



THE DC OFFICE OF PLANNING

Amending the DC Comprehensive Plan
Community Workshop #5
Summary & Public Comment Digest

Table with 2 columns: Field Name and Value. Fields include Meeting Date (Tuesday, November 1, 2016), Meeting Location (School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens, 2425 N St. NW), Featured Area Element(s) (Central Washington Area Element & Near Northwest Area Element), Number of Attendees (55), and Agenda (Registration, Welcome, Open House, OP Presentation, Final Thoughts from the Public, Closing & Next Steps).

This document presents written comments received from the public at the Open House Comment Boards and delivered verbally during the Final Thoughts from the Public session. Please note that this document serves as the initial step in the DC Office of Planning’s public meeting report out process for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment cycle. A more in-depth Community Outreach and Engagement Summary Report that covers all 7 PlanDC community workshops and identifies key themes from the public comments will be developed and released at a later date.

I. OPEN HOUSE

Following a welcome message and brief overview of the night’s agenda by the DC Office of Planning (OP), attendees were invited to participate in an Open House that included a series of topic-specific stations with boards containing information and/or data on the Comprehensive Plan’s Area Elements and Citywide Elements; growth and development in DC; and resilience, a new topic being integrated into the Comprehensive Plan for the first time. All stations were staffed and included comment boards for attendees to share insights and feedback. The purposes of the Open House were for attendees to provide their comments and insights pertinent to each particular topic station and for OP staff to share information and answer topic-/area-specific or process questions. For planning purposes, the District is organized geographically by Area Elements in the Comp Plan. There are a total of 10 Area Elements in the Comp Plan. Each meeting featured 1-2 Area Elements based on the geographic area of where it was held. Additionally, participants from across the city could attend any of the 7 PlanDC community workshops and OP provided an opportunity for comments on any of the 10 Area Elements at each meeting.

Open House Stations:

- 1) Comprehensive Plan Vision & Core Themes

- 2) What is the Comprehensive Plan?
- 3) Future Land Use Map & Generalized Policy Map
- 4) Area Elements – *3 boards*:
  - Central Washington Area Element
  - Near Northwest Area Element
  - Area Elements Summary
- 5) Citywide Elements—*12 boards*:
  - Land Use
  - Urban Design
  - Economic Development
  - Transportation
  - Infrastructure
  - Community Services & Facilities
  - Housing
  - Educational Facilities
  - Historic Preservation
  - Environmental Protection
  - Parks, Recreation & Open Space
  - Arts & Culture
- 6) Growth & Development
- 7) Resilience
- 8) Ask a Director
- 9) Ask a Planner

**OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC COMMENTS BY TOPIC**

Open House comments were transcribed based on attendees’ written comments. A commenter’s name is noted when provided.

***Area Elements***

**Central Washington Area Element**

**Includes the following neighborhoods: Monumental Core, Penn Quarter, Chinatown, Mount Vernon Triangle, Farragut, Southwest Employment Area, NoMa**

***What do you like about where you live?***

- DDOT program for demand-based parking- Good idea

***What improvements are needed in your area/neighborhood?***

- We have developers come to our city and decide what we going to pay for rent/housing. Who works for us? Who working on our side to say no, if you want to build make it affordable
- Enhance advertising and community outreach for events

- Outreach ideas: free clinics, flex times, lunch time, partner with local churches
- Outreach strategies: press releases, schools, promote within gov't employees
- Tailor transportation options for youth, ex. How to get kids to recreation centers
- Expand rent control in DC. This will make it more competitive with PG County
- Issues of monthly pricing cost in commercial v residential buildings
- Expand landscaping in streetscapes. Plant more trees and create new parks
- Provide opportunities for residents to move within the city should they wish
- Why are neighborhoods split up? Look at neighborhoods more holistically while planning, ex. Dupont Circle
- Expand affordable housing and recreation centers, ex. Expand training, life skills at the centers
- Trucks can pick up trash any time of day and night – in blocks with both offices and housing, it's a problem
- Plan for 24-hour usage of neighborhoods, i.e. downtown empties out after 6pm
  - Can contribute to crime
- Expand access to government for those who do not have access to computers
- Minimization of car use and prioritize bicycles and public transportation
- How does the comp plan address changes that might occur with statehood?
- How does development lend to public safety?
  - Manage vacant and blighted properties
- How to balance the commuters' consumption of resources?
  - Tons of MD and VA driver commuters

### **Near Northwest Area Element**

**Includes the following neighborhoods: Foggy Bottom, Georgetown, West End, Dupont Circle, Logan Circle, Shaw, Kalorama, Burleith, Hillandale**

