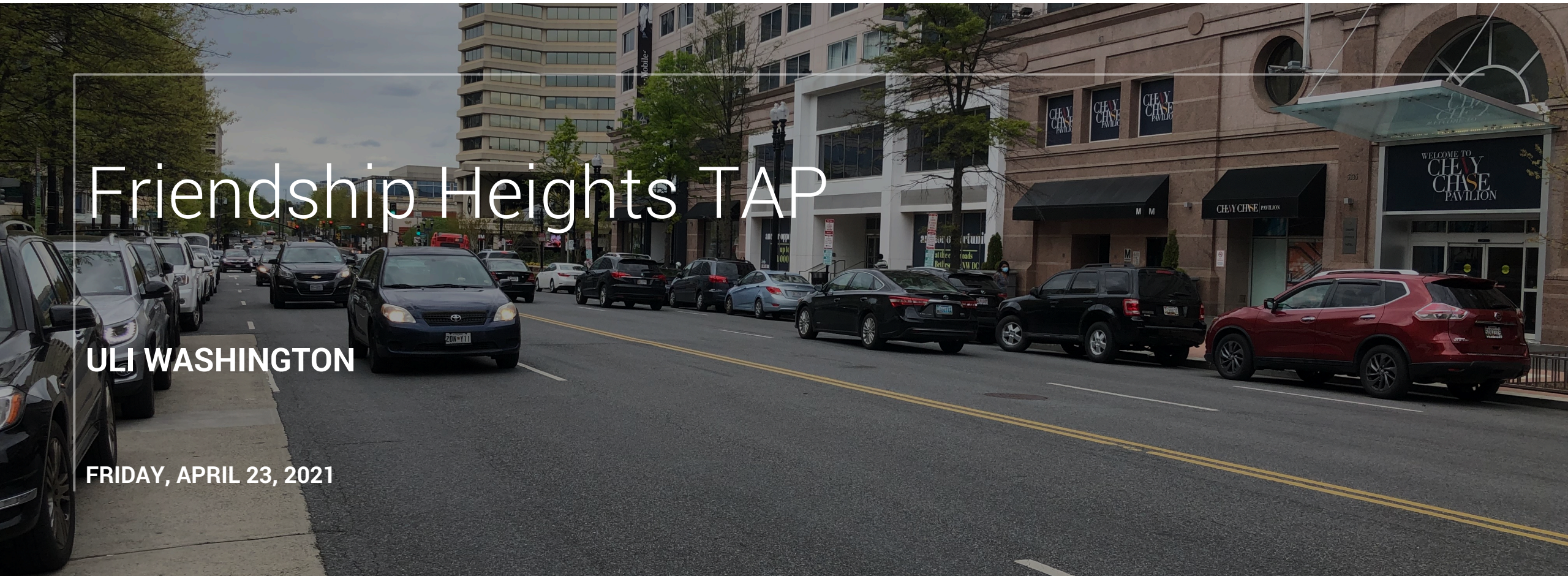


Friendship Heights TAP

ULI WASHINGTON

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021





“

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AvalonBay Communities, Inc.
Arlington, VA



Bob Peck (Panel Co-Chair)

Gensler
Washington, D.C.



Erwin Andres, PE

Gorove/Slade
Washington, D.C.



Christian Calleri, AIA

Perkins Eastman
Washington, D.C.



Doug Carter, AIA

DCS Design
Tysons, VA



Caroline Flax

The Meridian Group
Washington, D.C.



William Rich, CRE

Delta Associates
Washington, D.C.



Vandana Sareen

Just-A-Start
Cambridge, MA



LaToya Thomas

Brick & Story
Washington, D.C.



Alison Williams

Of Place
Chevy Chase, MD



Bob Youngentob

EYA
Bethesda, MD



David Zaidain

Gensler
Washington, D.C.

Panel Advisor

Hilary Allard Goldfarb
Rockefeller Group
Washington, D.C.

ULI Staff

Liz Price
Executive Director
ULI Washington

Georgia Gempler
Senior Associate
Advisory Services

Kaushambi Shah
Panel Writer

TAP Scope

- Future of retail
- Generating affordable housing
- Meet District's economic and social recovery COVID-19 goals
- Grow Metrorail and Metrobus ridership and best leverage its transit assets
- Considerations for building heights and floor area ratios
- Incorporating design techniques that provide density transitions
- Streetscape, roadway changes, open space, and placemaking improvements
 - Enhance the character of the area
 - Improve access to the Metro entrances and bus facilities
- New Metro bus facility location and improvements to bus loop
- Collaboration to create a cohesive approach to redevelopment



Agenda



What We
Heard

What We
Saw,
What We
Foresee

The
Building
Blocks

Next
Steps



Consensus on issues and opportunities

Stakeholder Interviews

12

focus groups

63

individuals

Residents | Civic Leaders | Advocates | DC & MD Housing,
Economic Development, and Transportation Agencies | WMATA |
Property Owners | Developers | Retail Brokers

What We Heard from Stakeholders

Consensus among owners, residents and officials – no one likes the status quo

There should be affordable housing – it will require some subsidization.

The streetscape needs to be enlivened, made safer and more attractive for pedestrians.

Friendship Heights needs to evolve a new identity – it is a “tweener” between Tenleytown and Bethesda.

“Millennials don’t live in Bethesda because they don’t want to run into their parents. They don’t live in Friendship Heights because they don’t want to run into their grandparents.”

There is a need for community facilities – parks, playgrounds, community building.

There needs to be coordination between Friendship Heights-DC and Friendship Heights-MD; landowners understand the need.

Friendship Heights is no longer and not likely to be a regional shopping destination: it is a neighborhood.

Friendship Heights has great transit connections.

Everyone sees the benefit, spaces, and market for new mixed-use development – retail at ground and housing above.

Agenda



What We
Heard

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Saw,
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Foresee

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Next
Steps



What We Saw: Existing Conditions

- No “there” there and no sense of place
- Plenty of transportation, but **low visibility and problematic circulation**: vehicular and pedestrian
- Impenetrable super blocks, uninviting public realm
- **Retail collapse**: changing consumer behaviors, competition
- Reduced land values and rents: an opportunity
- Potential redevelopment sites, but few actual plans in the works



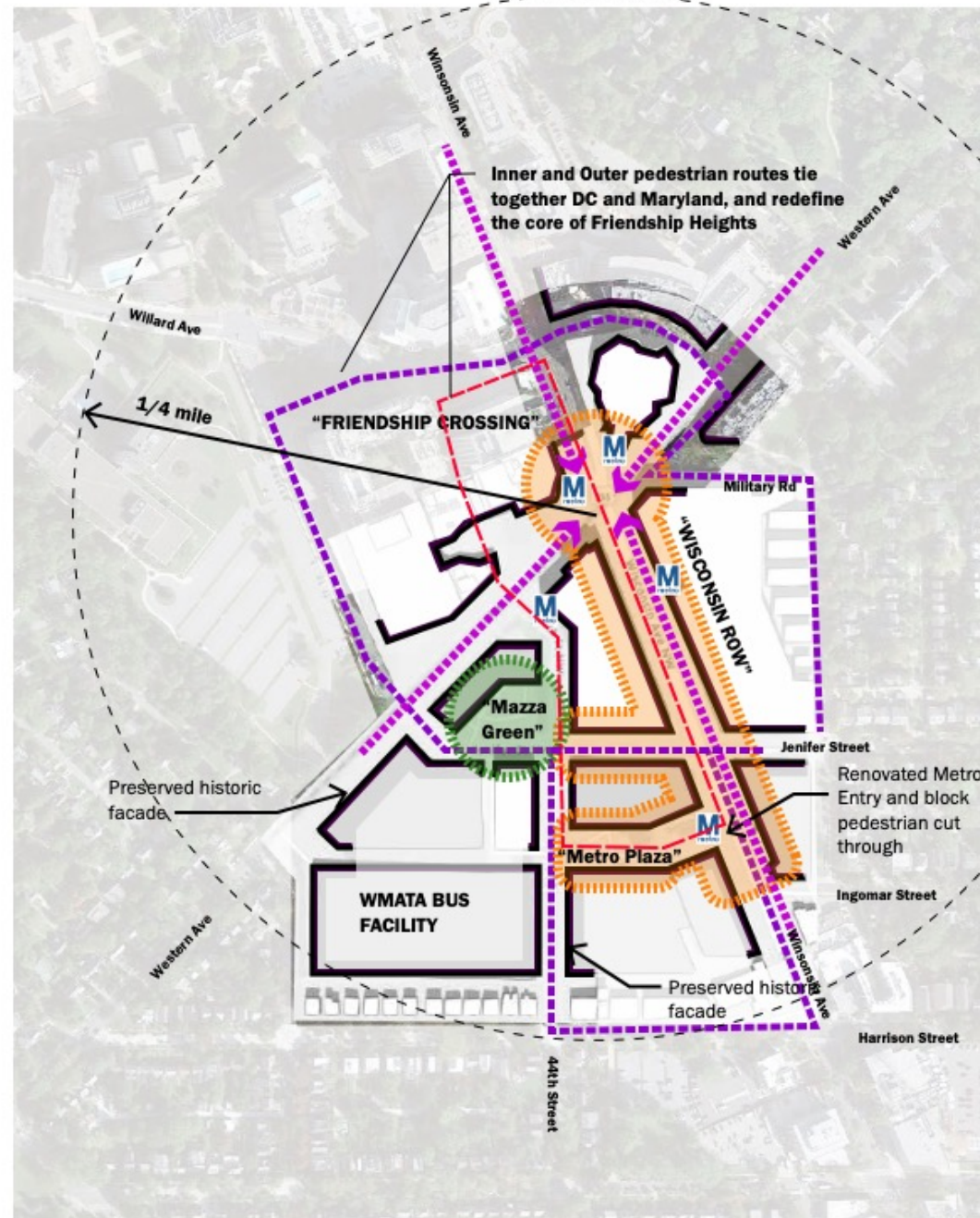
A Vibrant and Inclusive Neighborhood at Friendship Heights

