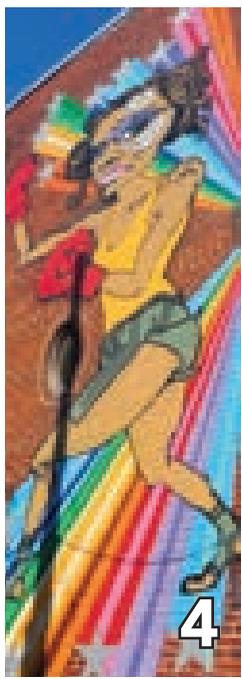


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Classic Bloomingdale Rowhomes

The Mid City East Small Area Plan provides a framework for conservation, development, sustainability and connectivity in Mid City East, a mosaic of neighborhoods including Bates/Truxton Circle, Bloomingdale, Eckington, Hanover, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda as well as sections of Edgewood and Stronghold. The Mid City East area sits near the center of the District of Columbia and showcases historic residential fabric and institutions, a rich diversity of residents, valued open spaces and burgeoning retail amenities. The inviting character of these neighborhoods is juxtaposed by the presence of major corridors - Florida Avenue,

New York Ave, New Jersey Avenue, North Capitol Street, and Rhode Island Avenue - that bisect these neighborhoods and create real and formidable boundaries, but also opportunities for retail enhancement, new development and improved connectivity.

The catalyst for studying and analyzing the Mid City East area was the notable activism on the part of some residents and civic organizations. The 2006 DC Comprehensive Plan also specifies the preparation of a small area plan for the North Capitol/Florida Avenue business district. Neighborhood groups advocated strongly to the District for a small area plan for their respective neighborhoods, as they were beginning to feel the effects of growth and change and wanted an opportunity to plan for the area's future. This level of civic engagement and neighborhood-based leadership at the outset was a harbinger of the important role that the plan's Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, civic organizations, community groups, and the business community, would play throughout the process in the development of the plan.

With a number of planning efforts already completed in the vicinity of Mid City East, the boundaries of the small area plan were designed to encompass those neighborhoods situated around a contiguous portion of North Capitol Street that had yet to have an approved small area plan to guide land use and development, filling an important gap in planning for this part the District of Columbia. Sursum Corda, while already addressed in the Northwest One Plan, was also included to address that community's intent to redevelop their property

while retaining affordability. The boundaries of the Mid City East area reflect a political amalgam, with most of the area in Ward 5, and other portions in either Ward 1 or 6.

The Office of Planning (OP), working with its consultant team, launched the process to create the Mid City East Small Area Plan in 2013. OP also partnered with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to coordinate outreach since that agency was simultaneously developing a Livability Study for the same study area. By having a single integrated process and website, OP and DDOT were able to create a seamless public participation experience for the development of both documents. The planning process integrated a more robust and creative range of engagement opportunities beyond community-wide meetings, including interactive online forums, office hours, community meet-ups and storytelling. The community's values combined with technical analysis and input from District Agencies helped define the plan's foundation. Technical work completed include an Existing Conditions analysis, a Historic and Cultural Resources report, and a Market study. The plan also incorporates recommendations from DDOT's Mid City East Livability Study completed in October 2013.

The public process began with a study area wide Kick-Off on April 27, 2013, during which the planning team engaged residents and stakeholders in facilitated activities to begin developing a vision for the plan and to identify issues and opportunities. **Neighborhood character** was a key concern especially the impact of architecturally inconsistent additions to the tops of homes, or "pop-ups" and the desire to preserve certain

buildings and structures that could be restored and reused. Reinforcement of neighborhood place-making and improvements to **public realm** were desired as was addressing the loitering and litter that detract from the community's image. Residents were supportive of **commercial revitalization** along key corridors as well as growing retail amenities and options. Opportunities for **redevelopment** focused on infilling vacant parcels and preserving housing affordability. Residents expressed a desire for more **park** improvements and multi-generational programming as well as higher-quality green space and a safer Metropolitan Branch Trail. Residents also raised concerns about major vehicular roadways and corridors within the study area and the desire for better connectivity and crossings and the opportunity for green decking over North Capitol Street. They also described the need for better wayfinding and lighting to and from Metro stations, all of which are located on the periphery of the study area.

The many voices of the Mid City East community emerged to define a cohesive vision for the area: **improve quality of life and enhance neighborhood amenities and character while supporting a community of culturally, economically, and generationally diverse residents.** The plan conveys goals and key recommendations for neighborhood character, commercial revitalization, redevelopment and housing, neighborhood place-making and public realm, parks/green space/stormwater and connectivity. The following pages, 6 and 7, summarize the plan vision and goals by theme.

