nd Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street NE. The urban living district is intended for medium- to high- density residential development, with limited ground floor retail uses;
- **Central Retail**, extending from 7<sup>th</sup> Street to 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE. This area is envisioned as the downtown of the H Street community. Existing retail space is to be revitalized, and new mixed-use projects combining ground floor retail and upper story housing are encouraged. Parking is to be enhanced by removing on-street parking restrictions and identifying opportunities for structured off-street parking;
- **An Arts and Entertainment District**, extending from 12<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This area builds on the established Atlas Theater, Joy of Motion Dance Center and other cultural anchors. New arts and cultural uses are encouraged, as are complementary specialty retail uses, sit-down restaurants, arts-related retail, and other community services. Moderate and medium-density residential and office space, including live-work space, also is encouraged in this area; and

Undertake transit and streetscape improvements to enhance mobility along H Street NE, and improve the area's accessibility from the surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of the District. Improvements should upgrade aesthetics and pedestrian safety and make walking along the street more comfortable and enjoyable

- **Hechinger Mall** (in the adjacent Upper Northeast Planning Area), located at the intersection of H Street NE, Benning Road NE, and Bladensburg Road NE. Support continued improvements to or redevelopment of the Hechinger Mall to realize the full potential of this site as an anchor for H Street NE. Any redevelopment or improvements should make the area more pedestrian-friendly, including the creation of new civic spaces and introduction of infill development to include a mix of residential and commercial uses. <sup>1510.6</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.2: Clustering of Retail***

Recognize that the existing supply of retail space on the H Street NE corridor may exceed demand, and that retail development should therefore be clustered on the 700-1100 blocks. <sup>1510.7</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.3: Physical Improvements***

Improve the infrastructure and physical appearance of the H Street NE corridor as a way to enhance its market perception and to attract investors, visitors, shoppers, and residents. <sup>1510.8</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.4: H Street NE Transit and Streetscape Improvements***

Undertake transit and streetscape improvements to enhance mobility along H Street NE, and improve the area's accessibility from the surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of the District. Improvements should upgrade aesthetics and pedestrian safety and make walking along the street more comfortable and enjoyable. <sup>1510.9</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.5: Parking***

Retain existing on-street parking along H Street NE. As recommended by the H Street Small Area Plan adopted by the D.C. Council, encourage the development of improved transit, underground parking, and shared parking lots serving the retail and theater areas in the central and eastern parts of the commercial district. <sup>1510.10</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.6: Historic Preservation***

Encourage the preservation of historic buildings along H Street NE and promote educational and cultural tourism activities to raise awareness of the corridor's history and unique historic character. In coordination with the affected ANC, periodically evaluate and update the implementation strategies in the H Street Small Area Plan. <sup>1510.11</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.1.7: H Street Bridge***

DDOT plans to replace the H Street Bridge (located directly behind Union Station over the CSX railroad tracks, and sometimes referred to as the Hopscotch Bridge) in the near future. Any future development in the air rights adjacent to the H Street Bridge should recognize the limitations of

the streets beneath the bridge to serve high-volume commercial traffic and include well-designed access points to and from the bridge itself. The allowable height of any building constructed in the air rights should be measured from the bridge. <sup>1510.12</sup>

*Action CH-2.1.A: H Street Strategic Development Plan*

Implement the recommendations of the 2003 H Street Strategic Development Plan. <sup>1510.13</sup>

*Action CH-2.1.B: Business Assistance*

Implement programs to improve retail success along H Street NE, Benning Road NE, and Bladensburg Road NE, including financial assistance to small businesses, grant and loan programs, façade improvement programs, Small Business Administration loans, and the creation of a BID. <sup>1510.14</sup>

## **CH-2.2: Pennsylvania Avenue SE Corridor** <sup>1511</sup>

Pennsylvania Avenue SE is sometimes referred to as America's Main Street and has ceremonial, historic, and symbolic importance. In many respects, the avenue is also Capitol Hill's Main Street, with walkable shopping areas extending up 7<sup>th</sup> Street SE to Eastern Market, and down 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets SE through the Barracks Row historic area. This concentration of commercial uses is known as Capitol Hill's Central Business District. <sup>1511.1</sup>

