

Character Area Development Guidelines

GUIDELINES FOR: BROAD APPLICATION and SPECIFIC USE WITH PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS:

The following Character Area Development Guidelines are intended to provide development guidance for both public and private decision-makers in shaping development activity and to assist in the evaluation of all projects. These guidelines will be use for any future zoning changes and will be specifically applied to the evaluation and approval of Planned Unit Developments or any other District government Development Review activity.

Since Planned Unit Development zoning is one of the most powerful tools we have in achieving the vision developed throughout this process and in implementing the specifics of this Plan, these Character Area Development Guidelines form the basis for shaping those projects. These guidelines break down the NoMA Planning Area into six smaller sub-districts that are generally based on current underlying zoning designations.

There are certain implementation recommendations that are common to many or all Character Areas and they are repeated in each area where they are relevant. For example, recommendations relating to the the re-introduction of a finer grained street network, the avoidance of “superblock” development, the need for a *NoMA Public Realm Plan*, connections among the subareas of NoMA and adjacent areas, the conservation of historic resources, the importance of neighborhood involvement and close consultation between the private and public sectors etc. reappear throughout.

NoMA CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARIES

Central NoMA Boundaries: All C-3-C-zoned areas north of I Street, east of North Capitol Street and south of Florida Avenue, except for Northwest One planning parcels along North Capitol Street; plus the triangular area bounded by New York Ave, Florida Ave, and the railroad tracks; as well as Union Station and all areas west of Union Station south of G Street.

Transition Area A: “East NoMA Neighborhood” Boundaries: C-2-A and C-2-B zoned area, east of the tracks, that border R-4 zone.

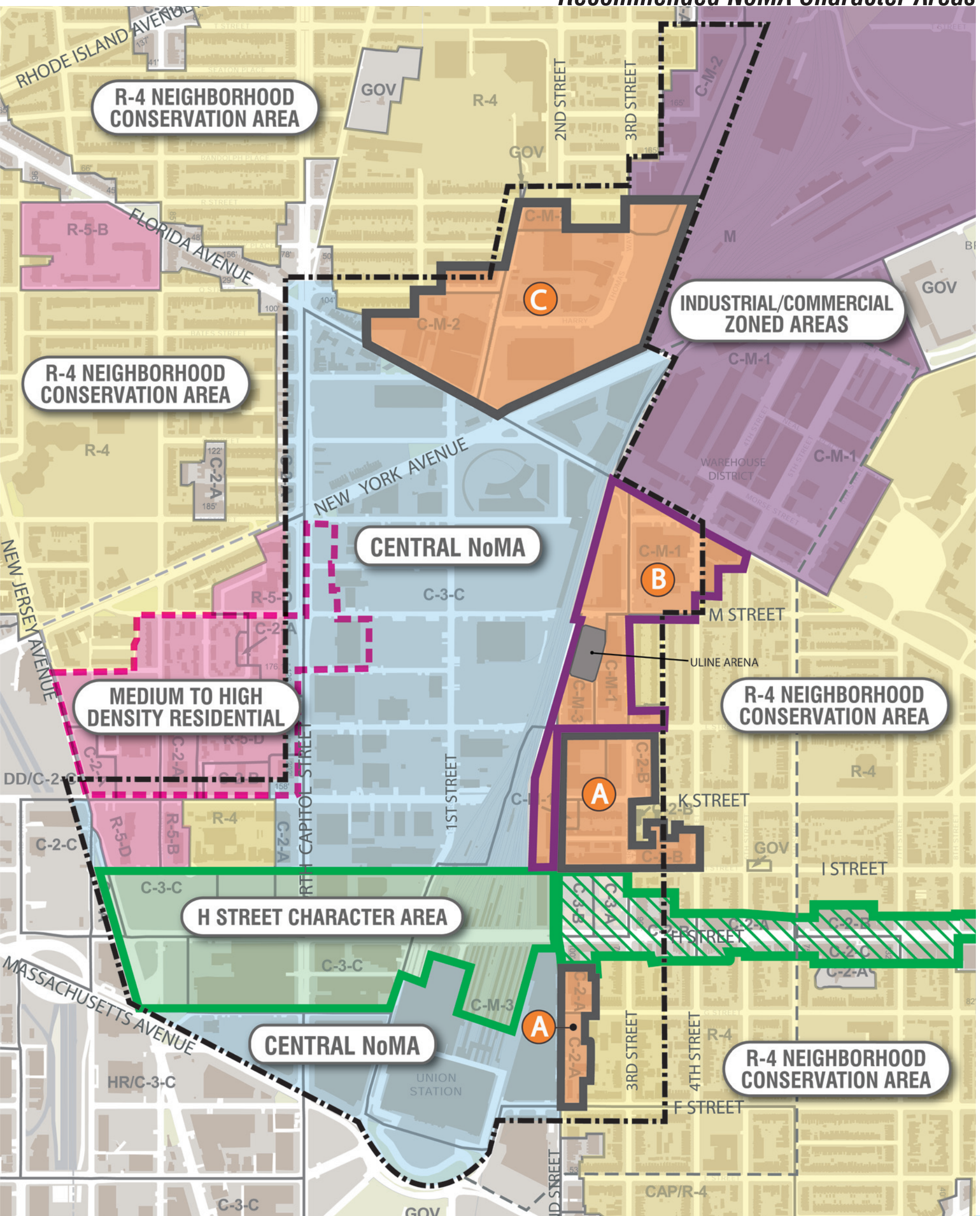
Transition Area B: “Mixed-Use/Creative Industries District”: East of the tracks, within the areas zoned C-M-1 and C-M-3 south of Florida Avenue, as well as the sites between I and L Streets along the tracks.

