Chapter 22
Rock Creek East Area Element

awthorne

Woods

Rock Creek Park

Shepherd Park

Takoma

Takoma

PINEY BRANCH ROAD

Brightwood

Lamond Riggs

Manor Park

BEACH DR

MISSOURI AVE

WEST

Brightwood Park

NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE

14TH ST

GEORGIA AVE

16TH ST

16th Street Heights

Fort Totten

Forest Hills

Crestwood North

Petworth

Crestwood

Pleasant Hill

Park View

UPPER NORTHEAST

Georgia Ave/ Petworth

Mount Pleasant

Pleasant Plains

Woodley Park

Columbia Heights

Stronghold

Lanier Heights

Woodland-Normanstone Terr

N

Miles

Rock Creek East Area Element

Overview 2200

The Rock Creek East Planning Area encompasses the 7.4 square miles located east of Rock Creek Park, north of Spring Road NW, and west of North Capitol Street and Riggs Road. It also includes the Armed Forces Retirement Home and the Irving Street Hospital Center Complex. Its boundaries are shown in the Map at left. Most of this area has historically been Ward 4 although in past and present times, parts have been included in Ward 5. 2200.1

Rock Creek East is an attractive residential community containing many stable low and moderate density neighborhoods. Single family communities like North Portal Estates, Colonial Village, Crestwood, Crestwood North, Carter Barron East, Shepherd Park, 16th Street Heights, and Takoma are known for their park-like ambiance, sense of community, open spaces, and family atmosphere. Row house and semi-detached neighborhoods such as Lamond Riggs, Brightwood, Brightwood Park, Petworth, and Manor Park have similar positive qualities. The major planning objective throughout the community is to conserve these traits as the housing stock matures and infill development occurs. 2200.2

Georgia Avenue is the commercial heart of this Planning Area, with local shops that serve the adjacent neighborhoods. There are also small shopping districts in Takoma, near 14th Street and Colorado Avenue, along Kennedy Street, along Upshur near 3rd Street, and along 14th Street between Allison and Decatur Streets. Other major employment centers in the area include the Irving Street Hospital Complex, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. The possible reuse of the latter two sites during the next 20 years presents planning challenges that must be addressed proactively so that the area's well-established neighborhoods are protected and enhanced. 2200.3

Rock Creek East is served by two major transit hubs—the Takoma and Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metrorail stations. Residents also use transit stations in adjacent Planning Areas, including Columbia Heights, Van Ness/UDC, and Cleveland Park. Historically, the major circulation routes through the planning area have been the north-south arterials leading out of Downtown, such as 16th Street, 14th Street, Georgia Avenue (7th Street), New Hampshire Avenue, and North Capitol Street. East/west circulation is more limited. Missouri Avenue/Military Road is the major east-west street and one of the few that connects the neighborhoods east of Rock Creek Park with those to the west. 2200.4

The community includes many important open spaces and natural resources, the most significant of which is Rock Creek Park itself. The park provides a massive buffer of green space, as well as opportunities for both passive and active recreation.

The community includes many important open spaces and natural resources, the most significant of which is Rock Creek Park itself. The park provides a massive buffer of green space, as well as opportunities for both passive and active recreation. It includes amenities such as a golf course, Carter Barron Amphitheater, and tennis facilities that host professional tennis players from across the United States. There are also a number of neighborhood parks, some serving the dual function of being school recreation areas. Recreation centers have recently been built in Brightwood, Lamond, and Takoma. The Fort Circle Parks also cross the area, providing a continuous linear green space from Rock Creek to Fort Totten and beyond. Rock Creek Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in the District of Columbia, is also located here. 2200.5

Rock Creek East has always had a strong sense of community spirit, due in part to a well-organized network of community associations, churches, and interest groups. Organizations include neighborhood groups like the civic and citizens associations in Shepherd Park, Brightwood, South Manor Park, Crestwood, Lamond Riggs, Carter Barron East, and Takoma. "Georgia Avenue Day" has always been a special event for residents and visitors alike. Farmers markets are hosted in Petworth, Takoma, and 14th Street Heights. 2200.6

While the area has enjoyed a relatively stable existence, the future holds a number of land use and community development challenges. Georgia Avenue continues to have high commercial vacancy rates, aesthetic issues, parking problems, and land use conflicts where commercial businesses abut low density housing. While attracting new businesses to the avenue is a high priority, helping existing businesses thrive is also important. In Takoma, there are issues related to the impacts of infill development around the Metro station. The CSX rail corridor in Manor Park and Lamond Riggs continues to support industrial land uses, sometimes without sufficient buffering for adjacent residential areas. As noted above, the future of Walter Reed Hospital continues to be debated, and portions of the Armed Forces Retirement Home may be developed in the coming years. These changes will impact traffic, parking, and the visual character of Rock Creek East neighborhoods. 2200.7

Rock Creek East also faces the challenge of retaining its economic and social diversity in the face of rising housing costs. Home prices in the Petworth/Brightwood/16th Street Heights zip code (20011) rose a staggering 35 percent between 2004 and 2005 alone, one of the sharpest increases in the city. Many apartments in areas like Brightwood and Brightwood Park have been converted to condominiums. The increase in housing costs has made the area much less affordable for Rock Creek East's working families and for its large population of low and moderate income seniors. On the other hand, demographic changes are making the area more ethnically diverse than it used to be. The area's Hispanic population more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. 2200.8

Looking to the future, neighborhoods from Crestwood to Takoma share the goal of keeping Rock Creek East a stable, healthy, and attractive community. Residents seek to retain the residential character, appearance, and historical continuity of their neighborhoods. Sustaining these qualities will require that development is carefully and strategically directed, and that additional steps are taken to conserve neighborhoods, enhance environmental quality, provide an effective transportation network, improve health care and educational services, reduce crime, upgrade public facilities and infrastructure, and improve housing choices. 2200.9

Battleground National Cemetery on Georgia Avenue

Context

History 2201

European settlement in the Rock Creek East Area dates back to 1712, when St. Paul's Episcopal Church was sited in the area. Rock Creek Cemetery was established in 1719. The area initially developed as a result of the presence of underground springs and the area's popularity for recreational horse racing in the early to mid-1800s. Brightwood Turnpike, later renamed Georgia Avenue, was built in 1819 and served as a major route for race patrons and agricultural commerce between Maryland and downtown Washington. During the Civil War, Fort Totten, Fort Slocum and Fort Stevens were developed to defend the capital from attack. Fort Stevens was the site of Civil War combat in 1864, a battle that gained notoriety as the only military action in which a sitting U.S. President came under fire from an enemy force. All three of the forts are now part of the National Park Service's Fort Circle Parks, and the Battleground National Cemetery on Georgia Avenue is on the National Register of Historic Places. 2201.1

Following the Civil War, development in the area increased, especially along Georgia Avenue and Military Road. Farms, estates and summer homes were the first housing types to be developed. Toward the end of the 19th century, Brightwood became a suburban village where affluent families lived on large estates. As further development occurred, Brightwood was subdivided into the neighborhoods that we know today as Petworth, Brightwood Park, Brightwood and Lamond. 2201.2

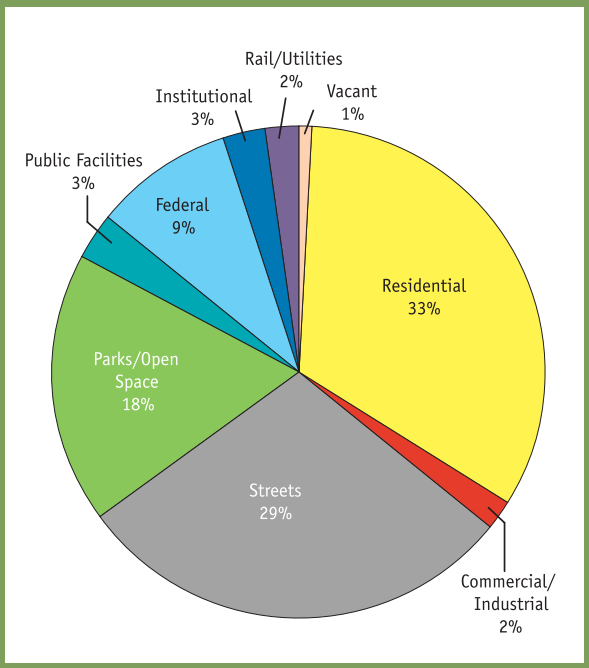
On the northeast edge of Brightwood, Takoma Park was founded by Benjamin Gilbert in the early 1880s and developed around the Brightwood Railroad Station (later renamed Takoma Park Station) near Fourth Street and Blair Road. Many of its spacious wood-frame bungalows and Victorian homes remain today, and much of the neighborhood is a designated historic district. 2201.3