East of 9<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Pennsylvania Avenue SE becomes more residential in character, although there are commercial uses at many of the intersections. Some of these commercial uses are auto-oriented (gas stations and fast food outlets) and serve the heavy volume of commuter traffic headed to or from the Sousa Bridge, as well as Hill residents. The juxtaposition of older residential row houses and drive-through commercial uses creates land use conflicts on the corridor and compromises the image of Pennsylvania Avenue SE as a gateway to the nation's capital. Consequently, the entire corridor—from the U.S. Capitol east to the Maryland line—was designated by the District as a Great Street in 2005. Efforts are underway to improve the streetscape, and address a variety of land use, transportation, and design issues. <sup>1511.2</sup>

Two Metro stations along the corridor present both challenges and opportunities. The Eastern Market station entrance is an unwelcoming public space located in an otherwise attractive pedestrian-friendly area. The possibility of developing the plaza as a town square has been explored in the past and should continue to be pursued. <sup>1511.3</sup>

The Potomac Avenue Metro station area experiences poor visibility and conditions that are dangerous for pedestrians. The area could become a much more dynamic neighborhood center in the future, with new shops,



New mixed use development at Eastern Market Metrorail station.

housing, and public spaces. The community remains concerned about the scale of proposed development around the station, given that the area is currently characterized by two- and three-story row houses. Opportunities for new mixed-use, multi-family development should be concentrated on vacant lots and on the drive-through commercial properties along the avenue, as well as around the Metro station. New development will continue to bring much needed retail and housing to the eastern end of Capitol Hill. Infill development should emphasize moderate or medium densities. Refurbishing and renovation of older commercial buildings, particularly those with pedestrian-oriented retail storefronts, should also be strongly encouraged. Efforts to create a Main Street program in this area were initiated several years ago and should be supported in the future. <sup>1511.4</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.2.1: Pennsylvania Avenue***

Improve Pennsylvania Avenue SE as an important approach to the U.S. Capitol and as a neighborhood-serving corridor. The design of the avenue—including adjacent buildings, land uses, and public spaces—should adhere to high aesthetic standards and should enhance the avenue’s role as a neighborhood commercial center and walkable street. <sup>1511.5</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.2.2: Neighborhood Shopping Improvements***

Sustain existing businesses and encourage additional neighborhood-serving retail uses along Barracks Row, on 7<sup>th</sup> Street SE between Pennsylvania Avenue SE and North Carolina Avenue SE, and along Pennsylvania Avenue SE between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets SE, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets SE, and 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets SE. Any improvements or alterations in these areas should preserve the historic texture, scale, and features of the existing buildings and adjoining neighborhoods. Where possible, improvements should include design features to improve accessibility for older adults and persons with disabilities. <sup>1511.6</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.2.3: Eastern Market Metrorail Station***

Improve the urban design quality of the Eastern Market Metro Station area as a community gathering space and a connection among the Pennsylvania Avenue, Barracks Row, and Market Row corridors. Provide appropriate transitions between such development and adjacent residential areas, and take steps to manage additional traffic and parking demand and improve Metro access, including installation of an adequate number of Capital Bikeshare stations so that residents who live more than half a mile from the Metro can get to a station easily. <sup>1511.7</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.2.4: Eastern Market***

Continue to promote Eastern Market’s intended function as a produce, meat, farmers, and retail market, as well as a community meeting place and visual arts center. Preserve the historic character of the market and surrounding area. <sup>1511.8</sup>



***Policy CH-2.2.5: Barracks Row***

Continue to promote Barracks Row as a neighborhood-serving retail center. Emphasize local-serving rather than regional or large-format retail use, and retain the area's historic scale and character. Particularly encourage additional retail to locate along the portion of Barracks Row south of the freeway, thus enhancing the connection between Capitol Hill and the emerging waterfront neighborhoods. <sup>1511.9</sup>