- **Place:** Activated streets and public spaces
- **Circulation:** Complementary bus, bike, pedestrian, and car circulation; improved access to Metro
- **Development:** Mixed-use housing/retail/office opportunities
- **Equity:** Supported affordable housing and small-scale retail for local businesses

New Framework: Visions for the Future

Option A*

*Bus garage moved
across 44th St. to
Lord & Taylor site*



Places Diagram
Option 1 - Bus Facility moved across 44th St

Framework for a Vibrant
and Inclusive
Neighborhood at
Friendship Heights

Place

Circulation

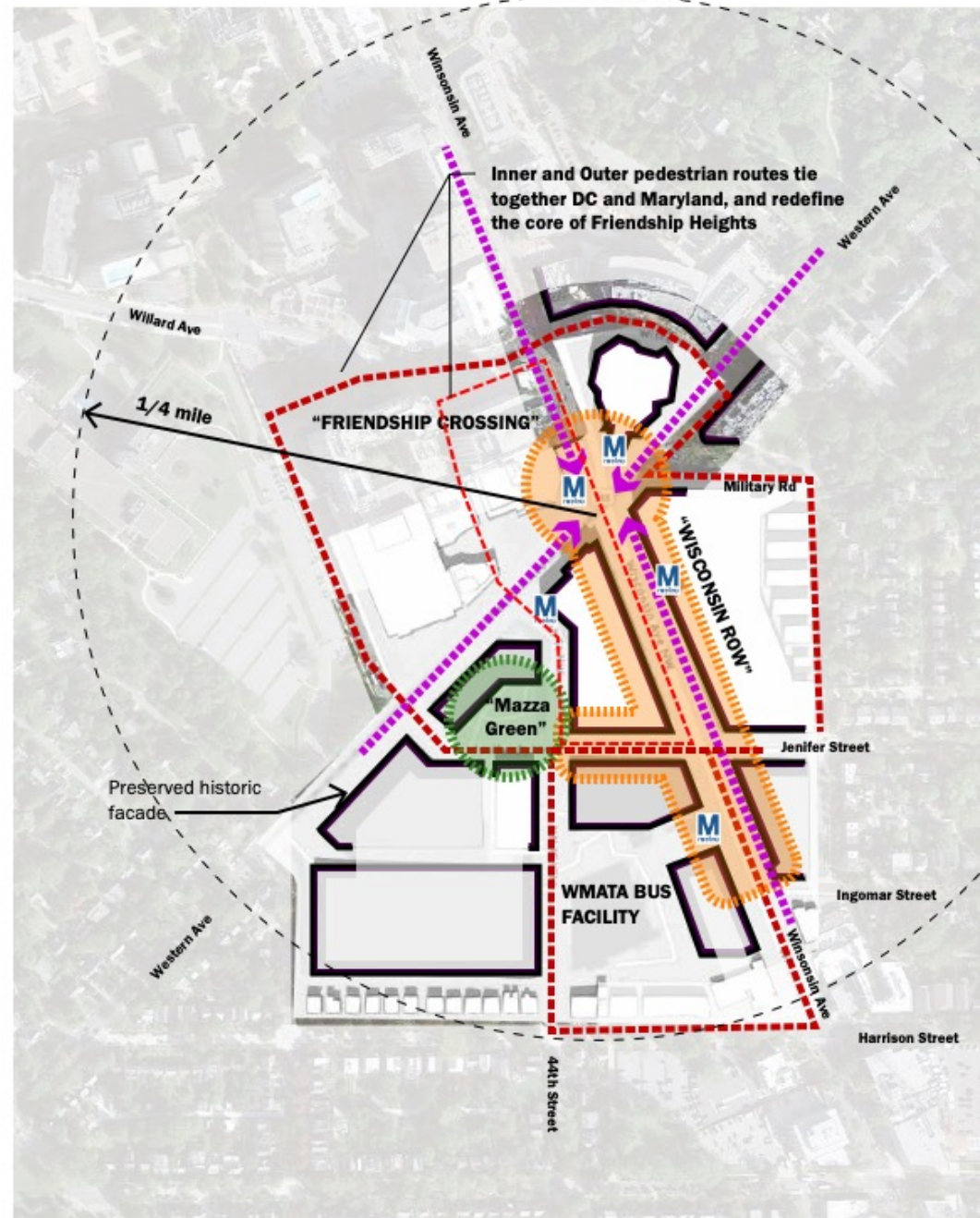
Development

Equity

New Framework: Visions for the Future

Option B

*Bus garage on
current site*



Places Diagram
Option 2 - Bus Facility remains on current site

Framework for a Vibrant
and Inclusive
Neighborhood at
Friendship Heights

Place

Circulation

Development

Equity

Agenda



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Heard

What We
Saw,
What We
Foresee

The
Building
Blocks

Next
Steps

Existing Transportation Context

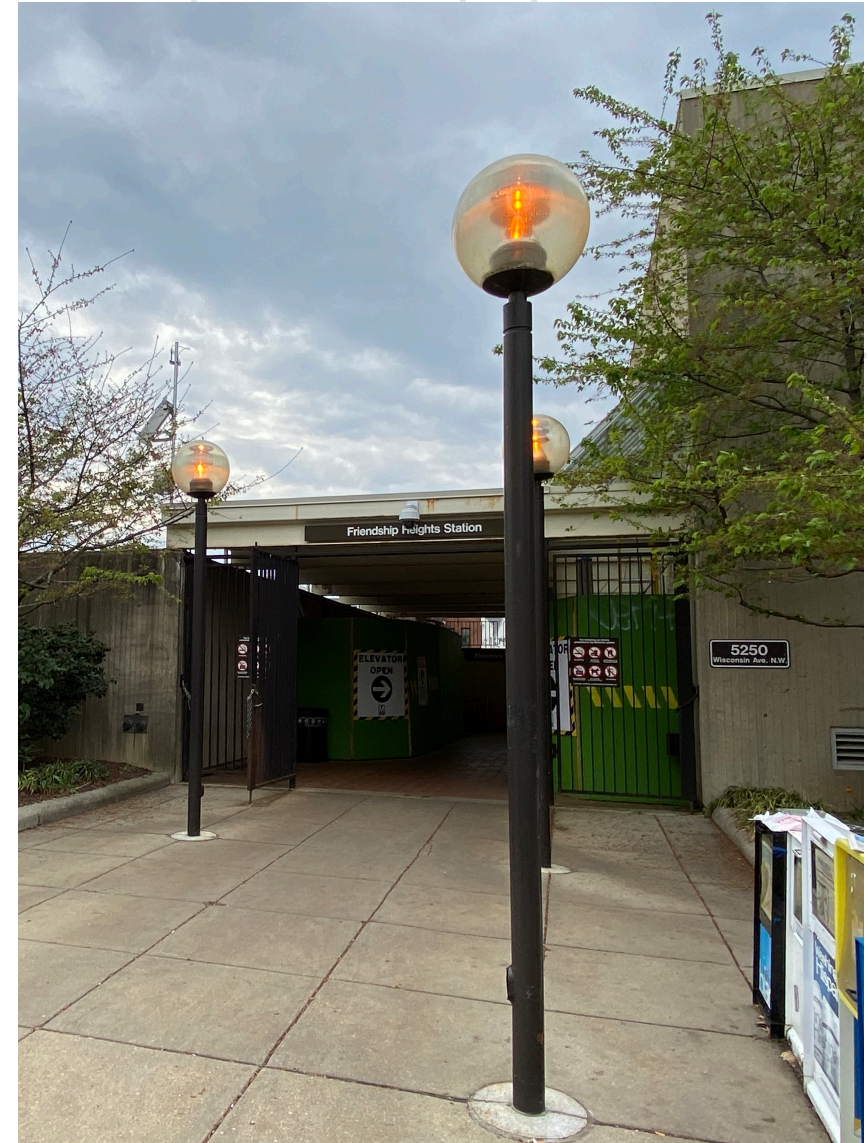
- Pedestrian crossings are wide and difficult – especially Wisconsin & Western Ave.
- Limited bicycle facilities
- Constrained bus operations at existing bus loop at Western and Wisconsin Ave.
- Existing WMATA bus garage on 44th Street provides minor bus maintenance, refueling, overnight storage and bus driver services
- **Off-street parking is abundant** with off-street garages on Jenifer Street and within Mazza Gallerie and Chevy Chase Pavilion
- Five portals to Friendship Heights Metro but **poor visibility and utilization**
- Wisconsin Avenue curbside currently serves on-street off-peak parking and bus stops in select locations
- **Similar average daily traffic along Western** (4-lane cross-section) **and Wisconsin** (6-lane cross section) - approx. 23,000 daily vehicles



