



riggs road & south dakota avenue

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AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

District of Columbia
Office of Planning



Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor
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Office of Planning



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The area surrounding the Riggs Road/ South Dakota Avenue intersection is currently undergoing significant transformation. Historically, the character of the area has been primarily residential, anchored by the Fort Totten Metro and supported by small scale commercial and retail shops. Due to the attractive character of the neighborhoods, ubiquity of quality housing and schools, and one of the only Metro exchanges outside downtown DC, the area has become ready for commercial and residential development.



The Lamond-Riggs Citizen Association (LRCA), the neighborhood organization in the study area, initiated the Area Development Plan in partnership with the DC Office of Planning (OP). The Lamond-Riggs Development Task Force, on behalf of the LCRA, became an instrumental, galvanizing force for public engagement and assisted the OP in developing implementation strategies and recommendations.

The Area Development Plan began in 2006 with the assistance of the Louis Berger Group, Inc. At that time, the majority of commercial establishments and residential properties immediately around the intersection, such as the Tiger Mart and Dakotas Apartments, were underutilized or vacant. Since then developers and grant making foundations have recognized the opportunities in the area and focused attention on its revitalization.

The Office of Planning recognizes the importance of new development and enhancements to the economic, physical, and social landscape around the intersection and is using this planning initiative to create a vision for overall growth in the area, ensuring consistency between past, ongoing, and future plans and projects.

The Area Development Plan is divided into four parts: Existing Conditions Analysis, Public Engagement, Redevelopment Framework, and Implementation. Each part is intended to support the Vision for the study area.

A Vision for the Study Area

The guiding principles for the study area are based on the outcome of the community process; and include the District's planning and development objectives for the area. Specifically, the plan responds to the District's Transit Oriented Development policy of clustering development near Metrorail Stations in order to expand housing, transportation, retail, and service choices. The implementation of this plan will also advance the District's objective of creating walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods. The Plan's framework is established by the following guiding principles:

Project Vision

1. Establish a dynamic neighborhood center at Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue that enhances community character and reactivates the street
2. Attract development that serves all generations
3. Connect, activate, and create new open spaces
4. Promote safe access and circulation throughout the neighborhood

Existing Conditions Analysis

The primary study area consists of the quarter-mile radius around the intersection of Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue. The secondary study area is the half mile radius. The project area has a diverse patchwork of land uses; the parcels that front the intersection are primarily commercial/retail (with the Food and Friends facility on the southwest corner), while the metrorail tracks straddle the industrial. Medium- and low- density residential units fill in the periphery of the primary study area and compose the majority of the secondary study area.

Public Engagement

The Lamond Riggs Civic Association was an integral part of the outreach process, facilitating community workshops and serving as a liaison to the Office of Planning and the community. Community outreach consisted of three meetings: a site walk in January 2007, a visioning session in June 2007, and a final presentation in March 2008.

Redevelopment Framework

The Office of Planning identified six opportunity sites for redevelopment in the primary study area. These sites were chosen based on a combination of factors such as a detailed market analysis, current neighborhood conditions, and proximity to intersections, developed parcels, or commercial activity. Each opportunity site was evaluated independently and in concurrence with the remainder of the study area to identify appropriate potential uses for redevelopment. Redevelopment scenarios were based on the condition of the facilities and its land value and include recommendations for proposed land use and development scale, redevelopment timeframe, proposed use, and urban design guidelines. See the table of Land Use Recommendations on the opposite page.

Implementation

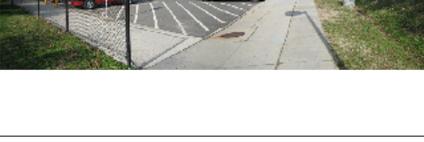
The implementation section of this plan provides a road map to guide revitalization in the study area. This effort was undertaken in partnership with the community and several other District agencies and entities. Implementation of improvements in the project area is based on phased development and timelines in the short term, medium and long term. Potential for new development is predicated on specific recommendations in four resource areas: Urban Design and Land Use, Public Realm and Community Safety, Parks and Open Space, Circulation and Access, and Economic Development and Housing.



