

VAN NESS

COMMERCIAL DISTRICT ACTION STRATEGY

Appendix B: Comprehensive Plan
Analysis and Background
April 21, 2016



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Overview of Comprehensive Plan Policies for Van Ness

This Appendix highlights the 2006 Comprehensive Plan's policies and actions for Van Ness. It also demonstrates how the Action Strategy's recommendations are aligned with the Comprehensive Plan.

All planning and development in the District of Columbia is guided by the Comprehensive Plan which includes twelve citywide elements, ten area elements, and two maps. The Van Ness Commercial District Action Strategy adds detail to the Comprehensive Plan's guidance through focused analysis and extensive community engagement. Within the Comprehensive Plan, the Rock Creek West Area Element provides guidance for Van Ness in its Planning and Development section and the Priority Focus Areas section.

The Planning and Development Priorities section reinforces the existing land use pattern comprised of high rise buildings along the Connecticut Avenue Corridor contrasted by low density single family housing in the areas between major corridors which is consistent with the Action Strategy's recommendations (see pages 26, 27). (§2307 & §2310)

Additionally, the Area Element guides newly constructed residential buildings to incorporate affordable housing using bonus density where available. (§2300.8) Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Action Strategy support efforts to increase the amount and diversity of neighborhood serving retail

(see pages 20-23). (§2308.4) Rock Creek Park's large natural landscape is a central feature throughout the Area Element supporting new environmental management measures that reduce the impact of stormwater runoff on the stream valleys that form Rock Creek Park (see pages 24, 25). (§2309.2)

Connecticut Avenue is one of two Priority Focus Areas in the Rock Creek West Area Element. (§2311) Within the Connecticut Avenue Focus Area, Van Ness is one of several commercial districts that receive guidance. (§2311.1)

The Van Ness recommendations focus on improving the community interaction with UDC and redesigning the University's large plazas along Connecticut Avenue. (§2311.9) Since the Comprehensive Plan was last amended UDC has constructed its new student center which better connects with the Metro and Connecticut Avenue replacing the largest underutilized plaza. The Action Strategy makes recommendations for the second remaining plaza (see page 28). Additionally, the Van Ness Main Street has emerged as a successful forum to establish an ongoing dialogue between community stakeholders and university leaders.

Overview of Comprehensive Plan Maps

In addition to the Rock Creek West Area Element, the Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Policy and Future Land Use Maps provide additional planning and development guidance. The Generalized Policy Map classifies the Van Ness Commercial District as a

Multi-Neighborhood Center. A focused view of this map is located on page 4 of this document. Multi-Neighborhood Centers meet the day-to-day needs of residents and workers in the surrounding communities. Typical uses include convenience stores, supermarkets, branch banks, restaurants, dry cleaners, hair cutting, child care, general merchandise stores, drug stores, apparel stores, and service-oriented businesses. The Action Strategy's recommendations are consistent with this designation. (§223.17)

The Future Land Use map classifies the Commercial District as Moderate Density Commercial. A focused view of the Future Land Use Map is located on page 5 of this document. Areas with a Moderate Density Commercial classification are shopping and service areas that are more intense in scale and character than low-density commercial areas. Retail, office, and service businesses are the predominant uses. Areas with this designation range from small business districts that primarily draw from the surrounding neighborhoods to larger business districts uses that draw from a broader market area. Buildings are larger and/or taller than those in low density commercial areas but generally do not exceed five stories in height. The corresponding Zone districts are generally C-2-A, C-2-B, and C-3-A; other districts may apply. (§225.9) Van Ness is Zoned C-3-A which is the more intensive of the typical zones for this land use category. The C-3-A zoning corresponds

to the commercial district's larger service area. The Van Ness Commercial District Action Strategy does not make any recommendations to change the future land use or zoning for the area and is consistent with the Plan.

Specific Comprehensive Plan Policies and Action Items for Van Ness

Policy RCW-1.1.3: Conserving Neighborhood. Commercial Centers Support and sustain local retail uses and small businesses in the area's neighborhood commercial centers. These centers should be protected from encroachment by large office buildings and other non-neighborhood serving uses. Compatible new uses such as multi-family housing or limited low-cost neighborhood-serving office space (above local-serving ground-floor retail uses) should be considered within the area's commercial centers to meet affordable housing needs, sustain new neighborhood-serving retail and small businesses, and bring families back to the District. §2308.4