Credit: ULI

Potential Transportation Opportunities

- **Mid-block crossings** with curb extensions along Wisconsin
- **Additional bicycle facilities** on 44th St. south to River Rd., provide more awareness of connection of Jenifer St. to the east to 41st
- **Restrict on-street parking on Wisconsin** to create flexibility for bus layovers, parklets, pick up/drop off, bicycle facilities
 - Investigate feasibility of separated bicycle facility
 - Investigate feasibility of reducing to 4 lanes (volumes similar to Western Avenue)
- **Improve current bus loop** with investment in physical appearance and potentially **move existing bus routes to on-street curbside locations** along Wisconsin Avenue, Western Avenue, and Jenifer Street
- Provide an **alternative location for the bus maintenance garage**, potentially at the Lord & Taylor site
- Augment **Friendship Heights Metro portal** to the south near Ingomar Street with escalators/steps and signature entrance
- Implement strategy to create **bolder presence for Metrorail portals**



Credit: ULI

Potential Bus Garage Routing & Pedestrian Crossings



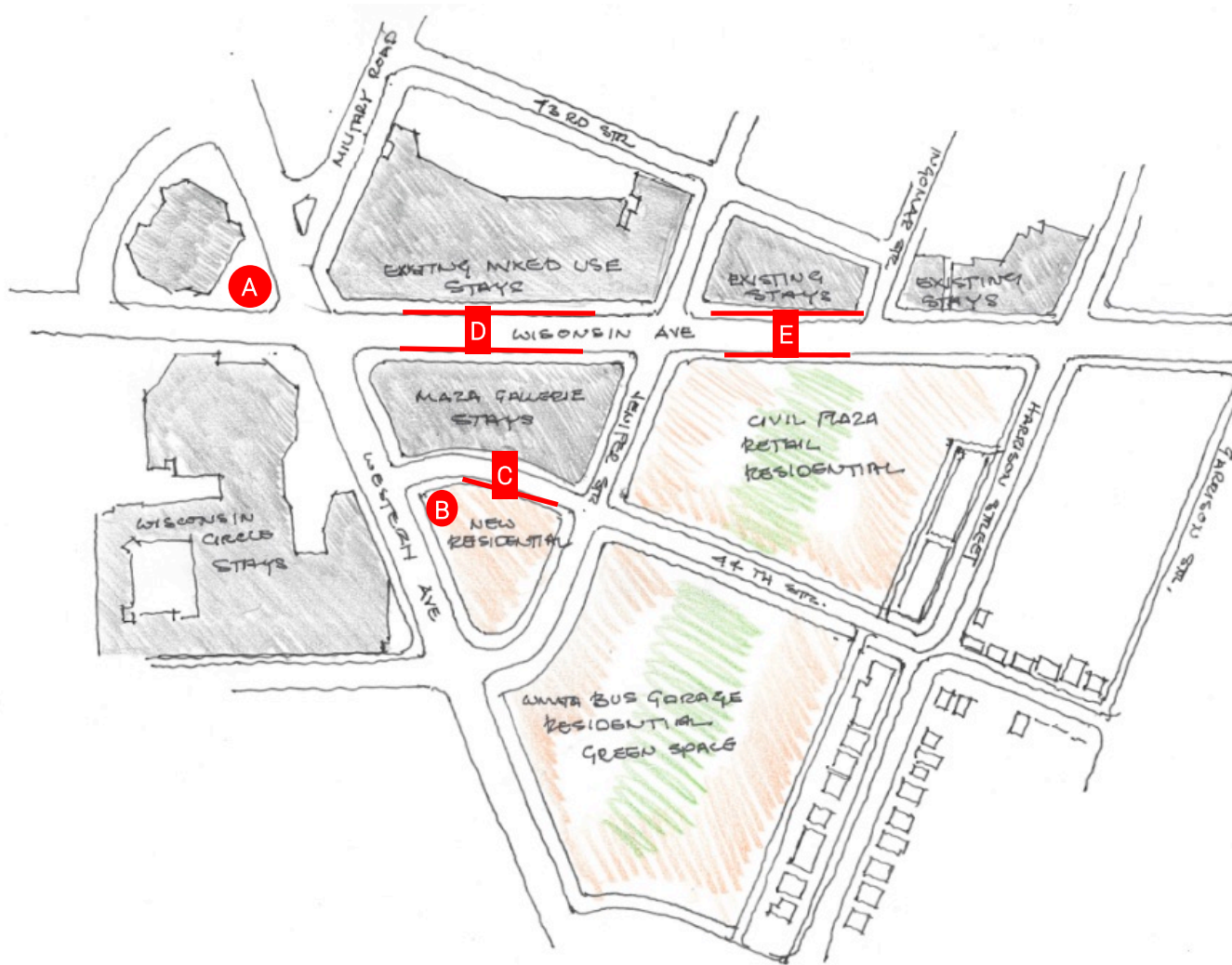
Existing Metrobus System



Metrobus Routes

- A2** Metrobus Major Route
Frequent, seven-day service on the core route. On branches, service levels vary.
- 96** Metrobus Local Route
Less frequent service, with some evening and weekend service available.

Bus Loop Options



Credit: [hh oldman](#)

A: Renovate existing bus loop
The existing can remain and renovated to address operational issues and be recreated into a signature transit amenity



Credit: [Leif Jørgensen](#)

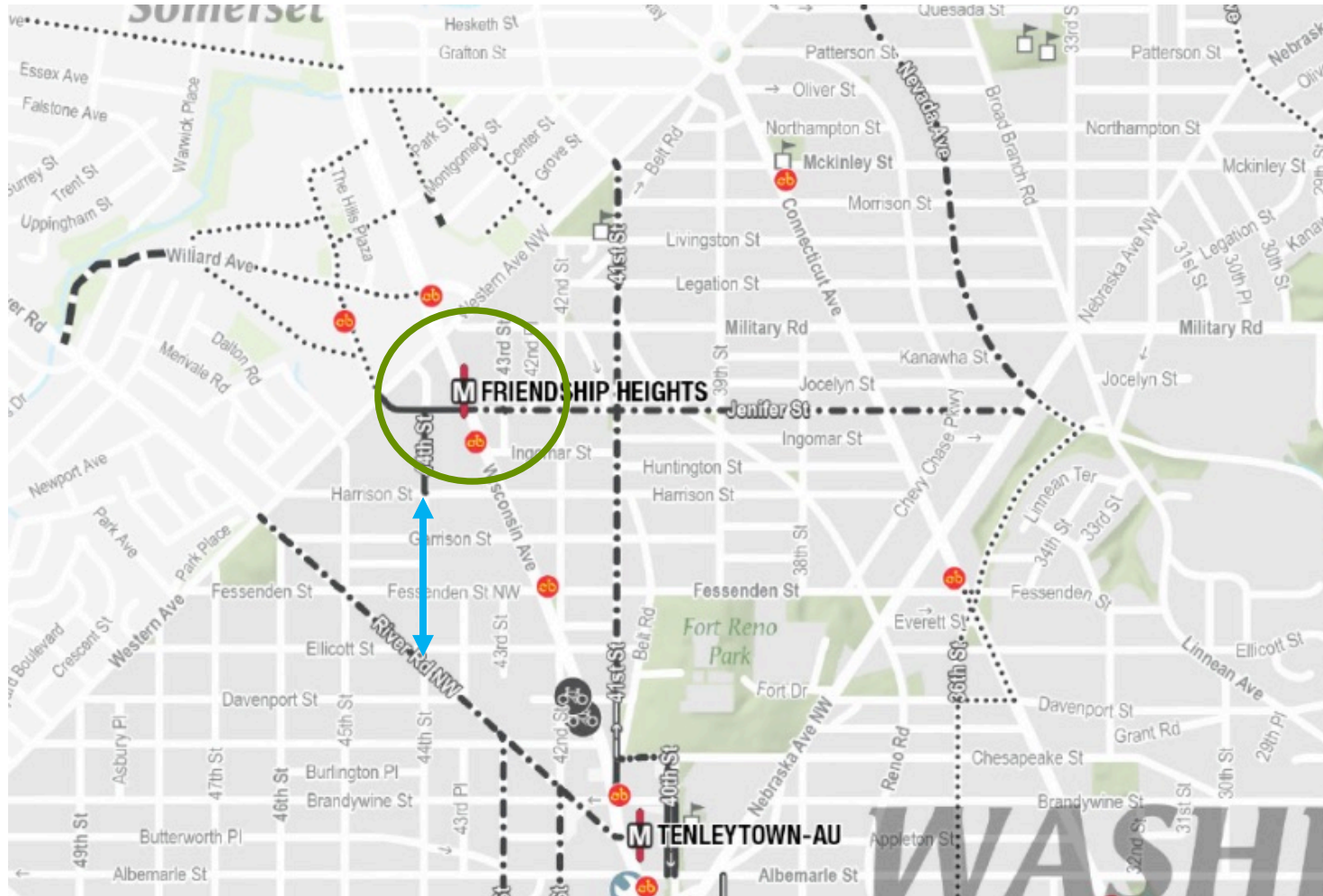
B: Create a new bus loop
Create a new, off street loop using the Homeplate site and create a signature public amenity adjacent to a new park/plaza.