This small area plan recommends land use designation changes for three opportunity sites. For these sites, changes to the underlying zoning will occur through the Zoning Map amendment process. A property owner or developer may propose a Zoning Map amendment, which is reviewed and approved by the District's Zoning Commission. Public review and comment will be essential to this discretionary approval process. For all other opportunity sites where no land use designation is proposed, the existing zoning still applies. If additional flexibility within a zoning category is needed for large sites, a developer may

also propose Planned Unit Development (PUD). PUDs are also reviewed and approved by the Zoning Commission. PUDs may include requests to increase building heights and/or density, provided the project offers commendable public benefits (i.e. public space improvements and/or affordable housing). A PUD may be coupled with a Zoning Map amendment application. In both cases, the recommendations of this small area plan is critical to the Zoning Commission and public review process.

*** Note 1, 2, 3 (See Appendix)**

SUMMARY OF LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS							
OPPORTUNITY SITE	EXISTING SITE PHOTOS	PARCEL SIZE	CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION	CURRENT LAND USE "BY-RIGHT" HEIGHT	PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATION	PROPOSED NEW LAND USE DESIGNATION "BY-RIGHT" HEIGHT	PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGE APPROVAL PROCESS
KFC/ Taco Bell		1.08 acres	Production, Distribution and Repair (PDR)	40 ft.	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	Requires Public Process and Zoning Commission Approval
Riggs Road North Industrial Site		3.65 acres	PDR	40 ft.	Moderate Density Mixed-use	50 ft.	Requires Public Process and Zoning Commission Approval
Riggs Plaza		7.48 acres	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	No Change	65 ft.	n/a
DC Gov. Triangle		.96 acres	PDR	40 ft.	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	Requires Public Process and Zoning Commission Approval
Riggs Road South Industrial Park		5.33 acres	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	No Change	65 ft.	n/a
Fort Totten East Industrial Site		2.5 acres	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	No Change	65 ft.	n/a
Fort Totten West		3.38 acres	Medium Density Mixed-use	65 ft.	No Change	65 ft.	n/a

Implementation

The implementation plan provides a road map to guide revitalization in the study area. This effort was undertaken in partnership with the community and several other District agencies. Implementation in the project area is based on phased development and timelines in the short term, medium and long term. Potential for new development is based on specific recommendations in four resource areas: Urban Design and Land Use, Public Realm and Community Safety, Parks and Open Space, Circulation and Access, and Economic Development and Housing.

As part of the plan, OP generated design guidelines to enable the project vision, ensuring visual consistency and scale in the Riggs Road/ South Dakota area.

General Design Guidelines

Development Scale

- Reinforce the intersection's four corners with street-activated retail uses and aesthetically consistent development
- Ensure future development is compatible with existing neighborhood scale and character.
- Provide adequate buffers between commercial, industrial, and residential land uses.

Access+Connectivity

- Create a well defined and well illuminated system of pedestrian walking paths to the Metro and vicinity.
- Ensure streetscape elements are appropriate in scale to adjacent development and should reinforce an improved pedestrian environment.

Visual Identity

- Establish a continuity of interesting storefronts, paving surfaces, and streetscape elements.
- Encourage safe, accessible, multi-functional green and open spaces.

Opportunity Sites Design Guidelines

KFC/
Taco Bell

- Reinforce the intersections four corners with street-activated retail uses and encourage aesthetically-consistent development that is compatible in scale and character with the adjacent corners.
- Ensure that streetscape elements are compatible in scale to adjacent development and reinforce a more pedestrian friendly environment north toward 1st Place NE, a key connection to the Metro.
- Maintain the continuity of development fronting the intersection and utilize 3rd Street NE as the sole point of ingress/egress to the parcel.
- Create a salient, visually appealing element at this site that can simultaneously orient pedestrians, vehicles travelling through, and Metrorail riders.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.

Riggs
North
Industrial

- Provide adequate buffers between commercial, industrial and residential land uses.
- Create well defined and well illuminated pedestrian connections to the Metro and the intersection.
- Ensure that future development provides an appropriate transition in scale from the Metro overpass to the intersection and adjacent areas.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.

Riggs
Plaza/
Cafritz

- Support the creation of walkable blocks along South Dakota Avenue of less than 250 feet.
- Maintain the existing public street network and create new connections where appropriate.
- Ensure new development south of the intersection along South Dakota is compatible in scale with adjacent residential neighborhoods; step back in height as appropriate per the regulations of the appropriate Zone.
- Pursue reduced parking requirements, shared parking, and initiate a parking district pilot.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.