Transition Area C: “North NoMA/Eckington Neighborhood” Boundaries: Within the area zoned C-M-2 and M north of Florida and New York Avenues and below R Street, NE.

H Street Character Area (West of 2nd Street NE) Boundaries: Area between G & I Streets, from 2nd Street NE, west to New Jersey Avenue.

R-4 Residential: “Neighborhood Conservation Areas” Boundaries: All R-4 zoned areas.

Recommended NoMA Character Areas



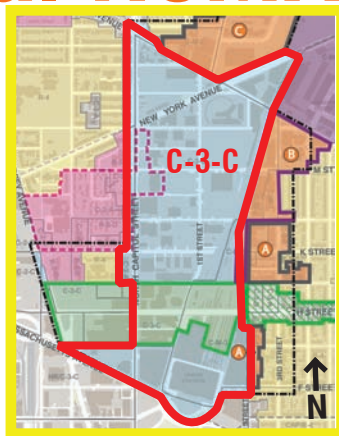
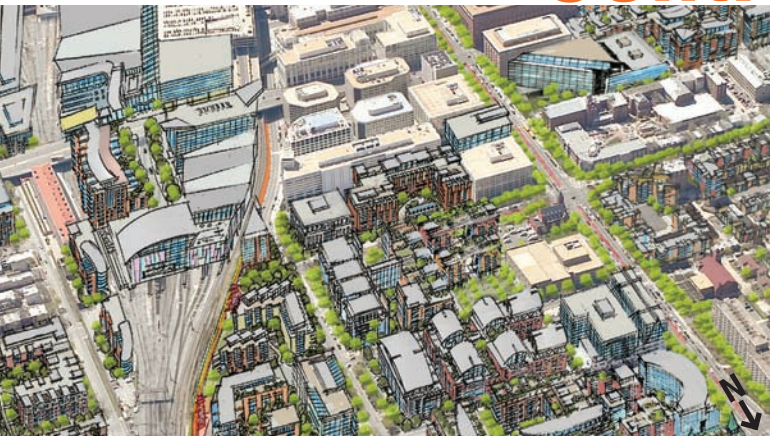
LEGEND

-  Neighborhood Transition Area: Sub Areas A, B, C
-  H Street Overlay
-  H Street Character Area
-  R-4 Neighborhood Conservation Area
-  Central NoMA
-  Industrial/Commercial Zoned Areas
-  Medium to High Density Residential
-  NorthWest One
-  Zoning Boundary
-  Study Area Boundary



CHARACTER AREA DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Central NoMA



A Downtown neighborhood with a great environment for living and working and a unique identity

(blue area on Recommended NoMA Character Areas map, page 5.7)
Boundaries: All C-3-C-zoned area north of I Street, east of North Capitol Street and south of Florida Avenue, except for Northwest One planning parcels along North Capitol Street; plus the triangular area bounded by New York Ave, Florida Ave, and the railroad tracks; and, Union Station and all areas west of Union Station south of G Street.

