

SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY EAT CHILL	COMMUNITY NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESSIBILITY RESIDENTS	PLACES OPPORTUNITIES JOBS CONSERVATION CHARACTER	PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY BIKE TRANSIT
<b>PARKS</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>	<b>BUILDING</b>	<b>CONNECTIONS</b>
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE WELLNESS PLAY	BUSINESS FAMILIES CULTURE DIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS	BUSINESSES GREEN DEVELOPMENT HISTORY AMENITIES	VEHICULAR WATERFRONT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

PUBLIC KICK-OFF | STATION TOPIC AREAS

**Interagency Coordination**

Throughout the planning process, the Project Team held coordination meetings with an Interagency Working Group comprised of District agencies, as well as one-on-one meetings with key agencies. The purpose of inter-agency meetings was to brief agencies on the planning process, solicit information on agency initiatives and priorities in the Planning Area, gather feedback on proposed recommendations and most importantly, coordinate the future work effort of each agency to ensure that all recommendations are actionable and can be implemented. Agencies consulted during this process include: DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD); DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR); DC Public Library (DCPL); DC Department of Public Works (DPW); District Department of Transportation (DDOT); State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); District Department of the Environment (DDOE); Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED); the Department of General Services (DGS); and the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA). Non-government organizations consulted included the Washington Project for the Arts and the Southwest Business Improvement District.



COMMUNITY MEETING 1

KICK-OFF  
#1  
Community Meeting

The planning process began with a Kick-off public meeting on September 11, 2013 at Arena Stage which approximately 250 people attended. This initial meeting included a presentation from Harriet Tregoning, the DC Director of Planning at the time, as well as several “engagement stations” where stakeholders were able to provide input regarding what the final plan needed to accomplish. Four main categories—buildings, connections, parks and people—were used to guide feedback and organize comments. The meeting generated over 825 comments that were categorized and grouped into themes. These key themes were adapted into guiding principles that were instrumental to the planning process and the development of Plan recommendations.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS REVIEW MATERIAL AND PROVIDE COMMENTS



GRAPHIC RECORDING STATION



COMMUNITY GATHERS FOR A BRIEF PRESENTATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS  
#2  
**Community Meeting**

Following the Kick-off meeting, the Project Team began a thorough analysis of the Southwest Planning Area. Physical analysis of the Planning Area and market analysis of existing and future economic forces were researched and documented. These findings were presented to the community for feedback at a December 11, 2013 public meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Market analysis revealed a strong market for residential development, a small market for increased retail, and little to no market for office space.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK



COMMUNITY REVIEWS THE EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

WORKSHOP  
#3  
**Community Meeting**

The Project Team recognized the high level of participation from community stakeholders, as well as the desire for further engagement. Therefore, the third community meeting was organized as a community workshop utilizing a “design charrette” model to give attendees the opportunity to roll-up their sleeves and directly wrestle with the planning issues. On January 25, 2014, approximately 120 residents gathered at the Capitol Skyline Hotel to talk through their concerns in Southwest and discuss goals and values for future change and development in the area. Specific details were discussed through conversation, model building and visual exercises to map improvements and amenities. Participants were divided into five groups and paired with a set of facilitators who led the discussions. Note-takers carefully captured participants’ comments, which were used to further guide plan recommendations.



BREAKOUT GROUPS DISCUSS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN DESIGN



SPECIFIC FEEDBACK WAS GATHERED FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS



A MODEL OF THE FOCUS AREA GAVE THE COMMUNITY A DIFFERENT VIEW OF SOUTHWEST

GOALS + RECOMMENDATIONS

#4

# Community Meeting

Following the third public meeting, the Project Team began to craft recommendations for the Plan that were generated directly from public comments and feedback, findings of technical analyses, and District agency priorities. A draft of these recommendations was presented at the fourth public meeting on June 25, 2014. At this meeting, the community was able to identify the ten recommendations that were most important to them and provide specific feedback on recommendations about which they had concerns or questions. The comments from this meeting, combined with feedback from the Advisory Committee and District agencies, helped to modify and craft Plan recommendations.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS DISCUSS DESIGN GUIDELINES



COMMUNITY MEMBERS REVIEW A DRAFT OF THE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

## Focus Group Meetings

In addition to these four well-attended community meetings, the Project Team held focus groups to dig deeper into issues and opportunities for neighborhood schools, serving the senior population, and historic preservation.

The first focus group, held on December 3, 2013, discussed local schools and the student population related to access, enrollment and safety. Seven local stakeholders participated in this focus group, which was held at Amidon-Bowen Elementary School. Representatives participated from Amidon-Bowen, Jefferson Middle School Academy, and Appletree Early Learning Center. Community members said the schools are considered “community anchors” that are important to family life in the neighborhood. During these meetings community members expressed concern over rising housing costs, the need for more family-sized units of housing to allow more families to stay in the neighborhood, and maintaining the diversity of local school enrollment. Additionally, community members wanted to see an emphasis on safe transportation corridors and on the continued public use of playground equipment and recreation fields at local schools. As a follow up to the focus group, the Project Team also presented information on the plan at a joint Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting between Jefferson Middle School Academy and Amidon-Bowen Elementary on January 14, 2014.

As part of the District-wide “Age Friendly DC ” initiative, the Project Team held a focus group for seniors in the Southwest neighborhood on December 18, 2013. Approximately 15 residents were in attendance for this focus group. A facilitator trained by the District Office of Aging led the residents through a discussion related to aging in place, access to transportation and amenities, safety concerns and health care facilities. Additional topics included ways to make day-to-day livability easier such as more benches in public spaces, better lighting on the streets, real-time bus information at bus shelters and more affordable food options in the neighborhood.

The third focus group on January 23, 2014, brought together ten stakeholders to discuss the historic preservation and neighborhood character in Southwest. Community members expressed concern that where developers and planners see large, open, and “underutilized” spaces, community members see green space, which helped draw them to Southwest in the first place. Additionally, community members said they believe development and change is acceptable and expected, but not at the expense of Southwest’s unique character. Participants said development can be compatible with local character and pointed to developments like the Arena Stage, Sky House, and Randall School as examples.

## Online Engagement

From the beginning, the Project Team deployed online engagement tools to supplement the community outreach and provide a path of engagement for residents unable to attend meetings. Meeting materials, presentations and announcements were made available at [www.swneighborhoodplan.org](http://www.swneighborhoodplan.org). To augment outreach and connect with additional populations, an interactive online forum, <http://engage.swneighborhoodplan.org>, supplemented the in-person meetings. The Engage Southwest portal allowed the Project Team to ask specific questions and gave community members the opportunity to submit ideas, ask questions, engage in the planning process alongside their neighbors, and provide feedback regarding different proposals. The site had over 1,000 unique views. Overall, 156 registered users participated in the online engagement site where they responded to questions, assessed recommendations and generated their own ideas for peer review. Of the 156 users, 118 reside in the Southwest zip code of 20024, and the average age was 41. Users also had the ability to post their own photos and map areas of interest or concern via the Engage Southwest portal.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNITY MEMBERS GET HELP WITH ONLINE TOOLS

## Vision and Goals

Community input, gathered from the over 800 comments received at the September 11, 2013 Kick-off meeting as well as input from initial Advisory Committee meetings, informed the Vision and Guiding Principles for the Southwest Neighborhood Plan. The Vision and Guiding Principles were developed in the Fall of 2013 and presented at the December 11, 2013 Community Meeting, and again at the January 25, 2014 Community Workshop. The Vision and Guiding Principles serve as the core, community-based underpinnings of the Plan and provide direction and values upon which to frame the Plan Opportunities and Recommendations.