The Mid City East Small Area Plan has already gathered momentum for some of its recommendations, with early implementation

underway on the following items:

- Pursuit of preservation strategies for Bloomingdale
- Restoration of North Capitol Main Street
- Revival of a "clean team", with a focus on North Capitol between New York and Florida Avenue
- Optimizing access for North Capitol businesses to the Great Streets Small Business Capital Improvement Grants
- Partnership with local architecture students to complete a visualization of the North Capitol Green Deck concept
- Development of historic resource brochures for neighborhoods in Mid City East
- Completion of an agency resource fair at Metroball DC's 13th annual New York Ave basketball tournament
- Submission of grant application for North Capitol Street Streetscape design
- Request for transfer of National Park Service (NPS) triangle parks to District jurisdiction to improve programming
- Release of the solicitation for redevelopment of Department of Housing and Community Development's parcel at Florida Avenue and North Capitol

What's Inside:

The plan is organized as follows:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the Study Area and the Small Area Planning process, plan methodology and overview of community engagement.

Chapter Two presents the vision for the Mid City East Plan.

Chapter Three presents the key findings of existing conditions and technical analysis and the plan vision, goals and recommendations by theme.

Chapter Four highlights select plan recommendations from Chapter Three which are organized for summary and reference purposes by neighborhood.

Chapter Five highlights select plan recommendations from Chapter Three which are organized for summary and reference purposes by corridor.

Chapter Six provides an implementation plan to serve as a roadmap for implementing plan recommendations including projected timeframe and lead entity

Appendices:

This plan is further supplemented by the following companion documents:

Appendix A: Mid City East Market Study

Appendix B: Mid City East Historic Resources Report

Appendix C: Mid City East Additional Maps and Figures

Appendix D: Mid City East Historic Neighborhood Brochures



1. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Vision: Mid City East neighborhoods will retain their historic and cultural diversity, while preserving their distinctive architectural character and public spaces.

Goals:

1. Create the structure and employ the tools for pursuing neighborhood-led conservation efforts.
2. Reinforce and support neighborhood identity.



LeDroit Park Gateway



2. COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

Vision: Mid City East will be an attractive area with thriving existing businesses, emerging small businesses, vibrant retail, and a growing neighborhood residential base. North Capitol Street and other major corridors will provide neighborhood serving retail, dining options and amenities to the community.

Goals:

1. Improve resident access to healthy food and dining opportunities throughout Mid City East.
2. Strengthen and expand the dining cluster emerging at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and First Street NW, and the dining establishments along North Capitol Street.
3. Leverage Mid City East's unique location along North Capitol Street to support commercial corridor vitality and local entrepreneurs. Build on existing efforts and explore new programs and incentives to improve and promote commercial areas, including the emerging creative economy cluster.
4. Improve the appearance and functionality of commercial properties in MCE through reinvestment in façades and interior spaces.



3. REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND HOUSING

Vision: Mid City East will prosper as an inclusive community with a strong neighborhood fabric, thriving businesses, and a diverse mix of quality housing options.

Goals:

1. Support strategic land use designation changes on key sites and the redevelopment of publicly-owned properties.
2. Encourage infill of privately-held vacant lots and increase site utilization to strengthen neighborhood fabric and create opportunities for new housing, unique retail offerings, and/or workplaces.
3. Support the redevelopment of Sursum Corda.
4. Maintain or increase the number of affordable housing units throughout Mid City East to better serve all household types, including families.



4. NEIGHBORHOOD PLACEMAKING AND PUBLIC REALM

Vision: Mid City East neighborhoods and corridors will showcase a unique identity and enhanced sense of place. Sidewalks and public spaces will be attractive, safe and well-maintained.

Goals:

1. Enhance North Capitol Street to celebrate its importance and symbolic axial connection to the Capitol.
2. Improve and maintain street trees and increase tree cover throughout Mid City East.
3. Improve the appearance, walkability, safety and cleanliness of Mid City East streets and public spaces.
4. Celebrate the creativity of artists in the Mid City East area and throughout the District.
5. Promote opportunities to enhance the sense of identity in the Eckington and Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover neighborhoods.

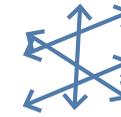


5. PARKS, GREEN SPACE AND STORMWATER

Vision: Mid City East will enjoy a variety of parks, green spaces, and recreation options. Flooding will be mitigated through the DC Clean Rivers project and the employment of Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management strategies.

Goals:

1. Improve the quality and accessibility of existing playgrounds, parks and green spaces.
2. Identify opportunities and sites for new parks, community gardens, green spaces and other recreation.
3. Improve access to public recreational facilities within Mid City East.
4. Decrease neighborhood flooding and improve stormwater management.



6. CONNECTIVITY

Vision: Mid City East residents will experience safe and enhanced connectivity between neighborhoods. Residents will be able to travel via car, bus, bike or on foot, through a pleasant environment to their daily destinations.

Goals:

1. Improve mobility and physical connectivity between the neighborhoods of Mid City East, and connect the neighborhoods to the city.
2. Reduce or remove physical barriers and provide for safe pedestrian routes and crossings to schools, transit, parks and amenities.