VISION

- Capitalize on substantial vacant land and Metrorail connections to create a balanced 50/50 mix of high density office and residential uses. With its proximity to Downtown, this is the area with the best long-term potential for office development. It is also where a limited-term residential tax abatement might be employed to ensure the desired mix of uses.
- Break down the scale of developments on large tracts of assembled land, emphasize a fine-grained street grid with the re-introduction of some streets that were closed when rail lines were consolidated for Union Station.
- Encourage the provision of multiple individual entrances in residential developments, especially on east-west streets, by embedding townhouse-like structures within the lower floors of large building.
- Emphasize creative architecture that keys-off the area's prior industrial character through the preservation and creative adaptive re-use of historic structures.
- Capture lower-price point office and residential markets through the innovative use of inexpensive building materials.
- Locate community-serving retail along 1st Street to focus community activity. This may require a zoning overlay to encourage development of ground floor space suitable for significant retail use, including restaurants.
- Take advantage of the area's excellent rail-oriented infrastructure by enhancing pedestrian connections to the New York Avenue Metro Station and Union Station.
- Emphasize creative linkages to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, as a unifying element and as a unique public space.

DESIRED LAND USE MIX

OFFICE /RESIDENTIAL GOALS:

- Target 50/50 mix of commercial/residential uses.
- Promote active streets with many residential entrances.

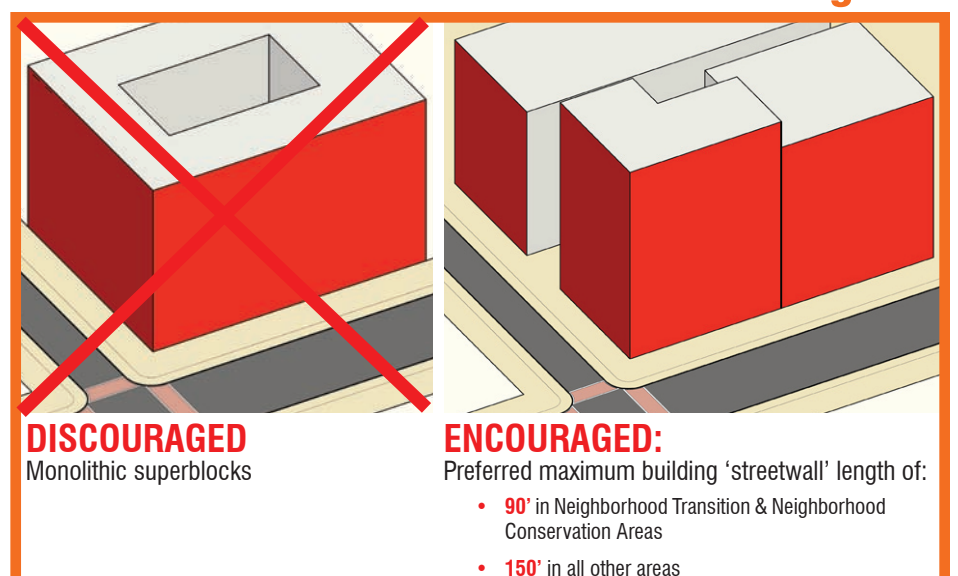
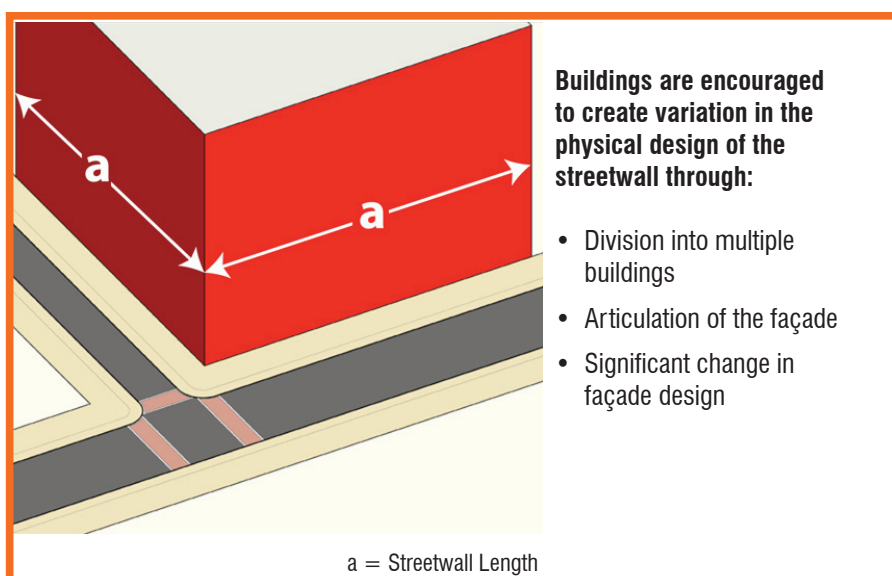
RETAIL GOALS

