

Ward 5 Industrial Land Transformation Task Force and Study

*“By **December 31, 2013**, the Task Force shall submit to the Mayor and the Council a report detailing a plan to stimulate and promote the **modernization and adaptive use of parcels of Ward 5’s industrial land**, consistent with applicable laws and zoning regulations”*

– Mayoral Order 2013-025

In November 2012, Councilmember McDuffie introduced legislation to create a Task Force to analyze how industrial land in Ward 5 can be better utilized to create jobs and increase the tax base, as well be used for desired neighborhood amenities and services. A Council Hearing was held on November 14, 2012. Public witnesses supported the creation of the Task Force, noting the opportunities for better utilization of industrial land for green jobs/training and family-oriented businesses, as well as the opportunity to identify ways to address nuisance and operational uses associated with some existing industrial uses. Some community concerns included:

- Nuisance and operational issues associated with some industrial uses;
- Appearance and enforcement of business establishments;
- Lack of adequate buffers between industrial and residential uses; and
- Over-abundance of undesired uses.

Recognizing the importance of an approach to industrial land, Mayor Vincent C. Gray established the Ward 5 Industrial Land Transformation Task Force (the “Task Force”) by Executive Order on January 31, 2013. The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a strategic plan for the modernization and adaptive use of industrial land in Ward 5. The 16-member Task Force is chaired by the Director of the DC Office of Planning and its members include District of Columbia Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, five additional District agency heads, and eight community members. The Mayor’s Order establishes that by December 31, 2013, the Task Force will submit to the Mayor and the Council a report detailing a plan to stimulate and promote the modernization and adaptive use of parcels of Ward 5’s industrial land, consistent with applicable laws and zoning regulations (the “Study”).

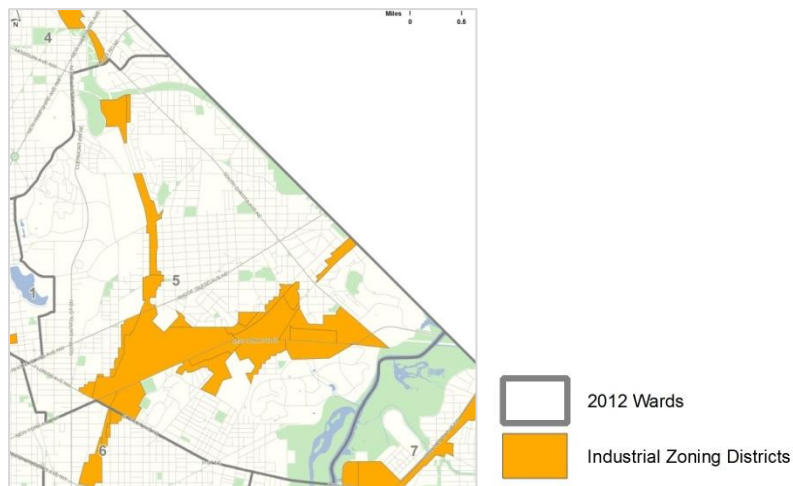
In support of the Mayor’s goals delineated in the One City Action Plan, the Sustainable DC Plan and the Five-year Economic Development Strategy, the sixteen Task Force Members identified the following goals for the Study:

- **Jobs & Economic Development:** *Support the Diversification of the District Economy and Leverage Industrial Areas to Create More Good Paying Jobs with Low Entry Barriers and Good Career Ladders*
- **New & Emerging Uses:** *Harness New and Emerging Businesses – Green, Tech, Food, Creative Industries*
- **Improved Industrial Neighbors:** *Address Nuisance and Improve Physical Appearance*
- **Community Amenities:** *Bring New Amenities, Services, and Other Offerings to Nearby Communities*
- **Municipal Needs:** *Create Efficiencies and Reduce Impacts of Ongoing Municipal Land Needs*
- **Create Great New Places:** *Advance Urban Design & Place Making to Create Vibrancy and Improved Gateways*
- **Implementation:** *Develop Strategies that Reflect Market Forces and Can Be Implemented*

Background

While only a fraction of the District’s overall land is zoned for industrial, Ward 5 is home to nearly half of all the industrially zoned land in the city. The productivity and performance of uses on this relatively scarce resource is mixed and is in need of greater study. Within Ward 5, there are some areas of “healthy” industrial fabric with businesses that are contributing to the local economy, and providing good-paying entry-level, low-barrier employment to city residents. The city is interested in bolstering these types of enterprises as part of a diversified economic development strategy.





Map: The Study area comprises all of the parcels zoned for industrial uses within the boundaries of Ward 5.

Other areas of industrial land in Ward 5 are underutilized or could serve as a better neighbor to the community. There is a need to reposition underperforming and vacant industrial land and articulate better ways to make the District's industrial lands productive. Transforming industrial land is essential to growing and attracting new businesses and employers to the City, while also providing Ward 5 neighborhoods with more compatible operations and desired amenities.

Revisiting industrial strategy is also key to capitalizing on the opportunities created by the city's changing economic outlook and growing population. The infusion of new population, economic energy and knowledge makes the District poised to attract innovative businesses and promote entrepreneurship that can make the city a leader in technology, green business, and the creative economy.

An industrial land transformation strategy for Ward 5 is also important for achieving the city's vision of inclusive job growth (i.e., jobs for all residents) and economic diversification. As the District moves towards a knowledge economy where the majority of jobs require at least a post-secondary degree, industrial businesses can offer an attractive employment source and career ladder for residents with lower education or skill levels.

While industrially zoned land in Ward 5 contains un-harvested economic potential for the District, there are also nuisance, operational, enforcement and appearance issues with some existing industrial uses which are of concern to the community. An industrial transformation strategy will need to address how industrial areas can perform better for the Ward 5 community and be transformed from perceived and real nuisances to community-serving and economic assets.

Study Area, Scope and Timeline

The study area is comprised of land within the boundaries of Ward 5, specifically focusing on all the parcels zoned for industrial uses within the Ward (see Map). This includes CM-1, CM-2, CM-3 or M zoned parcels. Industrially zoned land in Ward 5 is concentrated along both Metro and CSX rail lines and accounts for about half of all the industrially zoned land in the District of Columbia and approximately 15% of all the land in the Ward.

The Study will include an inventory of current uses on industrially zoned land, an existing conditions assessment, market analysis, best practices from case studies, study recommendations, and an implementation strategy. The Task Force is expected to finalize the Study by December 2013.

For more information:

Contact Andrea Limauro, Ward 5 Industrial Land Transformation Study Project Manager, at 202-442-7605 or email Andrea.Limauro@dc.gov