Credit: [Chris Yarzab](#)

C, D, E: Curbside Bus Facility
These options take advantage of curb side opportunities to allow for bus stops, amenities as well as additional space for layover.

Bicycle Network Opportunities



Map Legend

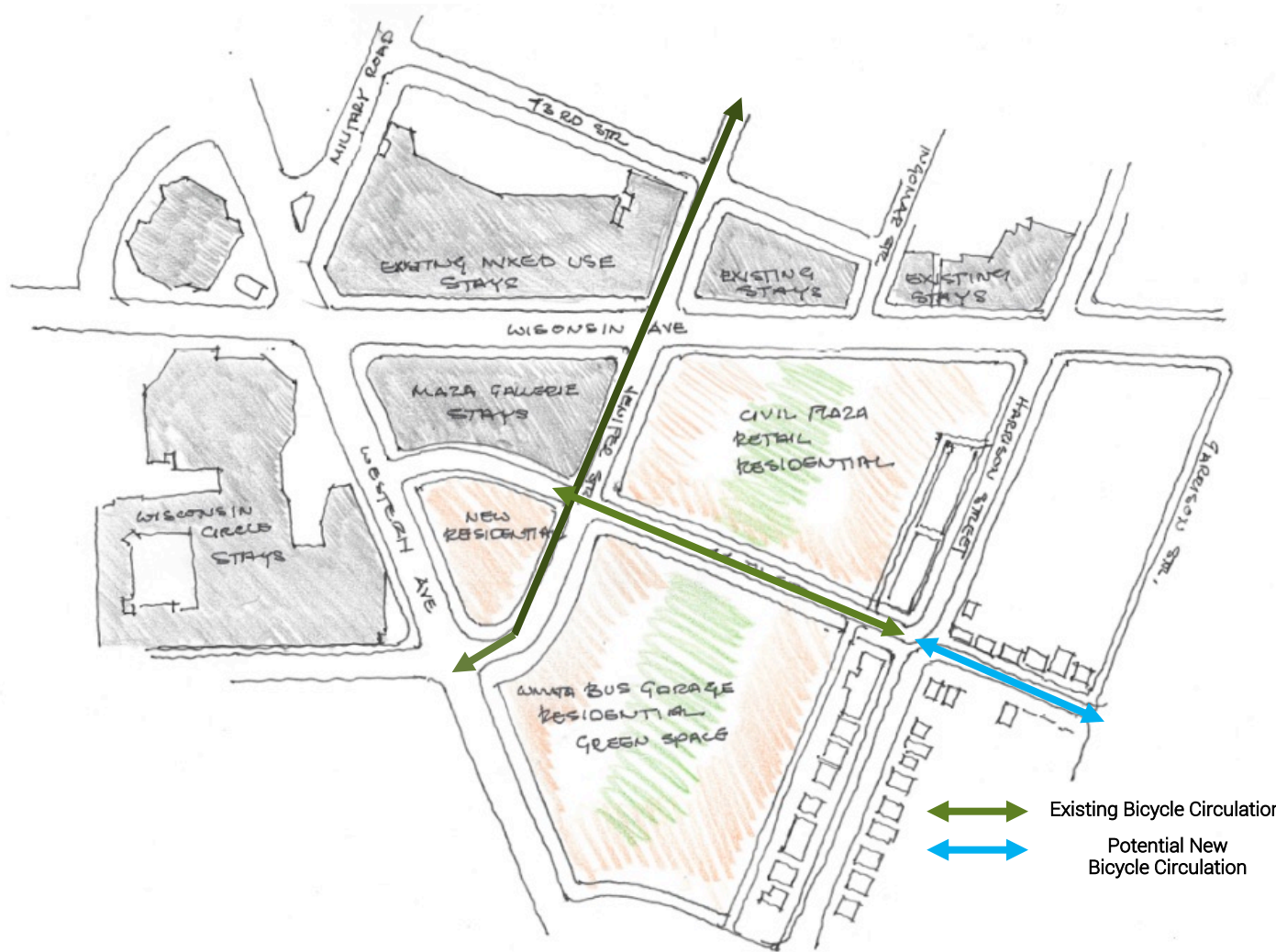
Cycle Routes:

- Bike Lane
- ▬▬▬ Protected Bike Lane
- ▬▬▬ Off-Street Trail
- ▬▬▬ Mountain Bike Trail
- On-Street Signed Route
- ▬▬ Shared Lane (Sharrow)
- ▬▬▬ Contraflow Lane

- Trail Access Point
- eb Capital Bikeshare
- Fix-it Stand
- fab Bike Sales & Repairs
- 🚲 Bike Rental
- 🔒 Secure Bike Parking

↔ Potential New Bicycle Circulation

Bicycles and Micro-Mobility Strategy



Reinforce and extend the existing (N-S, E-W) bicycle facilities that exist

Investigate long-term potential for bicycle facilities on Wisconsin Avenue

Disperse bicycle racks to coincide with new park and new bus loop areas. Relocate and expand Capital Bikeshare in park area

Implement mobility zones adjacent to bicycle areas



Credit: [Mds08011](#)



Credit: [Raysonho](#)

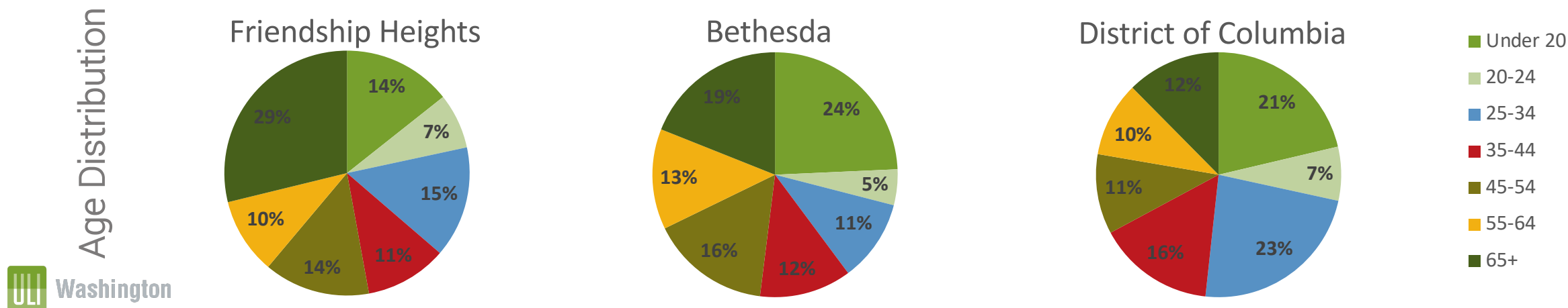


Credit: [Leif Jørgensen](#)