***Policy CH-2.2.6: Potomac Avenue Metro Station***

Support the revitalization of vacant commercial space and additional moderate to medium-density mixed-use development around the Potomac Avenue Metro station. Such development should be located on existing commercially zoned property and developed in a manner that is consistent with existing zoning (including established provisions for planned unit developments and pending programs for inclusionary housing). Any infill development should be compatible with, the character of the adjacent row house community. <sup>1511.10</sup>

***Action CH-2.2.A: Streetscape Improvements***

Implement plans to beautify Pennsylvania Avenue SE, including landscaping, street furniture and street lighting improvements, maintenance of the esplanade and small parks along the avenue, pedestrian improvements, and traffic management measures. These improvements should reinforce the avenue's symbolic importance and should complement the efforts that have already been made to improve the streetscape in the 600 block and near Eastern Market. <sup>1511.11</sup>

***Action CH-2.2.B: Eastern Market Plaza***

Prepare and implement a pedestrian-focused urban design and multimodal transit improvement plan for the Eastern Market Metro station entrance, making it a more attractive town square and improving the plaza's ability to function as a major transfer point including, if appropriate relocating bus stops to ensure safety and accessibility. <sup>1511.12</sup>

***Action CH-2.2.C: Potomac Gardens***

Pursue redevelopment of Potomac Gardens as a mixed-income development, including an equivalent number of affordable units and additional market rate units. Overall densities on the site should be compatible with adjacent uses. Every effort should be made to avoid the long-term displacement of existing residents if the project is reconstructed. <sup>1511.13</sup>

**Support the revitalization of vacant commercial space and additional moderate to medium-density mixed-use development around the Potomac Avenue Metro station. Such development should be located on existing commercially zoned property and developed in a manner that is consistent with existing zoning (including established provisions for planned unit developments and pending programs for inclusionary housing). Any infill development should be compatible with, the character of the adjacent row house community.**

Expansion of the Capitol Complex during the 1900s resulted in the development of large office buildings and expanded federal facilities on former row house blocks. This prompted some of the Hill's earliest historic preservation initiatives, along with the adoption of a Capitol Interest Overlay Zone that established maximum height and floor area ratio limits in an area extending from the edge of the Capitol Complex east to 6th Street.

### CH-2.3 U.S. Capitol Perimeter <sup>1512</sup>

The proximity of Capitol Hill's residential areas to the U.S. Capitol Complex creates a variety of land use, transportation, and urban design issues. Expansion of the Capitol Complex during the 1900s resulted in the development of large office buildings and expanded federal facilities on former row house blocks. This prompted some of the Hill's earliest historic preservation initiatives, along with the adoption of a Capitol Interest Overlay Zone that established maximum height and floor area ratio limits in an area extending from the edge of the Capitol Complex east to 6th Street. Through the 2016 Zoning Regulations update, this area is now the Capitol Interest Zones and includes the following new zones: RA-7, RF-3, MU-23, MU-24, MU-26, and PDR-5. The intent is still the same as the original overlay. Long-range plans for the Capitol Complex are articulated in a Master Plan that is prepared and periodically updated by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). The AOC also maintains an officially adopted historic preservation policy that guides the management of AOC heritage assets listed with the policy. <sup>1512.1</sup>

The following policies define the District's position on land use activities in and around the U.S. Capitol area. These policies seek to mitigate the effects of increased security requirements on neighborhood character, limit adverse impacts associated with the Capitol Power Plant, address parking and traffic impacts related to the Capitol Complex, improve urban design conditions, enhance resilience, and guide future land use decisions to be consistent with the AOC's Master Plan and historic preservation policy. <sup>1512.2</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.1: Capitol Master Plan Conformity***

Future development and/or expansion of the United States Capitol grounds should conform with the guidelines set out in the Master Plan of the U.S. Capitol. Any land transferred from the AOC to the District or a private party should likewise be used in a manner that is consistent with the Capitol Master Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. <sup>1512.3</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.2: Capitol Area Traffic and Parking***

Work with the AOC to reduce parking and traffic impacts in areas adjacent to the U.S. Capitol and to address related problems such as motor coach parking and the enforcement of residential permit parking restrictions. <sup>1512.4</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.3: Surface Transportation Improvements***

