



Kids playing in a neighborhood street



Kids playing in the Columbia Heights Civic Plaza's splash fountain



Kids playing in Swampoodle park's playground in NoMa

UD-3 Fostering A Vibrant Public Life ⁹¹²

The District's public realm represents half of Washington, DC's land area, with street rights-of-way alone accounting for more than 10,000 acres. The public realm provides spaces for residents to experience District life, recreate and relax, and socialize. Great public spaces are free and available to all. They have the capacity to create neighborhood pride, become places for cultural and civic events, encourage a more open and democratic society, and provide access for marginalized individuals and groups to express themselves. The District is fortunate to have a wealth of park spaces, squares, and pedestrian-friendly streets that can perform these vital roles. However, these parks and spaces can often be designed or programmed in ways that prevent public life from being fully realized, anything from a lack of seating to regulations that disincentivize community maintenance. Historically, public spaces and amenities have not been equally provided and maintained to serve residents of color, and today, real and perceptual barriers can make public space less inviting to various groups. Many streets have transportation demands that overwhelm the public life of the sidewalk, making spending time outside less enjoyable and discouraging cafe seating and outdoor retailing. The design of public space provides some of the best opportunities for the District to improve livability, enjoyment, and public life, and advance equitable development. It is often the quality of public space that defines the great cities and neighborhoods of the world. ^{912.1}

UD-3.1 Public Life For All ⁹¹³

A varied and vibrant public life is an important part of achieving an inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Washington, DC. Having a vibrant public life for all means that every neighborhood can realize spaces that encourage greater community use, interaction, and enjoyment. Parts of Washington, DC have a rich public life, but many parts of the District do not fully enjoy the benefits of public life. It is critical to promote many different forms and places for public life that reflect the varied cultures of the District's residents and its neighborhoods. It is also important to design public spaces throughout the District in a way that equitably invites residents to use these common spaces as places to celebrate, relax, and mingle. ^{913.1}

Evolving technology and digital tools can influence and maximize opportunities for a more robust and inclusive public life. The urban design of public places can leverage technology in a variety of ways, such as measuring the success of public spaces in ways that are both experiential and quantitative; merging physical elements of the public realm with virtual augmentation to create new and ephemeral experiences; and communicating information and wayfinding for increased efficiency, safety, and social interaction. The integration of technology into these aspects of public life should be balanced with a vision of people-centered urbanism anchored by real-life experience, equity, and urban vitality. ^{913.2}

District and federal agencies should examine their regulatory systems for permitting public life activities, such as special events and festivals, farmers markets, vending, public art, and café seating so that residents have opportunities to create unique cultural activities (see Maps 9.2 and 9.3 for locations of existing permitted cafés and farmers markets). ^{913.3}

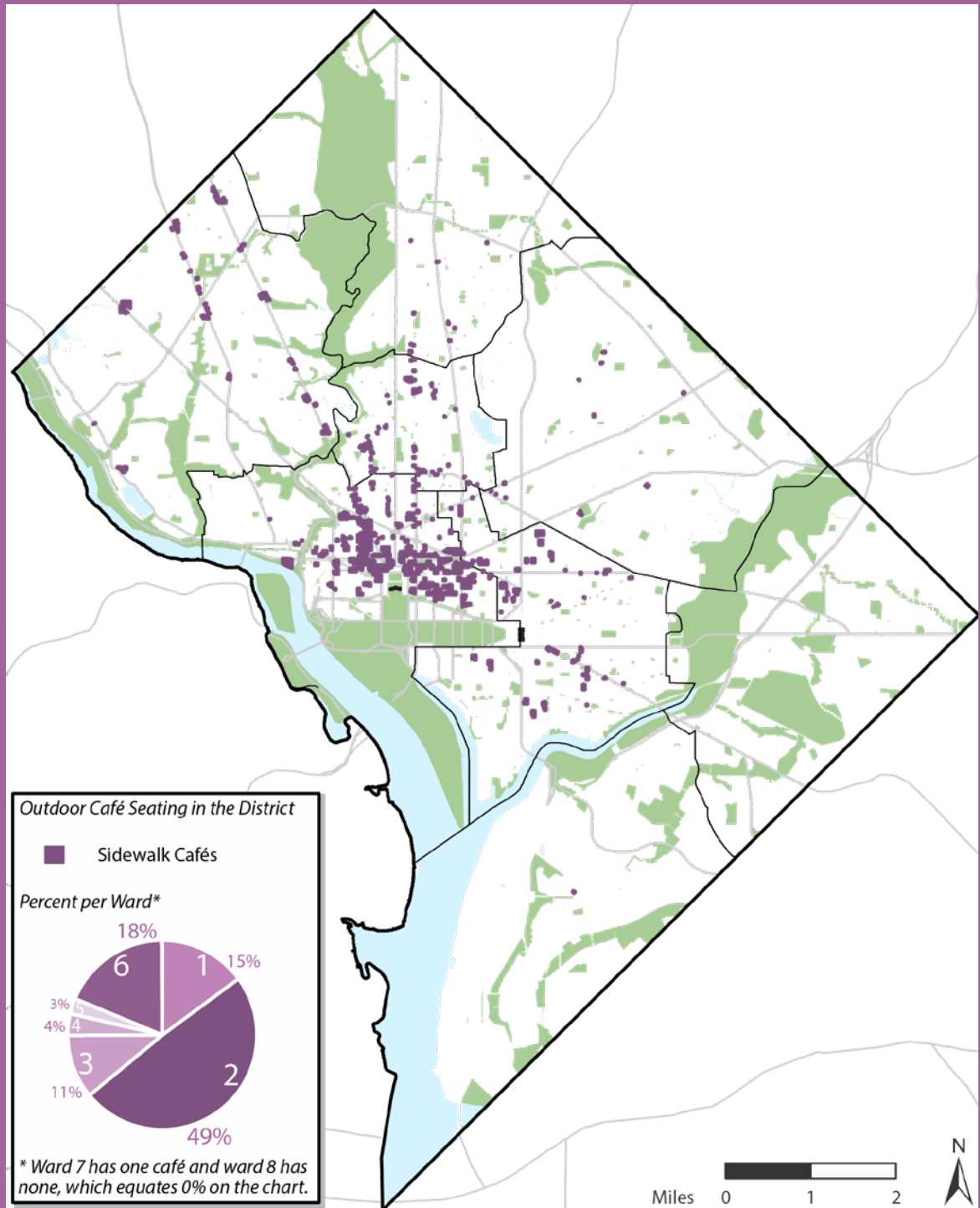
Security has and will be a factor in the design and development of Washington, DC, particularly around government and military facilities. Washington, DC is home to major local, regional, and national events, including First Amendment gatherings, with security considerations. The continuing challenge is to accommodate safety and security needs to protect people and places, while ensuring accessible, welcoming, and attractive public spaces and a connected, thriving community. Coordination between District and federal agencies to address security and public space issues is critical. ^{913.4}

Urban design is a key component in creating safe spaces for all, including communities of color and other groups that may have felt excluded, rather than welcomed, in public spaces. Security design approaches need to be flexible to address emerging threats, use temporary and permanent approaches appropriately, and work in concert with operational activities. ^{913.5}