Where Are We Now

Demographics

- Median household income in the study area is \$168,417, well above the city-wide median of \$86,420 but comparable to Bethesda (\$164,142)
- The residential population is much smaller than competing commercial corridors – there are just 540 residents in the DC study area plus 5,400 on the MD side of Friendship Heights compared to 63,195 in Bethesda
- There is a higher share of seniors in study area - **29% of residents are age 65 or over**, compared to 19% in Bethesda and 12% in the District of Columbia



Where Are We Now

Apartment Market

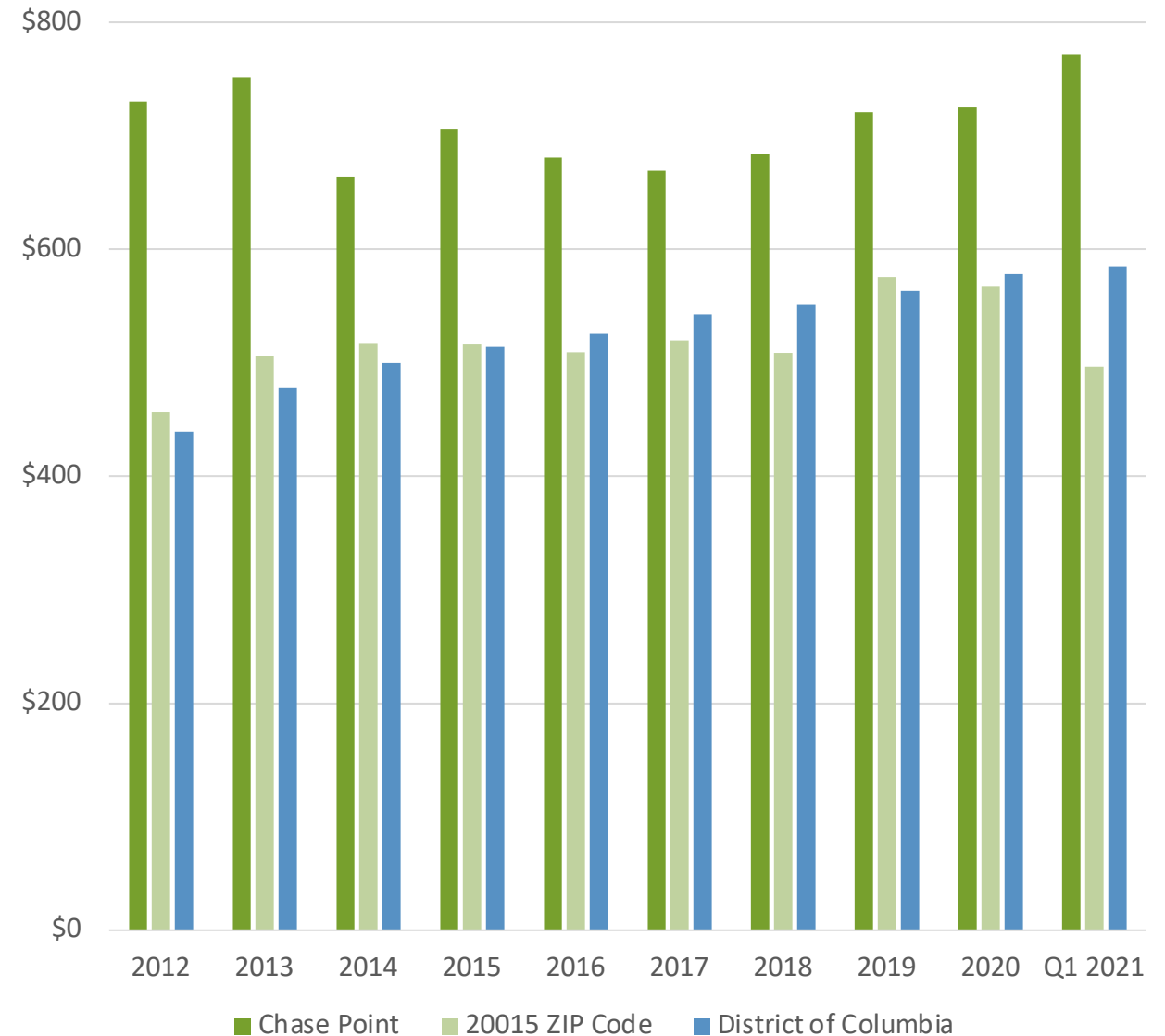
- Friendship Heights is a NORC (Naturally-Occurring Retirement Community)
- Multifamily housing in Friendship Heights concentrated on MD side – mostly older buildings
- Over 38,000 market-rate multifamily units have been built in the District of Columbia from 2010-2020 – *none of these units are in the study area*
- No Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) units have been built in study area
- Most recent apartment development was Wisconsin Place in 2008 – rents average \$3.20/SF
 - High concentration of seniors – almost no Millennials
- New multifamily development occurring south of study area in Tenleytown
- There is an opportunity to develop more rental housing in this market, but new apartments in Friendship Heights will be priced at a discount to Bethesda (\$3.60/SF) before area improvements due to weaker market conditions and larger unit sizes (\$3.35/SF+)
- Achievable rents suggest perceived land values may be higher than real underlying values

Where Are We Now

For-Sale Market

- Housing market dominated by single-family
- Desirable area for families due to quality of schools
- New development has been limited historically – last new condo built in the area was Chase Point Condos in 2007
- Lack of affordable housing in this area of the city
- Condo resale prices in the 20015 ZIP Code track similar to city-wide average
 - Chase Point Condos in Friendship Heights has trended higher
- New-build condos in Friendship Heights could achieve pricing at \$850/SF+, geared toward empty-nesters

Resale Condo Price/SF Trend



Where Are We Now

Office Market

- Office market regionally has been impacted by the pandemic and future space needs by tenants is uncertain
- Friendship Heights (DC & MD) does not have a sizable office market (3.4M SF) compared to Bethesda (10.4M SF)
- Vacancy in Friendship Heights (18.1%) is higher than the overall District of Columbia market (13.8%) or Bethesda (11.1%)
- Office use is important to generate daytime traffic for retail
- No new office has been built in the study area in over a decade
- Medical office users are actively looking in the study area
 - Current zoning does not allow medical office use as of right



Where Are We Now

Retail Market

- Friendship Heights was once a regional retail center with four department stores, but now is a “**retail graveyard**”
- Tweener market with 1.2M of retail space, compared to Bethesda (1.5M SF) and Georgetown (2.2 M SF)
- **Nearly 50% vacancy (500,000+ sf)** - Lord & Taylor closed, Mazza mostly vacant, low occupancy at Chevy Chase Pavilion.
- No new retail development in study area in over a decade
- Retail rents range from \$40 - \$60/SF for well-located space, a 40%+ discount compared to Bethesda Row