Riggs
South
Industrial

- Establish a streetscape concept that integrates multiple modes of transportation into one node (including bus, pedestrian, bicycles, and vehicles).
- Establish visual continuity and create a dynamic sense of place by encouraging active ground floor uses, public art, and public spaces along 1st Place NE.
- Improve 1st Place NE as a better pedestrian-friendly corridor to Metro and surrounding development.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.

Fort
Totten
East

- Promote Green Collar development uses.
- Design Kennedy Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street and any other access routes proposed in new development into safe, well lit, aesthetically pleasing and functionally accessible connections to Metro and surrounding development.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.

Fort
Totten
West

- Establish a streetscape concept that integrates multiple modes of transportation into one node (including bus, pedestrian, bicycles, and vehicles).
- Encourage the development of structured parking with street activated retail opportunities on the ground floor.
- Create clearly visible connections from Riggs to Galloway; other connections through private development projects should further support integrated connectivity for all.
- Development should comply with the current zone or be consistent with the zoning and land use recommendations proposed in this plan and approved by the Zoning Commission.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Area Development Plan is a District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) initiative for the study area surrounding the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection that engaged community stakeholders, the development community, and elected officials. The goals of the plan are to assess the surrounding neighborhood conditions, develop a vision for revitalization, and provide a framework to guide future growth and development. The Area Development Plan consists of an existing conditions analysis, market analysis, redevelopment framework, implementation strategy, and visioning. The existing conditions analysis is based on the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue Community Handbook, which was completed by OP in Fall 2005. The study team used this document as a baseline, and supplemented it with multiple site visits and public meetings to understand the issues and concerns of stakeholders in the study area.

Figure 1.1 - Riggs Road/South Dakota Avenue Study Area



The consultant team performed a market analysis to understand the market forces and economies in the study area, examine real estate trends and characteristics, identify drivers of demands critical to support revitalization and new development, and to test market support for a range of uses (residential, commercial, and mixed-use).

For the redevelopment framework plan, the consultant team and OP identified opportunity sites for redevelopment. Using the market analysis, and taking into consideration the planned and ongoing development, the consultant team identified a redevelopment timeframe and proposed land use for six opportunity sites in the study area. Their potential for new development is based on specific recommendations in four resource areas: Urban Design and Land Use, Public Realm and Community Safety, Parks and Open Space, Circulation and Access, and Economic Development and Housing.

The implementation plan provides a road map to guide revitalization in the study area. This planning effort was undertaken in partnership with the Lamond-Riggs Civic Association (LRCA) and the Lamond-Riggs Development Task Force, both of which were instrumental in engaging the community and the development of implementation strategies and recommendations.

In addition, the Plan benefitted from the assistance of Council members Muriel Bowser (Ward 4) and Harry Thomas Jr. (Ward 5), and District agencies and other organizations, including the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation (DCPR), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and others.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In Fall 2005, OP began a this planning process with several community groups to develop a neighborhood plan and revitalization strategy for the Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue intersection. OP performed a field survey of existing properties in the study area and produced a Community Handbook to provide a brief overview of the status and land use of existing establishments. As described in the Introduction, the consultant team used the Community Handbook as a baseline for this Area Development Plan.

In Summer 2006, OP engaged the consultant team led by the Louis Berger Group, Inc. (Berger) to complete the Area Development Plan. During Fall 2006, DDOT was in the process of designing the Riggs Road and South Dakota intersection realignment and conducting public outreach in the community. In an effort to coordinate ongoing infrastructure improvements with planned development in the community, the DC government invited the developer of adjacent parcels, Lowe Enterprises, to attend each community meeting to describe proposed plans and invite feedback from residents on the types of development they desired.

Over the course of the next year, several public meetings were held in the study area to elicit community stakeholder input on behalf of this Area Development Plan.