North Capitol Street (Southbound)

1: INTRODUCTION

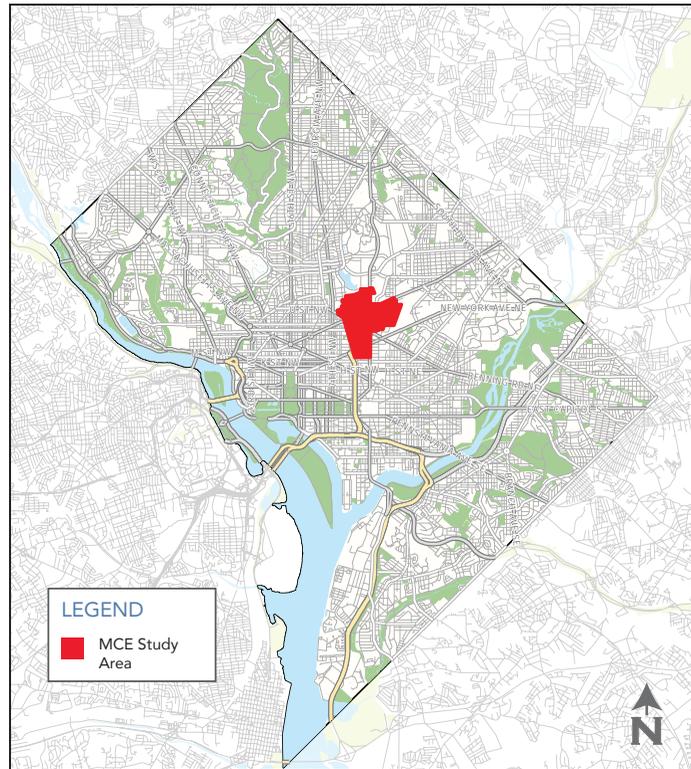


Fig. 1.1 Study Area in Context

OVERVIEW

Mid City East is the name given to the planning area comprised of a group of neighborhoods including Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover, Bloomingdale, Eckington, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda, as well as portions of Edgewood and Stronghold. These architecturally rich, culturally diverse, and vibrant urban neighborhoods are rich with community, yet wrestling with concerns

including architecturally inconsistent development, struggling retail and commercial corridors, increasingly expensive housing, inadequate green space, traffic, and barriers to connectivity. The DC Office of Planning (OP), in collaboration with DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), residents, property and business owners, an Advisory Committee, District agencies, and a consultant team, led an interactive community-based process to develop recommendations for the Mid City East Small Area Plan, a framework for the preserving of historic resources, revitalizing commercial corridors and retail, increasing diverse housing options, integrating green infrastructure, cultivating development opportunities, and improving the connectivity.

WHAT IS A SMALL AREA PLAN?

Small Area Plans provide a framework for the strategic development, redevelopment and/or preservation of neighborhoods and corridors. They address the District's planning goals on a more localized level and supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for the development of city blocks, corridors, and neighborhoods. They allow citizens to develop strategic priorities that will shape future development in their neighborhoods, identify gaps and opportunities in city services and resources deployed at the neighborhood level, and shape critical capital budget decisions and agency investment priorities. Small Area Plans are submitted to the DC Council for approval. The community vision, existing conditions and market analysis, recommendations, and implementation strategy of the Mid City East Small Area Plan are outlined in this report. The DC Department of

Transportation (DDOT) concurrently developed the Mid City East Livability Study. The Small Area Plan team coordinated with the Livability Study team throughout the process. The Mid City East plan supports the implementation of DDOT's Livability Study and its recommendations have been integrated into the Small Area Plan.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Mid City East planning area is centrally located in the District of Columbia, just north of the Capitol and northeast of downtown. **See Fig. 1.1.** The neighborhoods of Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover, Bloomingdale, Eckington, LeDroit Park, and Sursum Corda, form the Mid City East planning area which all have edges along North Capitol Street and include parts of Ward 1, Ward 5 and Ward 6. **See Fig. 1.2.** The planning area encompasses approximately 480 acres and is traversed by 5 major vehicular corridors including approximately 1¼ miles of North Capitol Street, approximately 1 mile of Rhode Island Avenue, approximately 1 mile of New Jersey Avenue, approximately 1/2 mile of Florida Avenue, and approximately 1/4 mile of New York Avenue. **See Fig. 1.3.**

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Mid City East study area is surrounded by a number of neighborhoods for which plans and studies have been developed in the last decade. These plans and studies include Howard University's 2011 Campus Master Plan, the 2006 Northwest One Redevelopment Plan, the 2009 ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report for the North Capitol