Federal facilities also shaped the growth of Rock Creek East. Chief among them were the U.S. Soldiers and Airmens Home, established in 1851 near Rock Creek Church Road, and Walter Reed Army Medical Center, built in

1909 on Georgia Avenue. Walter Reed's development sparked residential and commercial development in surrounding areas. For example, the Shepherd Estate north of Walter Reed was subdivided in 1911 and developed as Shepherd Park during the 1910s. Shepherd Park initially was developed with restrictive covenants that excluded African-Americans and Jews from the community. However, by the 1960s, the neighborhood was the heart of the District's Jewish community and today it is one of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in the city. 2201.4

The racial composition of Rock Creek East shifted during the 1950s and 1960s. The area was predominantly white prior to 1950, but by 1970 it was predominantly black. The area became a desirable neighborhood for upper-middle and middle income black professional families and the stately homes and subdivisions along 16th Street developed a cachet as Washington's "Gold Coast." Racial composition remained fairly constant during the 1970s and 1980s, but became more diverse during the 1990s as the number of Latino residents increased. 2201.5

Figure 22.1:
Land Use Composition in Rock Creek East 2202.2



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2006

Land Use 2202

Land use statistics for this Planning Area appear in Figure 22.1. Rock Creek East comprises about 4,800 acres, or about 12 percent of the city's land area. 2202.1

The largest single land use in the Planning Area is residential, representing about 33 percent of the total area. Of the 1,635 acres of residential land in Rock Creek East, over 90 percent consists of single family homes and row houses. Densities are typically lower than the citywide average. The lowest density areas are located west of 16th Street and in the Takoma and Shepherd Park areas. Concentrations of more dense housing exist in Brightwood, Brightwood Park and Petworth. The largest concentration of apartments is along the 14th Street corridor, particularly near Missouri Avenue and just north of Spring Road. 2202.3

Commercial and industrial uses make up just 2.5 percent of the Planning Area. Most of this land consists of retail and service businesses along Georgia Avenue and Kennedy Street NW, and in smaller commercial districts like Takoma and 14th Street Heights. Industrial areas total less than 20 acres and are located along the Metrorail/CSX tracks, generally following Blair Road. There are also light industrial uses between Taylor and Upshur Streets on the northwest edge of Petworth. 2202.4

Open space and parks comprise about 18 percent of the Planning Area. Most of this acreage is associated with Rock Creek Park and its stream valleys. The vast majority of the open space in the Planning Area is owned and operated by the National Park Service. Non-park federal properties comprise nine percent of the Planning Area. Almost all of this acreage is associated with Walter Reed and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Public facilities and institutional uses each represent about three percent of the Planning Area. 2202.5

One of the largest land uses in the Planning Area is streets. Street rights-of-way, including roads, medians, alleys, traffic islands, and sidewalks, comprise 29 percent of Rock Creek East. There are only 22 acres of vacant land in the Planning Area, representing 0.5 percent of the total area. 2202.6

There was a 183 percent increase in the Hispanic population between 1990 and 2000; persons of Hispanic origin now represent 13 percent of the area's population. This is double the average for the city as a whole.

Demographics 2203

Basic demographic data for Rock Creek East is shown in Table 22.1. In 2000, the area had a population of 66,347 or about 12 percent of the city's total. Population in the area declined by six percent during the 1990s. The number of households also declined, although not as steeply. Since 2000, the number of residents has declined slightly. Average household size in 2005 was estimated at 2.53. Although household size in the Planning Area has been falling for several decades, it is still well above the citywide average of 2.12. 2203.1

Approximately 77 percent of the area's residents are African-American, which is higher than the citywide average of 60 percent. However, the number of black residents in the Planning Area declined by over 10,000 during the 1990s. The number of white residents increased slightly, , representing about 10 percent of the total today. There was a 183 percent increase in the Hispanic population between 1990 and 2000; persons of Hispanic origin now represent 13 percent of the area's population. This is double the average for the city as a whole. The percentage of foreign-born residents is also much higher than the citywide average. 2203.2

Relative to the city as a whole, the area has higher percentages of children and seniors. About 21 percent of the residents are under 18, compared to a citywide average of 20 percent. About 17 percent are over 65, compared to the citywide average of 12 percent. 2203.3

Table 22.1:

Rock Creek East at a Glance 2203.4

Basic Statistics	
Land Area (square miles)	7.4
Population	
1990	70,564
2000	66,347
2005 (estimated)*	65,700
2025 (projected)*	74,400
Households (2005)*	25,400
Household Population (2005)* (excludes group quarters)	64,400
Persons Per Household (2005)*	2.53
Jobs (2005)*	31,600
Density (persons per sq mile) (2005)*	8,800

Year 2000 Census Data Profile	Rock Creek East Planning Area**		Citywide
	Total	% of Total	% of Total
Age			
Under 18	13,683	20.6%	20.0%
18-65	41,245	62.2%	67.8%
Over 65	11,419	17.2%	12.2%
Residents Below Poverty Level	8,645	13.0%	20.2%
Racial Composition			
White	6,891	10.4%	30.4%
Black	51,422	77.5%	60.3%
Native American	245	0.4%	0.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	666	1.0%	2.6%
Other	4,843	7.3%	2.8%
Multi-Racial	2,280	3.4%	5.2%
Hispanic Origin	8,850	13.3%	7.8%
Foreign-Born Residents	12,174	18.3%	12.8%
Tenure			
Owner Households	15,208	58.6%	40.7%
Renter Households	10,746	41.4%	59.3%
Population 5+ yrs in same house in 2000 as in 1995	38,631	61.5%	46.9%
Housing Occupancy			
Occupied Units	25,954	93.1%	90.4%
Vacant Units	1,922	6.9%	9.6%
Housing by Unit Type			
1-unit detached	6,613	23.7%	13.1%
1-unit attached	10,860	39.0%	26.4%
2-4 units	2,060	7.4%	11.0%
5-9 units	971	3.5%	8.0%
10-19 units	2,199	7.9%	10.3%
20-49 units	2,937	10.5%	7.4%
50+ units	2,212	7.9%	23.3%
Mobile/other	24	0.1%	0.2%

* *Figures noted with an asterisk are estimates developed by the Office of Planning and the Department of Employment Services based on a variety of data sources.*

Housing Characteristics 2204

More than 60 percent of the housing units in Rock Creek East are single family homes, compared to 39 percent citywide. The 2000 Census reported that 24 percent of the area's homes were single family detached units and 39 percent were single family attached units (row houses and townhouses). Only 18 percent of the area's housing stock consists of multi-family buildings of 20 units or more, compared to 31 percent for the city as a whole. 2204.1

More than 60 percent of the housing units in Rock Creek East are single family homes, compared to 39 percent citywide.

The home ownership rate in Rock Creek East is higher than in the city as a whole. The 2000 Census reported that 59 percent of the households in the Planning Area were homeowners (compared to 41 percent in the District) and 41 percent were renters (compared to 59 percent in the District). About 61 percent of the area's residents lived in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995. This compares to a citywide average of 46.9 percent, and is indicative of the stability of the Rock Creek East community. 2204.2

Income and Employment 2205

Data from the Department of Employment Services and the Office of Planning indicates there were 31,600 jobs in Rock Creek East in 2005, primarily in health care, local-serving businesses, public schools, and government. This represents 4.2 percent of the city's job base. The largest employment centers are hospitals, including Walter Reed Hospital, the Washington Hospital, the National Rehabilitation Hospital, Children's National Medical Center, and the VA Hospital. Based on 2000 Census data, approximately 58 percent of the area's jobs are held by Maryland residents and 12 percent by Virginia residents. Only about 30 percent of those who work in the Planning Area are District residents. 2205.1

Most employed residents in Rock Creek East commute to jobs within the District of Columbia. The 2000 Census indicated that 30 percent of the area's commuters worked in Downtown Washington, nine percent worked within the Planning Area, 29 percent worked elsewhere in the District, and 32 percent commuted to the Maryland or Virginia suburbs. The Rock Creek East Planning Area has a higher percentage of residents driving alone to work than any of the other nine Planning Areas in the city—about 50 percent in 2000. 2205.2

The Planning Area's median household income was $46,884 in 1999, which was slightly higher than the citywide median of $45,927. Approximately 13 percent of the area's residents were below the federal poverty line. 2205.3

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, Rock Creek East is projected to experience modest growth between 2005 and 2025. An increase of 3,400 households is projected, with the Planning Area reaching 28,800 households by 2025. The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 31,600 today to 33,500 in 2025.