Improve surface transportation in and around the Capitol Complex in a manner that reduces impacts on Capitol Hill neighborhoods and facilitates access within the area. This could include the use of shuttles between key destinations, such as Union Station, the new Capitol Visitors Center, and the Capitol South Metro station. <sup>1512.5</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.4: Impacts of Security Measures***

Encourage the AOC to coordinate all proposed street closings, reroutings, and security measures with District government. <sup>1512.6</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.5: Compatibility of Federal Facilities***

Work with the AOC to encourage the development of future federal buildings to be compatible with and preserves the moderate density residential character of adjacent residential areas. This includes the development of ancillary federal facilities such as child-care centers, housing and classroom space for Congressional interns, police facilities, Congressionally sponsored service institutions, improvements to public space infrastructure, and public works maintenance and storage areas used by the AOC. <sup>1512.7</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.3.6: Capitol Power Plant***

Encourage the Capitol Power Plant and Refrigeration Plant to operate in ways that reduce air pollution, noise, and other impacts. Update plans for the power plant as needed to reflect revised Capitol needs and community concerns. <sup>1512.8</sup>

#### ***Action CH-2.3.A: Streetscape and Signage Improvements***

Implement streetscape and signage improvements that more clearly define the boundary of the U.S. Capitol Grounds and distinguish it from adjacent residential and commercial areas. <sup>1512.9</sup>



Reservation 13

### **CH-2.4 Reservation 13/RFK Stadium (Hill East Waterfront)** <sup>1513</sup>

Public Reservation 13 lies on the eastern edge of the Hill East neighborhood on the west bank of the Anacostia River. For more than 150 years, the 67-acre site has been an isolated campus, separated from the neighborhood it adjoins and an obstacle between residents and the waterfront. Reservation 13 has contained public health facilities since 1846, when it became the location of the Washington Asylum—the District’s hospital for indigent patients. In later years, it housed a smallpox hospital, quarantine station, and crematory. Some of the site’s early buildings, such as Anne Archbold Hall, remain today. However, most of the buildings on the site were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. The site became DC General Hospital in 1953; the hospital was closed in 2001, and later used as an emergency shelter but closed in 2018, as the District plans to construct smaller short-term housing facilities. The DC Central Detention Facility was built in 1976, replacing the old jail on the site that dated back to the 1870s. <sup>1513.1</sup>

Reservation 13 presents itself today as a vast area of large, seemingly unrelated buildings associated only by their proximity and former use. Vast areas of the site are used for parking, and there are few areas where the natural beauty of the waterside setting can be appreciated. The site is not at all related to

**A Master Plan for Reservation 13 was completed in 2002 and later adopted by the D.C. Council. It seeks to retain important civic uses, connect residential areas to the shoreline, and redevelop the site as an extension of the adjacent Hill East neighborhood. Since completion of the plan, transfer of the site from federal to local ownership, along with pre-zoning to reflect the uses envisioned by the Master Plan, have both been completed.**

the low-scale row house neighborhood west of 19th Street, nor is it related to the nearby Metro station at Stadium-Armory. While the Department of Behavioral Health and the Court Supervisor and Offender Supervision Agency all use space on the site, many of the buildings are underused. <sup>1513.2</sup>

A Master Plan for Reservation 13 was completed in 2002 and later adopted by the D.C. Council. It seeks to retain important civic uses, connect residential areas to the shoreline, and redevelop the site as an extension of the adjacent Hill East neighborhood. Since completion of the plan, transfer of the site from federal to local ownership, along with pre-zoning to reflect the uses envisioned by the Master Plan, have both been completed. <sup>1513.3</sup>

The adopted Reservation 13 Master Plan retains the historic Anne Archbold Hall, DC Central Detention Facility, and other institutional uses, and it identifies approximately 40 acres for redevelopment. New facilities for health care and recreation are envisioned, along with new housing, offices, retail, and institutional uses. Key urban design features include extension of the Capitol Hill street grid into the site, new parks, and new access to the waterfront, including a great meadow overlooking the shoreline. Other notable elements of the plan include the extension of Massachusetts Avenue to the Anacostia River and a village square at the Stadium-Armory Metro station. The preliminary development program identifies the potential for 800 new housing units and over three million square feet of non-residential space, roughly doubling the total square footage of buildings on the site. In May 2016, Phase 1 of the Hill East development received Design Review Approval, and the District selected a development partner. The buildings are under construction and near completion. Originally, this first phase was to include over 350 residential units, with 30 percent designated for affordable housing, and additional retail and green spaces. In fall 2019, it was announced that one of the residential buildings would be converted to permanent supportive housing for persons experiencing homelessness and require supportive services. <sup>1513.4</sup>