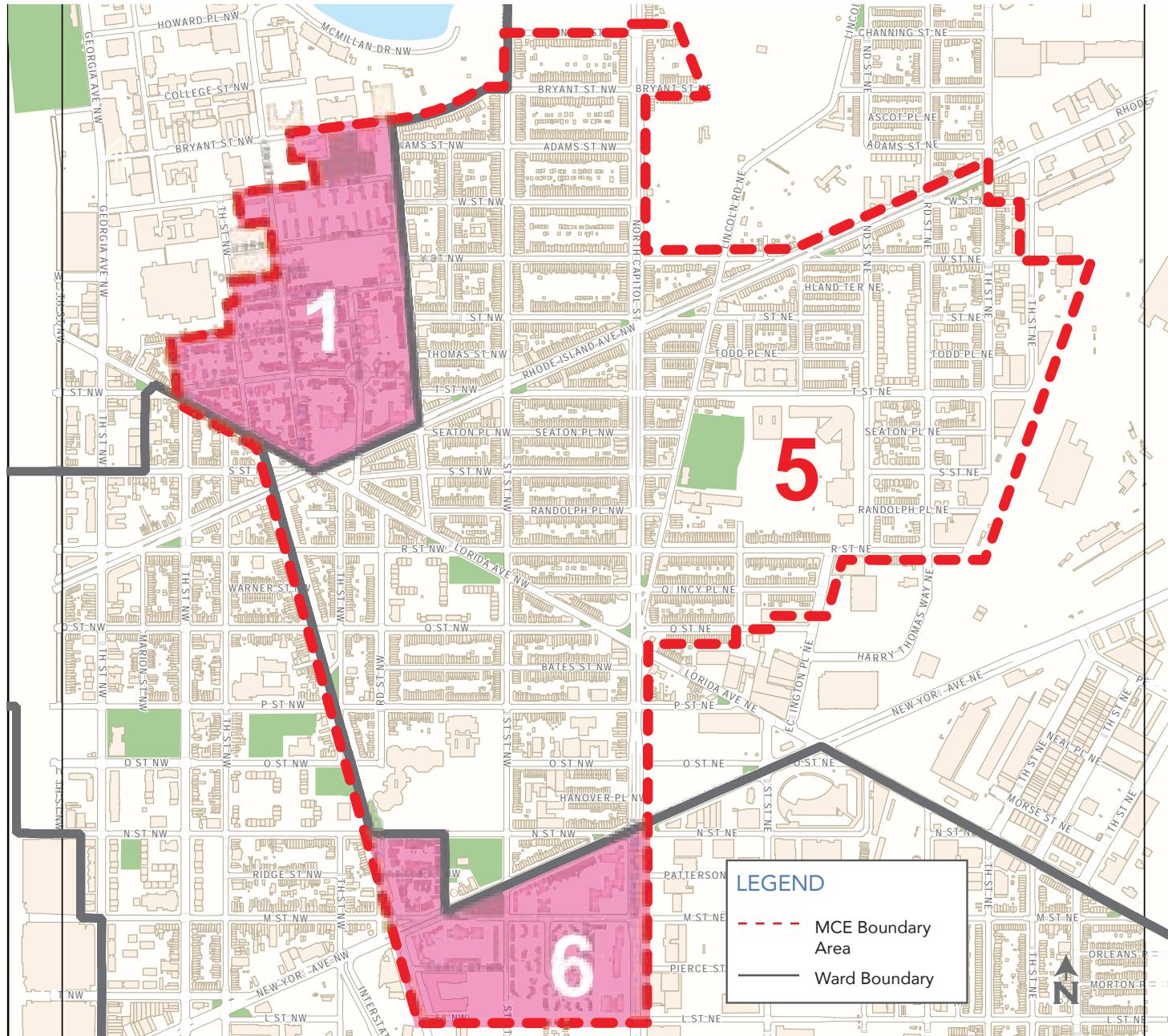


Fig. 1.2 Ward Boundary Map

Main Street, and the NoMa Vision Plan and Development Strategy. In addition to these planning efforts for nearby areas, the Mid City East Small Area Plan is also guided by city-wide initiatives including the Comprehensive Plan as the foundation, the Mayor’s One City Action Agenda, the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit, the Mayor’s Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, the Sustainable DC Plan, and DDOT’s Public Realm Design Manual. Recognizing the ongoing evolution of the District’s neighborhoods and the rapid changes facing them, residents of the Mid City East study area proactively led the charge to initiate this planning process.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The Mid City East Small Area Plan was developed through an extensive on-the-ground and creative online community engagement and public participation process. This process ensured that residents and stakeholders developed the vision and goals of the plan, and had numerous opportunities to engage, provide ideas, participate, and give feedback throughout the planning process.

OP directed the consultants in developing the plan through field work, observation, documentation, review of relevant plans and studies, analysis, public meetings, discussions with residents, and feedback from the project’s online engagement site. The consultant team studied existing physical conditions within Mid City East, including the urban design of neighborhoods and corridors, the public realm, parks and green space, and sustainability. Findings were documented through mapping tools and the analyses illustrated with drawings and diagrams.

Alternative concepts for achieving the goals of the plan were developed to test and vet ideas. Plans, supporting diagrams, and 3-D models were utilized to graphically illustrate ideas and recommendations of the Plan.