Projections 2206

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, Rock Creek East is projected to experience modest growth between 2005 and 2025. An increase of 3,400 households is projected, with the Planning Area reaching 28,800 households by 2025. Population is projected to grow by 13 percent over the 20-year period, reaching about 74,400 in 2025. The population forecasts presume that the federal government will proceed with redevelopment of portions of the Armed Forces Retirement Home; this growth represents more than one-third of the total for the Planning Area. Most of the remaining growth is projected to occur along Georgia Avenue, and near the Metro stations in Takoma and Petworth, consistent with the adopted Small Area Plans for each location. The forecasts do not assume housing development on Walter Reed Hospital. 2206.1

The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 31,600 today to 33,500 in 2025. These forecasts presume a sharp drop in employment between 2010 and 2015 as federal jobs at Walter Reed Hospital are repositioned. However, they presume that most of these jobs will be replaced in the long run by new jobs on the site, and that additional employment growth will occur on Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street, in the Washington Hospital Center complex, at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, and in other established business districts within the Planning Area. 2206.2

Planning and Development Priorities 2207

Three Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in Rock Creek East during the Comprehensive Plan revision. These meetings provided an opportunity for residents to discuss neighborhood planning issues as well as citywide issues. The Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and several Civic Associations were briefed on the Plan, providing additional input. There have also been many meetings in the community not directly connected to the Comprehensive Plan, but addressing long-range planning issues. These include Small Area Plan meetings for Takoma and Georgia Avenue/Petworth, as well as meetings on the Great Streets program, the city's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and various transportation studies. 2207.1

Tree cover and low densities contribute to the "park-like" quality of many Rock Creek East neighborhoods.

The community delivered several key messages during these meetings, summarized below: 2207.2

a. Land use planning for Rock Creek East should protect and enhance the stable neighborhoods for which the area is known. Residents at Comp Plan meetings described their neighborhoods as "park-like" due to their tree cover, low densities, and proximity to Rock Creek Park. An important part of what creates the park-like ambiance is the large federal and institutional properties in the community. This is particularly true for Walter Reed Hospital and the Armed

Forces Retirement Home, both of which may be redeveloped during the next two decades. Plans for these sites should make every effort possible to retain the open space, mature trees, and visual buffers that make these sites welcome neighbors in the community today. Residents at Comprehensive Plan meetings were also clear that design guidelines and zoning standards for these sites, and for other areas addressed by Small Area Plans, must be followed and enforced once they are prepared.

Neighborhood serving commercial on Colorado Avenue

b. While protecting established neighborhoods is a priority, Rock Creek East also recognizes the need to provide a variety of housing choices. This community has always taken pride in the fact that it is economically integrated, with housing options for seniors, lower income households, young professionals, middle class families, and persons with special needs, as well as affluent households. Appropriate sites for infill housing have been identified along Georgia Avenue, around the Takoma Metro station, between Upshur and Taylor near 14th Street, along Kennedy Street, and on a limited number of other properties in the community. Development on these sites must be in keeping with the scale of the surrounding community, provide ample green space, address parking and traffic issues, upgrade infrastructure where needed, and serve a variety of incomes. Existing housing should continue to be renovated and rehabilitated, with programs to assist seniors and low-income residents and avoid displacement.

c. Neighborhood-serving commercial facilities need to be upgraded and expanded throughout the Planning Area. Some of the commercial areas have suffered for decades from declining activity. Small Area Plans for Takoma and Georgia Avenue have focused on ways to improve the future viability of the local business districts in each area and attract investment that better meets the needs of residents, businesses, and property owners. Similar attention should be given to Kennedy Street, and to the Riggs Road Center in the adjacent Upper Northeast Planning Area. Much of the area continues to be underserved by basic consumer services like banks, hardware stores, and sit-down restaurants. Rather than siting these uses in long auto-oriented "strips," future development should emphasize pedestrian-oriented "centers." The community also expressed a strong preference for neighborhood-serving, rather than regional commercial uses. Such uses should be complementary to the low scale of existing development, and should enhance neighborhood identity through façade improvements, landscaping, signage, and lighting. Urban design excellence must be a very high priority.

Row houses in Petworth

d. As neighborhood commercial areas are upgraded, the potential for conflicts due to traffic, noise, litter, and other environmental impacts must be recognized and proactively addressed. In addition, conflicts caused by existing commercial and industrial uses in the community need to be addressed more effectively. This is particularly true in Petworth (along Georgia Avenue) and in Takoma and Lamond-Riggs near the CSX Railroad tracks. For years, these neighborhoods have dealt with semi-industrial uses such as auto repair shops, bus storage, maintenance yards, and distribution centers, in some cases immediately adjacent to single family homes. These uses are important to the city and provide jobs and needed community services for Rock Creek East residents. But they also generate truck traffic, fumes, odors, noise, and vibration—often without buffering. Over the next 20 years, steps should be taken to reduce the land use conflicts and visual blight associated with industrial uses in such locations as Blair Road, Chillum Place, and Upshur Street. In a few cases, this may mean phasing out industrial and "heavy commercial" uses and replacing them with housing or mixed uses.

e. Residents of Rock Creek East have expressed concerns about the growth of particular land uses, including group homes, churches, and related facilities such as day care centers and social service centers. The Planning Area's inventory of large homes, many located on major transit lines, has made it an attractive choice for social service providers and community based residential facilities. Issues relating to safety, parking, and neighborhood character have been raised, particularly in areas where group homes are clustered. Residents seek a stronger role in decisions on the siting and management of such facilities, and desire increased coordination with group home operators. There are also issues connected to code enforcement, related not only to special needs housing but to broader issues such as unpermitted construction and blighted properties.

f. Growth and development in neighboring jurisdictions particularly affects Rock Creek East. This is most apparent along Eastern Avenue in Shepherd Park, where tall condominiums in Silver Spring, Maryland face single family homes in the District. The revitalization of Downtown Silver Spring has provided exciting new shopping, entertainment, and dining options for area residents, but has also siphoned away some of the District's retail potential and brought traffic to Shepherd Park. Takoma Park, Maryland is experiencing more modest growth near its border with the District. Regardless of location, it is important to ensure that neither jurisdiction bears an undue share of the impacts of growth related to traffic congestion and parking needs. Coordination between the District and Maryland is essential to preserving community stability. Coordination should also

emphasize improvement of gateways into the city at New Hampshire Avenue, Georgia Avenue, and 16th Street. These entries define "first impressions" for residents on both sides of the state line, and do not convey as positive an image of Washington as they could.

g. The transportation system should be designed so that residents can easily travel between home, work, school, shopping, and public facilities. Right now, the network is designed to facilitate north-south circulation (between Downtown and Maryland), but east-west circulation is problematic. Improvements are needed to reduce traffic congestion and address safety concerns, particularly on Blair Road in Takoma, Georgia Avenue and Missouri Avenue in Brightwood, and Riggs Road in Lamond Riggs. Better transportation to the west side of Rock Creek Park is also needed, as many residents travel in this direction to access schools, shopping, and Metrorail. Parts of Rock Creek East are more than one mile from Metrorail stations and need better, more reliable bus and bicycle connections. On the other hand, it should also be recognized that auto ownership is higher in Rock Creek East than it is in most other parts of the city. Transit is not a practical option for everyone, and adequate parking should be provided as development occurs. This was a clear message provided by many Comprehensive Plan participants in the area. The safety of pedestrians and bicyclists is also an issue in many neighborhoods and at many intersections. New traffic management measures, including street design changes, should be explored to better regulate traffic volume and flow, particularly where major development is proposed. Such changes have already been made to 16th Street and will need to be explored along Georgia Avenue as plans for Bus Rapid Transit along the avenue move forward.