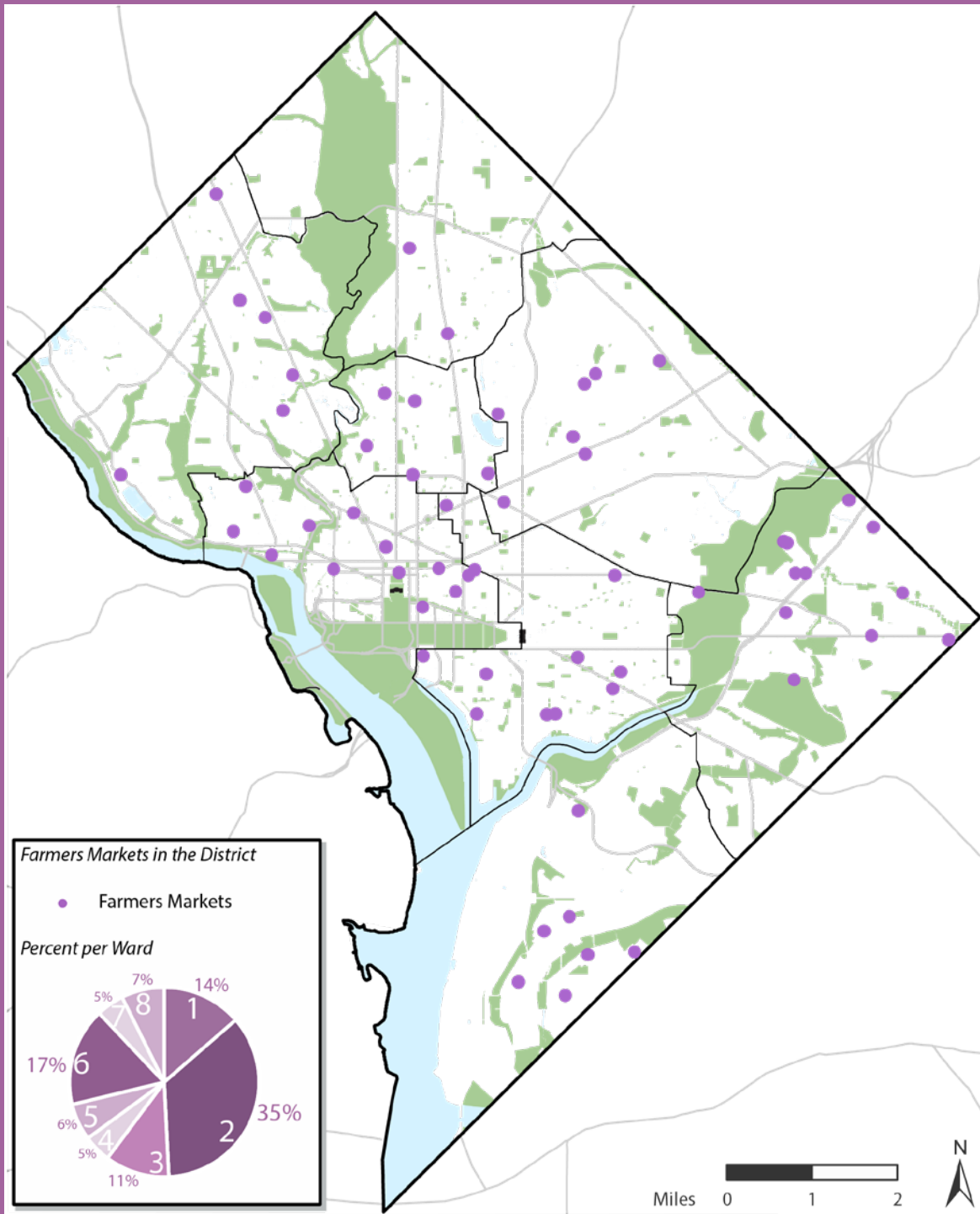
Policy UD-3.1.1: Freely Accessible Public Space

All people, including communities of color, all ages, LGBTQ+ populations and people with disabilities, should have the ability to enjoy public life, express their culture, and feel safe in public space. There should be low barriers for peaceful assembly and free expression in existing public spaces, and new and existing public space design should be accessible, welcoming, and support a mix of activities and users. ^{913.8}

Map 9.2:

Locations of Sidewalk Cafés ^{913.6}

Map 9.3:

Locations of Farmers Markets ^{913.7}



Playable Art: Sound Wave Art Park in the triangle park at the intersection of Minnesota Avenue, 34th, and D Streets, SE.

Policy UD-3.1.2: Security Features in Public Space

Avoid the placement of security barriers within public space. Where necessary, security measures should be sensitively integrated into the permanent design of streets and public spaces to achieve pedestrian-friendly streets and animated public spaces that support the daily activities of District residents, workers and visitors. Examples include reinforced benches, bicycle racks, stairways and ramps, and planter boxes. Retractable vehicle barriers, guard booths, and long lines of bollards should be avoided. Consider safety and security needs from the beginning of the design process to develop less intrusive solutions. Encourage architectural design and site planning methods that minimize perimeter security requirements and reduce impacts on the public realm. Appropriately use temporary security features and remove promptly when no longer needed. ^{913.9}

Policy UD-3.1.3: Public Spaces for Cultural Expression

Encourage the programming of streets and other outdoor spaces with cultural and community events and activities (such as open streets, performances, public art, festivals, and farmers markets) that stimulate street life and allow public expression of neighborhood culture. ^{913.10}

Policy UD-3.1.4: Markets for Small and Local Businesses

Use public spaces to support the creation of temporary markets and vending to both expand opportunities for small and local businesses and encourage more active use of public spaces. ^{913.11}

Policy UD-3.1.5: Sidewalk Culture

Encourage the use and expansion of sidewalk cafes throughout the District through more efficient and quicker permit processes, while discouraging the enclosure of sidewalk cafes that effectively transforms them into private indoor space. The design of sidewalk cafes should complement the street environment and not impede pedestrian movement. ^{913.12}

Policy UD-3.1.6: Digital Public Life

Support the District's urban design and public life goals through the use of emerging interactive technologies, and ensure adoption and use of technologies improves, rather than prevents, access and participation. Enhance community engagement through place-based interactive surveys. Improve resident knowledge of local architecture and heritage and expand information distribution for upcoming programming and events. ^{913.13}