The Vision for Southwest is further supported by the Guiding Principles listed on the following pages. These principles reflect the community's values and aspirations for their neighborhood. An implementation plan in Chapter 11 illustrates how each plan recommendation supports a guiding principle.

Building on the overarching Vision and the Guiding Principles, the remainder of the Plan organizes recommendations around the following Concepts for Southwest's Future listed below.

**Model Community**

**Modernist Gem**

**Green Oasis**

**Arts & Cultural Destination**

**Thriving Town Center**

**Optimized District Parcels**

**Vibrant Connections**

## Vision Statement

**"TO CREATE A THRIVING, ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT PRESERVES AND ENHANCES THE SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD'S CULTURE AND CHARACTER."**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## 01 SOUTHWEST CULTURE

Foster an environment that encourages and embraces cultural and economic diversity.

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## 02 NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Preserve the varied scale and green character of the neighborhood.

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## 03 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Design buildings, connections and sidewalks to improve safety, security and pedestrian circulation.

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## 04 RETAIL

Support, enhance and expand neighborhood retail amenities.

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## 05 PARKS

Enhance, connect and better utilize parks both active and passive as open space.



## 06 COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Invest in community, arts and education uses that serve resident needs.

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## 07 HOUSING

Preserve and develop a range of housing for a mix of income, age and family size, and encourage quality design and architecture.

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## 08 TRANSPORTATION

Strengthen multimodal transportation and improve street connections, parking and safety.

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## 09 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Remember the history and legacy of the Southwest neighborhood while planning for change in the future.

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## 10 NEW DEVELOPMENT

Develop a strategy for height, density and open space that enhances, acknowledges and complements the character of the neighborhood.

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## 11 SUSTAINABILITY

Incorporate goals and targets from the Sustainable DC Plan to protect our environment and conserve resources to foster a vibrant, healthy neighborhood.

# 04 CONCEPT | MODEL COMMUNITY



MODEL COMMUNITY ILLUSTRATIVE | THE SOUTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD IS A CHAMPION OF DIVERSITY AND PERSEVERANCE

## MODEL COMMUNITY VISION

*Southwest will remain an exemplary model of equity and inclusion - a welcoming and engaged community that celebrates and retains a mix of races, ages and income levels and enhances well-being for all amidst neighborhood growth and change.*

### Today

While the Southwest neighborhood has been wrought by a complex history of urban renewal and displacement, the planned community that formed since the 1960s is remarkable not only for its legacy of Modernist architecture, but perhaps more importantly for its idealism and inclusion. Southwest celebrates the diversity of its residents – a model mix of intergenerational, racial, religious, and socioeconomic levels. The plentiful neighborhood churches and community-based organizations are a further foundation for a strong sense of neighborhood identity, tolerance and commitment to justice. Southwest is a rarity in what it has accomplished as a community, evidencing very high civic participation with strong turnout at community meetings and a conviction about the importance of diversity to community identity. In many ways, today’s Southwest is not unlike the community that thrived before urban renewal where different races and ethnicities intersected, community bonds flourished, and social capital was high.



YOUNG FAMILY ENJOYING THE AMENITIES IN SOUTHWEST

## Opportunity

The Southwest neighborhood can remain a model community celebrating its diversity, pursuing engagement and advocacy, and creating a welcoming cultural and physical environment for all. The addition of preschool and prekindergarten at Amidon-Bowen Elementary school is attracting more families to the school, and the student population has been growing over the last five years. This is an example of just one of many positive changes the community can embrace. Even with new residents and additional development, the community can remain balanced—growing families, retaining public housing, supporting affordability, and improving the accessibility of infrastructure.

**Affordable and Diverse Housing Choices.** Neighborhood residents support the responsible redevelopment of the Greenleaf public housing community (see figure 4.1) to ensure that all current qualifying residents have the option to remain in Southwest and receive workforce and education tools and programs to prosper into the future. The community supports transparency and clarity in communications throughout the process as the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) embarks on planning and redevelopment. The community seeks to provide guidelines and expectations for new development, like the replacement of all subsidized units and the contextual design and massing of new buildings. The community voiced a desire to see emphasis on the human capital portion of the transition, with residents receiving all the support and capacity-building measures needed to ease transition and succeed in employment, education, and other matters.



PEOPLE IN SOUTHWEST ENJOY WALKING ALONG STREETS UNDER MATURE TREE CANOPIES



SOUTHWEST PRIDES ITSELF IN THE DIVERSITY OF ITS RESIDENTS

Also of importance to residents are the availability of affordable housing, family-sized units in new development, and a mix of housing types, including townhouses and apartments. The Southwest neighborhood already exceeds the District in its share of subsidized and affordable housing units. This is one of the important building blocks of housing and community diversity. The neighborhood will look to preserve existing affordable housing units and add affordable units in new development through Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), Inclusionary Zoning, and the disposition of District-controlled land.

**Economic Development and Access to Jobs.** The community seeks to benefit and grow economic opportunities from the development occurring adjacent to the neighborhood, such as The Wharf, Capitol Riverfront, and the proposed soccer stadium. There are vast opportunities for residents to connect to the District’s workforce development, education and entrepreneurship programs and resources to best leverage and access these nearby development opportunities.