Community Site Walk

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Community Site Walk - 01/13/07
- Public Kick Off meeting and LCRA Visioning Session - 06/02/07
- WMATA Community Meeting - 12/07
- LRCA Briefing - 03/08
- Development and Task Force Briefing - 08/25/08
- Development and Task Force Briefing - 10/27/08
- LCRA Briefing - 11/03/08
- Mayoral Hearing - 11/13/08



Figure 1.2 - Community Site Walk

On January 13, 2007, DDOT and OP organized a community site walk. Approximately 60 members of the community met at the Lamond Riggs Branch Library and walked to the intersection with the study team to understand the scale of the intersection realignment and assess the effects on the adjacent parcels. Representatives from the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) were in attendance and discussed the proposed development initiatives of the adjacent parcels and open spaces. During the site walk, members of the community articulated concern over two main issues. First, some residents were concerned that the character of the neighborhood would be adversely affected by the scale and density of the planned development. Second, residents generally concurred that the walkability of the study area was poor, particularly the pathways

from the intersection to the Metro. In response, OP stated that one of the goals of the Plan is to incorporate principles of transit-oriented development (mixed-use residential and commercial development designed to maximize access to public transport), which would ultimately improve the walkability and pedestrian safety in the project area.

Kick Off Meeting

On June 2, 2007, the Public Kick Off meeting was held in conjunction with the LRCA at LaSalle Elementary School. The Saturday morning meeting was divided into two parts: first, OP presented the purpose and goals of the Area Development Plan, the existing conditions of the market analysis and urban design, and the proposed opportunity sites. Following the presentation by OP, the LRCA conducted a visioning session to get input from residents on recommendations for a three to five year timeline for the Lamond-Riggs neighborhood.

During the first part of the kick off meeting, members of the community reiterated their desire to maintain the existing character of the community. In response, OP stated that the quality and character of the neighborhood can be controlled through effective urban planning. New development will balance out the condition of numerous buildings in the project area that are facing functional and physical obsolescence with fluctuating real estate rates, decreased rents, and aging buildings. In addition, some participants expressed the desire for additional public amenities, such as facilities that provide activity for youths (i.e. swimming pools, bowling alleys). In response, OP responded that the community has a right to request such facilities from the developers. Typically, developers may put together a community benefits package to include some of these amenities in a new development.

LCRA Visioning Session

In the second part of the meeting, the LCRA conducted a visioning session with the community to establish priorities for improvement in the neighborhood. Based on the outcomes of the visioning session, the LCRA developed action steps in four areas that formed the basis of a strategic plan:

Final Presentation

Public Safety	Improve police response (for speed limit enforcement and crime) Install adequate sidewalks and lighting
Youth Programs	Improve opportunities for employment and activity Expand resources for parents and encourage parental involvement
Senior Services	Improve community resources for seniors
Housing	Ensure visual consistency of new housing with existing housing Reduce density and preserve or enhance green space Ensure adequate parking



On March 11 2008, OP presented the Draft Redevelopment Framework Plan. The final opportunity sites were presented, as well as an overview of the long-term market conditions, and opportunities and recommendations for resource areas including community safety, urban design, parks and open space, and business and retail development.

Following the presentation, an informal workshop was held where residents had the opportunity to provide comments on redevelopment sites and land use recommendations. Each participant was given color coded stickers, which they could place on large format boards that listed main issues and opportunity sites described in the presentation. Green stickers represented general acceptance or concurrence. Red stickers signified dissent or a general indication that more work was needed. In addition, participants could write their comments on boards.

Plan Development

Following the public engagement process, DCOP developed a Draft Plan based on the combined efforts of the Lamond Riggs Civic Association, Councilmember Muriel Bowser (Ward 4) and Councilmember Harry Thomas, Jr. (Ward 5) and other community stakeholders. The Plan was then released for a 30-day public comment period concluding with the Mayoral Hearing held on November 13, 2008. The community provided extensive comments on the draft, challenging the Office of Planning to examine critical issues including:

- Further analyzing proposed Comprehensive Plan land use designation changes for Opportunity Sites discussed in the Plan
- Providing specific guidance for the provision of parks and open space
- Ensuring future development is architecturally compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood
- Emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity surrounding Fort Totten Metro Station; and
- Supporting the Plan's guidance on the provision of affordable housing opportunities.