Action UD-3.1.A: Street Vending

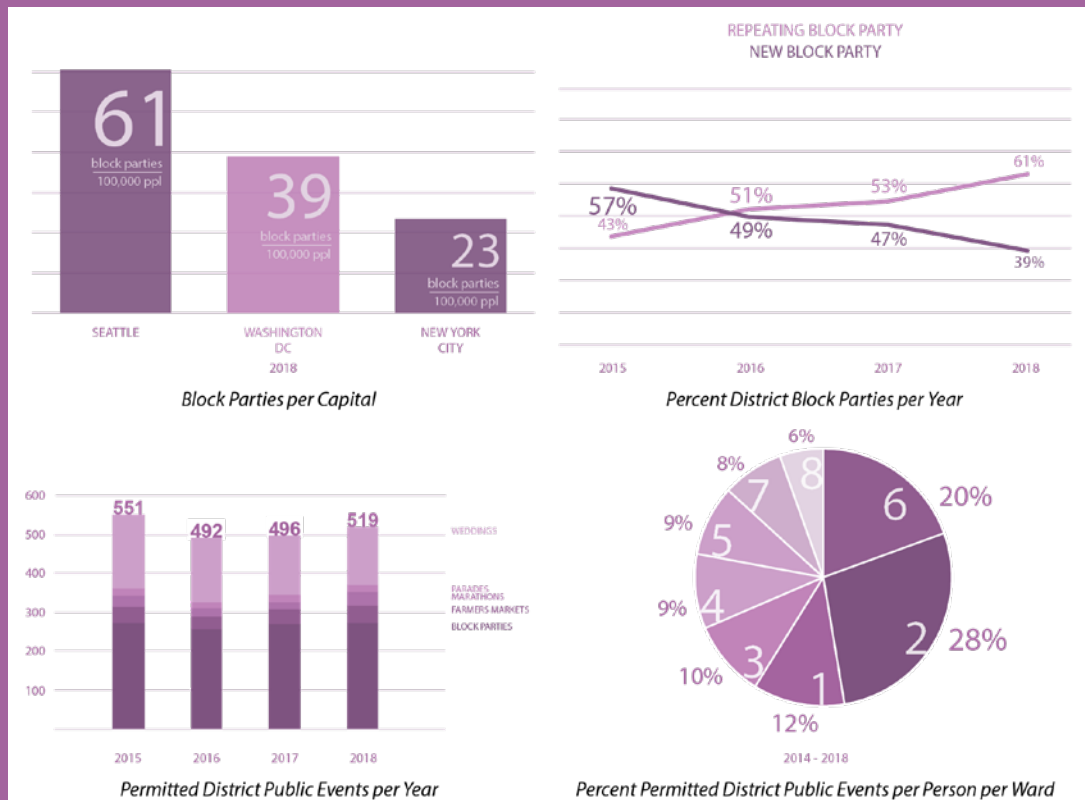
Assess street vending, sidewalk café, and parklet usage to be responsive to the goals of creating lively and animated neighborhood streets and also adequately protect public safety and movement. ^{913.14}

Action UD-3.1.B: Reduce Barriers to Permitting of Public Space

Reduce procedural barriers for neighborhood and civic-oriented uses of public space. Such uses may include both one-time and recurring events, such as festivals and farmers markets, and longer-term installations, such as parklets and plazas. ^{913.15}

Action UD-3.1.C: State of Public Life Report

Create a report benchmarking the progress in expanding public life across Washington, DC as part of the Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle. The report would track aspects of public life, including the annual number of community and special events, outdoor café seating, free speech activities, vending licenses, and use counts of major public spaces and streets. See Figure 9.18 for an example of public life event data. ^{913.16}

Figure 9.18:**Public Life Dashboard of Permitted Events** ^{913.17}

The public life dashboard provides a snapshot of the health of Washington, DC's public life. It also presents information to assess the success of our policies and actions, with the goal of enhancing opportunities for creating, recreating, and socializing in public space. The above dashboard shows the equitable distribution and overall level of public events and block parties in the District across all eight wards.



Crossing the Street is a series of events designed to engage communities by using arts and culture to activate neighborhood spaces.

Action UD-3.1.D: Digital Public Realm Initiative

As a pilot test, develop online tools to collect and share data about public life consistent with appropriate privacy protections. Leverage aggregated information from personal mobile devices and from smart-city infrastructure to better understand how the public realm is used to inform policies and actions that improve public space design, increase physical connectivity, improve access to amenities and local businesses, improve wayfinding, and disseminate real-time information to residents about events, public gatherings, and security concerns. ^{913.18}

UD-3.2 Designing the Active District ⁹¹⁴

The design of a city can influence how its residents use it. Physical activity can be fostered by designing spaces and streets that encourage walking, bicycling, and other forms of active movement and recreation. Active urban design entails several strategies. Recent research has demonstrated that a diverse mix of land uses, a well-connected street system, and a good public transit system all tend to increase physical activity among residents. The organization and location of parks, playgrounds, and plazas can also make active recreation opportunities more accessible to children and their families. Placing food markets and other healthy food options throughout the District can increase convenient and equitable food access and promote healthy eating. Complete streets can encourage walking and bicycling among all ages by developing safe, vibrant, and accessible streetscapes. Furthermore, streets that are safe for all will encourage more active use. Many of these active design strategies will benefit not only the health of District residents but also the environment, as they spur fewer vehicle miles traveled and better air quality. ^{914.1}

The following policy section offers several specific planning and design strategies that can promote physical activity. The policies address both public- and private sector projects, ranging from the design of neighborhoods to the design of streets. ^{914.2}

Policy UD 3.2.1: Buildings that Enable Social Interaction

Residential building design should provide opportunities and spaces for interaction, such as open-air porch entrances, balconies, front stoops, and shared yards. Large multi-family buildings should prioritize individual,

ground-level entrances to units that open up to the street in addition to interior access to units through a shared private lobby. ^{914.3}

Policy UD 3.2.2: Social and Community Meeting Spaces

New planned unit developments (PUDs) and other large-scale developments should provide for a mix of social and third spaces—for example, schools, retail stores, cultural and community spaces, and recreational facilities. ^{914.4}

Policy UD 3.2.3: Recreational Space Design for Large Site Development

Design open spaces conducive to physical activity as part of large-scale developments or create new recreation spaces (such as parks, walking paths, trails, and waterfront recreation) in neighborhoods lacking access to public open spaces. ^{914.5}

Policy UD 3.2.4: Pedestrian-Convenient Transit

Incorporate design interventions to make transit stops friendly to users and encourage public life and pedestrian activity. Bus stop shelters should protect users from sun, wind, and rain; furnish adequate seating; and build connections between transit stops and adjacent plazas or parks. ^{914.6}

Policy UD-3.2.5: Safe and Active Public Spaces and Streets

The design of the built environment should encourage public activity throughout the day and help minimize the potential for criminal activity. Design measures include active building frontages (such as windows, balconies, and frequently spaced entrances) adequate lighting that avoids glare and shadow, maintaining clear lines of sight and visual access, and avoiding dead-end streets. Where feasible consider closing streets to vehicular traffic to enhance pedestrian and cycling uses of streets. ^{914.7}

Action UD-3.2.A: Security-Related Design Guidelines

Work collaboratively with federal agencies to develop design measures which accommodate public space security needs that support ground level activities and other public space amenities and special events. ^{914.8}

See the Land Use and Transportation Elements for additional policies on street closures for security.