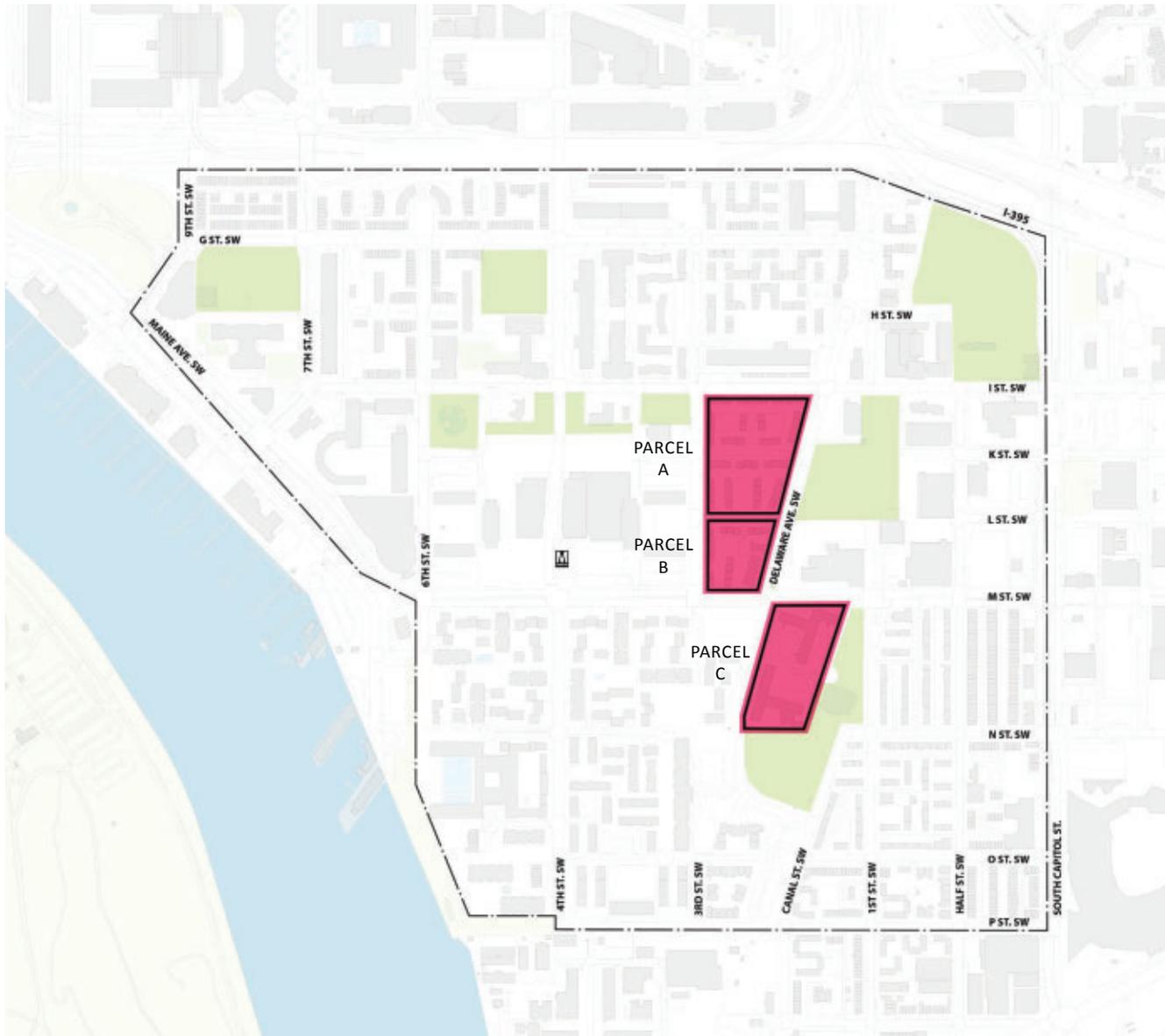
**A Healthy Community, Accessible to All.** Residents envision an age-friendly neighborhood, where senior residents can thrive as they age in the place they have called home for many years. The Southwest neighborhood can be responsive to this trend by improving the accessibility of transportation and open spaces. Improved bus shelters and new bus services like the Circulator will enhance mobility for seniors. Introducing benches where feasible into the street network will ease distances the elderly travel by foot. Open spaces can showcase universal design and intergenerational programming to ensure active lifestyles for seniors.



SOUTHWEST SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL RESIDENTS

Southwest residents visualize a neighborhood that is welcoming for all, where the disabled and anyone with mobility issues can comfortably navigate the neighborhood. Improved sidewalks, redesigned park entrances, and a potential new library will open up new opportunities to enjoy the neighborhood’s many amenities.

Community members also desire to prioritize healthy living and fresh food access for all residents. There is an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of urban agriculture in the neighborhood’s parks and connect residents, particularly the student population, to fresh foods through their participation and care for orchards and gardens. Additionally, farmers markets can be expanded in the neighborhood to ensure all residents have access to fresh produce, enabling them to adopt sound eating habits to support healthy living.



GREEN LEAF PUBLIC HOUSING



FIGURE 4.1 | DCHA OWNED GREENLEAF PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES MAP

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal:** *Support the responsible redevelopment of the Greenleaf complex to benefit existing Greenleaf residents and realize a well-designed development and mixed-income community.*

- MC.1** Develop a strategy during the DCHA Greenleaf Master Planning process for keeping current residents in the community during and after construction/redevelopment of the site.
- MC.2** Develop an Interagency Working Group for DCHA to coordinate with District agencies to identify, through the DCHA Master Planning process, the potential to utilize District-controlled properties in the vicinity to support a potential “build first” strategy for keeping current qualifying Greenleaf residents in the Southwest neighborhood.
- MC.3** Change the future land use designations at Greenleaf to promote mixed-income redevelopment and replacement housing for existing Greenleaf residents (see figure 4.1):
  - a. Change northernmost Greenleaf parcels (Parcel A) between ‘I’ and L Streets from Moderate Density Residential to Medium Density Residential.
  - b. Change Greenleaf parcel on the north side of M Street (Parcel B) from Moderate Density Residential to Mixed-use: High Density Residential/Low Density Commercial.
  - c. Change the Greenleaf parcel on the south side of M Street (Parcel C), from Medium Density Residential to Mixed-Use: High Density Residential/Low Density Commercial.

Any development under the new land use designations must be achieved through a Planned Unit Development and meet the following criteria:

- Conform to the Design Guidelines for each parcel as outlined in the Plan (pages 81-83).
- Provide replacement housing for all the existing affordable units within the project or immediate Southwest Neighborhood Planning Area.
- Encourage a mixed-income community through the inclusion of market rate units and to the extent practicable, workforce housing.
- Achieve a significant level of green design in terms of both site and building design to contribute to healthy living and improved environmental performance.



GREENLEAF HOUSING

## GREENLEAF PUBLIC HOUSING

Greenleaf Public Housing is comprised of four sites on both the north and south sides of M Street SW between 3rd and Delaware Streets, and extends northward to 'I' Street. The development is comprised of two-story low-rise garden apartment buildings, as well as a mid-rise family building and high-rise seniors building. At the outset of the planning process for the Southwest Neighborhood Plan, DCHA announced its interest in exploring the potential redevelopment of the current Greenleaf properties to create a new mixed-income and mixed-use development. DCHA had submitted an application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a Choice Neighborhood planning grant which was not awarded. DCHA initiated meetings with Greenleaf residents to discuss potential redevelopment in late 2014. A formal process with the Greenleaf residents and the broader Southwest neighborhood to develop a Master Plan began in 2015. Proximity to transit and other amenities in Southwest, as well as the size of the parcels, make this an ideal location for such a development.

Southwest residents were very clear about the desire to ensure that the needs and interests of existing residents at Greenleaf are a priority in any redevelopment scenario and that transparency with the community is maximized. The Plan encourages DCHA to prioritize ways to replace all existing affordable housing (almost 900 units) on the current sites to accommodate existing qualifying Greenleaf residents while adding in additional market-rate residential units. Improvements to green spaces, walking paths, lighting and public realm must also be included in the Master Plan. The Plan recommends increasing the land use designations of the Greenleaf parcels to provide enough development rights to accommodate the replacement of all affordable units with enough cross-subsidy from market-rate units and to promote a mix of high and low building heights and a mix of densities spread across the four sites in keeping with the current style prevalent throughout Southwest.