Through historic research, surveys, consultation with the DC Historic Preservation Office, and discussions with residents, the consultant team conducted an analysis of existing historic and cultural resources. This analysis included the identification of potential landmarks and historic districts and the examination of neighborhood-specific preservation planning tools that could maintain and enhance neighborhood character.

The consultant team also conducted an analysis of market conditions, and utilized the DC Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit to assess existing retail within the study area. Based on these methods, and in collaboration with the Office of Planning, recommendations for commercial revitalization, redevelopment and housing opportunities were developed. Recommendations are grounded in a quantitative analysis of existing demographic and real estate market conditions in Mid City East, as well as a qualitative evaluation of the neighborhood's relative strengths and weaknesses in comparison to competing commercial districts. Through discussions with neighborhood residents, business operators, and property owners, the team developed specific strategies on how to fill market voids, address current operational deficiencies, and create a shared vision for future economic diversification and commercial vitality.



Fig. 1.3 Mid City East Study Area



US Capitol View from North Capitol Street at Rhode Island Avenue

A HIGH COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Mid City East Small Area Plan at its core is a community-based plan guided by market centered solutions and a shared vision and principles. To ensure a successful and comprehensive planning process for the Mid City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study, the DC Office of Planning (OP) and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) developed an extensive, multi-faceted engagement strategy that placed an emphasis on both traditional and innovative methods of outreach. Both agencies were committed to thinking “outside the box” and launching a public engagement process that would attract and involve the greatest number of community residents and stakeholders within the study area.

Prior to kicking off the planning effort, the Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation actively attended Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and Single Member District (SMD) meetings as well as civic association and Advisory Committee meetings to get the word out about the unique joint planning effort which would result in a Small Area Plan and a Livability Study.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

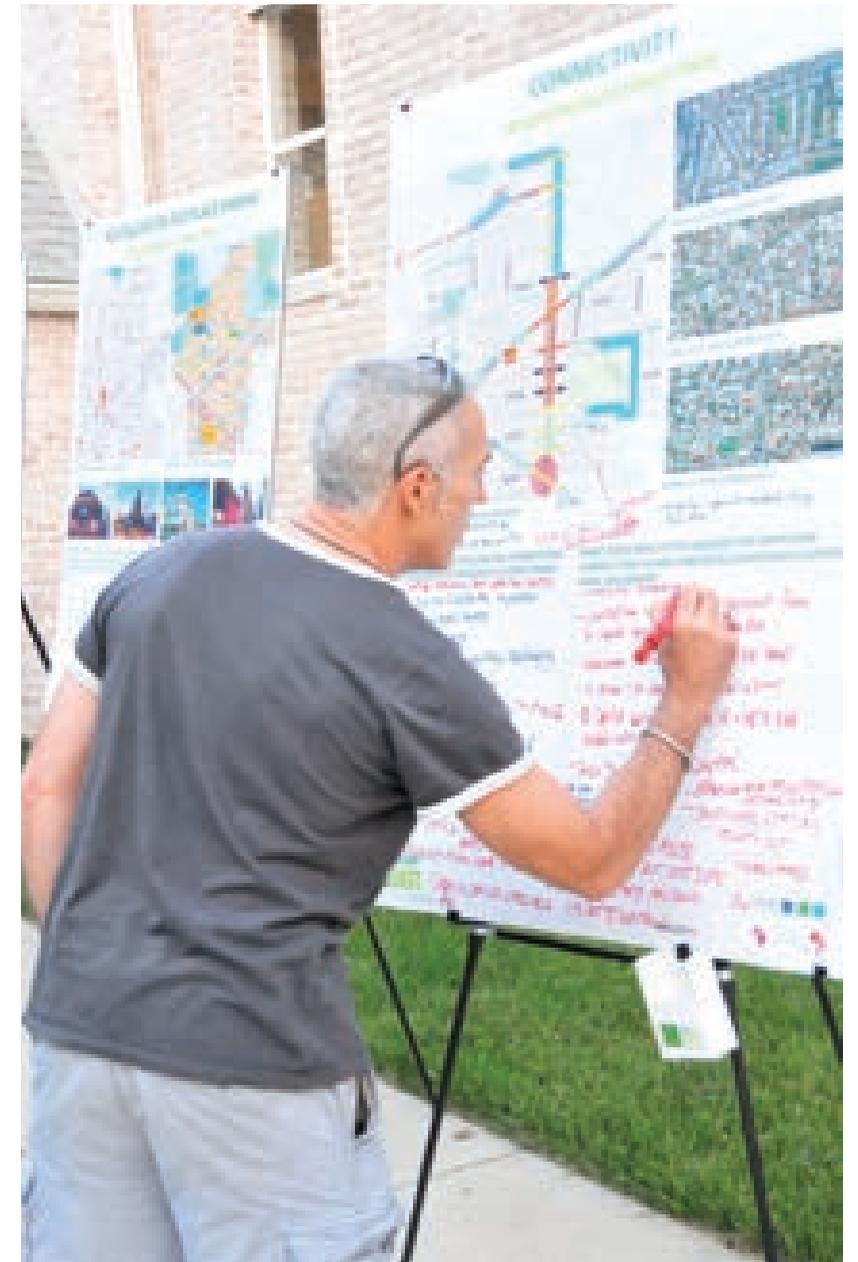
An Advisory Committee was established at the beginning of the process with approximately 20 members meeting for the first time on February 28, 2013 at the Fab Lab located on North Capitol Street NW. The Advisory Committee was comprised of representatives from the councilmembers of Wards

1, 5, and 6, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, leaders of civic associations and local businesses within the study area. Howard University, the NoMa BID, and Common Good City Farm were also members of the Advisory Committee.