h. A high priority must be placed on upgrading public services and facilities. The community has more recreation centers per capita than most parts of the District, but these facilities are not evenly distributed. Neighborhoods in the northern part of the Planning Area do not have a full-scale recreation center, while areas like Brightwood Park and Petworth are deficient in facilities like athletic fields and tennis courts. The new Takoma, Lamond, and Emery Recreation Centers are important additions, but maintenance of the parks themselves continues to be a concern. The Fourth District Police Headquarters is on Georgia Avenue, and there are fire stations in Petworth and Brightwood Park, but areas like North Portal and Colonial Village are several miles from the nearest station. Public libraries and schools in the community are in need of modernization. The community has the largest concentration of hospitals in the city, but they are clustered in the southern part of the Planning Area, with no facilities (other than Walter Reed) in the north. The new senior

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Participants in Comp Plan meetings pointed to various successes and failures along Georgia Avenue, noting some positive signs but focusing on the large amount of work yet to be done. One issue raised was the limited demand for the Avenue's small, narrow storefront spaces (with no off-street parking), and the need to concentrate retail at key "nodes" rather than in a continuous strip.

wellness center on Kennedy Street will provide a much needed facility in a community where nearly one in five residents is over 65.

i. The important historic resources in the Planning Area should be recognized and protected. The Fort Circle Parks are a resource of national importance, yet their significance is unknown even to many District residents. Additional interpretive facilities are needed, and the integrity and historic context of the parks themselves should be protected. The Takoma Historic District helps conserve the gracious homes and small-town architecture of Takoma, but other older neighborhoods and structures are not similarly protected. Important architectural resources like the Wardman rowhouses of Brightwood, the elegant older homes of 16th Street, and the legacy of early 20th century commercial buildings along Georgia Avenue remain vulnerable to demolition or unsympathetic alteration. Additional properties in the Planning Area may merit designation as historic landmarks or districts. Plans for neighborhood heritage trails in Brightwood and elsewhere will help preserve Rock Creek East's legacy in the future.

j. The Georgia Avenue corridor remains a source of great interest, concern, and hope. In March 2005, the entire 5.6 mile corridor was designated as one of six "Great Streets" in the city to be targeted for reinvestment. Participants in Comp Plan meetings pointed to various successes and failures along the Avenue, noting some positive signs but focusing on the large amount of work yet to be done. One issue raised was the limited demand for the Avenue's small, narrow storefront spaces (with no off-street parking), and the need to concentrate retail at key "nodes" rather than in a continuous strip. Additional programs and investments are needed to assist businesses, attract the desired mix of retail, resolve traffic problems, address problem land uses, and provide appropriately designed infill housing for seniors and others. Transit plans for the corridor were the subject of much discussion during the Comprehensive Plan process, with concerns expressed about impacts on parking and congestion. The link between plans for Upper Georgia Avenue and plans for Walter Reed Hospital also was raised. Regardless of what happens on the Hospital site, change should be leveraged to achieve positive results for Georgia Avenue and the neighborhoods around it.

Policies and Actions

RCE-1 General Policies

Single family home in Brightwood

RCE-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation 2208

The following general policies and actions should guide growth and neighborhood conservation decisions in the Rock Creek East Planning Area. These policies and actions should be considered in tandem with those in the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan. 2208.1

Policy RCE-1.1.1: Conservation of Low Density Neighborhoods

Maintain and conserve the attractive, stable neighborhoods of the Rock Creek East Planning Area. Any new development in the Planning Area should be attractively designed and should contribute to the community's positive physical identity. 2208.2

Policy RCE-1.1.2: Design Compatibility

Ensure that renovation, additions, and new construction in the area's low density neighborhoods respects the scale and densities of adjacent properties, avoids sharp contrasts in height and mass, and preserves park-like qualities such as dense tree cover and open space. 2208.3

See the Urban Design Element for additional policies on compatible building design and the Land Use Element for additional guidance on infill development.

Policy RCE-1.1.3: Directing Growth

Concentrate economic development activity and employment growth in Rock Creek East around the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metrorail and Takoma station areas, along the Georgia Avenue corridor, along Kennedy Street, and on 14th Street NW between Allison and Decatur Streets. Provide improved pedestrian, transit, and bicycle access to these areas, and improve their visual and urban design qualities in order to create a unique destination for the local community to enjoy. 2208.4

Policy RCE-1.1.4: Neighborhood Shopping Areas

Maintain and encourage the development of multi-use neighborhood shopping and services in those areas designated for commercial or mixed uses on the Future Land Use Map. The encroachment of commercial and other non-residential uses into the stable neighborhoods adjacent to these locations shall be strongly discouraged. 2208.5

Please consult the Land Use Element for policies addressing the mitigation of commercial development impacts, such as traffic, parking, litter and noise, on surrounding residential areas.

Provide improved buffering and screening along the interface between residential areas and industrial areas, especially along Blair Road, Chillum Place, and the CSX/Metrorail corridor.

Policy RCE-1.1.5: Housing Renovation

Strongly encourage the rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing in Rock Creek East, taking steps to ensure that housing remains affordable for current and future residents. 2208.6

Policy RCE-1.1.6: Development of New Housing

Encourage the retention of existing subsidized housing units within the Rock Creek East Planning Area, along with other measures to increase housing choices and improve housing affordability for area residents. This should include the production of new mixed income housing along Georgia Avenue, and the encouragement of mixed income housing in the industrially zoned area west of Georgia Avenue between Upshur and Shepherd, and on District-owned land along Spring Road near the Petworth Metro Station. A particular emphasis should be placed on providing low cost affordable housing for seniors. 2208.7

Policy RCE-1.1.7: Cross Jurisdictional Coordination

Work closely with the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the City of Takoma Park to guide development along the Maryland/District line, especially at the gateway areas along Eastern Avenue at 16th Street, Georgia Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue. 2208.8

Policy RCE-1.1.8: Industrial Zone Buffering

Provide improved buffering and screening along the interface between residential areas and industrial areas, especially along Blair Road, Chillum Place, and the CSX/Metrorail corridor. To protect nearby neighborhoods from noise and other industrial impacts, the expansion of industrial uses should be limited to areas designated for Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) on the Future Land Use Map. 2208.9

Policy RCE-1.1.9: Traffic Management Strategies

Establish traffic management strategies to keep through-traffic on major arterials, separate local traffic from commuter traffic, and keep trucks off of residential streets. These strategies should include improvements to buses, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks, as well as measures to coordinate traffic signal timing and improve traffic flow. Particular focus should be given to Georgia Avenue, North Capitol Street, Blair Road, 14th Street, Missouri Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, Kennedy Street, and Piney Branch Road. 2208.10

See also the Transportation Element for policies on transportation demand management, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians, including pedestrian safety.

Policy RCE-1.1.10: Parking For Neighborhood Retail Districts

Discourage the use of retail business and municipal building parking lots for long-term commuter parking through more aggressive enforcement and the provision of other parking and transportation options. 2208.11

Policy RCE-1.1.11: Bus Service Improvements

Promote more efficient bus service in the Planning Area, with a particular emphasis on connecting residents to the Metrorail stations, providing faster and more reliable service along Georgia Avenue, and improving circulation between the east and wide sides of Rock Creek Park. Explore the concept of jitneys and shuttles as a more economical alternative to additional bus routes. 2208.12

Takoma Metrorail Station

Policy RCE-1.1.12: Enforcement

Mitigate traffic, parking, noise, and related safety problems that result from nonresidential uses through strict enforcement of zoning, parking, and other municipal regulations. 2208.13

Action RCE-1.1.A: Small Area Plan Priorities

Prepare Small Area Plans for the following areas in Rock Creek East:

- Upper Georgia Avenue NW (between Decatur Street and Eastern Avenue) including the Brightwood neighborhood
- Kennedy Street NW
- Spring Road Public Facility Campus. 2208.14

Action RCE-1.1.B: Façade Improvements

Implement urban design and façade improvements in the established commercial districts along Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street, and 14th Street. These improvements should be based on standards that can be enforced through city codes such as zoning and building regulations. 2208.15

Action RCE-1.1.C: Industrial Zone Buffers

Develop a design plan to implement buffering techniques that protect residential areas from adjacent industrial sites, especially along Blair Road and Chillum Place. 2208.16