*Goal: Maintain a mix of affordable and market-rate residential units that better serve community needs.*

- MC.4** Retain the neighborhood's 19 percent of subsidized units by establishing targets that exceed current Inclusionary Zoning thresholds for future development on publicly owned land and in future Planned Unit Developments.
- MC.5** Future redevelopment of District-controlled sites should, at a minimum, require at least 20 percent of the units be affordable at varying levels of the area median income (AMI), preferably for longer than 20 years. Determine if a subject site meets the requirements for additional affordable units per the "Disposition of District Land Act of 2014".
- MC.6** As part of a community benefits package through the PUD process for new construction, prioritize affordable units above the Inclusionary Zoning requirement or fewer affordable units, but larger in size (e.g., three bedrooms) to better serve families.



JAMES CREEK HOMES

**Goal:** Update public realm and transit infrastructure to enhance accessibility for all.

- MC.7** Improve lighting, seating and maintenance at bus shelters throughout Southwest.
- MC.8** Pilot bus time monitors at bus shelters at locations that serve a high number of seniors, such as stops near the Greenleaf Senior Center.
- MC.9** Increase the number of signage for disabled parking spaces on 4th Street along the commercial blocks.
- MC.10** Prioritize funding to bring the Southwest Duck Pond into ADA compliance.
- MC.11** Increase the number of benches along sidewalks throughout the Southwest neighborhood to better serve residents of all ages and abilities.

**Goal:** Promote healthy living and food access for the entire community.

- MC.12** Promote community gardens at local schools, Amidon-Bowen and Jefferson, both for student use/educational purposes as well as for resident use. Expand community gardens already in Southwest.
- MC.13** Allow for “pop up” agricultural landscapes, temporary food installations, community gardens, and recreation on underutilized sites such as the sites on the corner of 4th and M Streets SW.
- MC.14** Strengthen and extend access to the Southwest Farmer’s Market, by connecting and marketing it to schools, public housing, and seniors and providing recipes and other information and demonstrations on healthy food preparation.



COMMUNITY GARDENS IN LANSBURGH PARK

# 05 CONCEPT | MODERNIST GEM



MODERNIST GEM ILLUSTRATIVE | SOUTHWEST IS A MUSEUM OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

## MODERNIST GEM VISION

*Southwest will promote the preservation of its unique architectural legacy and support new development that reflects the form and rhythm of the mid-20th century, reinforcing the neighborhood design as a “Modernist Gem”.*

### Today

Southwest is like no other neighborhood in the District of Columbia, where buildings, urban design, streets and open space combine to form an urban neighborhood of quintessential mid-century modern design. The neighborhood is a product of urban renewal and comprehensive redesign that occurred from the 1940s through the 1970s. The more residential portions of the neighborhood are defined largely by Modernist architecture, large urban blocks with limited through-streets, a blend of public and private open spaces and mature trees. Today, the unique physical character of the neighborhood is a major source of pride and identity for residents, who appreciate the sensibilities and social values behind this design and the sunlight, building variety, and sense of micro-communities it affords. The neighborhood is dotted with historic landmarks. Preservation of historic structures and making sure that new development features high quality design are key goals for the Southwest neighborhood .



ARCHITECT CHLOETHIEL WOODARD SMITH WITH MODEL OF HARBOUR SQUARE, CIRCA 1960 (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

## Opportunity

Southwest residents can promote the neighborhood as a “Modernist Gem”, celebrating its character and promoting preservation of the outstanding collection of Modernist architecture and urban design.

**Conservation of Neighborhood Character.** There are a variety of options to preserve the integrity of existing design and encourage compatible design in new development. These include drafting applications to designate additional historic landmarks, creation of a historic district, or designation as a conservation district (if the Council adopts legislation to permit them). The Southwest neighborhood has a strong neighborhood conservancy group, the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA), which can help organize and steer the community conversation around preservation opportunities.

Southwest can also pay homage to its roots and the rich history of the neighborhood prior to urban renewal. Although it already boasts a heritage trail with interpretative signage, the community can identify ways to continue to showcase its history through events, exhibits and more permanent installations.

**Design Expectations for New Development.** In addition to the preservation of existing residential housing units, Southwest still has the potential to evolve and dynamically change in certain areas, as it has done in recent years with the redevelopment around 4th Street SW. Given the sentiment of many Southwesterners regarding the importance of conserving current neighborhood character, the Plan translates that sentiment into guidelines. The goal is to ensure that new construction and adaptive reuse will contribute

positively to the neighborhood’s identity. This concept is perhaps best exemplified through the rehabilitation of Arena Stage, the neighborhood’s shining cultural anchor, that mixes a historic design with new architecture in ways that delight and advance the neighborhood’s character, not detract from it.



RIVER PARK HOMES

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal:** *Celebrate the distinctive character of Southwest and promote preservation of its outstanding Modernist architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design.*

- MG.1** Continue the community-led process of engagement to garner support for preserving Modernist properties in the Planning Area. The community, including property owners, neighborhood groups and the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission” should determine a preferred preservation strategy: Historic District, Conservation District (if approved by Council), or the continued designation of individual landmarks.
- MG.2** Provide the community with information and tools that outline the pros and cons associated with various preservation strategies.
- MG.3** Support infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings in Southwest to promote the preservation of the community’s architectural character.
- MG.4** Renovate and restore “Amidon Park” along G Street SW between 4th and 6th Streets to celebrate its original historic design as a linear park adjacent to the right-of-way. Repair or replace benches and lighting. Include game tables or other recreational uses appropriate for the space and Modernist landscape.

**Goal:** *Retain and enhance the character of the L’Enfant Plan in Southwest including associated vistas and historic open spaces.*

- MG.5** Retain existing streets and open spaces that contribute to the L’Enfant Plan.
- MG.6** Ensure future development and improvements reinforce the L’Enfant Plan as an important historic feature tying Southwest to its greater urban context.

**Goal:** *Ensure that future development is compatible with the existing design of the community.*

- MG.7** Apply the Design Guidelines contained in the Plan (pages 81-83) to all new development achieved through the Planned Unit Development process. Matter of right development is also strongly encouraged to apply the Design Guidelines.



WHEAT ROW TOWNHOMES

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

In keeping with the unique character of the Southwest neighborhood, new development, including development undergoing a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or other design review process, should adhere to the following principles:

### **Principle 1:** *Encourage a mix of building heights.*

Provide a massing and mix of defined building heights which complement and uphold the current mixture of high-rise and low-rise buildings. Particularly on large sites, this mix should include the provision of rowhouses and high-rise buildings, and avoidance of mid-rise building forms.



### **Principle 2:** *Achieve design excellence for high quality and timeless development.*

Achieve high quality development and the creation of attractive buildings and landscapes through design excellence by using distinguished architecture, durable high quality materials and detailing, and advanced sustainable design.



**Principle 3:** *Promote variation in building frontages along streets with continuous massing.*

Promote cohesive building forms and design, while incorporating articulation in the building and landscape design. This will ensure a pedestrian-scale of development and lessen the perceived length of high-rise buildings or rowhouse groupings. Blank, unarticulated walls should be avoided, particularly along streets and pedestrian ways.