- Mix of retail focus areas, including:
 - Neighborhood serving retail along 1st Street spine.
 - Anchor retail at Union Station and, possibly along N Street between North Capitol and 2nd Streets.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- A limited amount of Residential Tax Abatements available for a defined period of time to induce preferred land-use mix.
- Omit Transferable Development Rights (TDR) receiving zones in NoMA from areas where Inclusionary Zoning would be required. TDRs have already maximized development potential, and few or no incentives remain to developer to provide affordable housing.
- Emphasize fine-grained street grid with strong residential character (multiple individual entrances) on east-west streets.
- Potential zoning overlay for limited first floor areas at corners of 1st Street, NE and K, L, M and N Streets to require 14'-clear heights and clear glass and to permit only sales-tax producing (e.g., retail) uses in these corner spaces.
- Encourage public space permits to allow for temporary vendors along 1st Street, NE.
- Develop design review procedures and conduct design review for projects receiving tax abatement and other incentives and for those on prominent sites and large sites. This will insure that public incentives are well invested.

STREETWALL VARIETY: Streetwall Length



INFRASTRUCTURE,
TRANSPORTATION,
ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE

- Develop an Infrastructure and Utility Impact study for the whole area.
- Work with DDOT to study the feasibility and cost of introducing new streets and alleys designated in the Open Space Section of the Plan.

SHORT-TERM

- Work with DDOT on re-design of 1st Street rebuilding in time to facilitate a FY 2007 completion date; work with DDOT to provide sidewalks and basic streetscape improvements at appropriate locations including a possible public plaza in the block of 1st Street between K and L Streets. (See 1st Street Recommendation Box at right). Include Casey Tree Foundation in the process.
- Work with WMATA to study improvement of bus routes and connections to New York Avenue Metro Station.

SHORT-TERM

- Improve existing north-south shuttle service as more developments are completed.

MID-TERM

- Better bus connections to New York Avenue Metro Station.

LONG-TERM

- Develop better city-wide connections with K Street transit way, and/or north-south circulator route.
- Work with DDOT to develop a “Pedestrian Plan” for the area.
- Introduce new streets/alleys to improve “Central NoMA” vehicular/pedestrian movement, and alleviate existing traffic diversions through nearby R-4 residential areas.
- Proceed with the next step in planning: a Conceptual Public Realm Plan, comprising streets, open spaces and parks, transit hubs, landscape guidelines, etc.
- Engage DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities to pursue and fund artist/underpass projects.
- Metropolitan Branch Trail/“Burnham Spine” developed as transportation as well as a recreation spine:
 - Vertical connections to trail: ramps, stairs, elevators
 - Trail-level connections to adjacent buildings
 - Continuation of “public-art” emphasis to trail: art-walk
 - Potential “greening” of the trail in some areas
 - Extension of the elevated trail down to L Street, connecting into future air-rights development over tracks

BUILDING DESIGN

- Offer increased design review assistance for projects of significant importance (i.e., prominent site, extremely large development site, modification of historic resource, etc)

- Advocate the use of NCPC security design standards, (summarized in Appendix E.1-E.3) Note that the District’s standards and open space review process may require design solutions that exceed the requirements of NCPC’s security design standards.
- High quality retail ground floor design (see below).
- For large residential building types, encourage building type with residential ‘townhouses’ embedded in base of larger buildings.
- Most buildings will reach 110 to 130 foot height limits with potential TDR floor area.