Policy RCW-1.1.4: Infill Development. Recognize the opportunity for infill development within the areas designated for commercial land use on the Future Land Use Map. When such development is proposed, work with ANCs, residents, and community organizations to encourage projects that combine housing and commercial uses rather than projects that contain single uses. Heights and densities for such development should be appropriate to the scale and character of Neighborhood retail along Connecticut Avenue

adjoining communities. Buffers should be adequate to protect existing residential areas from noise, odors, shadows, and other impacts. §2308.5

Policy RCW-1.1.5: Preference for Local-Serving Retail. Support new commercial development in the Planning Area that provides the range of goods and services necessary to meet the needs of local residents. Such uses are preferable to the development of new larger-scale or “big-box” retail uses that serve a regional market. “Destination” retail uses are not appropriate in smaller-scale commercial areas, especially those without Metrorail access. Regardless of scale, retail development must be planned and designed to mitigate traffic, parking, and other impacts on adjacent residential areas. § 2308.6

Policy RCW-1.1.6: Metro Station Areas. Recognize the importance of the area’s five Metrorail stations to the land use pattern and transportation network of Northwest Washington and the entire District of Columbia. Each station should be treated as a unique place and an integral part of the neighborhood around it. The development of large office buildings at the area’s metro stations should be discouraged. The preference is to use available and underutilized sites for housing and retail uses in a manner consistent with the Future Land Use Map, the Generalized Policies Map, and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Careful transitions from development along the avenues to nearby low-scale neighborhoods must be provided. §2308.7

Policy RCW-1.1.7: Housing for Seniors and Disabled Residents Maintain and increase housing for elderly and disabled residents, especially along the major transportation and commercial corridors of Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. §2308.8

Policy RCW-1.1.14: Bicycle Facilities. Improve facilities for bicyclists, to the extent feasible and consistent with traffic safety considerations, along Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Massachusetts Avenues, along MacArthur Boulevard, along Calvert Street (to Rock Creek Park), and at each of the Metrorail stations. §2308.15

Policy RCW-1.2.1: Urban Design Focus. Focus urban design efforts in the Rock Creek West Planning Area on its commercial centers and major avenues, historic landmarks, historic districts, and areas with significant environmental and topographical features. 2309.1

Policy RCW-1.1.15: Metro Access. Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access to the five Metro Station areas, and improve their visual and urban design qualities. Space for car-share vehicles should be provided near the stations where feasible to reduce parking congestion in neighborhoods and encourage car-sharing as an alternative to vehicle ownership. §2308.16

Policy RCW-1.2.2: Scenic Resource Protection. Conserve the important scenic and visual resources of Rock Creek West, including: a. Views from Fort Reno National Park, which is the highest point of land in the city and a place of historic significance; b. The

Potomac Palisades, which should be protected as a low density, wooded area above the Potomac River and C&O Canal, with future improvements along the river limited to passive open space, trails, and natural parkland; c. Dalecarlia Reservoir, which is environmentally important because of its large land area and proximity to the Potomac River; d. The US Naval Observatory Grounds, which contain abundant woodlands, are proximate to parkland, and are vulnerable to light and heat pollution; e. Stream valleys, including Rock Creek Park and its tributaries, and Glover Archbold Park; f. Neighborhoods developed on hilly terrain on or near stream valleys such as Barnaby Woods, Forest Hills, Hawthorne, Spring Valley, and Woodland-Normanstone; and g. The Fort Circle Parks, including Fort Bayard Park, and Whitehaven Parkway. §2309.2

Policy RCW-2.1.1: Connecticut Avenue Corridor. Sustain the high quality of the Connecticut Avenue corridor. The positive qualities of the corridor, particularly its attractive older apartment buildings, green spaces, trees, and walkable neighborhood shopping districts, should be conserved and enhanced. Continued efforts to improve traffic flow and parking should be pursued, especially in the commercial districts. §2311.7

Policy RCW-2.1.2: Infill Development. Recognize the opportunity for additional housing with some retail and limited office space along the Connecticut Avenue corridor. Any development along the corridor should be consistent with

the designations of these areas on the Future Land Use Map, zoning overlay requirements, and the scale of adjoining uses. §2311.8