**Principle 4:** *Enhance green space through landscaped perimeters and internal green or amenity spaces.*

Support Southwest’s vibrant green character through the provision of publicly visible landscaped perimeters; internal green or amenity spaces; and landscaped setbacks appropriate to the streetscape, particularly for high-rise structures.



**Principle 5:** *Incorporate sustainable building and site design.*

Employ a range of innovative sustainable design strategies and building standards to promote a high performing environment that encourages healthy living, energy efficiency, and stormwater management.



**Principle 6:** *Ensure parking is not a detractor.*

Locate vehicle parking underground, or in above-grade structures that are visually buffered from the street and adjacent properties. Services such as parking and loading access should avoid the interruption of street-facing building fronts or communal open space.



**Principle 7:** *Maximize transparency and viability of ground floor uses along key commercial corridors.*

For high-rise structures, provide vibrant ground-floor uses and street-level design that promote pedestrian-oriented usage, particularly on M Street, 4th Street and South Capitol Street.



**Principle 8:** *Encourage connectivity for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular access, including transit where feasible.*

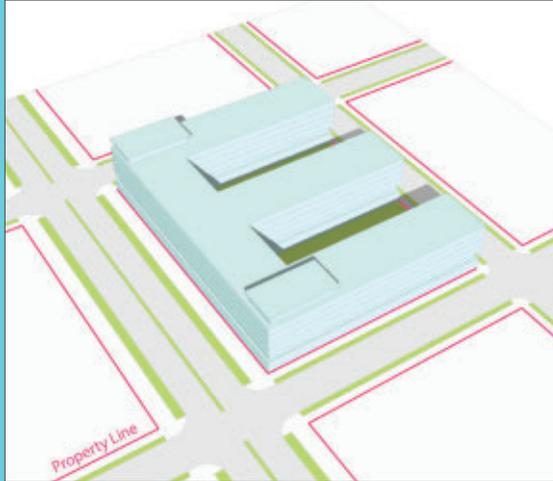
Promote connectivity by re-establishing the street grid where feasible, as noted in the Plan. (See Page 118)



## DEVELOPMENT COMPARISON

### DEVELOPMENT *WITHOUT* DESIGN GUIDELINES

Medium Density | Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - 4.0



- Lack of green space
- Mid-rise structures
- Large, bulky buildings
- Tall, continuous streetwalls
- Less daylight in courtyards and on streets
- Monotonous building mass and architecture

### DEVELOPMENT *WITH* DESIGN GUIDELINES

Medium Density | Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - 4.0

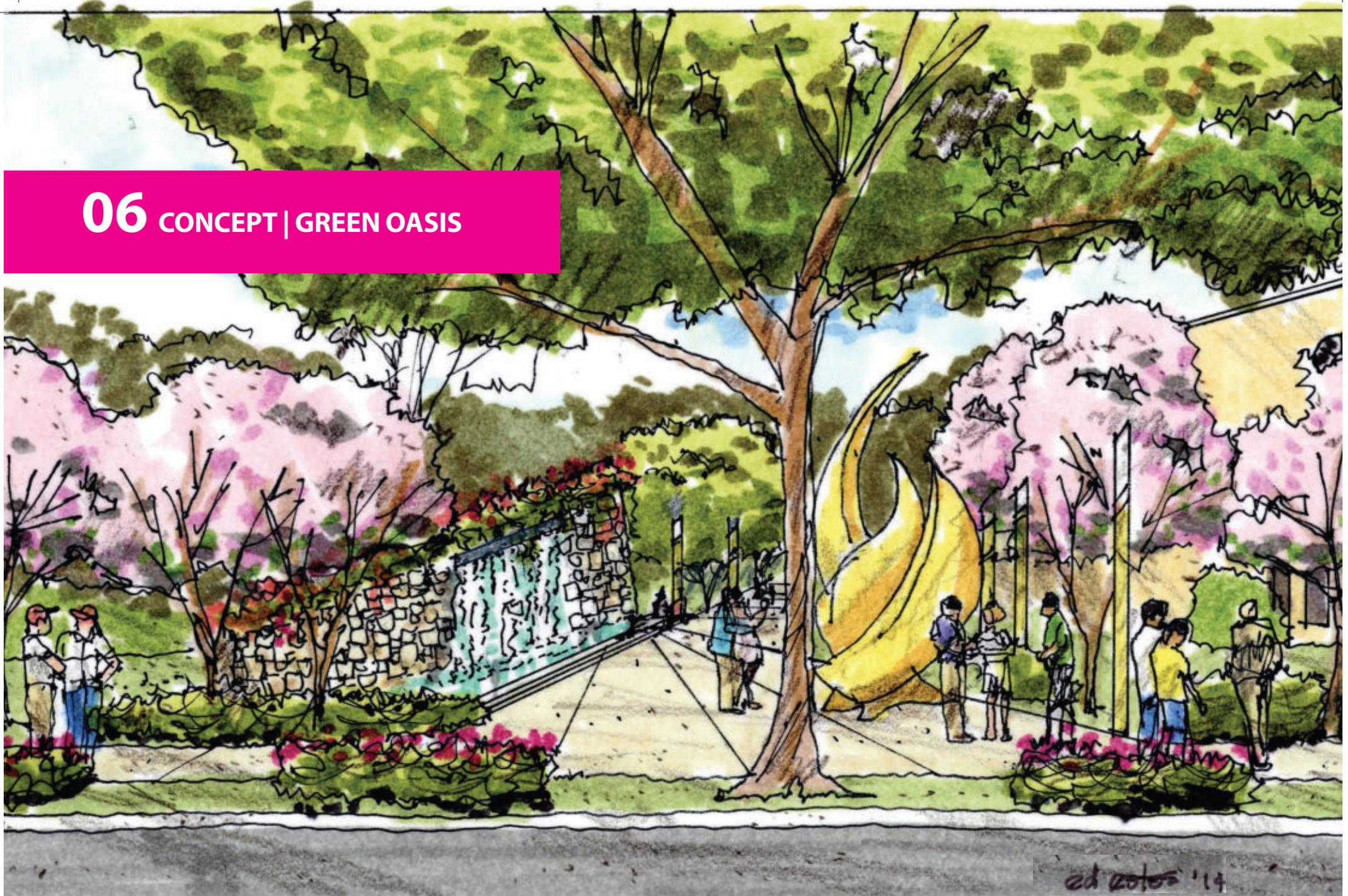


- Mix of high and low-rise buildings
- Variety of architectural character
- Views through and around buildings
- Greater mix of building and housing types
- Reduction of the “urban canyon” effect along corridors
- Public facing open spaces created by setbacks
- Private open spaces in the form of courtyards

PUD applications should consider the following Plan recommendations and implement them where applicable.