#### ***What do you like about where you live?***

- Love open space, parks and trees
- Parks and trees

#### ***What improvements are needed in your area/neighborhood?***

- Area Element map reveals low public facilities in the Dupont Circle area
- How are discrepancies between generalized policy map and future land use map?
- Dupont Circle covers two Area Elements (should be one)
- Funding base to support development
- Incentives for small businesses?
- Parking regulations are not realistic

- How does this realistically relate to city services – fire, police, gas, water, sewage?
- Where is relationship to feds?
- Input from commuters from VA-MD-West VA-Penn
- Where is the point for responsibility over long term transportation issues?
- Area as drawn:
  - Too big –unable to correlate future changes
  - Cut in half of Dupont Circle
  - Georgetown is special area--should be separate
- Comp Plan is designed for developers--not residents
- Comp Plan did not play out as expected. Needs to be consistent
- Need more affordable housing
- Land use map not representative of on the ground circumstances
- Campus plans are not helpful to neighborhoods. They eat residential housing
- Concern over micro-units in the future
- Infrastructure to support new units--Metro
- More libraries and community centers and senior centers
- DC take over NPS parks
- How does this relate to zoning provisions for NW?
- Changes in density but façade may be the same
- Circulator that connects to U Street
- Preserve pedestrian character of 16th Street
- Diversity of green and open space

## ***Citywide Elements***

### **Land Use Element**

#### ***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- Encourage new development in blighted areas through tax policy and zoning, rather than increasing development in areas which are already ‘developed’ (+1)
- Mixed income neighborhoods and opportunities for exchange and interaction between existing and new residents (+1) (+1)
- Open land should be preserved to plant new trees, including near construction sites
- Make land use decisions in conjunction with transportation decisions
- Better balance of single-family neighborhoods with more dense neighborhoods (~50% SF detached. Too much)
- More parks, better parks – well distributed
- Unaffordable housing threatens neighborhood character more than new buildings do (+1)

- A healthy city shows its layers of growth, rather than funneling all growth from one era into a few neighborhoods. Ensure that all neighborhoods, even established ones, share in the potentials and burdens of growth. (+1) (+1) (+1)
- Plan for more growth: The 2006 plan included large land use change areas. Almost all are under development today. DC needs to find and plan for additional centers of growth. (+1)
- Allow incremental growth “by-right” everywhere in the city. Make it legal to build rowhouses in single-family detached areas. Make it legal to build small apartment buildings in rowhouse areas, etc. (+1)

### **Urban Design Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- “I don’t want DC to look like NYC”
- With new condos, creates a feeling of cement city
- New development on U Street out of scale
  - Used to be a place to party/entertainment – new residents complained, parking restrictions – difficulty parking for churches. Not recognizing their role in community
- Too much emphasis on design details (e.g., materials) and not big picture things that are proven to be more fundamental of built form. (+1) (+1)
- Too much about compatibility in neighborhoods without appreciating urban diversity that reflects our population
- So much unique/ experimental architecture in DC, encourage creativity within scale (height) of neighborhoods
- Encourage more public art/green spaces to add/preserve character of neighborhoods
- Keep openness and trees along walkways so walkers get sun dappled shade – encourage walking
- Encourage better retail frontages – high ceilings and lots of transparency
- Involve local creatives/artists. Hire local designers and creatives
- Policies/incentives to promote less boxy, homogenous construction (monotony of curtain walls and brick clad facades)

### **Economic Development Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- First floor retail (& especially small business) needs protection, enhancement, tax breaks, etc. to ensure vitality and survival (+1)
- High housing costs dissuade job growth too
- Increased housing production may lower housing costs and spur job growth
- Regional coordination to market area’s demographic strengths

- Diversify but don't forget your federal gov buddies
- Ward 2 has less dynamic retail. Tired
- Education to support career pathways
- More, faster development in Ward 8, please. Need more grocery stores
- Fight to keep fed agencies in DC (Goodbye FBI)

### **Transportation Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- More dependable transportation options from MD
- Dedicated streetcar lane on K St. to Georgetown
- Protected bike lanes need enforcement, especially on L St. (+1)
- Better signage (for both cyclists and drivers) and flow where bike lanes end abruptly
- More dedicated bus lanes – K St., 16th (+1) (+1)
- Remove parking lanes for dedicated lanes
- Comprehensive Bike Path Plan – Need to ensure continuous paths across city without gaps in dedicated lanes
- Increased and sustained efforts to deter, detect, and prevent bike thefts
- Dedicated bus lanes – 8<sup>th</sup> St. NE-SE
- Rebalance Capital Bikeshare bikes to ensure greater availability through the day, esp. off peak and in residential neighborhoods
- No street cars – invest in Metro (+1)
- Invest in ongoing Metro maintenance to avoid things like SafeTrack in the future
- As much as you have the ability, please make bus transit more dignified
- Transportation is a chicken and egg issue. You need to make the upfront investment in infrastructure before it becomes workable and can actually replace the use of single occupancy cars