Café seating on 7th Street SE in Eastern Market

UD-3.3 Places For Linger ⁹¹⁵

There are many great spaces for people in Washington, DC, such as Columbia Heights Plaza, Friendship (Turtle) Park, and Yards Park, but the vast majority of small parks and plazas are underused spaces that don't fully serve the recreational or social needs of residents. This is most evident in the design of Metrorail (Metro) stations; a survey of Metro stations (shown in Map 9.4) reveals that only 45 percent have plazas that feature critical elements such as benches or artwork. It is vital that public spaces are designed to invite people to linger and share experiences. Safety, comfort, and pleasure are the key qualities present in all great public spaces and essential conditions for unlocking the potential of small parks and plazas and creating a vibrant public life. As new neighborhoods are built or existing public spaces are improved, these design parameters should be consulted to encourage socializing and recreating in the District's open spaces ^{915.1}

Policy UD-3.3.1: Neighborhood Meeting Places

Provide places for neighborhood public life through the creation of public plazas at existing Metro stations or urban squares in new development. Encourage the activation of such spaces through the design of adjacent structures, including the location of shop entrances, window displays, awnings, and outdoor dining areas. ^{915.3}

Policy UD-3.3.2: Small Parks for Recreation

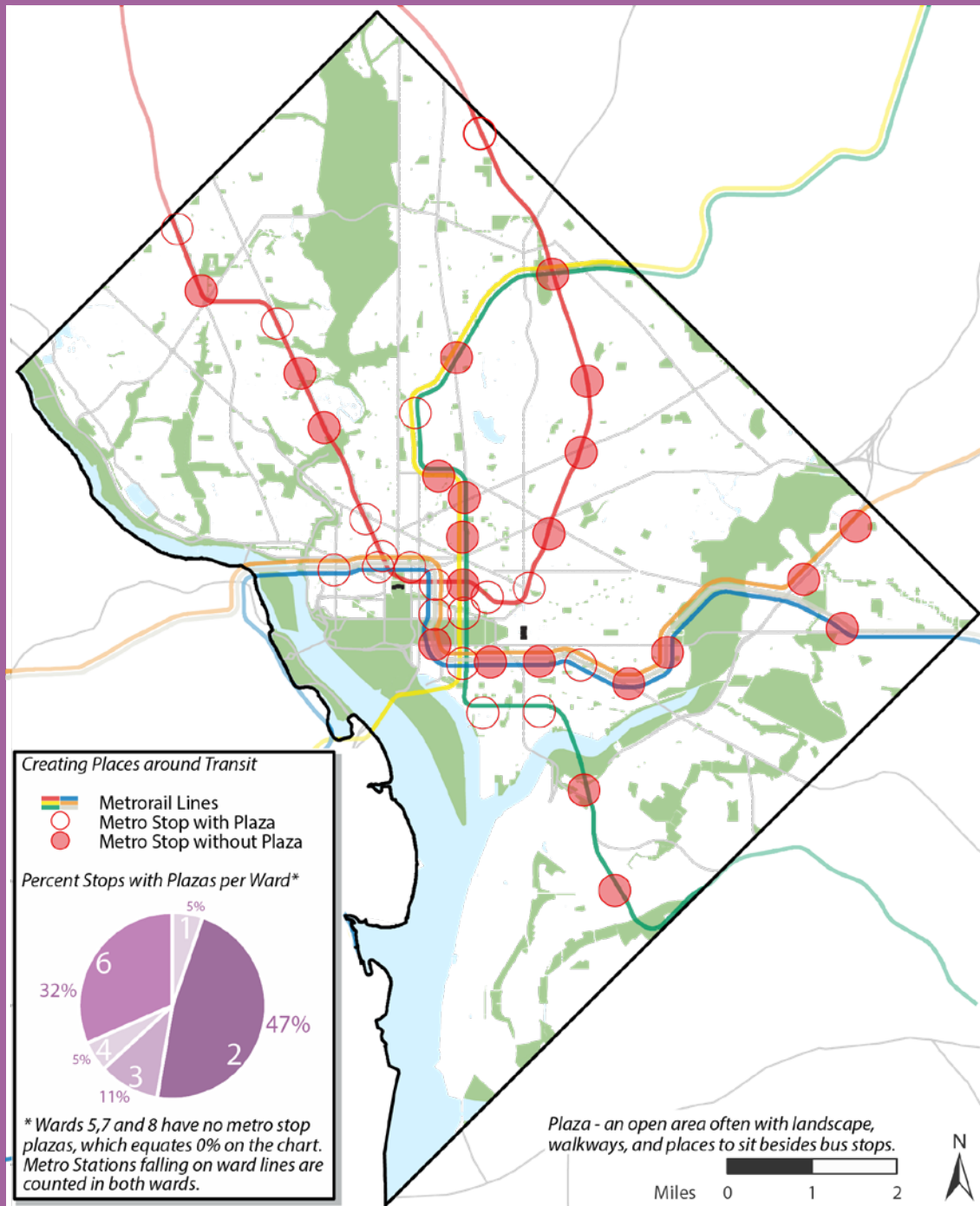
Leverage small parks, including triangle parks, linear parks, and medians, to serve as places for recreation, community gathering, and play by encouraging greater resident and community design and management of these spaces through grant and partnership programs. ^{915.4}

Policy UD-3.3.3: Plazas for Diverse Uses

Design plazas to accommodate physical activities like dancing or ball play, passive activities like sitting and chess, and cultural events like concerts, exhibits, and historical celebrations. Plazas can also provide space for cafe-style seating and farmers markets. When programming plazas, consider the needs of users with varying mobility levels. ^{915.5}

Map 9.4:

Metrorail Stations with Plazas 915.2





Crossing the Street events encourage cultural Expression

Policy UD-3.3.4: Plaza Design for Weather Conditions

Design plazas to include sunny areas protected from the wind for use in the colder seasons, shaded areas for use in hot, sunny weather, and slick-proof surfaces with excellent drainage for storm events to facilitate year-round use.

915.6

Policy UD-3.3.5: Design for Safety

Design parks and plazas to promote safety from crime and injury through clear sightlines in and out of public spaces, maintaining a state of good repair of sidewalks and pathways, encouraging community stewardship, and inviting evening use through programming and well-designed lighting. 915.7

Action UD-3.3.A: Cross-Agency Small Parks Partnership Program

Develop a community partnership program that includes the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and the DC Department of General Services (DGS) to improve and activate small parks through a combination of landscaping, recreation amenities, signage, and street design that contributes to neighborhood recreation, definition, and identity. 915.8

Action UD-3.3.B: Small Park Management

Work with NPS to transfer, lease, exchange and/or enter into cooperative agreements or partnerships of key small parks in NPS's jurisdiction as well as the District's jurisdiction to enhance community use, programming, and stewardship. 915.9

Action UD-3.3.C: Design Standards for Public Space Design

Create public space design guidelines for District-controlled parks and plazas that highlight designing for diverse cultural uses, placemaking, and socializing. 915.10

UD-4 Making Great Urban Architecture ⁹¹⁶

While a city is made up of more than its buildings, its image is often linked to its architectural expression. This is especially true in a capital city like Washington, DC, which must balance its roles as a national emblem and a city of neighborhoods. As an intentionally planned capital, designers have given a special emphasis to street corridors, axial vistas, and symbolic buildings, public space, and monuments to support the plan's broader vision. A series of height acts and various zoning regulations gave Washington three-dimensional form and a distinct horizontality that emphasizes the more vertical prominence of civic landmarks. Washington, DC is more than a capital city of grand proportions and axial formality. Its architectural legacy includes multiple scales: the finer-grained expression of bay window projections, tower elements, varied storefronts, and smaller-scale institutional buildings shaped by time-tested building codes and public space regulations. ^{916.1}

Washington has a long-standing civic design tradition. Moving forward, innovative, creative design should celebrate District public life, and embrace design excellence and sustainability. Civic buildings should be community icons, and transportation infrastructure inspiring. As development continues on waterfronts and signature sites, there are opportunities to create dynamic and contemporary places. ^{916.2}