MC.1, MC.2, MC.3, MC.4, MC.5, MC.6. | MG.1, MG.3, MG.5, MG.6, MG.7 | GO.1, GO.8, GO.10, GO.12, GO.13, GO.14  
AC.5 | TC.4, TC.5, TC.6 | DP.1, DP.4 | VC.2, VC.3, VC.5, VC.8, VC.9

# 06 CONCEPT | GREEN OASIS



GREEN OASIS ILLUSTRATIVE | PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN SOUTHWEST HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ENHANCEMENT

## GREEN OASIS VISION

*Southwest will thrive as a green oasis in the city, with lush tree canopy and vegetation, landscaped building edges, thriving parks and robust connections between green spaces, while attaining new levels of neighborhood sustainability and environmental performance.*

### Today

A defining feature of the Southwest neighborhood is its multitude of strategically located green spaces, from major public open spaces, walking paths, parks, playgrounds, recreation centers and mature street trees to the green perimeters and landscaped courtyards of private development. This landscape creates spaces of visual beauty, physical respite, community-gathering, nature, play, shade and stormwater management. Southwest's green spaces, both majestic and minor, offer the community common ground for intersection and building connections. For a neighborhood just minutes from downtown, they soften the urban edges and offer relief from density. This distinguishing green atmosphere is not only a key to the success of today's Southwest, but an essential ingredient for retaining Southwest's unique character, desirability and quality of life as it moves into the future.



SOUTHWEST DUCK POND

## Opportunity

Southwest can be a green oasis, an equalizing counterpoint to a growing and thriving residential neighborhood. Southwest has the potential to become the rival of other DC neighborhoods, striking a balance between nature and urban building form.

**Great and Connected Parks and Open Spaces.** It is possible to not only retain the atmosphere of a “parks” neighborhood but expand on this concept to realize the enhancement of existing streets, open spaces and parks, and the delivery of green connective tissue throughout the neighborhood. An open space network can take shape as an even stronger greenway that links assets, provides visual connectivity, and enhances bicycle and pedestrian access. Residents would like to see capital investments, design enhancements and outstanding programming at its signature parks: Randall, King Greenleaf, The Southwest Duck Pond, and Library Park. Unlike the other parks, Lansburgh Park, located centrally within the Planning Area, has significant potential to be transformed from a beloved but underperforming park with very limited transparency or access, into an attractive and active “central park” for the neighborhood showcasing design excellence in landscape architecture, increased access and activity, and new “eyes on the park”. Collectively, Southwest parks will be called upon to serve a range of populations – youth, seniors, dog-owners, urban gardeners, athletes, everyone – and provide a mix of active and passive recreation opportunities. Parks can help support active lifestyles and serve as an educational ground for increasing understanding of the environment and healthy living choices.



EXISTING LANSBURGH PARK





LANSBURGH PARK RENDERING

**Outstanding Environmental Performance and Sustainability.**

Southwest can celebrate its figurative “green” through the adoption of sustainability measures and progressive community actions. Tree planting and the landscaping of parks and streets provide the opportunity to serve dual purposes – natural beauty and stormwater management / flood mitigation. This approach will be particularly important in the context of climate change and rising sea levels.

The adoption of “green” can go beyond public spaces. Southwest can support model private development providing attractive, high-performing landscaping, internal recreational and open spaces for residents, provision of electric vehicle charging stations, bicycle and shared vehicle parking, and environmentally conscious construction. Existing residential communities may voluntarily improve their carbon footprint through green retrofits and increased energy efficiency, paving removal, composting, and other actions furthering the goals of Sustainable DC.



COMMUNITY GARDEN AT ST. MATTHEWS CHURCH SITE



BASKETBALL AT RANDALL RECREATION CENTER

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal:** *Ensure Lansburgh Park evolves into a “central park” that will become a center of activity for the Southwest neighborhood.*

- GO.1** Redesign Lansburgh Park to create a true “central park” for the Southwest neighborhood . Continue the dog park and community garden functions but also include improved walking paths, new landscaping and permeable edges that invite “eyes on the park”. Include additional trees, benches, sustainable vegetation and enhanced signage. Consider a design competition to create a signature design and beautiful park space.
- GO.2** Consider an orchard feature as a “gateway” into Lansburgh Park from ‘I’ Street, SW. Sustainable DC recommends the inclusion of food-bearing trees where possible.
- GO.3** Remove the two brick walls at the northeast corner of Lansburgh Park in order to improve visibility from ‘I’ Street and apply landscape improvements and low impact development practices.

**Goal:** *Improve connectivity through greenways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, wayfinding signage, and coordinated programming throughout all Southwest Parks.*

- GO.4** Design a “green path” with signage to provide pedestrians with visual connections and walking routes between the Southwest Duck Pond, Library Park, Lansburgh Park and Randall Recreation Center.
- GO.5** Ensure that all park entry points at the Southwest Duck Pond are clearly marked and visible from the street, through the use of signage, public art and lighting as needed.
- GO.6** Enhance the presence of King Greenleaf Recreation Center along M Street through improved signage and landscaping at First and M Streets.
- GO.7** Visually extend Canal Street as a sidewalk between N Street and M Street to better connect pedestrians to the King Greenleaf Recreation Center.



LANSBURGH PARK

**Goal:** *Adopt Sustainable DC goals to showcase the Southwest neighborhood as a steward of green, sustainable practices targeting stormwater management, healthy living, and energy efficiency.*

- GO.8** Increase the tree canopy in the Southwest Planning Area from 25 percent to 37 percent with the addition of trees in all new developments, streetscape improvements and potentially at existing parks, such as Lansburgh. The creation of larger setbacks for new developments may allow for more tree planting opportunities. Ensure that any diseased trees are removed and replaced at appropriate times.
- GO.9** Designate the 100-year flood zone that extends from south of I-395 to P Street as a “Green Zone.” In this Green Zone, prioritize natural stormwater percolation, stormwater ponds, and general perviousness of public and private space, parking lots, plazas and courtyards. (See Figure 6.1)
- GO.10** Promote low impact development in all future upgrades along Delaware Avenue and Half Street, which run parallel to the flood zone, to maximize their capacity to hold storm and flood water.
- GO.11** Reduce stormwater runoff by transforming key areas of existing impervious surfaces to pervious materials and encouraging bioretention and landscaping.
- GO.12** New Private Development: Meet or exceed current flood-proofing requirements (requirements are currently set for 100-year floods). The Southwest neighborhood should consider negotiating with developers so that future PUDs meet flood-proofing for 500-year floods given the rapidly increasing sea-level rise projections.



KING GREENLEAF RECREATION CENTER

Any setbacks for new developments should become an opportunity for stormwater and flood water retention rather than lawns.

- GO.13** Maximize open spaces, vegetation and sustainable practices in new developments achieved through Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). (Also see Design Guidelines on pages 81-83).
- GO.14** Encourage the installation of electric vehicle-charging stations and set aside electric vehicle-only parking spaces in the garages of future buildings constructed under Planned Units Developments (PUDs) as a community amenity.
- GO.15** Partner with the Sustainable Energy Utility (SEU) and District Department of the Environment (DDOE) to organize follow-up community meetings on energy efficiency. Work with existing homeowner associations and other citizen organizations to identify specific project opportunities and market existing programs and subsidies for energy efficiency, renewable energy and green roof retrofits.