1st Street: Recommended Revisions

Adjusting DDOT’s current plans to fit the new NoMA Vision

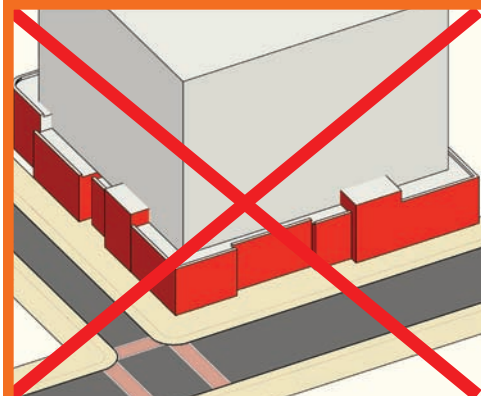
Intent

The current plans for rebuilding 1st Street were conceived before the emergence of a comprehensive vision for the area. 1st Street was not yet seen as the ‘main street’, social spine, and pedestrian-oriented heart of a mixed use neighborhood. Given this new context, the Office of Planning and DDOT should continue the process (already begun) of working together to adjust current plans in time to meet project deadlines for capital improvements that have already been budgeted for.

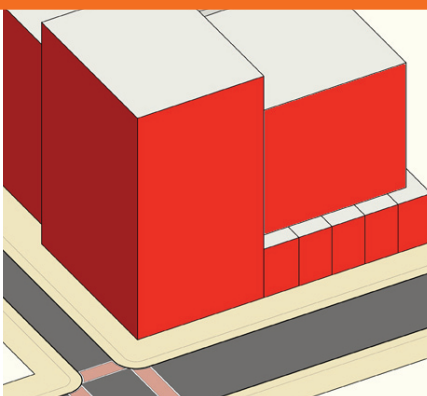
Recommendations

1. Alter current plans for 5’ grassy strip and 6’ sidewalk to: 4’ pervious paving strip with tree wells and 9’ sidewalk.
2. Study the elimination of bike lane (or portion of bike lane) on east side of 1st Street, so that on-street parallel parking can be accommodated. Bike trail can be accommodated through one or more of the following means: on elevated Metropolitan Branch Trail extension (proposed in this Plan; or, on extension of 2nd Street west of the tracks (proposed in this Plan); or, on an enlarged version of the already-proposed at-grade bike trail east of the tracks along 2nd Street.
3. Encourage simple, inexpensive paving materials (such as placed concrete in a 3 foot joint grid), executed with the highest quality. Simple, utilitarian (not ‘over-designed’) street furniture and material-palette for 1st Street can achieve an understated elegance and functional beauty appropriate to NoMA’s industrial past and future.
4. Incorporate quality security design strategies to the 1st Street design so that they don’t have to be added later, using NCPC’s National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan.
 - Use street design to limit large vehicle movements in certain areas, rather than adding artificial physical barriers at the curb line.
 - Incorporate physical perimeter security barriers with decorative tree wells, planters, light poles, signage, benches, parking meters, trash receptacles and other streetscape elements.
 - Plant new trees and protect existing trees as they help minimize the visual impact and physical intrusion of the security barriers in the urban landscape.
 - Include curbs, copings and retaining walls into the design to reduce the perceived height of the security barriers.

STREETWALL VARIETY: Building Massing



DISCOURAGED:
A single building with a base designed to look like multiple ‘fake’ buildings.

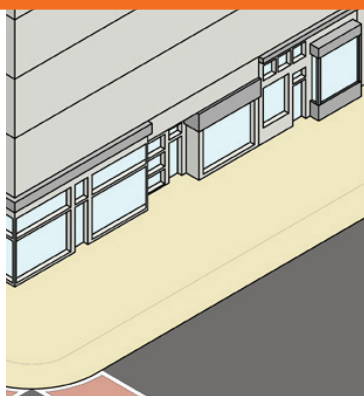


ENCOURAGED:
A single building with articulated massing.

QUALITY RETAIL DESIGN



DISCOURAGED:
Low visual openness at street level



ENCOURAGED:
Significant glass coverage for transparency & views

- Discourage tinted glass
- Opaque, smoked or decorative glass for accents only
- Maintain minimum 80% (approximately) glass coverage for overall storefront dimensions
- Ground floor window tops no lower than 9’ above sidewalk
- Minimum 14’ floor-to-ceiling height at ground floor retail

CHARACTER AREA DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

R-4 Residential:
Neighborhood Conservation
Areas

DC’s great residential legacy - protection
for thriving rowhouse neighborhoods

(yellow areas on Recommended NoMA Character Areas map,
page 5.7)
Boundaries: All R-4 zoned areas



VISION

- Historic preservation and creative, adaptive re-use of historic structures.
- Preserve and enhance existing residential rowhouse fabric.
- Human-scaled architectural and streetscape elements.
- New architecture should be comfortable with existing neighborhoods, without introducing false historical elements. Modern, contemporary architecture should be encouraged, as long as scale transitions and architectural elements provide continuity.