Immediately north of Reservation 13 lies the RFK Stadium complex. RFK Stadium was built in 1961 at a particularly prominent location along the east-west axis that includes the U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial. More than 100 acres of land around the stadium is used for surface parking and unimproved open space. The area is owned by the federal government and is currently under study by EventsDC to develop a Master Plan for future uses at this site. It was identified in the 1997 NCPC Legacy Plan as a possible location for major new memorials, recreation, and open space as well as possible private development. <sup>1513.5</sup>

#### ***Policy CH-2.4.1: Redevelopment of Public Reservation 13***

Redevelop Reservation 13 as a mixed-use neighborhood that combines housing, retail, office space, health care, civic, education, institutional, and recreational uses. This site could be a future potential opportunity

for an anchor employer or institution. Established uses such as the DC Correctional Facility should be retained. Health care and institutional uses on the site should be reorganized to accommodate infill uses, improve the site's vitality and efficiency, and create an environment more conducive to pedestrian travel. <sup>1513.6</sup>

***Policy CH-2.4.2: Reservation 13 as an Extension of Hill East***

Connect the established Hill East neighborhood to the Anacostia waterfront by extending Massachusetts Avenue and the Capitol Hill street grid through Reservation 13 to new shoreline parks and open spaces. Massachusetts Avenue should be designed as a grand boulevard in the tradition of the L'Enfant Plan, and should terminate in a dramatic overlook above the Anacostia River. <sup>1513.7</sup>

***Policy CH-2.4.3: Reservation 13 Parkland***

Create new waterfront parklands and green spaces at Reservation 13, including a grand waterfront park designed for resilience to flooding and that includes, recreational trails along the waterfront, smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces within the site, and tree-lined pedestrian streets. <sup>1513.8</sup>

***Policy CH-2.4.4: Stadium-Armory Metro Station***

Capitalize on the Stadium-Armory Metro station in the design and development of Reservation 13. This should include development of a new neighborhood center near 19th and C Streets SE that serves the unmet needs of the nearby community, as well as the development of moderate- to high-density housing on the Reservation 13 site. <sup>1513.9</sup>

***Policy CH-2.4.5: Reservation 13 Building Heights***

Achieve a gradual progression in building heights on Reservation 13, with the lowest heights along 19th Street SE to buffer the adjacent low-scale row house neighborhoods. Taller buildings should be located along the Massachusetts Avenue extension and on the portions of the site where visual impacts can be minimized by slope and topography. Buildings should be designed to maximize waterfront views and vistas and minimize impacts on nearby residences. <sup>1513.10</sup>

***Policy CH-2.4.6: RFK Stadium Area***

Encourage active and better use of NPS lands around RFK Stadium, including park and trail improvements that connect Hill East to the Langston Golf Course and National Arboretum areas to the north. Explore the potential of transferring NPS land to the District where appropriate. <sup>1513.11</sup>

***Action CH-2.4.A: Hill East/Reservation 13 Master Plan***

Implement the Hill East/Reservation 13 Master Plan, including the Massachusetts Avenue extension and the creation of new waterfront parks. Explore creating recreation spaces that include indoor walking/indoor track



*Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station*





Barney Circle

opportunities. Coordinate this study with EventsDC to determine if any of these recreational needs can be met through the development of the RFK Stadium site. <sup>1513.12</sup>

#### *Action CH-2.4.B: RFK Stadium Planning*

Work collaboratively with NCPC, EventsDC and adjacent Hill East and Kingman Park communities in planning the area between Benning Road and Reservation 13, including RFK Stadium, and in implementing these plans after they are completed. <sup>1513.13</sup>