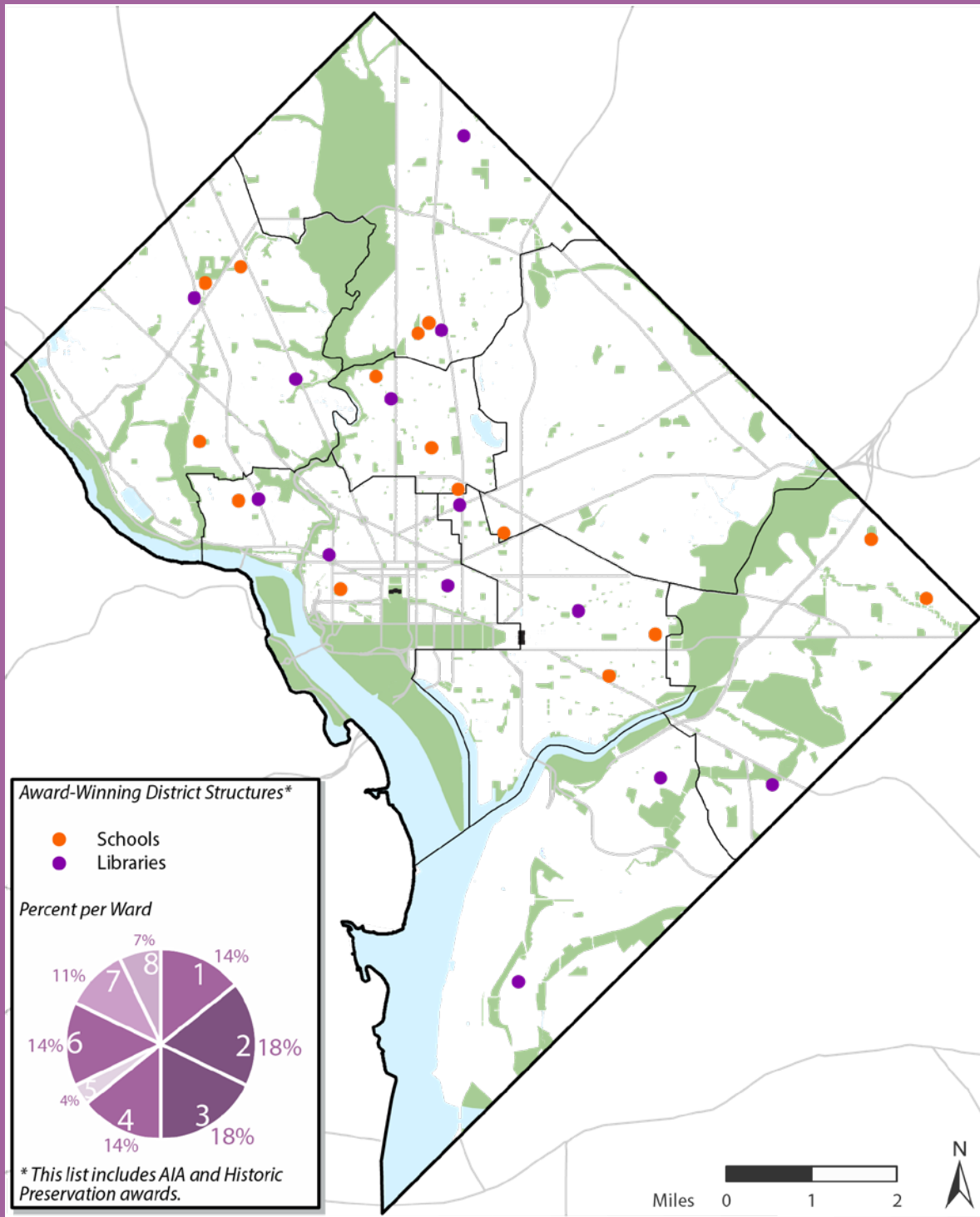
UD-4.1 The Design of Public Buildings, Public Spaces, and Infrastructure ⁹¹⁷

The design of new civic architecture and infrastructure reinforces the District's image as a forward-looking city that supports civic engagement and respects historic context while embracing change and innovation. Each library renovation, fire station addition, school modernization, park renovation, streetscape project, and recreation center construction project is an opportunity to create a great civic asset that contributes to neighborhood livability, collective resident pride in civic institutions, and the District's status as a national capital. The District has intentionally worked over the last 15 years to equitably build award-winning civic buildings in all eight wards (see Map 9.5). The District can continue to lead by example by actively seeking an agenda of sustainable design excellence across all agencies. ^{917.1}



People lingering at the small park at the intersection of 14th and Girard Streets NW

Map 9.5:

Award-Winning District Architecture ^{917.2}

Over the next 20 years, transportation infrastructure projects will provide some of Washington, DC's most important urban design opportunities through the reconstruction of transportation corridors, bridges, and upgraded systems. Within the District, Union Station is one of the world's great train stations and the Metro system itself is an iconic piece of transportation architecture. The integration of new bicycle, high-capacity transit, and other modes into the transportation system, along with the reconstruction of connections across the Anacostia River and other physical boundaries, will shape the identity of the District and its neighborhoods for decades to come. ^{917.3}

Policy UD 4.1.1: Capital Improvements and Urban Design

Use new capital improvement projects as opportunities to strengthen the District's urban design vision. Important community-serving civic places, such as schools and libraries, should be designed as civic icons with a high level of architectural quality, enhancing neighborhood identity and promoting the pride of residents and the admiration of visitors at both the neighborhood and District-wide level. ^{917.4}

Policy UD 4.1.2: Design Excellence

Promote design excellence contracting processes in District capital improvement projects for public buildings and public spaces to achieve a more attractive, functional, and sustainable environment in the District and its neighborhoods. ^{917.5}

Policy UD-4.1.3: Design of New Public Transit

Design transit system elements as an important component of public architecture. Elements including transit shelters, waiting platforms, signage, off-board fare collection, bicycle-sharing facilities, and other improvements should contribute to meeting District-wide urban design goals. ^{917.6}

Policy UD 4.1.4: Metro Station Entrances

Promote design improvements and public art at Metro station entrances and other transit hubs to provide a stronger sense of arrival and orientation for travelers and contribute to neighborhood identity. ^{917.7}

Policy UD-4.1.5: Design of Bridges and Other Transportation Infrastructure

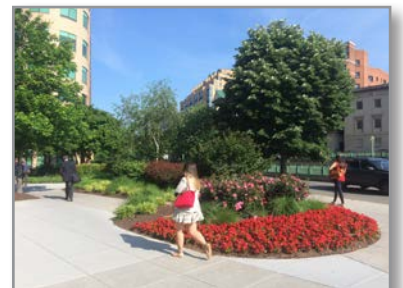
Promote high-quality design and environmentally advanced engineering that accommodates various modes of transportation and supports public life, natural ecology, and civic identity in all infrastructure projects, including bridges and other public works projects. ^{917.8}



The Arts Walk in Brookland is an active plaza with surrounding retail



S Street Park at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue, 7th, and S Streets NW is a small park turned dog park for recreation purposes



Small parks can be improved and activated through cross-agency partnerships

Policy UD-4.1.6: Infrastructure Reuse Projects

Continue to explore creative reuse of obsolete District infrastructure facilities, including transportation and utility structures, to address current needs for new types of public spaces and recreational facilities. ^{917.9}

Policy UD-4.1.7: Design for Longevity

Public buildings and infrastructure should be designed to be aesthetically pleasing with the highest quality and durable building materials providing long-term appearance and functionality and to minimize energy usage and maintenance needs. ^{917.10}

Policy UD 4.1.5: Small Area Plans

Integrate urban design considerations into small area plans and other applicable studies. Consider the use of illustrative design guidelines and place-specific urban design standards as part of these plans. ^{917.11}

Action UD-4.1.A: Design Excellence Program for District Facilities

Develop a Design Excellence Program for architectural/engineering contracting processes for District government-controlled public buildings and public spaces based on the federal General Services Administration Design Excellence Program. ^{917.12}

Action UD-4.1.B: Commission of Fine Arts Review of District Government Capital Projects

Develop guidelines for assisting the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) design review for any applicable District building and infrastructure projects. These guidelines should reflect the District's urban design goals. ^{917.13}

Action UD-4.1.C: Excellence in Urban Design Initiative

Develop a District-wide Excellence in Urban Design Initiative for the District, including an award program and public education campaign, to make Washington, DC a nationally recognized leader in architecture, landscape, environmental design, historic preservation, and city planning.