Action RCE-1.1.D: Improving Traffic Flow

Improve traffic flow and safety through improved lighting, signage, pavement markings, traffic islands, truck route signs, and other transportation system management measures for Georgia Avenue, North Capitol Street, Missouri Avenue the 4th/Blair intersection, and New Hampshire Avenue. 2208.17

RCE-1.2 Conserving and Enhancing Community Resources 2209

Policy RCE-1.2.1: Fort Stevens and Fort Slocum

Maintain and improve the Fort Circle Parks, especially Fort Stevens and Fort Slocum. The Fort Circle green spaces should be more effectively linked and commemorated, and conserved as an essential cultural, historical, recreational, aesthetic, and natural resource. 2209.1

Fort Stevens

Policy RCE-1.2.2: Historic Resources

Increase public awareness of facilities and places of historic and archaeological significance in Rock Creek East, including the Fort Circle Parks, the Lucinda Caddy House, and the Takoma Historic District. These resources and others should be enhanced and protected through regulatory enforcement. 2209.2

Policy RCE-1.2.3: Gateways

Enhance 16th Street, Georgia Avenue, and New Hampshire Avenue as gateways into the District of Columbia. 2209.3

Policy RCE-1.2.4: Rock Creek Park

Improve multi-modal access to Rock Creek Park by providing additional parking, public transit service, bicycle trails, and walking paths. Expand outdoor recreational activities at the park to better meet community needs. 2209.4

Policy RCE-1.2.5: Erosion and Drainage

Carefully assess the erosion and drainage impacts of existing and proposed development, particularly in the North Capitol/Rock Creek Church area where flooding has been a problem in the past. 2209.5

Policy RCE-1.2.6: Small and Minority Businesses

Assist small and minority businesses along Kennedy Street, Georgia Avenue and other Rock Creek East commercial districts in providing neighborhood services and creating job opportunities for area residents. 2209.6

Policy RCE-1.2.7: Multi-Cultural Services

Ensure that community services are responsive to cultural changes in the Rock Creek East community, particularly the growing number of Latino residents in Petworth, Brightwood, Brightwood Park, and 16th Street Heights. 2209.7

Policy RCE-1.2.8: Health Care Facilities for Special Needs Populations

Provide additional facilities to meet the mental and physical health needs of Rock Creek East residents, especially facilities for the elderly. 2209.8

See also Land Use Element Section LU-3.4 on the distribution and siting of Community Based Residential Facilities.

Policy RCE-1.2.9: Recreational Acreage

Expand access to parkland in the southern part of the Planning Area (Petworth, Brightwood, and 16th Street Heights). The 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified these areas as being particularly deficient in parkland acreage. The opportunity for publicly accessible open space at

the Armed Forces Retirement Home should be realized in the event the site is redeveloped. 2209.9

Action RCE-1.2-A Rock Creek Park and Fort Circle Parks Coordination

In collaboration with the National Park Service, explore the feasibility of developing additional community-serving recreational facilities at Rock Creek Park and within the Fort Circle Parks to increase recreational options, public safety and community stewardship of these assets. All facilities should be consistent with the General Management Plans for these park areas. 2209.10

William HG Fitzgerald Tennis Center in Rock Creek Park

Action RCE-1.2.B: Historic Surveys

Continue to conduct historic surveys in the Rock Creek East Planning Area, with a priority on the Petworth, Brightwood, Crestwood, Crestwood North, 16th Street Heights, Shepherd Park, North Portal Estates, and Colonial Village areas. Consider expanding the Takoma Historic District to include appropriate structures and places. Consider the creation of additional historic districts or conservation areas along the Upper 16th Street corridor to recognize its significant historic anchors and architectural resources. 2209.11

Action RCE-1.2.C: Shepherd Park Recreation Center

Determine the feasibility of developing a new recreation center in the Shepherd Park/Colonial Village area. The 2006 Parks Master Plan identified this area as needing such a facility. 2209.12

RCE-2 Policy Focus Areas 2210

The Comprehensive Plan has identified five areas in Rock Creek East as "policy focus areas," indicating that they require a level of direction and guidance above that given in the prior section of this Area Element and in the citywide elements (see Map 22.1 and Table 22.2). These five areas are:

- Takoma Central District
- Georgia Avenue - Petworth Metro Station Area
- Upper Georgia Avenue/Walter Reed
- Kennedy Street NW
- Armed Forces Retirement Home/ Irving Street Hospital Campus. 2210.1

RCE-2.1 Takoma Central District 2211

Takoma is one of Washington's most distinctive communities. It shares its history and its name with Takoma Park, Maryland. Both communities embody classic pedestrian-scale streets and a rich architectural legacy. The

area's principal business district along Carroll Street links the District and Maryland portions of the community. While the border is seamless, the District's side lacks the streetscape, retail mix, and vitality of the Maryland side. Many Takoma DC residents find themselves shopping across the border in Maryland, even though their own commercial district has the capacity to offer many of the same retail amenities. 2211.1

Table 22.2:
Policy Focus Areas Within and Adjacent to Rock Creek East 2210.2

Within Rock Creek East	
2.1	Takoma Central District (see p. 22-18)
2.2	Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro Station (see p. 22-22)
2.3	Upper Georgia Avenue/Walter Reed (see p. 22-24)
2.4	Kennedy Street NW (see p. 22-26)
2.5	Armed Forces Retirement Home/Irving Street Hospital Campus (see p. 22-27)
Adjacent to Rock Creek East	
1	14th Street/Columbia Heights (see p. 20-20)
2	McMillan Sand Filtration Site (see p. 20-29)
3	Fort Totten Metro Station Area (see p. 24-28)
4	Georgia Avenue Corridor (Mid-City) (see p. 20-16)

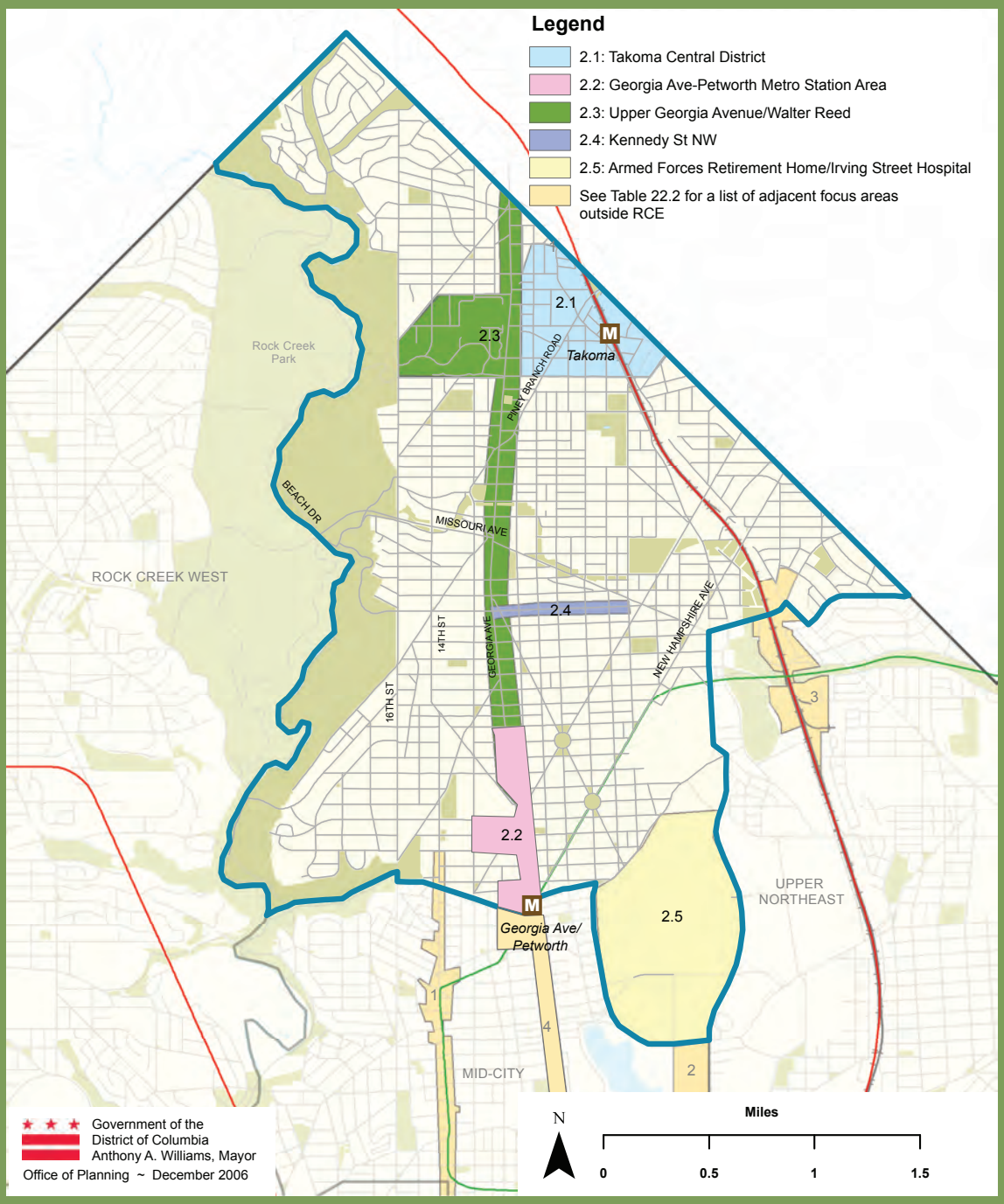
A number of planning studies for the area have been completed over the years, including a 1977 Plan that anticipated the opening of Metro, a 1999 study that looked at ways to link the Maryland and DC commercial districts, and a 2002 Strategic Plan for the Takoma Central District. The Central District Plan was developed through an intensive public process and was adopted by the City Council as a Small Area Plan. It covered an area extending from Chestnut Street on the north, the Maryland/DC state line on the east, 4th and 5th Streets on the west, and Aspen and Laurel Streets on the south. The area includes the Metrorail station and the shopping districts along Carroll Street and 4th Street. It includes small shops with a variety of neighborhood serving businesses, a vacant theater, homes and apartments, parking lots, and vacant land. 2211.2