- 100 YEAR FLOOD LINE
  - FLOODZONE X - 500 YEAR FLOOD FLOOD (MINIMAL FLOOD HAZARD)
  - FLOODZONE X500 - 500 YEAR FLOOD (MODERATE FLOOD HAZARD)
  - FLOODZONE A - 100 YEAR FLOOD (WITHOUT BASE ELEVATIONS\*)
  - FLOODZONE AE - 100 YEAR FLOOD (WITH BASE ELEVATIONS\*)
- \* BASE FLOOD ELEVATION - THE COMPUTED ELEVATION TO WHICH FLOODWATER IS ANTICIPATED TO RISE DURING THE BASE FLOOD
- \* MAP DOES NOT REFLECT THE FLOOD PLAIN ONCE THE 17TH ST LEVEE IS COMPLETE.

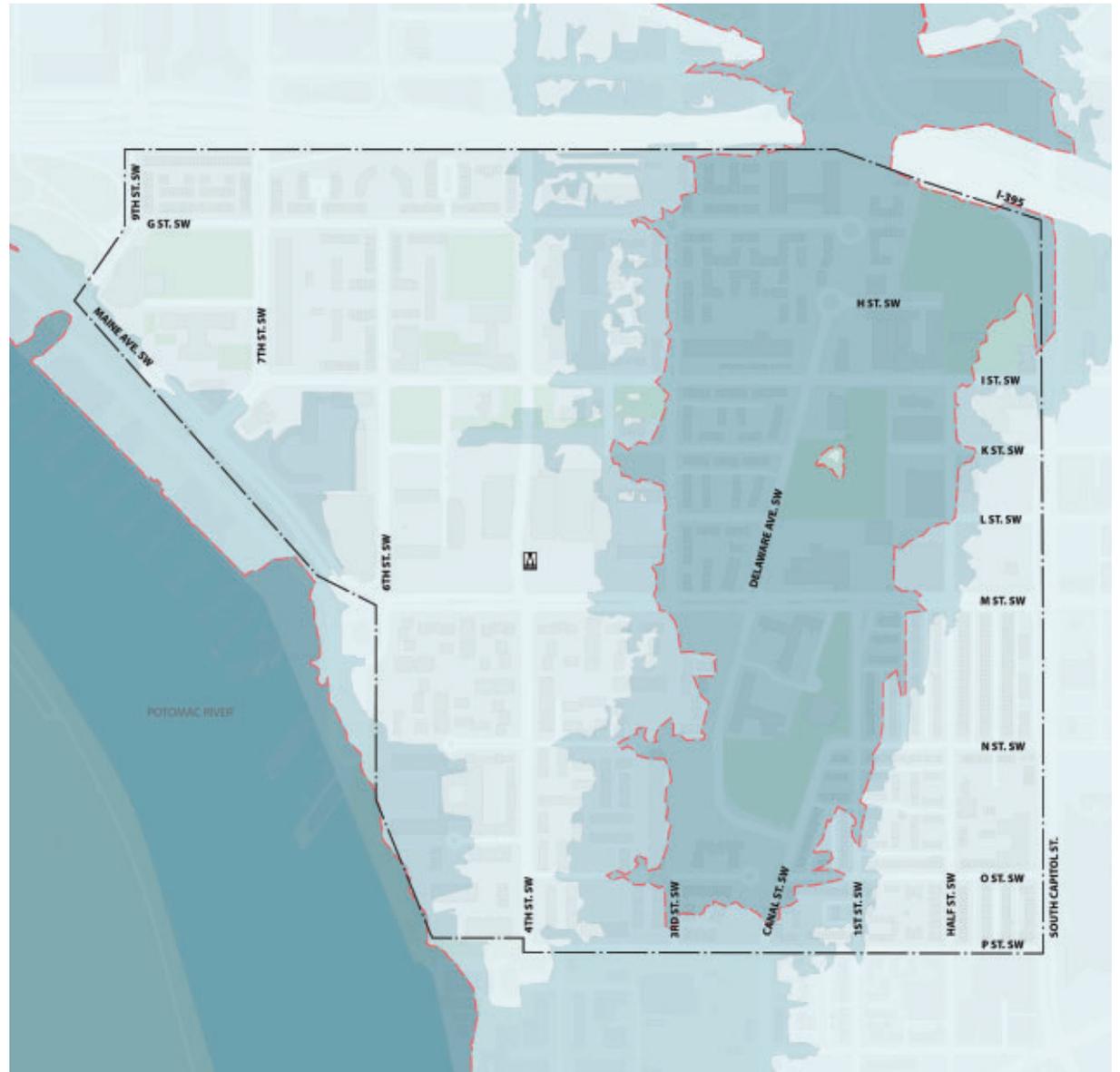


FIGURE 6.1 | PLANNING AREA FLOOD MAP



# 07 CONCEPT | ARTS AND CULTURE



ARTS AND CULTURE ILLUSTRATIVE | SOUTHWEST LOOKS TO FURTHER ENHANCE ITS CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

## ARTS AND CULTURE VISION

*Southwest will flourish as a premier arts and cultural destination, creating synergies between existing cultural assets and attracting new creative uses and arts-related activities.*

### Today

Southwest boasts strong arts institutions, the most central of which is the Arena Stage, a nationally known theater and the cultural icon of the neighborhood. The Blind Whino and planned Rubell Museum at the Randall School will create an arts hub at one end of 'I' Street. The Westminster Presbyterian Church at 4th and 'I' Streets not only serves as a religious institution but also a de facto performing arts space that attracts large crowds to its weekly live jazz series. The long vacant Southeastern University site has languished due to the difficulty of redevelopment under the current zoning and land use designation and lends itself to a future ground floor institutional or arts use to reinforce 'I' street as a cultural corridor. Vacant parcels on 4th Street have been activated with temporary public art installations through the District's "5x5" program in 2014. The neighborhood is also bolstered by its community facilities including local schools (Amidon-Bowen Elementary School and Jefferson Middle School Academy), the library, and two recreation centers.



ARENA STAGE

## Opportunity

Southwest has the potential to become one of the city's premier arts and culture destinations.

**A Cultural Hub.** While Southwest already has great cultural assets, these institutions and programs can be better leveraged collectively through joint promotion and marketing that puts the neighborhood and its institutions on the cultural map. There are also opportunities to foster an arts hub in the neighborhood by expanding local events and drawing on the existing successful ones such as Jazz Night at Westminster, Southwest Night at Arena Stage, and activities with Blind Whino. The future Rubell Museum at the Randall School can also reinforce the local arts scene. Importantly, this exciting range of institutions and programming can serve as an enriching and accessible community amenity for all Southwest residents.

**Invigorated 'I' Street.** The Southwest neighborhood has the opportunity to continue to concentrate cultural activities along the 'I' Street corridor. Renovation of the Randall Recreation Center should be prioritized – not only to improve access, entrances and the overall facility, but also to introduce programming that provides both recreational and cultural offerings for residents. To increase the presence of artists as local residents, priority can be placed on marketing the affordable units at the redeveloped Randall School to artists. The redevelopment of Greenleaf, with the responsible and thoughtful participation of the Southwest neighborhood, can include some ground floor spaces along 'I' and M streets that may house arts/creative incubator uses. The Southwest Neighborhood Library also contributes to the corridor, and a new library can create a space that further establishes an iconic presence for community institutions. The Southeastern University site can be ignited for



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

redevelopment to bookend one side of the 'I' Street cultural corridor, remain sensitive to its context, and include an institutional/cultural use and possibly artist housing (for more see page 97).