^{917.14}

UD-4.2 Designing Architecture for People ⁹¹⁸

Buildings and architecture have a direct impact on comfort, sense of safety, and emotional well-being; they form the physical fabric of the District. The quality of the District's physical character should be designed to improve the experience of walking down its streets, create moments of joy and visual delight, and promote a sense of civic pride and order. To achieve this, the relationship of buildings to the human experience should be closely considered, including the size of buildings, their distance to the sidewalk, the treatment of ground-floor-level points of entry, and the impact of light and air. ^{918.1}

Experiences are defined by limitations to senses: environments that relate directly to what is comfortably perceived elicit pleasant emotions, while environments that are disorienting or monotonous challenge the senses and can create isolation or discomfort. Humans interact with and understand the surrounding urban environment based on their inherent physical, sensory, and social capabilities:

- Social: distance (intimacy of communication), group sizes, level of activity;
- Physical: walking distances, material size, speed of movement; and
- Sensory (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.): craftsmanship and texture, order (scale and hierarchy), visual limits. ^{918.2}

Policy UD-4.2.1: Scale and Massing of Large Buildings

Design the scale, height, volume, and massing of large buildings to avoid monotony and enhance the human scale. Varied roof heights, facade widths, and more expressive massing can provide variety and visual interest. Massing should be articulated with a special emphasis placed on corners, especially along important view corridors or intersections. Patterns of architectural elements, expressive structure, or other design tactics can provide variety and visual interest. ^{918.3}

Policy UD-4.2.2: Engaging Ground Floors

Promote a high standard of storefront design and architectural detail in mixed-use buildings to enhance the pedestrian experience of the street. Promote a high degree of visual interest through syncopated storefronts that vary every 20 to 30 feet, provide direct lines of sight to interior social spaces, provide socially oriented uses along the public street, and use tactile, durable materials at the ground level. ^{918.4}

Policy UD-4.2.3: Continuity and Consistency of Building Frontages

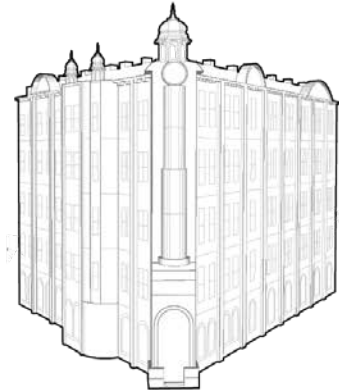
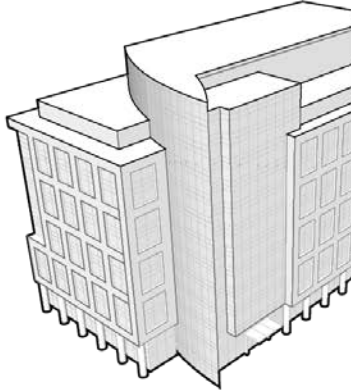
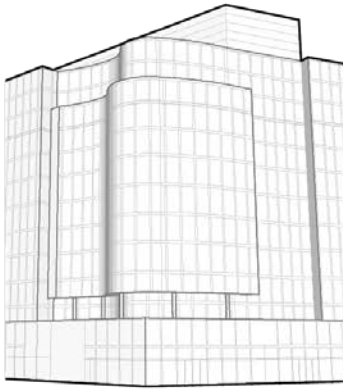
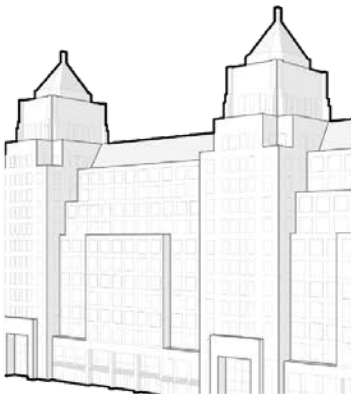
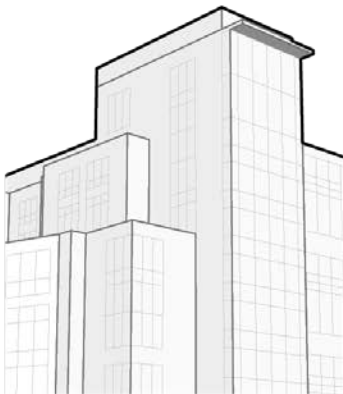
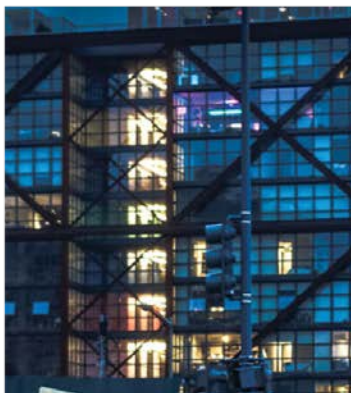
Maintain the established frontage lines of streets by aligning the front walls of new construction with the prevailing facades of adjacent buildings. Avoid placing new construction that extends beyond the existing facade line unless it significantly benefits the public life of the street. Where existing facades are characterized by an established pattern of windows and doors or other elements, new construction should complement the established rhythm. ^{918.5}

Policy UD-4.2.4: Creating Engaging Facades

Design new buildings to respond to the surrounding neighborhood fabric by modulating façade rhythms and using complementary materials, textures, and color, as well as well-designed lighting. Varying design tactics may be used to engage a building with its surroundings. In contexts with smaller lot sizes and multiple closely spaced building entrances, breaking up a building façade in the vertical direction is encouraged, along with strongly defined

Figure 9.19:

Creating Engaging Facades 918.7

*Engaging Corners**Dynamic Rooflines**Varying Textures*

and differentiated bases, centers, and tops of buildings. In areas lacking a strong building-form pattern, the use of complementary or reinterpreted materials and colors could strengthen architectural identity (see Figure 9.19 for recommended façade design strategies). ^{918.6}

Policy UD-4.2.5: Interesting Roof Lines

Design architecturally interesting roof lines to help articulate the massing of buildings and add visual appeal. Along commercial streets, tower elements at corners can help define intersections; in more residential neighborhoods, towers and penthouses can help scale and mass buildings to respond to surrounding building scale and mass. ^{918.8}

Policy UD 4.2.6: Active Facades

Prioritize the placement of multiple entrances for new multi-family and mixed-use buildings across the length of a block rather than a single lobby entrance at one location. New residential developments should promote active facades with spaces for social activity, such as porches, stoops, or patios along public streets, to encourage more activity along the sidewalk and increase social interaction in a neighborhood. ^{918.9}