The Central District Plan (CDP) seeks to improve neighborhood retail choices, restore vacant buildings and storefronts, accommodate compatible infill housing, address traffic and parking conditions, enhance open space, and improve the safety and quality of the pedestrian environment. Key principles from the CDP are captured in the policies and actions below; the CDP itself should be consulted for additional detail. The Plan describes a vision for Central Takoma as a "Town Center," with Metro serving as a gateway to new mixed use development, restored historic buildings, and pedestrian friendly streets. It places a priority on preserving the small-town character that embodies historic Takoma DC, emphasizing development that is in keeping with the low scale and businesses that serve the local community. 2211.3

Several specific sites were identified in the Central District Plan as housing opportunities. Since 2002, mixed use development projects such as Elevation 314 and Cedar Crossing have already been completed on some of these sites. A townhome development is currently proposed on the 6.8-acre Metrorail

Map 22.1:

Rock Creek East Policy Focus Areas 2210.3



Takoma is one of Washington's most distinctive communities. It shares its history and its name with Takoma Park, Maryland. Both communities embody classic pedestrian-scale streets and a rich architectural legacy.

site itself, including live-work space, parking for Metro riders, and a new public park. Improvements to Carroll Avenue and Blair Road are planned to maintain traffic flow, and make the area safer for pedestrians. Future development in the Central Takoma area should maximize Metrorail access while taking care to provide appropriate buffers and transitions to adjacent uses. 2211.4

The Central District Plan was immediately followed by preparation of a Transportation Study for Takoma. The Study had several objectives, including improving safety for all modes of travel, reducing cut-through traffic, improving aesthetics, and balancing the needs of autos with those of pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists. The Study also tested the effects of proposed development on the transportation network to ensure that impacts would be mitigated and that traffic flows would remain acceptable. A number of short-term and long-term recommendations were developed and are currently being implemented. 2211.5

Policy RCE-2.1.1: Historic Preservation in Takoma

Recognize and respect Takoma's rich heritage, architectural character and scale, and small town ambiance in all revitalization, urban design, and marketing strategies and initiatives. 2211.6

Policy RCE-2.1.2: Strategic Public and Private Investment in Takoma

Target public investment in the Takoma Central District area in ways that can be leveraged to improve private investment and create public benefits. This should include streetscape and building façade improvements, partnerships with neighborhood and business organizations, and the development of key public properties. 2211.7

Policy RCE-2.1.3: Takoma Central District Housing Strategy

Accommodate housing demand at the short-term and long-term opportunity sites identified in the Takoma Central District Plan. Short-term sites include vacant land, an auto service site, and the station parking area. Longer-term development sites include parking lots and light industrial areas which could potentially strengthen the Takoma Central District as a mixed-use, mixed income neighborhood. 2211.8

Policy RCE-2.1.4: Takoma Central District Retail Strategy

Concentrate retail activities on key sites along Carroll Street and 4th Street through requirements that mandate ground floor retail space within the established business district. Continuous street walls and active ground floor retail should be encouraged in these areas, consistent with the Small Area Plan. Inappropriate uses, such as storage yards, auto sales, and warehouses, should be strictly limited. 2211.9

Policy RCE-2.1.5: Takoma Central District Transportation Strategy

Place a priority on meeting transit needs at the Takoma Metro station and accommodate all Metro and Ride-On services on the station site itself. Incorporate Metropolitan Branch Trail options into all transportation improvements for the area. 2211.10

Action RCE-2.1.A: Traffic Congestion and Parking

Mitigate intersection and corridor congestion on Blair Road and Carroll Street. Improve parking for local businesses by encouraging better management of existing parking, including shared parking arrangements with WMATA and other landowners in locations that can better support the commercial district. 2211.11

Action RCE-2.1.B: Pedestrian Safety and Connections

Improve pedestrian safety in the Takoma Central District with a coordinated program of physical improvements, including new western entrances to the Metro station that better connect communities east and west of the tracks. 2211.12

Action RCE-2.1.C: Takoma Metro Station Redevelopment

Enforce the Takoma Central District Plan redevelopment guidelines for the Metro station and implement the recommendations of the Takoma Transportation Study. 2211.13

Action RCE-2.1.D: Takoma Central District Village Green

Create a village green as the Central District's signature open space feature. 2211.14

See the Takoma Central District Plan and the Takoma Transportation Study for additional action items relating to this Policy Focus Area.

RCE-2.2 Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro Station Area 2212

The Georgia Avenue—Petworth Metro Station Focus Area extends from Decatur Street on the north to Euclid Street on the south. The text below addresses the area between Decatur Street and Spring Road, including the Metro station itself. 2212.1

See the Mid-City Area Element for detail on the area from Spring Road south to Euclid Street.

The Rock Creek East portion of the Study Area includes flats, apartments, the Petworth Library, several schools and recreation areas, and many small shops such as beauty salons, carry outs, and liquor stores. The corridor also includes vacant buildings and underutilized sites with the potential for redevelopment. 2212.2

A "Corridor Plan and Revitalization Strategy" was developed for Georgia Avenue - Petworth in 2005. It provides a framework to guide future development and to enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods along the corridor. The Strategy recognizes the opportunity to reenergize Georgia Avenue as a thriving and attractive street, building on historic assets like the area's building stock and relatively new assets like the Metrorail station.

A "Corridor Plan and Revitalization Strategy" was developed for Georgia Avenue - Petworth in 2005. It provides a framework to guide future development and to enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods along the corridor. The Strategy recognizes the opportunity to reenergize Georgia Avenue as a thriving and attractive street, building on historic assets like the area's building stock and relatively new assets like the Metrorail station. It includes strategies to strengthen existing businesses, restore abandoned storefronts, attract new mixed income development, address parking issues, and draw new businesses through financial and regulatory incentives. Several blocks along the Avenue are identified as new housing sites. Numerous parking, traffic flow, and pedestrian improvements are identified, such as more visible crosswalks, landscaped medians, and improved lighting. One of the Plan's transportation recommendations—extension of Yellow Line train service—is already moving forward. 2212.3

Several mixed use projects are planned for the area. One of these is located on the 1.4-acre Metro station site at Petworth and will include ground floor retail and upper floor housing. This project should be a catalyst for other residential and mixed use projects planned or underway on Georgia Avenue. Future projects should include a diversity of housing types and retail amenities, oriented toward the needs of the surrounding community. 2212.4

Policy RCE-2.2.1: Development Character

Encourage development in the Georgia Avenue/Petworth area to respect the area's pedestrian-oriented, moderate density character. A variety of project scales should be encouraged, ranging from small adaptive reuse and rehabilitation projects to mixed use projects combining housing and commercial uses. Mixed income housing with a variety of housing types is particularly encouraged. Any development of larger-scale buildings shall require architecturally sensitive scale transitions to adjacent, less dense development. 2212.5