**Arts in the Public Realm.** The Southwest neighborhood can reinforce its identity as an arts and culture destination by manifesting the arts in the public realm. Temporary installations, "pop-up" programming, and events can be focused around the Southwest Duck Pond and vacant parcels and retail spaces along 4th Street SW. Underpasses have long stood as a neighborhood barrier that may be significantly enhanced through incorporation of public art and lighting.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal:** *Build on and market existing cultural assets and institutions to reinforce the concept of an arts and cultural destination.*

- AC.1** Foster the Southwest neighborhood arts hub by expanding events, such as Jazz Night at Westminster, Southwest Night at Arena Stage, activities with Blind Whino, and future events with the proposed Rubell Museum at the Randall School.
- AC.2** Promote the arts as a community amenity in neighborhood marketing materials and communicate current and planned activities involving the arts to residents throughout the District of Columbia. Develop a single source to advertise and promote all arts events in one place for easier access and more effective marketing.

**Goal:** *Strengthen ‘I’ Street as a cultural corridor.*

- AC.3** Renovate the Randall Recreation Center to support both recreation and multi-purpose arts focused programming while maintaining existing playing fields and greenspaces.
- AC.4** Market the required affordable units in the new Randall School development to artists who meet the affordability requirements.
- AC.5** Encourage the creation of incubator space for local arts organizations or other creative entrepreneurs (e.g., web designers, film editing, production, culinary space, etc.) or local business start-ups on the ground floors of new buildings on M and ‘I’ Streets.



BLIND WHINO ART EVENT SPACE



INSIDE BLIND WHINO

## SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SITE

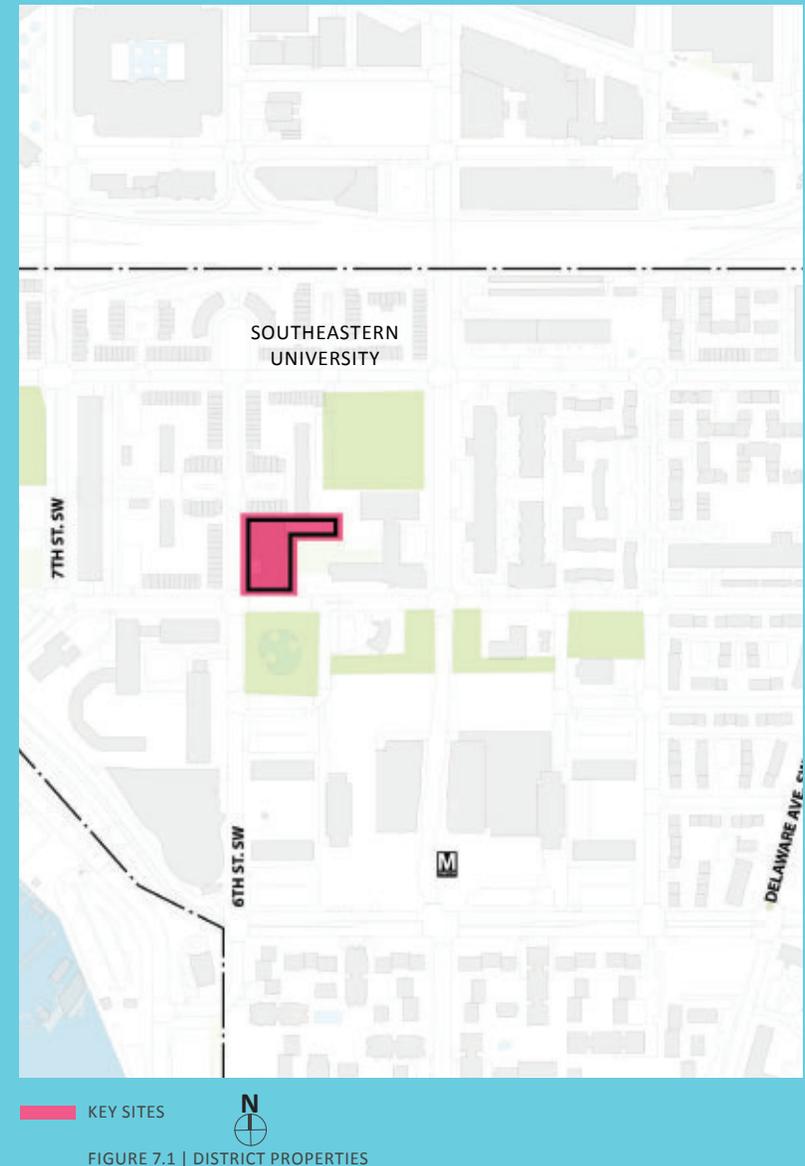
This site, located at 501 'I' Street SW, was initially constructed in 1948 as the Metropolitan Boys Club. It was later expanded by Modernist architect Charles Goodman to become the Hawthorne School. Additional wings were added as was the concrete façade that is still in existence. The building was sold in 1972 to Southeastern University which operated an adult education campus until closing permanently in 2010. Since that time, that building has been vacant and fallen into disrepair.

During this planning process, a prominent theater company, Shakespeare Theater Company (STC), proposed a plan to convert the property into its new headquarters with artist space by tearing the existing building down and erecting a larger building in its place. STC planned to partner with a private developer to include additional market rate housing as well as housing specifically for visiting actors. This site is a preferred location for an arts and cultural use as it complements and augments the arts uses already in Southwest and further anticipates the Plan's vision for cultural uses along 'I' Street. Convenient access to Metro is also a plus for many of the visiting actors who would use the rehearsal space.

The site itself is currently designated "Institutional" on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map which is in keeping with its historic educational and nonprofit uses. It is zoned R-3 which permits low density residential uses such as townhomes.

During this planning process, the community expressed an understanding of the theater's need for additional space and recognized the merits of having a world class theater headquartered in Southwest. However, it was clear that many adjacent residents have serious concerns about the compatibility of a 6-9 story building within the existing townhome community. The land use designation would need to be changed to facilitate the full building program as required by the theater company and its development partner.

At this time, the Southwest Neighborhood Plan is not making a recommendation for a land use designation change for this site until further outreach efforts can be conducted by the STC and its development partner to address community concerns. A cultural use at this site would be a preferred use going forward and efforts to change the land use should seriously be considered by the community and the ANC. The theater is encouraged to continue the dialogue with the Southwest neighborhood through the upcoming Comprehensive Plan Amendment process which will get underway in 2015.



**Goal:** *Grow the presence of the arts throughout the Southwest neighborhood.*

- AC.6** Initiate a pilot improvement project for at least one underpass to include unique public art and lighting.
- AC.7** Support the use of grants, pilot programming or public/private partnerships to help fund “pop-up” programming, short-term events and other efforts by the Neighbors of the Southwest Duck Pond to expand activities in this location.



SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY



ART ON 6TH STREET SOUTHWEST