Prior to each public meeting, the Advisory Committee was convened to preview completed components of the study and provide feedback. In total, the Advisory Committee met four times, with additional meetings held by a subgroup consisting of business owners. The role of the Advisory Committee was to provide guidance and feedback about elements of the plan from the perspective of their constituencies.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

To ensure a collaborative process that resulted in an implementable plan, an Interagency Committee was formed. Representatives from the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), District Department of the Environment (DDOE), DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), the Department of General Services (DGS), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and DC Water met to discuss the Mid City East planning area and develop coordinated, actionable solutions, and agreement on recommendations.



Focus Area Meeting Three for Bloomingdale/LeDroit Neighborhood
June 20, 2014, St. George's Episcopal Church

ON-THE-GROUND

During the course of the planning effort, public meetings and interactive open houses were convened to engage community members and inform them of Small Area Plan progress. Each public meeting included a presentation which provided an update on the findings of the planning process as well as a series of topic-specific, facilitated, and interactive stations. Public meetings were important to the planning process as opportunities for participants to express ideas, provide feedback and build consensus around the draft plan.

A **Kick-off Public Meeting** and **Open House** was held on April 27, 2013 at the Community Academy Public Charter School located at First and P Streets NW.

Focus Area Meetings were tailored to emphasize the specific characteristics of a targeted segment of the study area and to convey findings of technical analyses. A total of four focus area meetings were held:

- #1 - Sursum Corda - 06/08/2013
- #2 - Eckington - 06/12/2013
- #3 - LeDroit Park/ Bloomingdale - 06/20/2013
- #4 - Truxton Circle/Bates/Hanover - 06/24/2013

Business Focus Group Meetings engaged local business and property owners to discuss issues, opportunities and build consensus around recommendations for the Mid City East study area.

An **Early Implementation Committee** was established to assist in planning for early implementation of some recommendations introduced in the Small Area Plan.