DESIRED LAND USE MIX

- Low density.
- Primarily residential.
- Limited office uses.
- No support for PUD’s or zoning changes in existing rowhouse residential areas.

RETAIL GOALS:

- Limited neighborhood serving retail.
- Primary retail along H Street.

INFRASTRUCTURE,
TRANSPORTATION,
ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE

- Discourage truck and commuter traffic flow through neighborhood ‘short-cuts’.
- Neighborhood traffic calming (including discouragement of construction & Wholesale Market truck neighborhood cut-throughs along 3rd Street).
- Stricter parking enforcement to free up more spaces for residents.
- Landscaping & Public Realm plan for street improvements.

BUILDING DESIGN

- Consistency with existing neighborhood fabric

Stanton Park



Truxton Circle



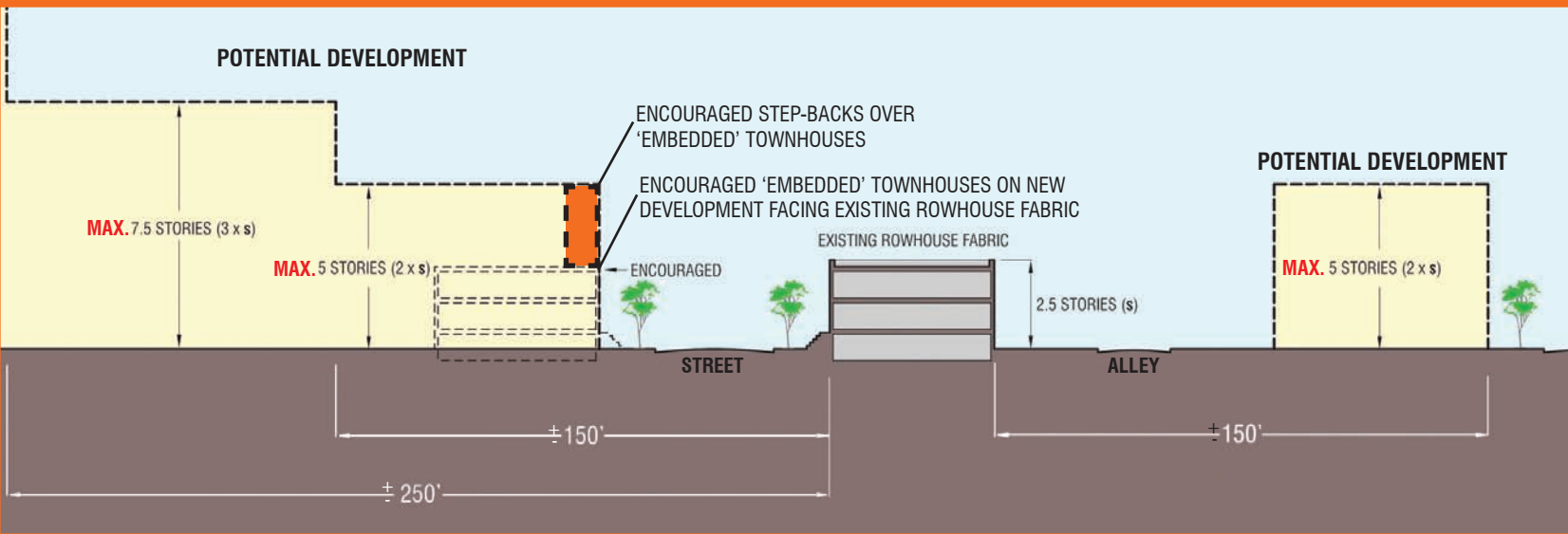
Eckington



Near Northeast



BUILDING SCALE IN TRANSITION AREAS



ENCOURAGED: New development should step down in height close to existing rowhouse fabric and it can be higher towards the railroad tracks.

Guideline:

- Within 150’ of existing rowhouse fabric, max. height = 2 times # of existing rowhouse stories
- Within 250’ of existing rowhouse fabric, max. height = 3 times # of existing rowhouse stories