### **Infrastructure Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- Green infrastructure leadership should become more widespread
- More trimming of street trees
- Trees in parking lane, not sidewalks
- More rain gardens
- Address smell of Rock Creek
- Recommend silva cells for tree plantings
- Restore trees on Mass. Ave
- Plant new trees on sidewalk by PNC bank at Dupont Circle

- Work harder to support tree cover goals by caring for the trees we plant and planting trees in all neighborhoods
- Balance infrastructure development between neighborhoods
- Build infrastructure to catch up to population growth
- Sewer backups in Petworth, basement flooding on 7<sup>th</sup>/Shep./Taylor

### **Community Services and Facilities Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, or questions below:***

- Turkey Thicket Rec Center – A/C summertime
- Turkey Recreation Center- A/C breaks every summer
- More libraries. Explore more joint development opportunities
- Longer/later library hours. Consider tradeoffs of consolidation vs. longer hours
- Overdrive - electronic booksharing program
- Sharing systems/interlibrary systems – universities of MD and VA systems
- Possible to make community facilities 24 hour public goods?
- Really excited for MLK library renovation – but where will people go while it is underway?
- Keep outdoor pools open past Labor Day
- More/better exercise/workout facilities
- More support for aging in place (i.e. Georgetown Village)
- Continue fantastic library design efforts

### **Housing Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- City-owned vacant properties should not be acceptable in a city short on housing (+1)
- More housing and affordable housing (IZ) near Metro stations
- Increased development of permanent supportive housing for residents who cannot manage without help
- Allow more pop-backs
- Encourage accessory dwelling units
- Encourage new development in all wards
- Less “neighborhood conservation” districts
- Creative housing - artists, musicians, dancers, etc.

### **Educational Facilities Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- DC needs to focus 125% on revamping the schools in the District (+1)
- Provide trade schools for those who cannot attend college (financially)
- Trade schools period, more home-economics
- How are DC charter schools performing? Sounds like a great idea but would love more data
- Improved schools one of key issues affecting decision to stay or leave the District (+1)
- Continue upgrading/renovating facilities
- Provide space for adult continuing education
- Partner with maker spaces, hack labs, universities, museums, etc. to create city-wide resource-rich network and program of events for public school students (internships, creative workshops, etc.)
- More adult education
- More lifelong learning – cooking classes, pottery
- Balance construction/modernization of new schools with educational materials and teacher salaries
- Middle schools. Public middle schools

### **Historic Preservation Element**

***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- HPO needs more staff (+1)
- Concerned about preserving churches
- Respect historic districts
- Balanced approach to encouraging new growth and preserving actual historic elements of the city
- Please redevelop “SunTrust plaza”
- Complete historic resources survey. Landmark proactively, not reactively
- Protect historic residential areas from pop-up development\condemnation
- How much is enough preservation? Future growth needs to be accommodated, too
- How do you bring historic character back to a neighborhood that has already been leveled? (interstate through SW)
- Protect “ugly buildings”
- Help Burleith
- The treescapes of historic streets and avenues deserve as much proactive protection as the historic buildings
- Establish program to provide owners resources to help ensure additions to buildings are compatible with traditional DC building patterns
- We need conservation districts as an alternative



## **Environmental Protection Element**

### ***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- Close some streets to cars and make some bike and pedestrian malls (+1)
- DC Parks and Rec needs to maintain parks and take back parks from NPS for efficiency (+1)
- Coordinated shoreline plan for enviro, public access
- Take climate crisis seriously – uphold Sustainable DC targets
- Programs are great (storm water run off) – looking forward to results
- Maintenance of new and young trees is critical to grow them to full canopy trees and provide claimed ecosystem benefits for NAAQS SIP and MS4 compliance (DS/RMA)
- Create District-wide electric vehicle stations
- Public farms/fruit trees
- More robust recycling rules
- Partnership with: farmers markets, local environmental concern groups, locally-based scientific associations, environment and energy interest groups – to implement educational/interactive programs for schools
- Allow subsidies for both rain gardens and pervious pavers, not one or the other

## **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element**

### ***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- DC needs to maintain existing DC-controlled parks and take over more NPS-controlled small parks reservations
- Ditto--comment above. Aggregation of reservations-- such as Francis School – into the hands of DC
- Work to make neglected small parcel parks inviting/happy places
- The NPS “reservations” make up many small triangle parks and other sites important to neighborhoods. NPS should arrange user-friendly ways for DC residents to plant the reservations with trees and adapt these sites to local community use
- Open DC sidewalk at Dupont Circle by PNC bank is terrible kept island and not a community space. City should plant trees there. (See RMA Dupont Tree Plaza Plan)
- Banneker Pool: love the renovations; however it is now overcrowded on weekends. Perhaps make/add additional pools available or renovate
- Turkey Thicket Community Center: AC breaks every summer in the gym. Boot camp and summer camp participants suffer and it is unhealthy
- Plans for integration of open space into walkable environments: address access
- There should be places for children 6 and under to learn and develop their motor skills in their own play areas. Too much is focused on teens and adults
- Affordable summer camps for children. Camps are too expensive for many families