Action UD-4.2.A: Designing the District for the People Reference Guide

Create a reference guide that catalogues principles of good urban design at a human level. This reference guide should articulate these concepts in a clear manner to be understandable to both the general public and members of the design profession. ^{918.10}

UD-4.3 Celebrate Washington, DC's Unique Design Legacy ⁹¹⁹

Every city has a built form and character that is specific to its sense of place. Like New York City's tiered skyscrapers, San Francisco's Queen Anne row houses, or Boston's brownstones, Washington, DC has its own specific building traditions and character. They are the result of a long history of conscious design goals that have resulted in many defining features of the District. Recognizing their importance, intent, and value is critical to preserving Washington, DC's design legacy, as well as continuing design traditions as the District develops and grows. ^{919.1}



The Anacostia neighborhood library



The Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Georgetown

Washington, DC's unique design legacy is far reaching and touches every aspect of the built environment:

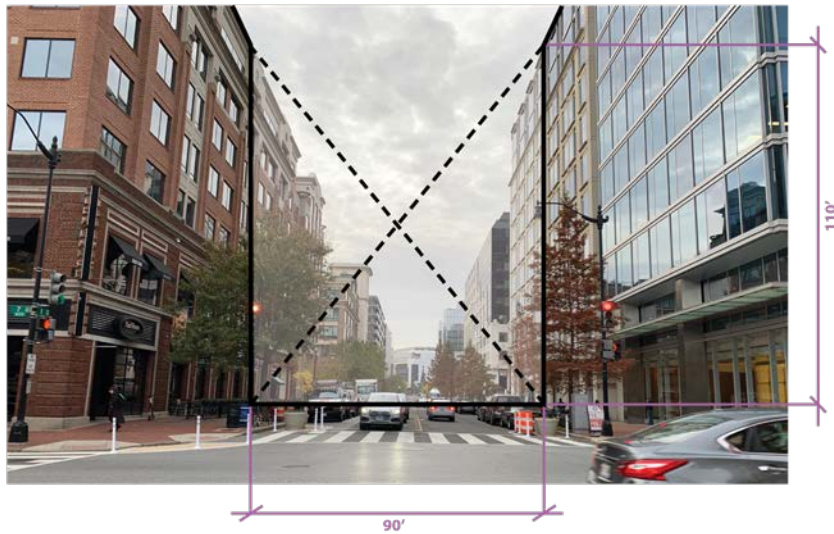
- A relationship of building heights to street width and setbacks for penthouses create a distinct scale along streets and avenues, as well as architectural opportunity for rooftop expression;
- Public parking and building restriction lines establish a green and park-like area along residential streets;
- Limits on building height give the District its consistent skyline and open look and feel;
- Shop windows, awnings, and wide sidewalks are emblematic of active and inviting commercial areas; and
- Building projections such as porches, bay windows, oriels, and towers embellish buildings and frame picturesque views. ^{919.2}

This design legacy is the result of conscious efforts to shape the District and is created through a number of different regulatory controls, some established for a specific design intent and others for practical reasons. Although they have evolved over time in response to concurrent planning and architectural trends, it is their consistent application that is most important. Their continuous use and enforcement has greatly benefited the District and its residents by creating distinct places to live, work, and visit. ^{919.3}

Policy UD-4.3.1: Recognize the Legacy of the Height Act

Utilize the basic principles for regulating building height by street width in the Height of Buildings Act of 1910 to guide the redevelopment of corridors and new large site developments, continuing Washington, DC's historic design tradition of well-proportioned streets and consistent building heights (see Figure 9.20). Examine opportunities where enabling buildings to exceed zoning height restrictions can encourage better site massing and architectural design. ^{919.4}

Figure 9.20:

Height Act Diagram ^{919.5}

The Height of Buildings Act generally regulates building height based on the width of the street it faces.

For streets with mixed-use and non-residential uses:

max. building height = street width + 20'

For streets where only residential uses are permitted the following rules apply:

Maximum building height
Streets < 60' wide
Streets 60' - 65' wide
Streets > 65' wide

90'
max. building height = street width
max. building height = 60'
max. building height = street width - 10'

Policy UD-4.3.2: Building Projections That Shape Urban Form

Design building projections to enhance the visual experience of the street and neighborhoods as a whole, as well as add distinct form to individual buildings. Projections should provide design embellishments while respecting the scale of the primary building façade, access to light and air for adjacent properties, view sheds, and the pedestrian experience of the street (see Figure 9.21). ^{919.6}



The Marvin Gaye Recreation center is an award-winning public building near the Capitol Heights metro station



Massing of a large building by the Columbia Heights metro station

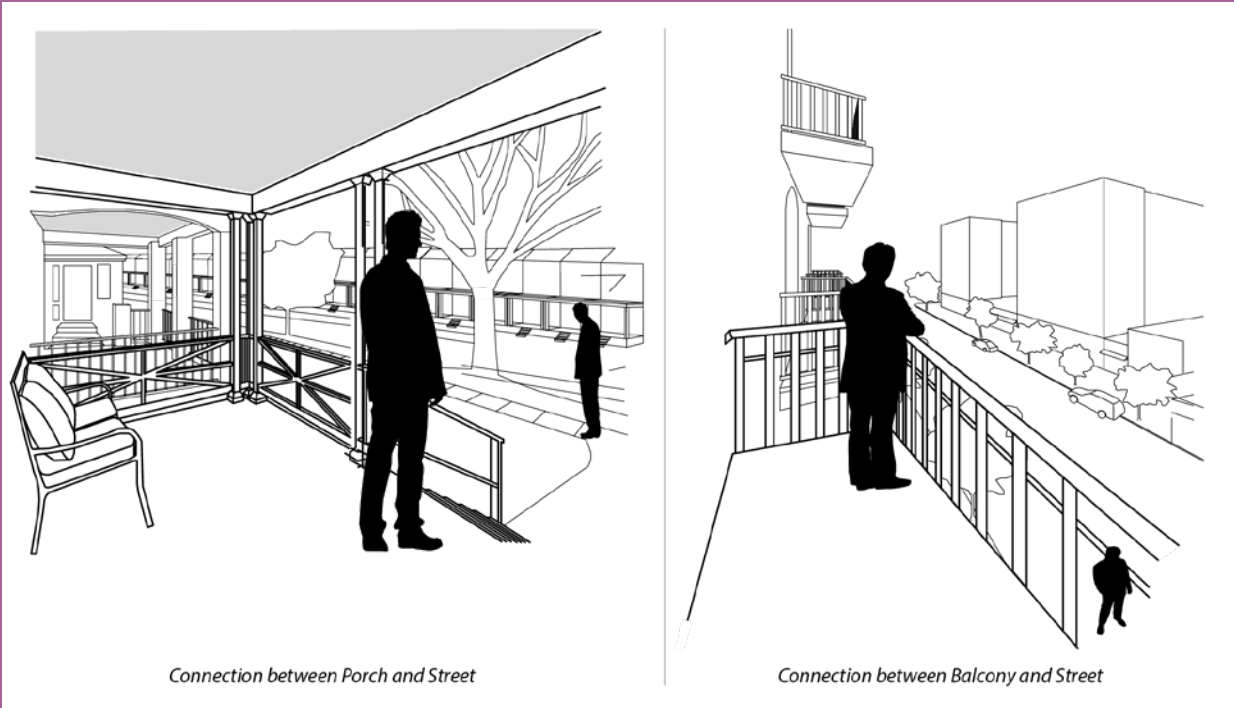


Storefronts at Barracks Row create an engaging ground floor level contributing to a streetscape that engages passersby.