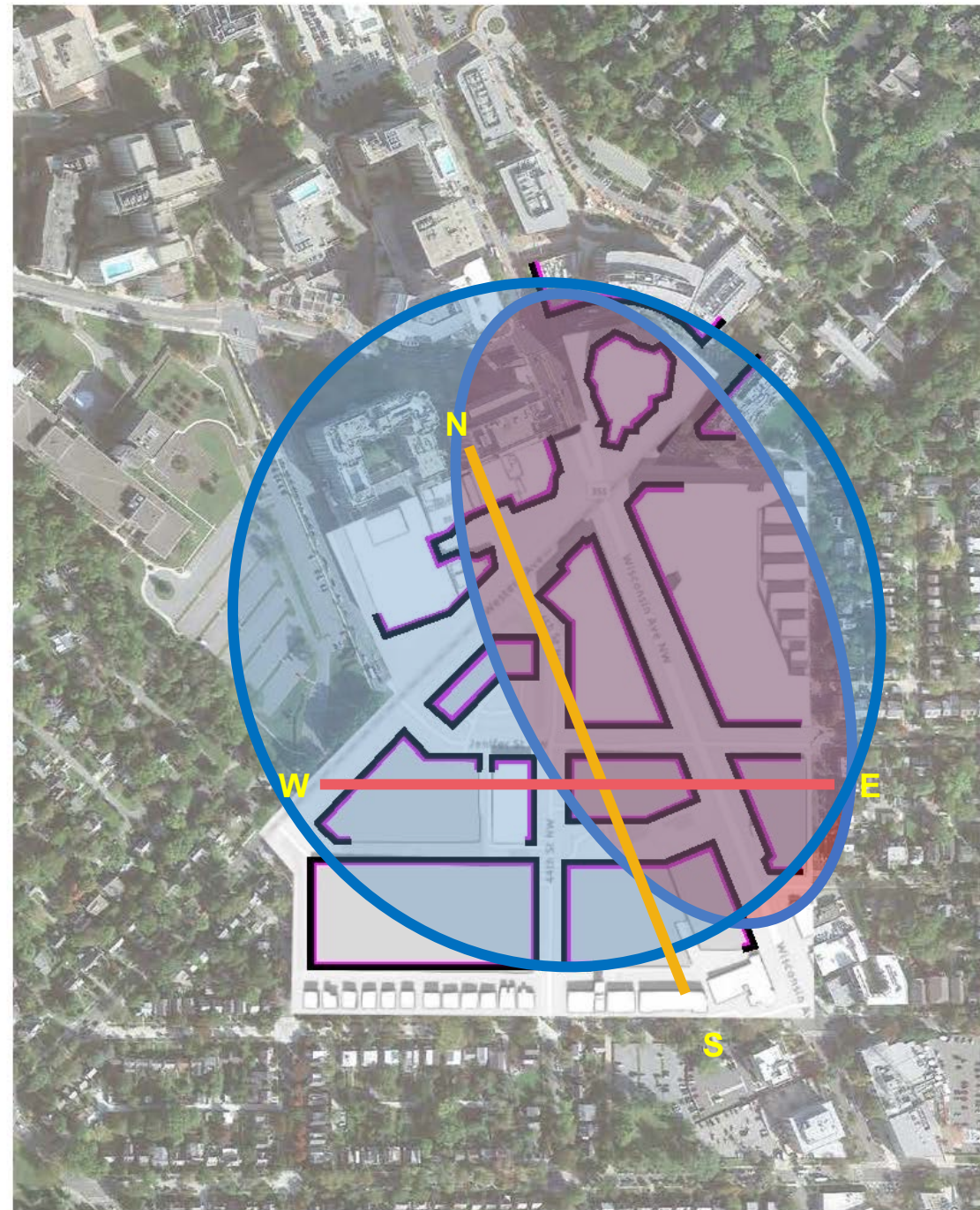


Credit: ULI

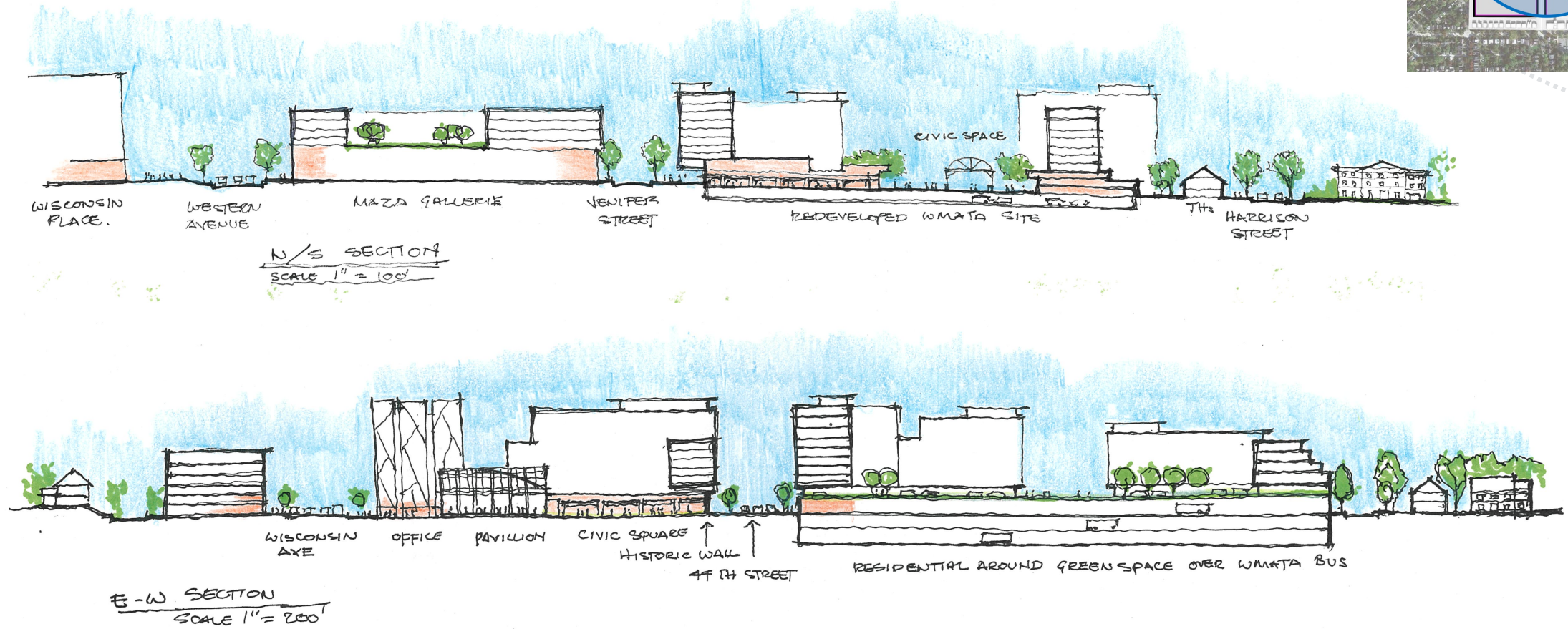
Densification

& Heights

- Highest density concentrated around metro and highly trafficked roads (Wisconsin & West Ave)
- Existing zoning allows for buildings up to 65'.
 - Change zoning to target tallest buildings (up to 130') adjacent to transit
- Buildings stepping down from the core to a more modest height and density that connects to the surrounding single-family neighborhoods



Density Opportunities



Key Uses

Housing

- Significant housing potential: will be the largest amount of new FAR built
- Housing should be targeted at primary demographic segments already in Friendship Heights: **Mature and Family households** (unlikely to be strong immediate demand for younger renters or buyers today)
 - Mix of Housing Types: Multifamily high-rise, midrise and transitional housing forms adjacent to existing single family
 - Unit sizes may be larger to accommodate empty nesters and families
 - Amenities should meet needs of families and seniors
- **Increases in density may not stimulate high-rise construction at present**
 - Existing and projected rent levels may only support stick built midrise until market stabilizes and retail improves
- **Key inflection point exists now** with Mazza Gallerie and Lord & Taylor site
 - Redevelopment options should be **near term**
 - An extended process to achieve higher density through a Small Area Plan (SAP) may result in development under existing height and density limits
- WMATA: consider possible partnership with Boeysmonger site to **catalyze Jenifer street neighborhood retail**
 - Possibly phase total site development to allow portions to happen more quickly.

Housing Framework

Affordable Housing Opportunity – Typology & Target Market

- Variety of building forms that target **seniors and families**
 - High-rise, mid-rise, missing middle forms; for-sale and rental options
 - Larger family-oriented units
 - Senior housing
 - Mixed income with workforce components: Lindley model 60/20/20
- Limited public land suggests significant subsidy or incentives required above IZ levels – e.g., Bonifant in Silver Spring
- Creative thinking on nontraditional subsidy to maximize production
 - Purchase of private land with federal American Rescue Plan dollars
 - Long term tax abatements
 - Bond issuance for both equity and debt financing (new MoCo model)
- Services provided to meet needs of new residents: senior center / library / day care to serve residents, building equity and community
- Mayor's housing goals place priority on housing affordability
- Community consensus
 - The community recognizes need for change: **timing is right for new development, including affordable housing**
 - Meaningful community engagement needed to achieve diversity and inclusivity



The Bonifant in Silver Spring, MD
Credit: [Farragutful](#)



The Lindley in Chevy Chase, MD
Credit: EYA

Key Uses

Office

- Office will remain a key part of Friendship Heights, but will not drive the first phase of new development
 - Focus on the existing office stock
 - If an anchor tenant were to be secured for an office building, could help drive daytime traffic, e.g., a District agency relocating to Friendship Heights
- Medical office
 - Of interest to developers and current owners/operators on both DC and MD sides of Friendship Heights
 - Parking challenge
 - Retail impacts



History & Context

Retail

The Start: A Suburban Commercial Core

- Despite local density, retail customers were suburban in nature – vehicular focused.

Retail Expansion Over Time

- Large master-planned mixed-use projects in other regional areas were able to establish more **cohesive human-scale environments** and draw a critical mass of quality national retailers.
- Today's regional soft-goods destinations include Bethesda (within 2-miles of Friendship), Tysons, and Georgetown.