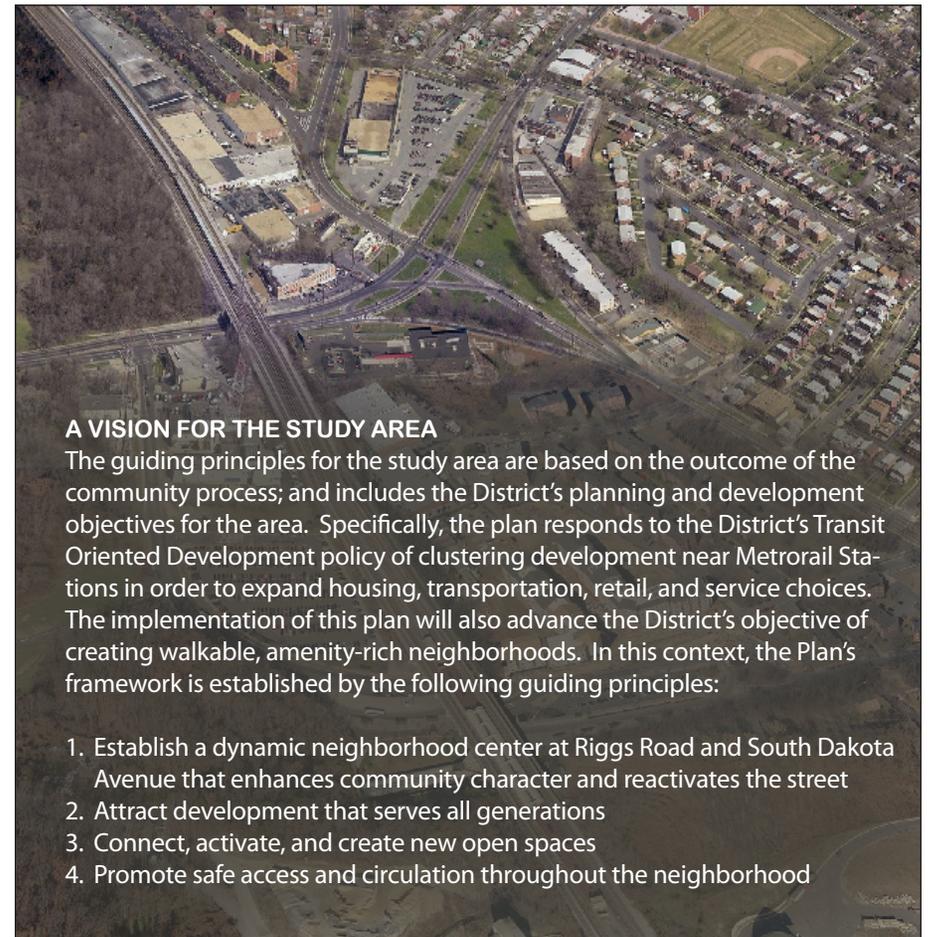
OP then analyzed the public comments received and determined general trends and reoccurring concerns. This Plan's recommendations and strategies were developed, as appropriate, to address comments received during the planning process.

Comprehensive Plan Guidance

OP then ensured that the goals for the study area comported with the District's 2006 Comprehensive Plan, a guiding document for long-term growth in the city through the next 20 years. Per the Comprehensive Plan, the study area straddles the Rock Creek East and Upper Northeast Area Elements, both of which are attractive, residential communities with low to moderate density single family homes known for their park-like ambiance, sense of family centric, community atmosphere. The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that careful and strategic planning will be required to conserve these qualities while enhancing the environment, transportation, infrastructure, housing

choices, health care, and educational services.

The Comprehensive Plan also places the majority of opportunity sites identified in this Area Development Plan within a Land Use Change Area. This designation is given to areas where new development is encouraged and mixed-use opportunities will flourish. The industrial areas to the east and west of the CSX/Metro tracks are considered Land Use Change Areas. In addition, the Tiger Mart site is categorized in the Comprehensive Plan as a Neighborhood Commercial Center. This designation suggests that future development in these areas contribute and enhance the day-to-day needs of residents in a one-mile radius. Neighborhood Commercial Areas should complement adjacent land uses and include basic retail goods and services and office space for small businesses.



A VISION FOR THE STUDY AREA

The guiding principles for the study area are based on the outcome of the community process; and includes the District's planning and development objectives for the area. Specifically, the plan responds to the District's Transit Oriented Development policy of clustering development near Metrorail Stations in order to expand housing, transportation, retail, and service choices. The implementation of this plan will also advance the District's objective of creating walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods. In this context, the Plan's framework is established by the following guiding principles:

1. Establish a dynamic neighborhood center at Riggs Road and South Dakota Avenue that enhances community character and reactivates the street
2. Attract development that serves all generations
3. Connect, activate, and create new open spaces
4. Promote safe access and circulation throughout the neighborhood

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