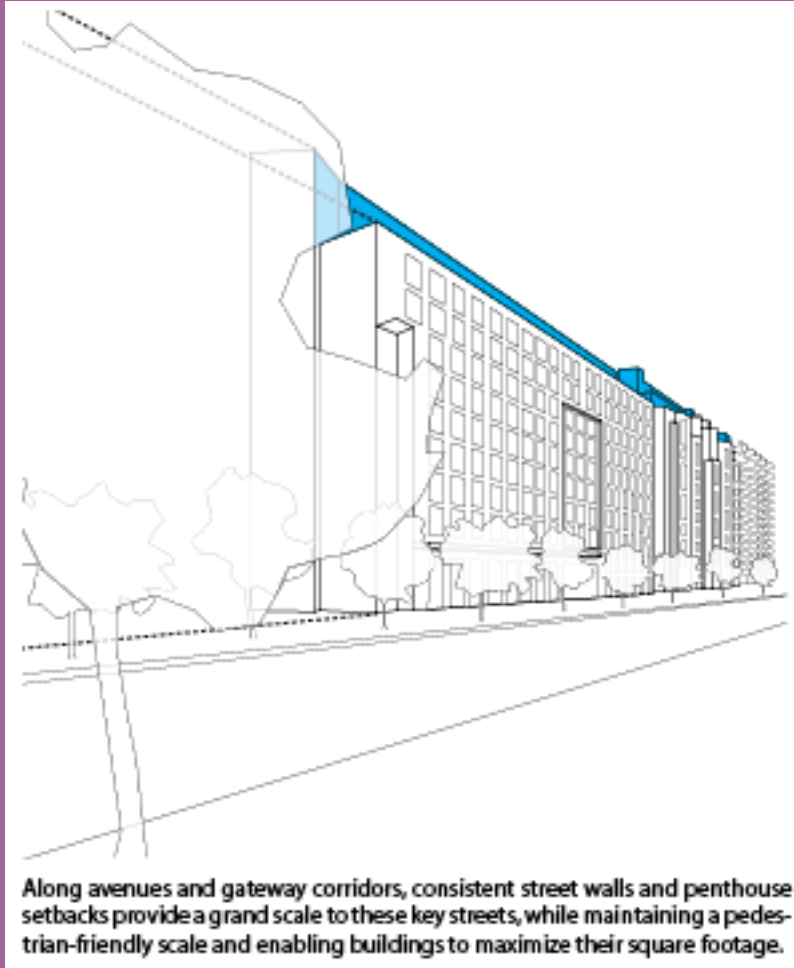
The West End Public Library's dynamic roofline is one architectural element that makes its façade engaging.

Figure 9.21:

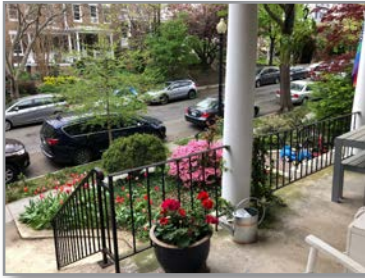
Porches and Balconies ^{919.7}***Policy UD-4.3.3: Building Setbacks and Rooflines***

Maintain uniform building setbacks and roof lines to establish a consistent pattern along avenues and priority view corridors. Setbacks should create a consistent street wall rather than have abrupt disruptions with facades that are set back or extend in front of an established pattern. The treatment of roof lines, such as recessed penthouses or variations created by bay windows and towers, should respond to the predominant character of a corridor. See Figure 9.22 for an example of building setbacks and rooflines. ^{919.8}

Figure 9.22:

Building Setbacks ^{919.9}*Architectural setbacks of H Street NE buildings****Policy UD-4.3.4: Rooftop Penthouses***

Encourage new buildings to maximize the potential of penthouse regulations that allow for greater design flexibility and architectural expression of rooftops. Use penthouses to create shared recreation spaces for building users, using sculptural roof forms. Pay special attention to setback lines and tower projections in designing rooftop treatments. See Figure 9.23 for examples of dynamic rooftops. ^{919.10}



Active building projections: Porches



Active building projections: Balconies

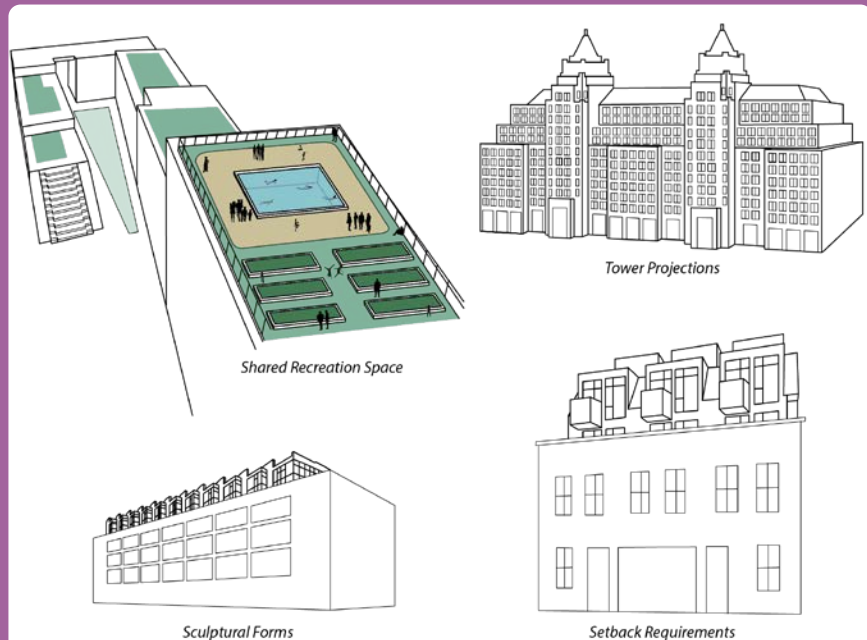


Active building projections: Storefronts



Active building projections: Bay Windows

Figure 9.23:
Dynamic Rooftops ^{919.11}



Policy UD-4.3.5: Building Projections that Promote Interaction

Encourage buildings with public parking along their frontage to use the flexibility of projection regulations for steps, porches, balconies, and awnings and create opportunities for in-between spaces that encourage social interaction and add visual interest to building facades. ^{919.12}

Action UD-4.3.A: Washington, DC Urban Design Guide

Prepare an Urban Design Guide for Washington, DC that compiles the existing codes and regulations that play a role in creating the District's urban design legacy. ^{919.13}

Action UD-4.3.B: Update of the Projection Code

Conduct a comprehensive study and subsequent building code update to address issues of large projections on long building facades that detract from the public realm, view sheds, and monumental character of the District's streets. The study should consider the role projections have played in shaping the form of Washington, DC and assess their intent and how they have evolved over time. ^{919.14}

Action UD-4.3.C: Review Zoning Height Restrictions

Review the zoning code to determine where it may be more restrictive than the federal Height of Buildings Act to identify the potential capacity for more affordable housing and opportunities to expand inclusive neighborhoods (see Figure 9.24). ^{919.15}

Figure 9.24:

Zoning Height and Street Width ^{919.16}