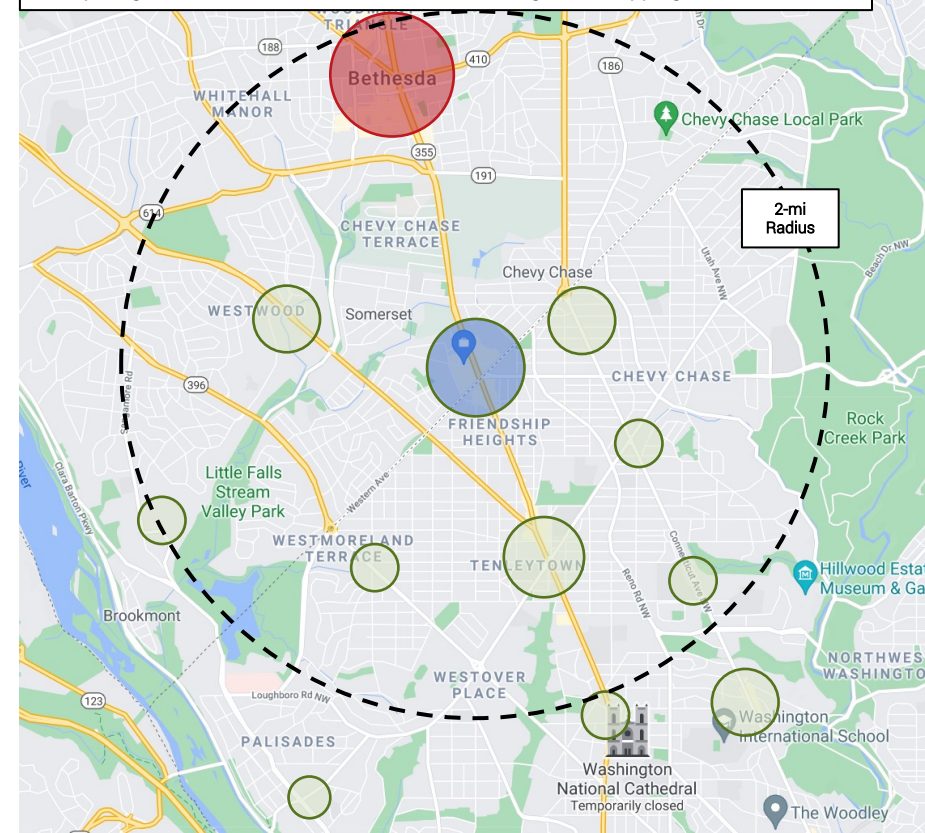
What Will Be Required: A Transformed Merchandising Mix

- Consumers are changing the way they use retail, and the community needs are returning to a time of experience and service-oriented retail.
- These uses will thrive in a pedestrian-first place.

Circa 1970s – Streetcar Stop: current site of the Metro Bus Loop & The Collection



Competing Commercial Cores – Bethesda as the Regional Shopping Destination

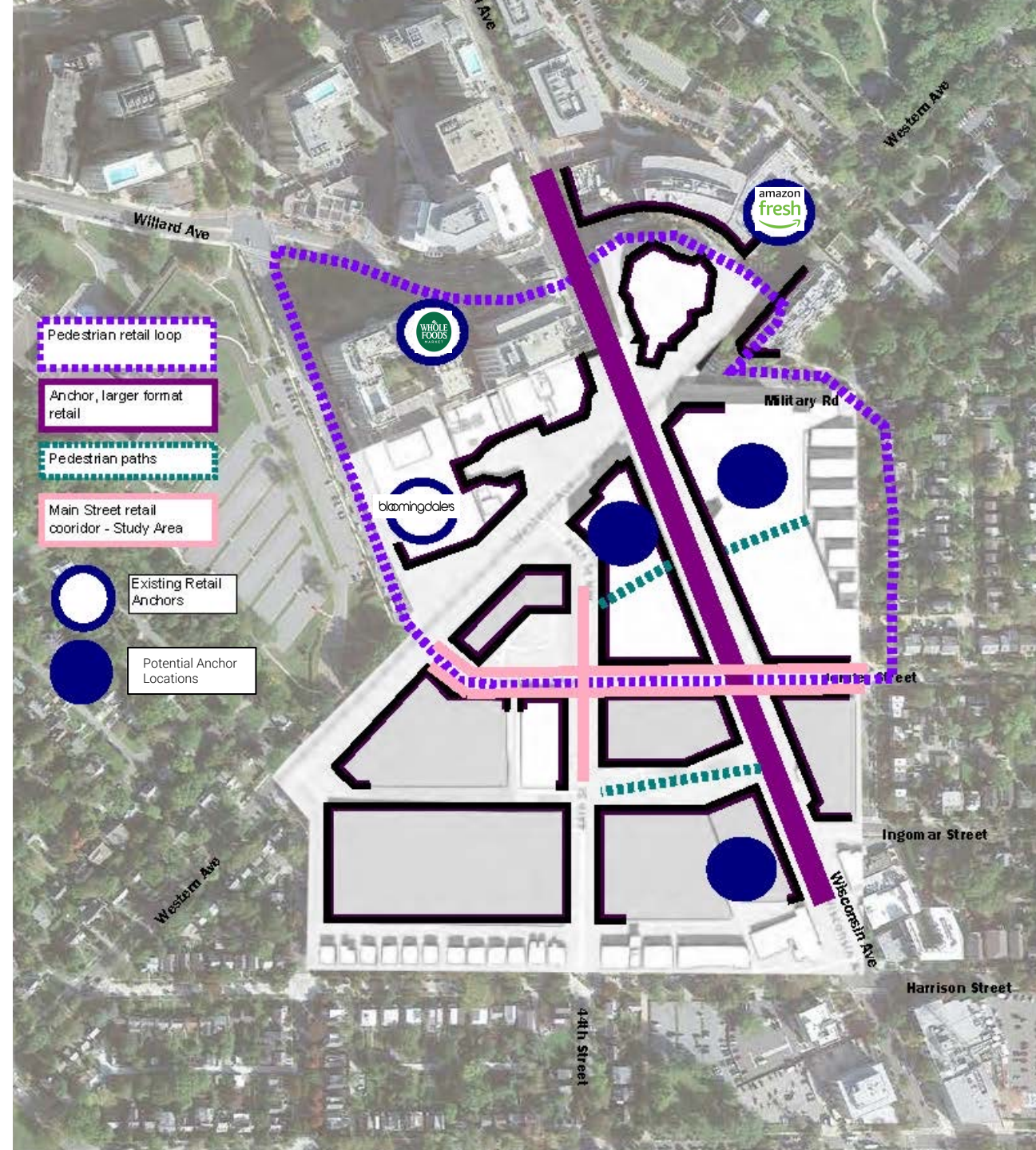


Key Uses

Retail

Critical Take-Aways

- Establish concentrated collection of street retail / food and beverage
- Retain some anchor locations
- 150 - 200,000 sf total; 1-2 anchors



Key Uses

Retail

Immediate opportunities:

- Wayfinding
- Identity
- Comfort-based public spaces

Future opportunities:

- Traffic / Sales
- Circulation / Small Blocks
- Human scale
- Streetscape redevelopment

What will be required:

- Assistance for local businesses owned by underrepresented populations, particularly the first movers