Policy RCE-2.2.2: Strategic Public and Private Investment in Petworth

Target capital improvements toward the locations that are best equipped to leverage new private development, particularly the 3600-4100 blocks of Georgia Avenue. These capital investments should include façade improvements, streetscape amenities, pedestrian safety measures, parking management improvements, and public art. 2212.6

Policy RCE-2.2.3: Limiting Undesirable Uses in Petworth

Discourage uses deemed undesirable along Georgia Avenue, such as liquor stores, used car lots, and automobile repair shops. Provide flexibility for businesses with desirable uses that would like to expand their services and facilities. Such measures will help strengthen the economic vitality of the corridor, retain businesses, and serve the shopping needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. 2212.7

Policy RCE-2.2.4: Upshur/Taylor Industrial Area

Recognize the opportunities for new housing, loft, and live-work development in the heavy commercial area located between Upshur, Shepherd, Georgia Avenue, and 13th Street. 2212.8

Action RCE-2.2.A: Site Acquisition

Continue acquisition of underused or vacant land to facilitate public-private infill development that catalyzes the revitalization of Georgia Avenue and reinforces its role as the central business district of Petworth. 2212.9

Action RCE-2.2.B: Petworth Co-Location Opportunities

Explore opportunities to co-locate new and improved public facilities along Spring Road and on the Petworth Library/Roosevelt Senior High School/ MacFarland Middle School campus. Consider other uses in the co-location development programs, such as a health care center, housing and senior living. 2212.10

Action RCE-2.2.C: Petworth Overlay Zone

Consider an overlay zone for Georgia Avenue in Petworth that would restrict new uses deemed undesirable along the corridor, such as used automobile lots and automobile repair shops, and that would provide existing businesses with an allowance for additional floor area ratio to help them expand. 2212.11

Action RCE-2.2.D: Georgia and New Hampshire Avenue Intersection

Enhance pedestrian safety, aesthetics and streetscape quality at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue, adjacent to Metro. This intersection is the hub of Petworth and requires crosswalk improvements and other changes to create a more desirable shopping district and favorable climate for new investment. The need for such improvements at the Georgia and Kansas Avenue intersection also should be assessed. 2212.12

Action RCE-2.2.E: Financial Incentives

Consider financial and management incentives to assist existing businesses and new investors along Georgia Avenue, including a Tax Increment Financing District, a retail and leasing management strategy, and changes to the Façade Improvement Program. 2212.13

Illustrative rendering of planned development at the Petworth Metro station

RCE-2.3 Upper Georgia Avenue NW/Walter Reed 2213

The Upper Georgia Avenue corridor extends more than 2.5 miles from Decatur Street north to Eastern Avenue. The corridor includes local and community-serving retail uses, gas stations, car dealerships, small offices, public and institutional buildings, and residential uses. The character of the corridor changes between Aspen Street and Fern Street, where Walter Reed Army Medical Center occupies the west side of the avenue and row houses and low-rise apartments line the east side. 2213.1

One of the street's challenges is its continuous "strip" development pattern. Looking to the future, development along Georgia Avenue should emphasize "nodes" at key locations. Nodes should be clearly identified by signage, lighting, paving, landscaping, and other physical features that define their identities and create a clearer sense of place.

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Portions of Upper Georgia Avenue lack retail diversity and have poor streetscape amenities, an unsafe pedestrian environment, and an aesthetic quality that is not in keeping with the high-quality residential areas on its east and west. The corridor has the potential to attract significant redevelopment, potentially supporting new retail, housing, and mixed use activity. It has many assets that are attractive to investors, including its historic building stock and proximity to a diverse community with significant purchasing power and a wide range of retail interests. 2213.2

One of the street's challenges is its continuous "strip" development pattern. Looking to the future, development along Georgia Avenue should emphasize "nodes" at key locations. Nodes should be clearly identified by signage, lighting, paving, landscaping, and other physical features that define their identities and create a clearer sense of place. One example of such a node is the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Missouri Avenue/Military Road. This historic crossroads provides a logical location for a more well-defined, walkable retail district serving nearby neighborhoods. Another example is the area near Eastern Avenue, which is a gateway to the District and an established shopping area. 2213.3

More detailed assessments of Georgia Avenue are needed to identify the appropriate locations and "themes" for activity nodes, and to develop strategies for the commercially zoned areas in between them. Some of these areas may redevelop with housing over the next 20 years, particularly where existing uses are vacant or obsolete. 2213.4

Strategies for Upper Georgia Avenue must be coordinated with the evolving plans for the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC). In 2005, the site was identified for closure through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law. The law requires WRAMC-related employees, services, and programs to vacate the site and move to other existing and/or planned facilities by the year 2011. As of Spring 2006, the Department of the Army had accepted the applications of the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department of State (DOS) for reuse of the site. ~~The~~ This initial decision ~~means~~ meant that the entire site will be conveyed to these agencies and none of the property will be declared surplus. GSA's proposal ~~includes~~ included secure office space for the northern portion of the site and DOS' proposal calls for foreign missions on the rest of the site. In April 2009, the federal government declared 62.5 acres on the main post of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center as surplus property, thereby making it available to a District government local redevelopment authority (LRA) for re-use. In accordance with the BRAC process, the Walter Reed LRA engaged in an extensive public planning process to prepare a Reuse Plan in alignment with District, community, and BRAC goals. It is possible that these plans will change before the site is vacated. Key goals for redevelopment of the site include:

(a) Enhancing the city's tax revenue base;

(b) Re-connecting the campus to the neighborhood by extending the street grid into the campus and creating enhanced transit options

(c) Creating a livable, walkable community through sustainable development; and

(d) Revitalizing Georgia Avenue. 2213.5

While the District does not have jurisdiction over Walter Reed, consultation between local and federal officials is necessary on many issues. These include historic preservation, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, environmental remediation, and transportation. The District will work closely with the federal government over the coming years to promote changes on the site that benefit the community, and to avoid land use conflicts, create community access and open space wherever feasible, and mitigate impacts on parking and community character. 2213.6

Policy RCE-2.3.1: Upper Georgia Avenue

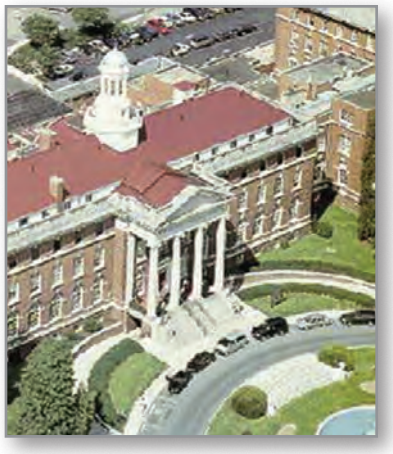
Develop Upper Georgia Avenue (from Decatur to Eastern) as a walkable shopping street with distinct and clearly identifiable activity centers along its course. Encourage development that reinforces a nodal pattern, with new retail or local-serving office development clustered at key locations and new housing or mixed use development on underutilized commercial properties in between. Conserve existing housing along the corridor and support its maintenance and renovation. 2213.7

Policy RCE-2.3.2: Pedestrian and Transit Improvements to Upper Georgia Avenue

Improve transit access along Georgia Avenue to support existing and planned commercial activities. This should include transit improvements on the Avenue itself and better connections between the Avenue and other parts of the city. Improvements to the public realm also should be made, to make transit use safe, comfortable, and convenient. 2213.8

Policy RCE-2.3.3: Walter Reed Development

Work with federal officials in ongoing discussions on the disposition of Walter Reed Hospital. The District will seek outcomes that preserve the stability and quality of neighborhoods around the site, minimize the potential for future land use and transportation conflicts, preserve open space buffers between the site and its neighbors, provide community amenities wherever feasible, and create educational and employment opportunities that benefit District residents. The Final Reuse Plan will be a key component of the District's application to the Department of Defense and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the successful conveyance of the property to the District, and will serve as the preferred federal land use plan for the future development of the site. 2213.9