### **CH-2.5 Southeast Boulevard** <sup>1514</sup>

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, DDOT initiated a planning study to further investigate options for transforming the existing section of the Southeast Freeway into a boulevard that would be fully integrated into the adjacent street network. After several community meetings, OP was asked to initiate a supplemental planning study, the Southeast Boulevard Planning Study. Completed in July 2015, the Southeast Boulevard Planning Study was intended to provide OP, DDOT, and the community the technical assistance needed to develop alternatives to transform the former Southeast Freeway into an urban boulevard fully integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. The study evaluated options to improve pedestrian and bicyclist connections to the waterfront and connections to the neighborhood, and it examined the future development potential of excess rights-of-way. <sup>1514.1</sup>

The Southeast Boulevard Planning Study area includes the existing portion of the Southeast Freeway east of 11th Street SE and its immediate environs, bounded by 11th Street SE to the west, K Street SE to the north, Barney Circle to the east, and M Street SE to the south. Because the existing portion of the Southeast Freeway east of 11th Street SE was originally funded and constructed as part of the interstate Highway System, DDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are required to conduct studies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to understand the impacts to the environment of any proposed change to the former interstate. Agreements between DDOT and FHWA also would be required if portions of the former interstate right-of-way are to be made available for private development. The OP study also evaluated concepts in the context of District-wide planning objectives, issues raised through a previous DDOT study, the purpose and need outlined in the transportation study, the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) framework and other planning guidance, as well as legal and physical constraints to improvements within the right-of-way. The study was guided by a project advisory team that includes OP, DDOT, ANC 6B, the Ward 6 Councilmember, and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). <sup>1514.2</sup>

***Policy CH-2.5.1: Southeast Boulevard Land Uses***

Encourage land uses around the Southeast Boulevard that enhance and strengthen the neighborhood fabric and promote safer and greater connectivity between the Capitol Hill neighborhoods and the Anacostia Waterfront. Implement future land uses that reflect community desires for mixed-use development that is in character with the surrounding neighborhood. Explore opportunities for small amounts of neighborhood-serving retail. <sup>1514.3</sup>

***Policy CH-2.5.2: Southeast Boulevard Waterfront and Neighborhood Connections***

Leverage the redesign of the Southeast Freeway into Southeast Boulevard to reconnect the Capitol Hill communities to the Anacostia waterfront. Grid streets that are now currently dead ends could be extended south to the boulevard. Pedestrian and bicycle access connections could be created across the CSX rail right-of-way with stairs and ramps down to M Street SE and the waterfront. Additional opportunities to better connect neighborhood streets to the boulevard and install bike lanes and safer pedestrian access should be prioritized during future planning and implementation. <sup>1514.4</sup>

***Policy CH-2.5.3: Transformation of SE Freeway into SE Boulevard***

In conjunction with DDOT and federal agencies, conduct analyses needed to satisfy the environmental and community-raised issues. Continued interagency coordination is needed to move this process forward. Continue to work with the Capitol Hill residents to capitalize on community support to implement the connections to the Anacostia waterfront as first recommended in the AWI. <sup>1514.5</sup>

***Action CH-2.5.A: Southeast Freeway Alternatives***

Conduct environmental and feasibility studies to assess the preferred alternatives of the Southeast Boulevard Planning Study. Determine the most appropriate alternative to move forward based on community input and structural and financial feasibility. <sup>1514.6</sup>

***Action CH 2.5.B: Additional Land Use Planning for Southeast Boulevard***

In conjunction with environmental and feasibility studies, complete additional land use and master planning studies as needed to further refine the preferred options for the transformation of the Southeast Freeway into Southeast Boulevard, recommend appropriate land use changes for the Future Land Use Map, and identify opportunities for additional neighborhood amenities. <sup>1514.7</sup>

Encourage land uses around the Southeast Boulevard that enhance and strengthen the neighborhood fabric and promote safer and greater connectivity between the Capitol Hill neighborhoods and the Anacostia Waterfront. Implement future land uses that reflect community desires for mixed-use development that is in character with the surrounding neighborhood. Explore opportunities for small amounts of neighborhood-serving retail.