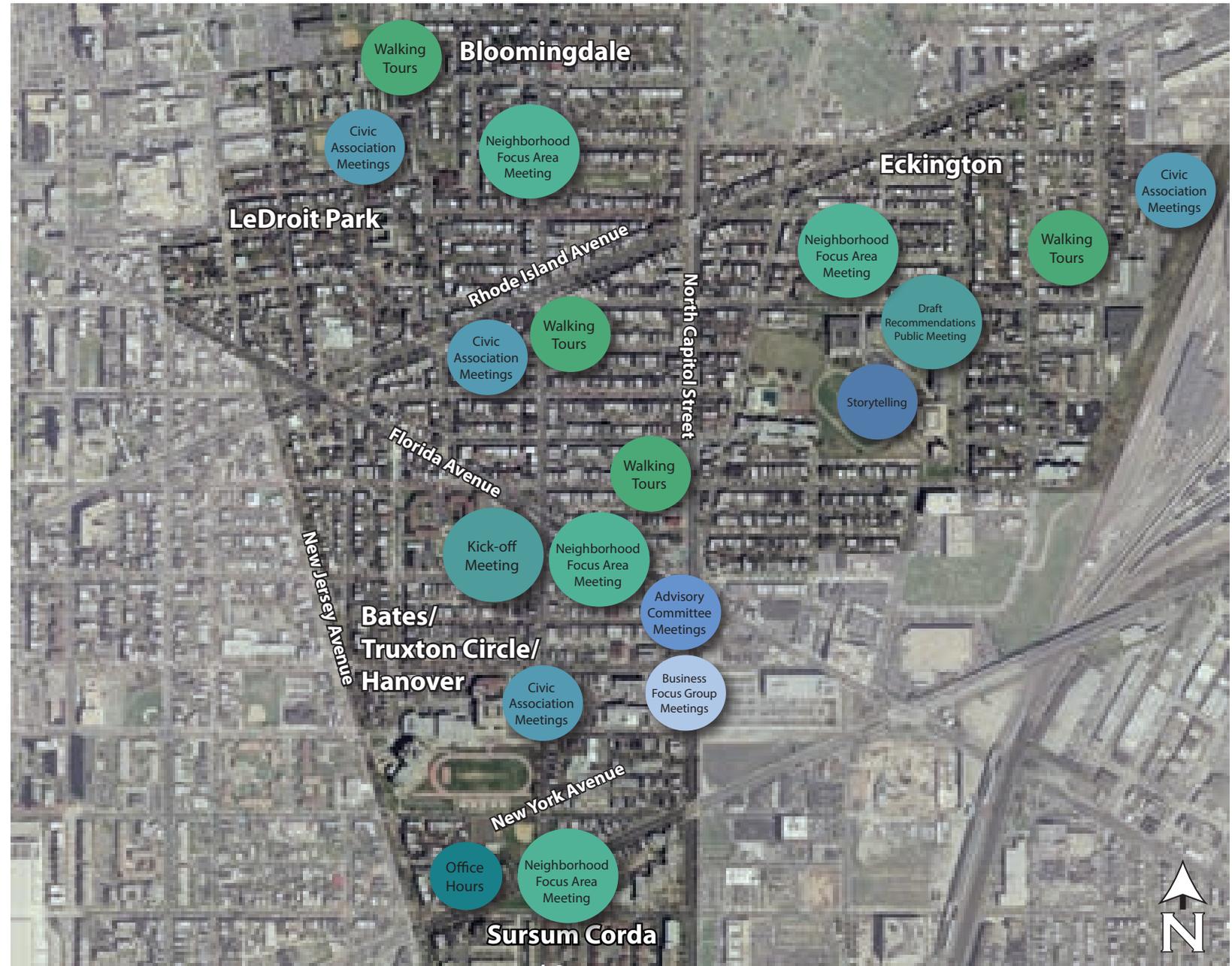


Fig. 1.4 Community Engagement Map

Meet-Ups were a creative approach to public engagement that manifested as a variety of alternative meeting types and gave people additional opportunities to engage.

Existing Conditions Walks - Participants were able to walk each neighborhood in the planning area with representatives from OP to examine existing conditions, discuss opportunities and learn more about the neighborhoods and the people who live there.

Photo Walk - Participants were taken on a tour of North Capitol Street in the Mid City East area highlighting iconic neighborhood elements, architecture, street art and other interesting photographic opportunities.

Historic Walking Tours - In partnership with the Historic Preservation Office, participants were taken on tours of the Mid City East neighborhoods of LeDroit Park, Bloomingdale, Eckington, Bates/Truxton Circle and Hanover. Neighborhood heritage, culture and architecture were highlighted on these tours celebrating the richness and vibrancy of each neighborhood's historic character.

Storytelling - Understanding the stories and aspirations of residents is an important way to capture the essence of a community. During the course of the planning process, a local professional videographer, Bryan Hayes, volunteered as a "Citizen Planner" to document stories by residents in the study area. Through storytelling, residents discussed life in the Mid City East community, what they liked about their neighborhood and their vision for the future. The final video was played at the September 26, 2013 public meeting and posted on YouTube, and a link was provided on www.midcityeast.com

Office Hours were informal gatherings at local venues throughout the planning area. Libraries, cafés and recreation centers provided alternative opportunities for residents and stakeholders during convenient dates and times to ask questions, provide feedback and discuss various aspects of the planning process findings.

- **Big Bear Café** - 04/26/2013, 05/03/2013, 10/17/2013, 07/16/2014
- **Northwest One Library** - 04/30/2013, 05/02/2013, 6/25/13, 10/15/2013
- **Windows Café** - 05/01/2013, 06/28/2013
- **Harry Thomas Sr. Recreation Center** - 06/17/2013
- **Rustic Cafe** - 07/24/2014
- **Uncle Chips** - 06/26/2013

University Partnerships - The Office of Planning was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with students from the Howard University School of Design and Catholic University's Graduate School of Architecture and Planning. The Howard student's project was titled "Project North Deck", which explored the possibility of decking over a portion of North Capitol Street. The vision for this project was to create a greener North Capitol Street and unite the neighborhoods of Eckington and Bloomingdale, while providing a more pedestrian friendly thoroughfare. You can find some of the details and outcomes of their study on page 130. The Catholic University Graduate Studio's class project was a corridor study for North Capitol titled "The New North Capitol Street". Their semester long studio examined connectivity, public realm