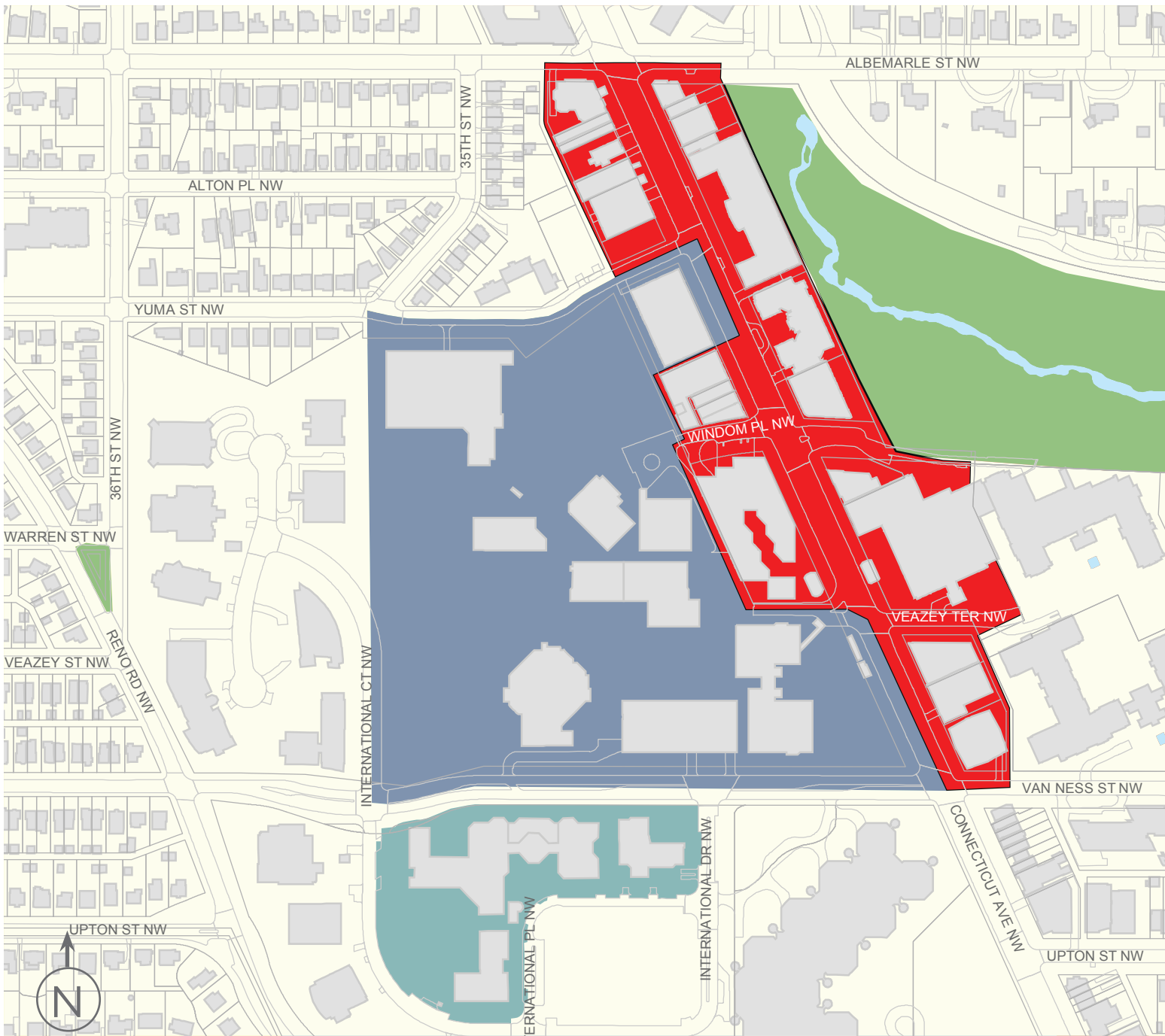
Policy RCW-2.1.3: Van Ness/UDC Station. Area Improve the design and appearance of the Van Ness/UDC Station area, particularly the “hardscaped” portion of the UDC Campus. §2311.9

Policy RCW-2.1.4: Coordination Between Community and UDC. Support greater coordination and communication between UDC officials and the surrounding community on issues such as parking, traffic, property maintenance, and facility development. Establish complementary goals between the University and the community at large, so that the university becomes even more of a community asset and resource than it is today. §2311.10







Action RCW-1.2.F: Façade Improvements. Encourage urban design and façade improvements in the established commercial districts along Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue. §2309.17

Action RCW-2.1.A: Improving the UDC Plazas. Work with UDC and with local community groups and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission in the “greening” of public open space on the UDC Campus. §2311.11