Walter Reed Hospital

Action RCE-2.3.A: Upper Georgia Avenue Area Plan

Develop a small area plan and implementation strategy focused on the properties fronting on Georgia Avenue between Decatur Street and Eastern Avenue. The small area plan should identify the commercial nodes along the corridor, develop strategies for encouraging housing in areas in between these nodes, and provide guidance on the appropriate mix of land uses and measures to avoid the over-concentration of undesirable uses. 2213.10

Action RCE-2.3.B: Land Acquisition on Upper Georgia Avenue

Acquire vacant and/or underutilized private land along Upper Georgia Avenue which can be leveraged to support private revitalization and reinvestment. The production of mixed income housing should be a top priority where land is acquired. 2213.11

Action RCE-2.3.C: Walter Reed Small Area Planning and Zoning

As the Walter Reed property progresses through the BRAC process, the District and an implementation LRA should take a proactive approach to connect the site with the community, accelerate the timeline for reuse, and mitigate potential development risks. Steps to achieve this goal include:

(a) Undertaking a small area planning process to determine land use designations and zoning;

(b) Working with the Army to establish interim uses and activity on the site;

(c) Actively marketing the site to potential tenants and developers;

(d) Identifying an appropriate public-private financing plan that includes a mix of local and federal incentives and grants; and

(e) Establishing appropriate standards for environmental remediation and site-wide sustainability. 2213.12

RCE-2.4 Kennedy Street NW 2214

Kennedy Street NW spans the Brightwood Park and South Manor Park neighborhoods. The street is mixed use in character, with low-density storefront commercial uses, as well as residential uses. Apartment buildings, rowhouses and single-family detached homes line the streets immediately adjacent to the corridor and parts of Kennedy Street itself. The street also serves as one of the few east-west transit routes in the Rock Creek East Planning Area. 2214.1

During the last several years, the District has targeted resources to the area for crime prevention, community clean-up, and public safety. This has generated interest in the area and attracted new residents. While the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor are quite stable, demographic changes have altered the kinds of retail services that are needed. Typical businesses on the corridor currently include convenience stores, beauty/barber shops and carry-outs. Over the next two decades, Kennedy Street

should evolve into a more vibrant mixed use shopping area, with vacant storefronts reoccupied once again and new opportunities for local-serving businesses. The success of existing businesses also should be encouraged as this revival occurs. 2214.2

Kennedy Street

The large senior population in the Brightwood area creates the need for additional senior housing and assisted living facilities in this area. The revitalization of Kennedy Street provides an opportunity for such development, possibly combined with retail uses and senior services. A new Wellness Center on the street will provide a potential catalyst for new senior housing. 2214.3

Policy RCE-2.4.1: Kennedy Street Improvement

Improve Kennedy Street between Georgia Avenue and 1st Street NW as a locally-oriented neighborhood shopping street. A distinct identity should be created for the street in order to boost the performance of existing businesses and attract new businesses to the vacant storefronts on the corridor. 2214.4

Policy RCE-2.4.2: Housing along Kennedy Street

Encourage moderate density mixed use projects along Kennedy Street, including housing. Capitalize on the new Wellness Center by promoting new housing for seniors in its vicinity. 2214.5

Action RCE-2.4.A: Kennedy Street Strategic Development Plan

Develop a small area plan and implementation strategy focused on vacant and underutilized commercial properties along Kennedy Street. The Plan should identify the potential for new and expanded residential, commercial and mixed use development, and should include actions to make the area a more attractive place for local residents to shop. 2214.6

Action RCE-2.4.B: Main Street Designation

Consider the designation of Kennedy Street as a DC Main Street, thereby creating a vehicle for business improvement and technical assistance 2214.7

RCE-2.5 Armed Forces Retirement Home/Irving Street Hospital Campus 2215

The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), formerly known as the U.S. Soldiers and Airmens Home, is a functioning home for almost 1,400 veterans of the U.S. Military. It occupies a 272-acre site in the southeast part of the Planning Area. 2215.1

The AFRH has been an institution of national importance for more than 150 years, and is both a DC Historic Landmark and is a National Register of Historic Places landmark. The property has exceptional significance as a natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resource and is one of the largest contiguous properties in the District of Columbia. President Abraham Lincoln maintained a cottage on the site and wrote parts of the

The property has exceptional significance as a natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resource and is one of the largest contiguous properties in the District of Columbia.

Emancipation Proclamation while residing there in 1862. The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan acknowledge the significance of the AFRH as an important public open space. 2215.2

In 2001, the Secretary of Defense was authorized to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any property of the AFRH determined to be excess to the needs of the Home. The AFRH is in the process of developing a master plan for that purpose. While the District has limited jurisdiction over AFRH as long as it remains in federal use, consultation between local and federal officials is necessary on many redevelopment issues. 2215.3

The prospect of redevelopment creates exciting opportunities but also has raised community concerns about the scale of development, provisions for open space, traffic and environmental impacts, effects on visual and historic resources, and the compatibility of the development with the surrounding row house neighborhoods. The District will work closely with the federal government over the coming years to promote changes on the site that benefit the community, and to avoid land use conflicts, create community access and open space wherever feasible, and mitigate impacts on traffic and community character. As portions of the site are sold to the private sector, they should be subject to zoning and new Comprehensive Plan Map designations by the District. 2215.4

To the south of the AFRH, the Irving Street Hospital Campus includes approximately 50 acres of health care related uses located between Michigan Avenue NW, Irving Street NW, Park Place NW, and First Street NW. The hospital complex includes approximately 8,000 employees. Facilities include the Washington Hospital Center, Children's Hospital National Medical Center, the National Rehabilitation Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital. The Washington Hospital Center, founded in 1958, is the largest private hospital in the District. 2215.5

In the future, expansion of hospital facilities may be necessary to maintain appropriate levels of care for a growing population and to support new medical care initiatives. This expansion may include ancillary uses such as medical office buildings, clinics, hotels, and conference facilities. 2215.6

Policy RCE-2.5.1: AFRH Redevelopment

Ensure that any future development of the Armed Forces Retirement Home is sensitive to and compatible with surrounding uses. The scale of development should reflect prevailing densities in adjacent communities. The highest densities should be clustered along North Capitol Street and near the Irving Street Hospital area. It is critical that the western edge of the site near the Park View, Pleasant Plains, Petworth, and University Heights areas be retained as open space, with public access restored as it was when these neighborhoods were initially developed. 2215.7

Policy RCE-2.5.2: Housing Opportunities

Strongly support a variety of housing types, developed at a range of densities and serving a range of incomes, in the event the Armed Forces Retirement Home is developed. The opportunity to develop larger units suitable for families on the site should be recognized. Gated communities should be discouraged on this site. 2215.8

Policy RCE-2.5.3: Resource Protection

To the greatest extent possible, require the protection of panoramic views, historic landmarks, and important historic landscapes on the Armed Forces Retirement Home site. The historic links between this site and adjacent land at the McMillan Sand Filtration site and the 49-acre property acquired by Catholic University should be reflected in its design and planning. 2215.9

Policy RCE-2.5.4: Open Space Conservation

Encourage the designation of a substantial portion of the Armed Forces Retirement Home as open space and public parkland as the site is made available for reuse, particularly on the western perimeter of the site where it abuts residential uses. A linear park connection extending from this site south through the Irving Street Hospital Campus and McMillan Reservoir Sand Filtration site to LeDroit Park should be pursued. 2215.10

Policy RCE-2.5.5: Irving Street Hospital Campus Development

Encourage continued development of the Irving Street Hospital Campus with hospitals and health care services. Promote land uses that are flexible enough to accommodate the future needs of the facilities while considering the impacts to the surrounding residential areas and the additional impacts to the District's roadway, infrastructure and public service resources. 2215.11

Action RCE-2.5.A: AFRH Master Plan Coordination

Coordinate with the AFRH, NCPC, and General Services Administration to review the AFRH Master Plan with attention to desired land uses, zoning, building height, intensity of proposed development, circulation, open space, infrastructure, and public services. Site plan review must be carefully coordinated to address potential impacts. 2215.12

Action RCE-2.5.B: Irving Street Hospital Campus Strategic Planning

Coordinate with hospital operators on the Irving Street Hospital campus to ensure that necessary facility expansions are well planned and mitigate potential adverse impacts on surrounding areas. Review existing hospital facility strategic plans to determine appropriate land uses and determine if zoning changes are needed. 2215.13

The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) has been a functioning home for veterans of the U.S. Military for more than a century.