- Safe transportation for children going home from after school programs
- Identification survey and preservation of existing open spaces (green and brown field sites) such as McMillan and railyards along MBT for use as parks
- Improved access and linkage between existing open space elements

### **Arts and Culture Element**

#### ***Write your issues, ideas, questions below:***

- Red line mural corridor – NoMa-Silver Spring
- Affordability of housing and studio spaces. Just setting aside spaces in zoning not a guarantee, e.g. Penn Quarter (+1)
- Graffiti as a positive, distinctive art
- Reactivate Penn Ave
- More opportunities for edgy art, more spontaneity
- More outdoor music
- Architecture as a cultural destination
- Using vacant/empty spaces as art/maker/gallery space after certain period of vacancy
- Art and sculpture in smaller parks – beautify them – chess tables, ping pong
- Create streamlined permit process for pop-ups

### **Resilience**

#### ***What does resilience mean?***

- Fragile transportation system
- Confidence in law enforcement
- Need good communication about disaster planning and what to do – creates confidence
- Listen to the DC area – everyone, as a whole (ongoing)
- Parking for non-zone residents (who used to live in area) of the District who want to support local establishments (U. St.) – long-term establishments lose support
  - Metro not reliable
  - Not everyone wants to Uber
- Environmental equity (i.e. Ivy City)
- Economic downturns and decreasing tax revenue as result
- Need to diversify economy
- Importance of industrial land to diversify the economy
- SafeTrack--avoid the need for emergency maintenance by more constant, ongoing maintenance
- Recognizing that residents in different parts of the city are more vulnerable and need to have a more specialized resilience plan

- Access to communication, cash
- Economic inequality, lack of access exacerbates impact of other shocks
- Efficiency, emissions of buildings – look at DOEE regulations — what are outcomes of LEED?
- Encourage public responsibility – 3-day survival kit
- Estonia survivalist boot camp article – NY Times
- Stormwater, resilience – need a map showing how >1” of rain water gets distributed throughout the city

## II. Final Thoughts from the Public

Following the Open House and OP Presentation, meeting attendees were invited to share at the microphone in front of the entire audience their “top thought about DC’s future” or to build on thoughts shared by others. The following is a transcription of the comments shared verbally during this session. The name of the commenter is noted when it was provided.

- **Public Comment 1:** Do not know how people are going to work in the next ten years but we know that they will need somewhere to live. Encourage additional residential through mixed use zones proximate to downtown like the West End.
- **Public Comment 2:** How will DC pay for it? Who will be overseeing it and who will be accountable? When the Zoning Commission changes things, how are they held accountable?
- **Public Comments 3:** Demographic changes are happening in the District – diversification of the economy away from federal jobs and changes based on race and income. How do we include the diversity while balancing a bigger tax base and safety. Remain inclusive.
- **Public Comment 4:** Supportive of mixed use but those living in mixed use areas need to be subject to the same protections (noise, trash collection, ABRA legislation, etc.) as the residential areas. Cultural uses should be included in these areas. Maintain residential quality of life for residents living in these areas.
- **Public Comment 5:** From Dupont Circle Citizens Association. Noise is the biggest problem in mixed use areas; fix inclusionary zoning so Dupont Circle provides more affordable housing; more green space and green buildings. MLK library hosting 8 public meetings on new central library design.
- **Public Comment 6:** Mixed-use centered in areas where there is not parking. West End has been a fully-functioning mixed use area for a long time. Other areas had nothing and change is coming quickly and displacing people. Want DC to have mixed use spaces where everyone feels included. Spread out ability to do things. Appreciate being part of the process.

- **Public Comment 7:** Protect the characteristics that make DC desirable. Growth should be encouraged in areas that need it rather than taking areas that are already built up and making them denser. Find ways to have developers develop in blighted areas rather than building in areas that are already (over) developed.
- **Public Comment 8:** Addressing the issue of cars as it relates to the city's growth. We already have some of the worst commutes in the country. Cities allow people the opportunity to move away from an auto-dependent existence. Create a network of neighborhoods that allow people to live without cars and that support the local life of a community. Make sure people have access to working and shopping opportunities.
- **Public Comment 9:** Important to try to delineate parking for residents from parking for shopping in mixed use zones. Not all residents rent cars, some like to own their own car for convenience--to run errands go out and do things around town, visit children, grandkids in suburbs. Cost of parking for residents is high.