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GENERALIZED POLICY MAP 2012



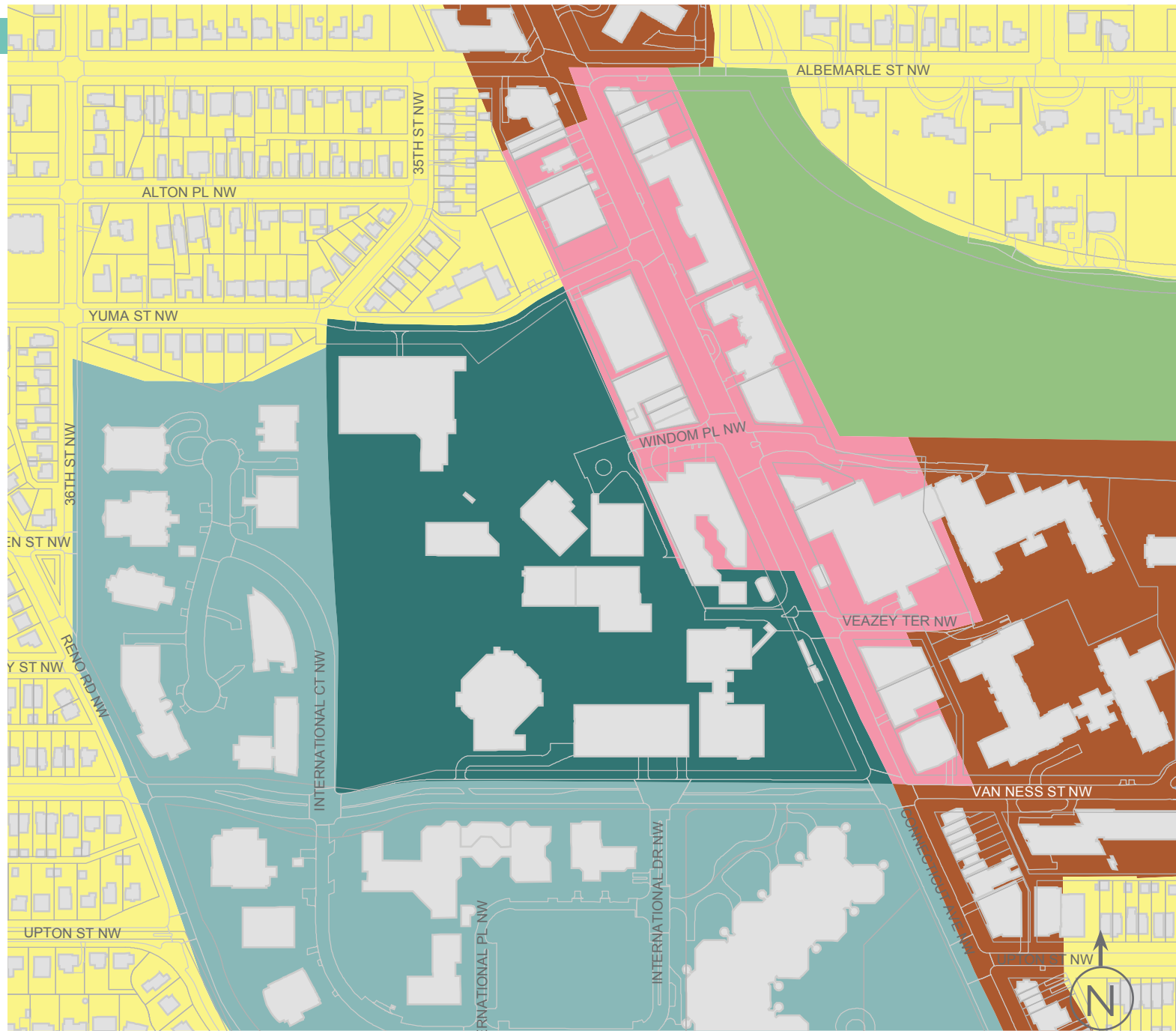
LEGEND

-  Multi-Neighborhood Centers
-  Institutional Uses
-  Federal Lands
-  Neighborhood Conservation Center
-  Parks
-  Building Footprints

This map is a visual depiction of the Comprehensive Plan's Policies. The Commercial District shown in red indicating that it is a Multi-Neighborhood Center. Multi-Neighborhood centers meet the day-to-day needs of residents and workers in the surrounding communities. Typical uses include convenience stores, supermarkets, branch banks, restaurants, dry cleaners, hair cutting, child care, general merchandise stores, drug stores, apparel stores, and service-oriented businesses. For more information about this map please visit planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan

LEGEND

- Moderate Density Commercial
- Local Public Facilities
- Federal
- High Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
- Building Footprints



The Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map is one of the most important guides for zoning and a key implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan. This map shows that most of the Van Ness Commercial District is designated Moderate Density Commercial. Areas with a Moderate Density Commercial classification are shopping and service areas that are more intense in scale and character than low-density commercial areas. Retail, office, and service businesses are the predominant uses.

planning.dc.gov/page/comprehensive-plan



streetsense.