12 Agency
Coordination Meetings

7 ANC
Meetings

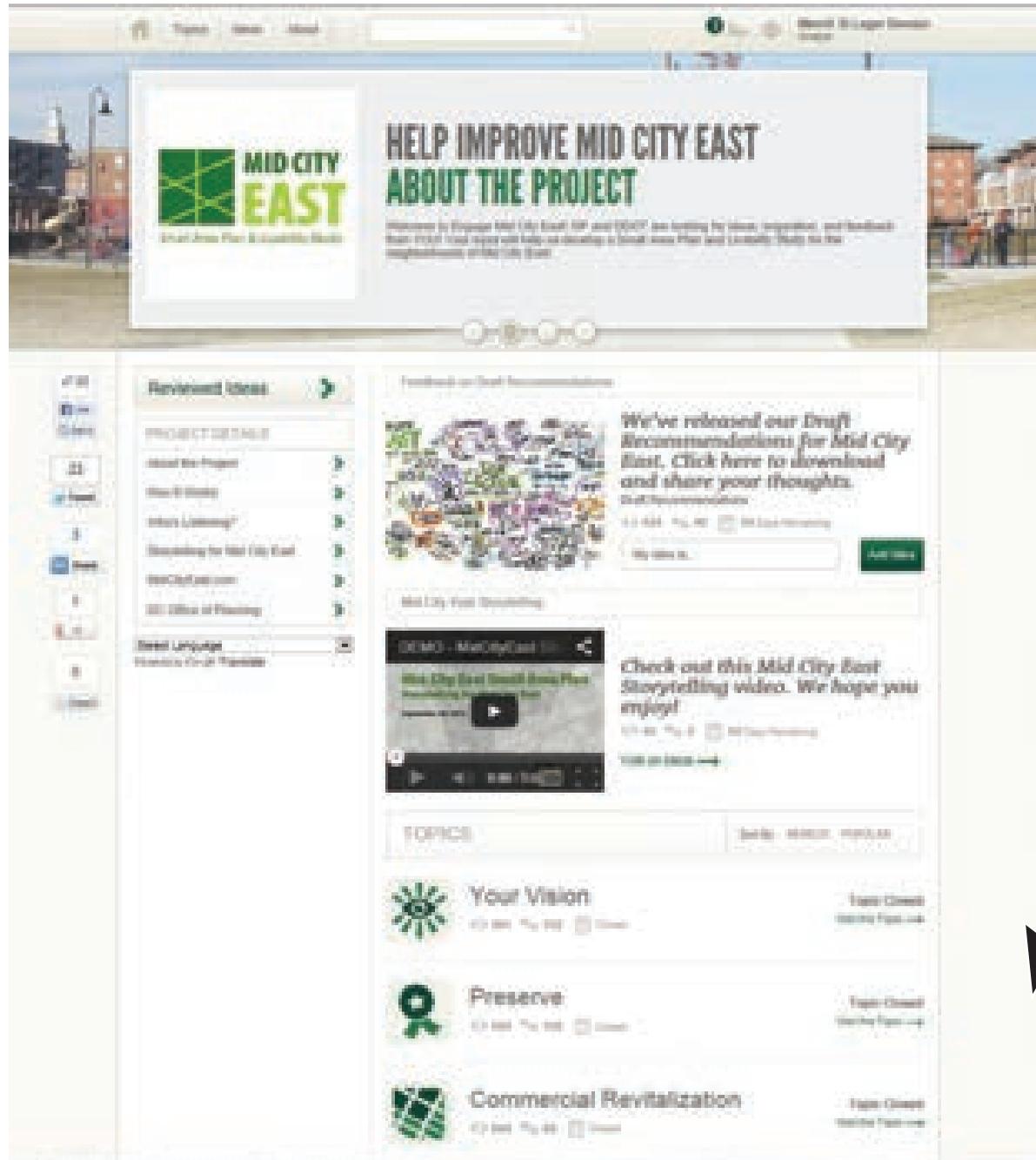
5 Walking
Tour Meet-ups

15 Civic Association
Presentations

5 Neighborhood
Focus Meetings

11 Office Hours
Meet-ups





and neighborhood character. They examined key intersections along North Capitol and developed recommendations that would mitigate some of the challenges that were identified during the analysis process. The Office of Planning provided information and feedback to the students as they went through the studio process. You can view a sample of their work beginning on page 127.

ONLINE

In order to reach a broader cross section of residents and stakeholders, the traditional “on-the-ground” outreach process was supplemented with an online engagement process. A project website (www.midcityeast.com) provided basic information, announcements about public meetings and other events, and served as a repository of information. Through MindMixer an online crowdsourcing platform (engage.midcityeast.com), the consultant team posted interactive mapping exercises and questions to prompt dialogue among participants. Ideas and feedback were posted by participants and discussed at each stage of the planning process.

OUTCOMES

The community engagement strategy for the Mid-City East Small Area Plan and Livability Study engaged large numbers of participants through on-the-ground venues and online tools. The draft plan was released on July 7, 2014. The public mayoral hearing was held on July 29, 2014.

153
Active Participants

2,062
Unique Website Visitors

261
Email Subscribers

16,092
Mindmixer Page Views

On-the-Ground:

- Advisory Committee meetings - 45 Participants
- Public meetings - 110 Participants
- Focus groups - 27 Participants
- Focus Area meetings - 75 Participants
- Office Hours - 37 Participants
- Meet ups - 72 Participants
- Mobile Workshops - 120 Participants

Online - Crowdsourcing (MindMixer):

- 1,383 visitors
- 16,092 page views
- 153 active participants
- 15 topics
- 200 ideas
- 170 comments

Online - Website:

- 2,062 unique visitors
- 3,299 visits
- 7,837 page views
- 62% new visits
- 261 email subscribers

7,837
Website Page Views

1383
MindMixer Visitors

200
Ideas

170
Comments