Atherton Mill - Charlotte, NC



Bethesda Row - Bethesda, MD



Icon - Buckhead, GA

Key Uses

Public Spaces / Community

Critical Take-Aways

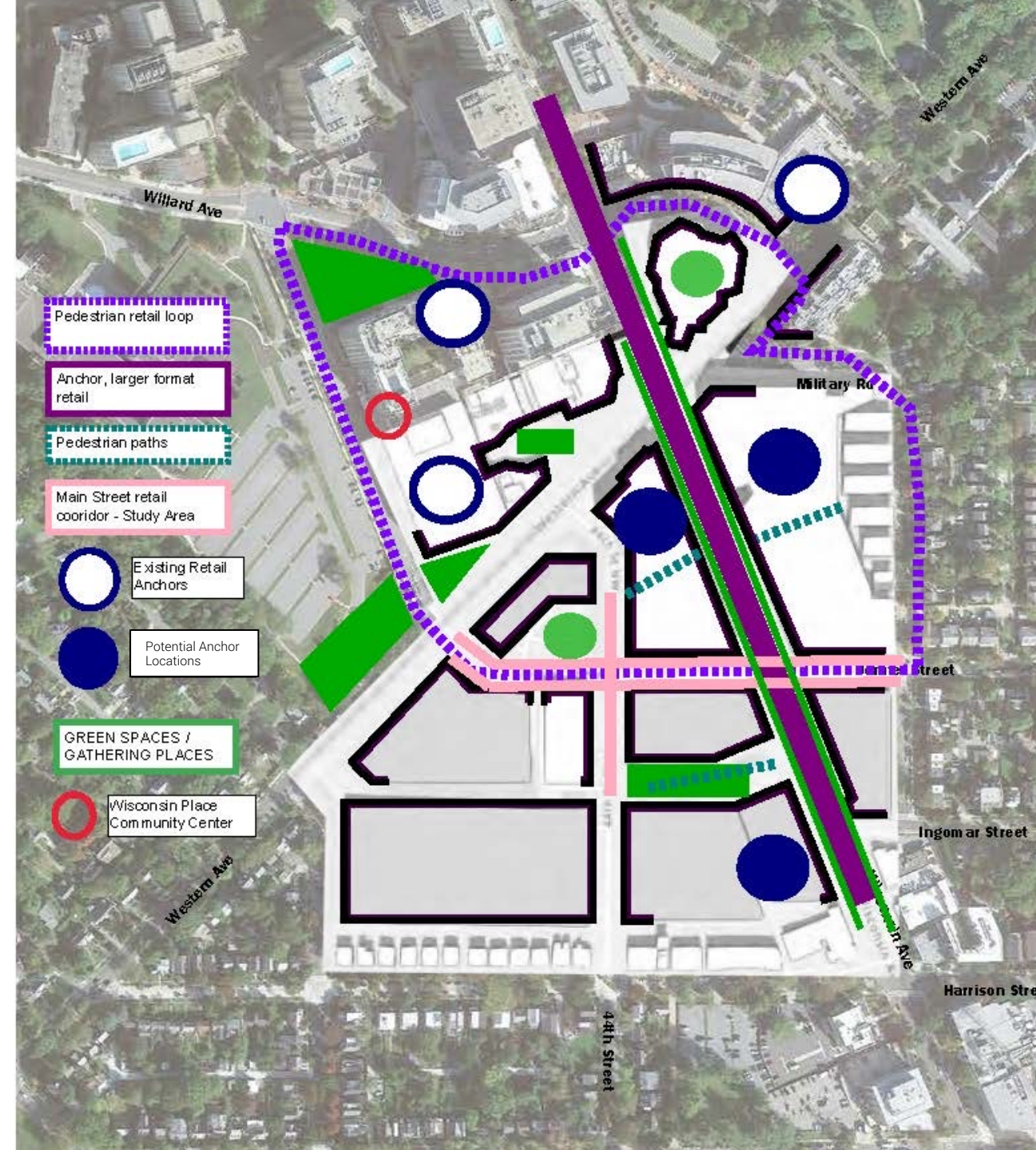
- Create core (but protected) retail adjacent public spaces
- Develop frictionless streets



Credit: ULI



Credit: ULI



Key Uses

Public Spaces / Community-Building

Immediate opportunities:

- Re-establish place: branding, wayfinding, crosswalks, comfort
- Utilize existing vacant lots for recurring community events.
- Windows/Storefronts of vacant retail bays for visual branding, education, and/or engagement.

Future opportunities:

- As redevelopment occurs establish core intimate public spaces.
- Create opportunities for **all-ages play** and entertainment.
- **Addition of a true civic-use** that would be attractive to all residents.

What will be required:

- Engaging the broader community
- Cross-jurisdictional collaboration
- Continued care of place



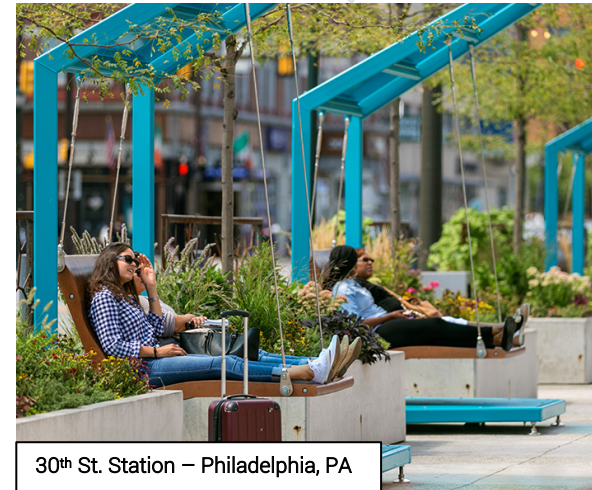
Spruce St. Hbr Pk – Philadelphia, PA



National Landing, VA



Willie "Woo Woo" Wong Playground – San Francisco



30th St. Station – Philadelphia, PA



Outdoor Lighting Perspectives – Minneapolis, MN



Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, TX

Agenda



What We
Heard

What We
Saw,
What We
Foresee

The
Building
Blocks

Next
Steps

Goals of Stakeholder Engagement

- Continue the conversation
 - This TAP is just the beginning
- Reimagine the narrative and identity of Friendship Heights
 - Friendship Heights is a **neighborhood of people**
 - Defining a new "**sense of place**"
 - How to **support and retain current** residents and visitors
 - How to **attract new** residents, shoppers, workers, and visitors
- Inspire the community, property owners, and agency partners to develop an authentic vision that is transformative, inclusive, and resilient
 - Acknowledge what is **NOT** working
 - Uplift what **IS** working
 - Make room for **CHANGE**
 - Collective Action --> Collective Prosperity



Credit: ULI

Engaging Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

- Foster **cross-jurisdictional collaboration** between public sectors
 - Continue DC/MD interagency dialogue that has started as part of TAP
 - Build relationships and partnerships for joint planning and problem solving along the border (Friendship Heights, Silver Spring, Takoma Park)
- Unique opportunity to create a Friendship Heights Alliance that is initially comprised of DC/MoCo business and commercial property owners (Tysons Partnership)
 - First step in the creation of a formal BID
 - Strong interest from private sector on cross-sector collaboration
 - Precedent: Takoma Main Street (overlaps DC and MD businesses)
 - Several property owners are active in other BIDs and know their value
 - Opportunity to leverage neighboring Tenleytown Main Street for early-stage guidance
 - Convene regular meetings of business and commercial property owners
 - Establish and fund a small budget with contributions going towards small studies, activations, etc.
- Business-focused stakeholder group for **engagement with the community & public sector**
 - Opportunity for more regular connection with ANC
 - Formalized body that can engage with OP, other relevant agencies and future public processes

Engaging Local Residents and the Broader Community

- Engagement should encompass broader, intentional outreach & community-building **over time**
 - Cultivate within the community among a **larger and diverse group of residents**
 - **Build trust** among/between neighbors AND with the business community AND the public sector
 - Opportunity for **cross-jurisdictional and cross-neighborhood** relationship-building
 - Public initiatives, such as a Small Area Plan, can integrate into, but not govern, an engagement plan
- Opportunity to:
 - Acknowledge the good, bad, and ugly of **Friendship Heights' history** (e.g. Belmont)
 - Bring to light neighborhood views of current **challenges and opportunities**
 - Collaborate to shape and build consensus among stakeholders for a future **vision of place**
 - Build energy and momentum around future **change**
 - Define what it means for Friendship Heights to be a neighborhood that **welcomes** change in its various forms (**new housing, new retail, new people**)

Engaging Local Residents and the Broader Community

- **Community Conversation Series** (education + dialogue + relationship-building)
 - History of Friendship Heights
 - Changing Nature of Retail
 - Housing and Equity
 - Placemaking – Neighborhood Identity, How to be a Welcoming Place for All
- **Community Needs Survey**
 - As we reimagine what Friendship Heights can be, what would be **most meaningful** for the residents who live here?
 - What does the community want to **own** as Friendship Heights' "thing"?
- Community-designed "**activations**" that occupy space and allow people to come and linger (rather than pass through)
 - Opportunities to leverage underutilized sites, such as the Home Plate site
 - Temporary streetscape activations
- **Continue the dialogue** between TAP-convened stakeholder groups and OP
 - Diverse perspectives in the housing advocacy space
 - Neighborhood-adjacent partners (e.g. Tenleytown Main Street)
 - Other organizations who support local retail (e.g. WACIF)

Reimagining Friendship Heights

From Regional Shopping District to Vibrant, Connected, Inclusive Neighborhood

Opportunities for Action

Immediately

- Establish Friendship Heights Alliance (DC & MD)
- Foster cross-jurisdictional planning
- Begin community engagement
- Activate streets for pedestrians
- Pop-up activities in underutilized public or private spaces
- DC to engage with current owners re: affordable housing financing tools

Short Term

- Improvements to pedestrian retail loop
- Improve bus loop facilities
- Create bus/bike lanes
- Establish appropriate zoning/height density based on market needs
- DC to engage with new owners: re: housing plans & assistance

Medium Term

- Decide better alternative for bus garage
 - If L&T – begin planning for garage with development above, focus on housing incentives
 - If not L&T – redevelop on site, housing above
- Relocate or split bus loop facilities

Q&A

To sign up for email notifications from the DC Office of Planning on future planning activities in Friendship Heights:

<https://publicinput.com/FH-TAP>

Contact below with questions for ULI:
Georgia.Gempler@uli.org



Washington